



# Museum matters

## Newsletter of Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd

**Summer 2017 Issue 42**

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**Dates of future Events - see Noticeboard enclosed**

### **Highlights and Happenings From the Chairman**

A hot summer at last! Since the declaration of Summer on 1st June we have seen in the last few days some very hot weather. You will recall that in the Spring newsletters, I reported the initial meeting of a Heritage Development Group to co-ordinate the Heritage assets of the town. I also referred to a proposed meeting with the Revd. David Tomlinson and Howard Rolfe, Leader of Uttlesford District Council, to discuss the future development of the Castle and Museum.

Following this meeting, I am pleased to say that the Museum Management Working Group (MMWG) will include the Castle future development as part of its responsibilities. This means that we can promote both the Castle and the Museum as one site of Heritage Asset within the Uttlesford District. The next meeting of the MMWG is due on 28th June. That the MMWG can now co-ordinate the Castle development with the Museum development will greatly assist with the Phase II bid for Lottery funding.

The Board has approved the draft proposals for the Phases I and II of the development of the Museum which are to be

discussed at this meeting. The Board has authorised the Museum Society representatives on this group to agree both the initial details of the application and the final application form, as required. The matched funding contribution has been agreed in the sum of £7,500,

At its recent meeting, the Board also recorded that the sum of £1,000 has been paid for the project to digitise the series of 19<sup>th</sup> century illustrated accession registers. Volunteers have entered these onto spreadsheets so that they are now available to both staff and store volunteers on computer.

The Board also agreed that the Society should become a member of the Saffron Walden Heritage Development Group which met on 21<sup>st</sup> June to progress the co-ordination of the Heritage assets of the town. The Fry Art Gallery and the Town Library Society were invited to this meeting in addition to the Castle involvement.

We are pleased to note that the Town Development plan has acknowledged the future development of the Museum, and were also pleased to hear that the U DC budget for the Museum has been increased to enable the re-establishment of the Learning & Outreach Officer post vacant since Gemma Tully left in October 2015. Richard Priestley is to assist the interview team for the new Learning Officer. It is hoped that this post can be filled in time for the next School year in September.

Volunteers continue to man the Visitor desk, and assist in the Shirehill store. Plans are in hand for the preview of the next exhibition on Friday, 11<sup>th</sup> August. Look out for the invitation to be included with this newsletter.

The current exhibition '*Completing the Look: 300 Years of Fashion Accessories*' was previewed on 27th January, when Leah Mellors who curated the exhibition, was rewarded by a large attendance of members and guests. The Spring series of talks, organised by Carol Law, has continued in March with '*Dressing up - British portraits of the 18<sup>th</sup> century*': in April '*Darwin's Life in Letters*': in May '*The history of horseracing in Newmarket*'; and in June with a talk on 300 years of jewellery design. See the reports with this newsletter.

Despite the current state of our country, the Museum makes steady progress and I am very grateful for all those who volunteer, as they make this progress possible. Best wishes for an enjoyable summer and looking forward to seeing members in August.

**Tony Watson**

### **Curator's Column**

#### **Treasure 20**

In the last edition of this newsletter, I wrote about two of our most recent additions to the archaeology collections a medieval gold ring and a gold brooch acquired through the Treasure Act 1996.

It is twenty years since the Treasure Act came into force (in September 1997). To mark this anniversary, the British Museum's Portable Antiquities Scheme is running a project Treasure 20 in partnership with museums across the country, to highlight the remarkable range of finds which museums have been able to acquire, preserve and display for the public benefit. Saffron Walden Museum has acquired over 50 treasure finds through the Treasure Act, and we will be featuring a different treasure each week for 20 weeks over the summer and autumn on our website and social media. Visitors can pick up a hand-out in the Museum to help them locate all the treasure finds on display.

There is always a 'rolling list' of interesting finds from Uttlesford which have been reported under the Treasure Act, and it is the job of staff and the Museum Society Board to select those which we ought to try and purchase for the collections. Grant-aid can be obtained on some purchases, but not all, so if you are interested in sponsoring a treasure find, please contact me for an informal and confidential chat. In particular, we have our sights set on acquiring a sample of the 'Piano Hoard' which hit national headlines earlier this year - an amazing story of gold coins hidden in a piano from Saffron Walden.

**Carolyn Wingfield**

#### **The Ins and Outs of Collecting**

Other parts of our archaeological collections may be less glamorous but can hold interesting information, and also take up much time behind-the-scenes. Many museums and heritage services are now rationalising their older collections, removing objects which no longer 'fit' their collecting policies, and which may often be put to better use in a more appropriate museum or public institution.

For accredited museums like Saffron Walden, there is a strict procedure for this 'disposal' process. Recently we have received from the London Borough of Newham an assortment of excavated finds, notes, photos and plans from archaeological surveys along the M11 corridor and in south Uttlesford, mainly the Hallingburys. These were all from 1960s and 70s fieldwork undertaken by the Passmore Edwards Museum in Newham at the time, but now Newham Borough's heritage service is 'repatriating' its Essex finds to appropriate museum services in

the county, the better to focus on the needs of its metropolitan community.

By the same token, Saffron Walden Museum is also looking to transfer some of its non-local collections to more appropriate destinations. With the able assistance of volunteers - Peter

Morrisey, Peter Stribling, Joanne Pegrum and Peter Rooley- I have been sorting, listing and checking boxes of pottery, tile and prehistoric flint from places in Cambridgeshire and circulating lists to the relevant museum and archaeology authorities in the county. By the time a report and recommendation is presented to the Museum Society Board later this summer, I expect to have found a willing recipient for all the stray Cambridgeshire potsherds and Hints we have 'rounded up'. This material will be contributing to archaeological reference collections, education and knowledge more effectively in public museums and heritage services in Cambridgeshire than they can do here, and we need the shelf space for the continuing intake of archaeology from sites in Uttlesford district!

**Carolyn Wingfield**

#### **More from the early records of the Museum**

##### **The Museum's first seasons, 1835 to 1839**

After the ceremonial first opening of the museum in May 1835, it was opened each Tuesday over the summer period For the benefit of 'subscribers and their friends only', of course. Minutes of the meetings of the Board of Management at this time gave details of which Trustees were required 'to superintend in person on the Days expressed against their names', indicating the extent to which they were involved in the regular operation of the Museum.

Not surprisingly, therefore, subsequent to the final opening of the season on 10<sup>th</sup> November, and in celebration of the First year's 'season', it was resolved by the Board of Management that "refreshments be provided by the Board of management for Wednesday evening" with Mr Player in the chair. This is what they put together and presumably put away:

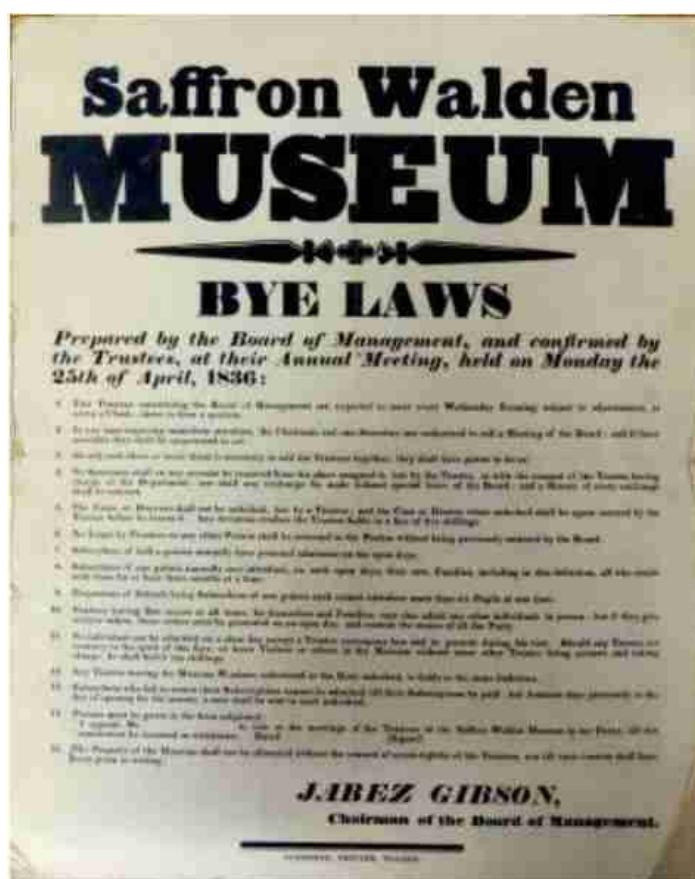
"All sorts Pye, Flummery, & Filberts	Treasurer
Sherry, Madeira, Bride cake, & Biscuits	Mr Spurgin
Custards, Flummery, Champagne, with Glass, Crockery, etc	Mr Dunn
Partridges, two brace	Do
Chickens & Ham	Mr Joseph Clarke
Superfine Bread	Mr Stephen
Neats tongue, Beer, Pears, with Cutlery, Linen, etc}	Salmon
Pastry, Grapes, Burgundy	Mr Baron Mr Secretary"

The Minutes further state that "The Evening was devoted to rational & interesting Communications on various points".

The Rules and Regulations by which the Museum was governed were quite comprehensive, proceeding from the most general, ("I, The object of this Society is to promote the Study and extend the knowledge of Natural History in all its Branches") to the more practical ("13, All pecuniary Donations shall be inscribed in a Vellum Book; and a general Record shall likewise be kept of all other Donations and Deposits, to be left in the Museum") - if only that Vellum Book were still in existence....

They were augmented by Bye Laws which summarised the duties and responsibilities of the Trustees and how the Museum was to be operated. The Bye Laws demonstrate that the Trustees had what we would now regard as curatorial responsibilities, for placing items on display and removing them; strict controls were formulated concerning access to cases and drawers in which items were kept, also regarding exchanges of objects, fines being imposed for infringements. School pupils were allowed, but only up to six at any one time, and the school proprietor was required and paid a fee of one guinea as a subscriber.

These Bye Laws were finally approved by the Trustees on 25<sup>th</sup> April, 1836. This meeting also included agreement to the appointment, by the Board, of an Assistant Curator, to admit Strangers, on a written order only. But he was not in a position of responsibility, as he 'is not to be entrusted with the Keys of the Drawers or Cases'. It was also resolved that "From this Time no person be admitted as a Trustee without paying £40 as a Life Trustee, and £60 as a Family Trustee", So Trustees did have considerable financial interest in the workings of the Society and the Museum.



The Museum was reopened on Tuesday 3rd May 1836, but with less ceremonial than the previous year. The Hon. Algernon Herbert of Ickleton made some remarks, but these were not mentioned at that time in the Minutes. No notes of meetings in 1836 after October 12 were recorded, so we do not know if Refreshments after this year's closure were repeated.

It is increasingly clear that as the operation of the Museum continued, not all the affairs of the Museum and the Society were recorded in the Minute Book. This can be judged from the copy, in the Minutes of the meeting of the Society held on 4th April 1837, of a letter to the Hon. Algernon Herbert which states: "Referring to the Remarks made by you at the opening of the Museum in 1836, relative to delivering a Lecture, I am requested by the Committee to acquaint you that they hope that the Museum, notwithstanding the delay which has arisen from the building a new Room, will be opened for the Season about the middle of next month; and I am instructed, Sir, to make enquiry whether it would be consistent with your arrangements and views to favour the Society by delivering some Remarks in furtherance of their Objects on this occasion, and whether the Gentleman to whom you alluded in 1836 would oblige the Society by giving a lecture on any subject that would be most agreeable to himself".

There was no record in previous Minutes of any discussions relating to this 'new Room' (which is the gallery now housing the 'World of Man' displays) being provided for use by the Museum, despite it providing a considerable increase in the space available for display, particularly for more of the large mammals from South Africa.

On Wednesday 17th May, 1837 the Museum was again opened for the Season. On this occasion, the Hon. Algernon Herbert did indeed deliver some Remarks; he spoke for 90 minutes on "recent Additions to our Geographical knowledge". There is no mention of a lecture by any other person. But this was nothing compared to the lecture to accompany the reopening the following year, by Professor Sedgwick, who held the Professorship of Geology in University of Cambridge for 55 years.

The following detail is recorded in the Minutes of the Board's meeting of 2nd May 1838: "The Museum was opened at 11o'clock, Professor Sedgwick commenced his lecture at 1/2 past One, and ended it at a 1/4 after 4. The subject many interesting and instructive facts respecting the Geological formation of Cambridgeshire and the adjoining counties. The Number of the Auditory was estimated at from 4 to 500," So it can only have taken place in the Agricultural Hall (now the Great Hall). It is to be assumed that many of the audience came from further afield than the town itself, the total population of which was unlikely to have exceed 5,000 at this time (when the census was taken in 1841 its population was 5,111).

For the opening on 8th May, 1839, Dr Bond of Corpus Christi College Cambridge, agreed to deliver some remarks on the "Influence of Art and Civilisation on the phenomena of Natural History". It is not recorded in the Minutes how long this delivery lasted or how many were in the audience.

**Len Pole**

**Natural Sciences**  
**Sarah Kenyon**

Mr William Tuke's cabinet of British Birds' Eggs was mentioned in the last newsletter. Staff started to transport his drawers of birds' eggs from the Museum to Shirehill store. Volunteers from the Museum Society are also helping to move the eggs, and the mollusc shells that were housed in his other cabinet.



**Birds' eggs on the move**

Collection management work has also included removing a frost cover from the cracked glacial erratic boulder in the museum grounds, examining pest traps to ensure that no insect pests such as carpet beetle larvae are present that could eat collections, and installing a humidifier in the Natural Sciences store at Shirehill during a period of very low relative humidity - when collections can dry out and crack. Collections volunteers helped me with a large bequest of wildlife photographs and slides. The 123 storage boxes are in numerical or taxonomic order now, an Excel spreadsheet was produced and we linked each photograph with the location of the box in which it is stored. Work will continue to digitise the list of slides on Excel.

On the environmental front I have attended meetings of the Essex Wildlife Trust (Uttlesford) Group, Verges Committee and the Essex Field Club. It was my last AGM as Treasurer of the Field Club, a role that I held for ten years. The ecological survey season for Special Roadside Verges has started. Nice as it was to get out into the countryside, we all found surveying a bit hot during the 30° C temperatures towards the end of June. Several groups and researchers have viewed the collections. Members of Support 4 Sight had a handling session with museum objects which included a mole, conch shell, brain coral and ammonite for natural sciences. We held the first of two workshops for the Eastern Regional Textile Forum. Patterns

found in nature focused on geology specimens and hawkmoths from the insect collection of George Stacey Gibson.

An examination of 180 dried mosses was carried out by a botanist for a new book about the Bryophytes of Cambridgeshire. These specimens were collected by Reverend William Lewes Pugh Garnons around 1826 and by Frederick Yorke Brocas in 1874.



**Moss *Polytrichum juniperinum* collected by Frederick Yorke Brocas at Furze Hill, Hildersham, Cambridgeshire in 1874.**

**Sarah Kenyon**

**Human History Collections**  
**Leah Mellors**

A lot of work goes on behind the scenes to care for and document our collections, and currently I am juggling many different projects with different collections, with the help of my fabulous volunteers.

In the Inorganics store, we are documenting the social history collection onto our database and preparing to move much of the collection to the Shirehill store. In the World Cultures store, we are repacking and auditing the collection, making sure we know where everything is and that all objects are safely packed. In the Shirehill store, we are updating the locations of objects that were moved in and documenting the social and local history collection onto Modes. All of this work feeds into our commitment to provide greater access to the collections - by knowing what we have, where it is stored and that it is properly looked after, we can enable more people to access our objects.

Back in March, I worked with Ana Silva from the Royal College of Music on a project to document the Museum's musical instrument collection. This project, called MINIM-U K, aims to catalogue all historic musical instruments held in UK museums for a national database.

Ana spent three days in the Museum and the Shirehill store, documenting and photographing all of our musical instruments - we have a surprising amount, with many forming part of the world cultures collection. This was a great opportunity for us to have high quality photographs taken and to tap into Ana's specialist musical instrument knowledge. The information is being processed and will appear on the database soon.

## Drum



Our current exhibition '*Completing the Look 300 Years of Fashion Accessories*' has now been up for nearly five months and will come to the end of its run on 30th July.

Over the past few months, I have welcomed four groups, including NAD PAS and the Women's Institute, to view the exhibition and have an introductory talk from me over a cup of tea or coffee, with three more groups booked in for July. This has proved to be a very popular initiative and a great way of boosting our visitor figures! I will be sad to take the exhibition down in August, but I hope that people have enjoyed seeing some of our wonderful and rarely displayed accessories.

I am now looking ahead to future exhibitions, in particular an exhibition with the Eastern Regional Textile Forum in 2018-19.



Together with Carolyn and Sarah, we hosted a workshop (see image) for the forum in June, selecting objects from the stores with interesting textures, patterns and colours for the members to view and take inspiration from. They will go away and create textiles inspired by our objects to display in an exhibition. From the initial conversations we have had with members, it sounds like this could be a very varied and interesting exhibition.

Finally, through the Museum's presence on Twitter, I recently discovered a company called Saffron Drones run by Alex Dodman. Alex takes both aerial photographs and videos of the local area using a drone. I was so impressed with his work that I contacted him to see if he would take some images of the Museum. Alex took some excellent shots of the Museum and Castle from above (see example below), and made a short film



of the museum displays (being careful not to fly the drone into Wallace!). The video can be seen on the homepage of the Museum's website, I'm currently planning a new project involving Saffron Drones for 2018 so watch this space!

**Leah Mellors**

## Object of the Month

*Object of the Month*, a project that aims to highlight objects rarely seen by the public, is going from strength to strength with staff and volunteers all choosing objects to display in the Museum and share online on our blog.

### March 2017

March's Object of the Month was a pair of leather and wooden clogs, worn by a nun in the Carmelite convent in Saffron Walden.



A convent was built on Ashdon Road in Saffron Walden, on the north side of the Common, in July 1928. The convent housed nuns of the Carmelite order, an enclosed order meaning that the nuns remained in the convent for the majority of the time and were rarely seen. There were two 'novice' nuns who would communicate with the outside world for the necessities of everyday life. Although many local people may remember the convent, there appear to be only two surviving written accounts of it: a report by Mr Ernest Jennings, a surveyor from Saffron Walden, written in 1939, and an anonymous account of a visit to the convent in 1942.

In 1939, Mr Jennings wrote that the convent was occupied by 14 nuns, 12 of whom were enclosed and two of whom were on probation. The largest number that would have been permitted to the convent was 20. The convent stood in about four acres of grounds, which originally belonged to Lord Braybrooke of Audley End. The accommodation consisted of three floors: the ground floor where most of the work was done: the first floor where there were 11 cells for sleeping, an office and a Chapel: and the third floor where there were an additional 10 cells, a cloakroom and a toilet. There were no fireplaces in any part of the building.

An anonymous account written in 1942 reports on a visit to the convent, during which the writer was shown around by the Mother Superior and a few other nuns. They reported that the convent consisted of cloisters around a central quadrangle, which were filled with very little furniture. The nuns sat on the floor except in the Refectory, where they sat on wooden benches at tables to eat, and in the Chapel, where they sat in choir stalls. They slept in individual cells, which were simple but not uncomfortable. The convent was knocked down in 1974 and the land is now a housing development.

## April 2017

April's Object of the Month was a male Mallard or Wild Duck. A male Mallard is called a drake. This mounted bird is from a collection of objects that can be loaned to schools for art or natural science topics.



Mallards are found all over Britain. The species is the ancestor of the domestic duck. They live in towns and the countryside in wetland areas or near freshwater ponds, lakes, canals and rivers. These dabbling ducks eat plants, insects and shellfish, feeding in shallow water on submerged vegetation and small aquatic animals and grazing on plants, seeds and berries in farmland.

The feathers of the drake are metallic green on the head, white around the neck, brown on the breast, grey and black on the rest of the body. The male makes a range of whistles or nasal calls. The female, called a duck or hen, has pale brown speckled feathers. Ducks lay and incubate 7 to 16 eggs, looking after all the ducklings. And it's the Females which make the more Familiar loud quacking calls.

## May 2017

May's Object of the Month was a pottery bowl made by an unknown potter of the Hopi people of North America in the early 20th century. Although we have no records of where the pot came from, its distinctive style links it to a fascinating story about the village of Sikyatki and the modern revival of traditional Hopi pottery.



The Hopi tribe are a Native American nation living in what is today north-eastern Arizona, USA. Their name Hopitu means 'The Peaceful People'. When the Spanish first came to the Americas in the 1500s, they referred to the Hopi and other cultures in the region as Pueblo people because they lived in villages (pueblos in the Spanish language). One of these villages, Sikyatki, gave its name to a distinctive style of pottery produced by the Hopi from the 1300s to the 1600s. Typical forms included bowls and ladles, and occasionally jars, in yellow-orange clay. The pots were painted with black, red and white mineral pigments. Designs were based on animals and birds, such as heads, beaks, wings and feathers, and other patterns

derived from the natural world. Sikyatki itself was probably abandoned between 1500 and 1600, before Spanish colonisers reached the area. According to Hopi tradition Sikyatki was burned by people from the neighbouring village of Walpi in a feud.

The revival of traditional Hopi pottery was started by the work of the Native American potter Nampeyo. She was a Hopi-Tewa woman, born in the village of Hano in 1859. Nampeyo spent much of her early life in the village of Walpi with her grandmother, a potter, who taught her the art of pot-making. Nampeyo quickly became known for her skill in designing, shaping and decorating pots. When the Keam Canyon Trading Post was established in 1875, Nampeyo was able to trade her pots in exchange for imported goods. By the 1890s, Nampeyo was incorporating traditional Hopi designs into her pottery, inspired by sherds she collected and by pots excavated at Sikyatki in 1895 by Jesse Walter Fewkes in 1895.

## June 2017

June's Object of the Month is a print of an engraving of Easton Lodge. It was published in 1832 by George Virtue, a London publisher.



Easton Lodge was a privately-owned mansion in Little Easton, near the town of Dunmow. The gardens, grounds and estate of Easton Lodge date back to Tudor times; in 1590, they were granted to Henry Maynard who built a house in 1597. From the early 1600s, the grounds around Easton Lodge were developed with a small wood, a dovecote and a temple. An icehouse was also built by the end of the 1700s for keeping food stocks cool during the summer.

In the 1800s, major changes were made to the house and gardens. In 1847, there was a large and disastrous fire, which destroyed almost all of the main Elizabethan part of the house. As a result, the house was rebuilt in brick and stucco in the Victorian Gothic style, to a design by Thomas Hopper.

In 1865, the Easton Lodge estate was inherited by Frances 'Daisy' Maynard. Following the deaths of her father and grandfather when she was only three years old, Daisy grew up to be a noted beauty and turned down several marriage offers, including Prince Leopold, the youngest son of Queen Victoria. She chose instead to marry Lord Brooke, who became Earl of Warwick. After their wedding they preferred to live at Easton Lodge, rather than in their London home, and the architect William Young was employed to make changes to the house. The west wing was reconstructed and a new façade was added,

In 1918, there was another major fire at Easton Lodge, believed to have been caused by one of Daisy's pet monkeys. The monkey was taken ill and wrapped in a blanket in front of the stove to keep warm; the blanket caught fire, and the monkey panicked and ran around the room setting fire to the furnishings. The west wing, kitchen and servants' quarters were all gutted by the fire, Daisy employed the architect Philip Tilden to plan the rebuilding. The west wing was rebuilt as a separate building but the remainder of Tilden's plans were never realised. In 1919, Daisy had to sell off most of her estates as a result of her poor finances.

Although the mansion no longer exists, the gardens of Easton Lodge have been restored by volunteers and are open to the public once a month.

**Leah Mellors**

### Museum Outreach News

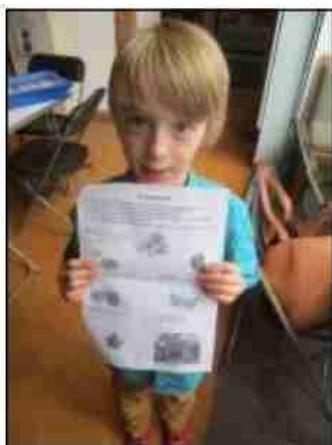
#### Nature Explorers

Over two days in May half-term, 205 visitors took part in a range of activities to explore the natural world in the Museum and grounds. Stag beetle specimens were on show, one of which was found in Great Dunmow. Children made bookmarks from card 'logs' and decorated them with pictures of male and female stag beetles, a caterpillar and ladybird.

Families could test their tree identification skills in the museum grounds with a Tree-Spotting trail and view the Stag beetle loggery. When the castle was conserved, some trees had to be cut down because they were growing too close to the walls. The trees were cut into logs and used to make a home for stag beetles. A female stag beetle lays her eggs near decaying wood. The larvae that develop from the eggs are large white grubs with orange heads that eat rotting wood. After up to seven years they turn into stag beetles. The adult beetles only live for a few months in the summer to find a partner, mate and lay eggs.

Another trail about Signs of Spring was provided for visitors who wanted to explore the Museum. They looked for the insects that can be seen in spring and early summer in the Discovery Centre. They also searched for animals that are having their young, spotting amphibians, birds and mammals in the Nature of North West Essex display in the natural history gallery.

**Sarah Kenyon**



### Exhibitions

#### Life in the Ice Age Exhibition

**Sarah Kenyon**

The next exhibition '*Life in the ice Age*' opens on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> August and continues until Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> January, 2018.

This exhibition will look at the Ice Ages, together with Stone Age people and some of the Ice Age animals found around the world and those that lived in Britain during glacial and interglacial periods. Fossils and stone tools from the collections of Saffron Walden Museum and the Travelling Natural History Museum will be on display. The TNHM is also providing models of a sabre toothed cat, European wolf and woolly mammoth (fortunately not life sized!).



**Flint hand axe from Quendon**



**A Woolly Mammoth Tusk from Little Walden**

Private Preview for Members of the Museum Society of '*Life in the ice Age*' Exhibition with Pimms will be held on Friday, 11<sup>th</sup> August from 6 pm to 7.30 pm; invitations are included with this newsletter.

There will be two activities supporting this Exhibition. Three days of events will be held for Stone Age Day on 16<sup>th</sup> August when visitors can meet Stone Age man. A re-enactor will be setting up camp in the museum grounds and showing us what life was like in the Stone Age. You can even touch some tools made thousands of years ago. *Woolly Mammoth Fun Days* will be held on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> October, when visitors can take part in craft activities and learn about these enormous creatures. The activities are drop in sessions, 11am-1pm and 2 pm-4 pm. Children must bring an adult and entry fees apply.

**Sarah Kenyon**

### VOLUNTEER NEWS

**Wendy-Jo Attar, Manager of the Desk Volunteers team**

#### Our valued Volunteers

#### Warm welcome

We extend a warm welcome to our new volunteer, Gillian Ram, who has completed her induction and is now fully operational in her Welcome Desk role.

## Volunteers Week 2017

The Museum could not operate without the help of our valued volunteers, who fulfil a number of roles including Welcome Desk, Learning and Activity, Collections and Archaeology projects. During Volunteers Week, we sent all our volunteers a certificate to thank them for their tremendous contribution and commitment to Saffron Walden Museum. All volunteers were invited to attend a picnic hosted by Volunteer Uttlesford in Jubilee Gardens on 8<sup>th</sup> June.

Michael T Swindlehurst, Welcome Desk Volunteer, and Wendy-Jo Atter enjoying the picnic



### STOP PRESS - Trip Advisor

I'm delighted to announce that Saffron Walden Museum has been recognized with a 2017 Certificate of Excellence based on the consistently great reviews we've earned on Trip Advisor, the travel and tourism website.

The photograph below shows Volunteers at the tea party held for them at the Museum on 26<sup>th</sup> June, with Carolyn Wingfield holding the **2017 Certificate of Excellence** awarded by Trip Advisor.



### Congratulations!

We are delighted to announce that June Baker, one of our long-serving Welcome Desk volunteers, received a Highly

Commended Certificate at the SHARE Volunteer Awards for museums in the East of England.



June Baker with Jamie Everitt, Regional Museums Development Manager, SHARE 'Museums East' at the awards ceremony

reception at the Museum of East Anglian Life at Stowmarket

June's certificate was awarded in the Front of House category, where there was stiff competition with a total of 13 nominations (and 6 of those were for volunteer teams). Congratulations to June for well-deserved recognition.

### Thank you

We offer our heartfelt thanks to Welcome Desk Volunteer, Ann Holloway, who kindly dressed as 'Mistress Ann' and brought with her a number of Tudor artefacts for a hands-on demonstration of Tudor life to Hutton All Saints primary school children. In the absence of a Learning Officer, school visits are currently independent and self-led, We and the school were grateful to



Ann Holloway in the persona of 'Mistress Ann'

'Mistress Ann' for making this visit so memorable; following which the pupils sent extra special 'thank you' letters and hand drawn pictures.

Wendy-Jo Atter

### Upcoming Events Seaside Holidays

#### Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> July 11am-1pm and 2 pm-4 pm

From flip-flops to floppy hats, sunglasses to swimwear, there are lots of accessories you can wear to the beach.

Inspired by our current exhibition, *Completing the Look 300 Years of Fashion Accessories*, you can design and create your own seaside holiday accessories to take home with you.

### Stone Age Day

#### Wednesday, 16th August 11am-1pm and 2 pm-4 pm

To celebrate the opening of our new exhibition, '*Life in the ice Age*', we'll have a special visit from a Stone Age Man! He'll be setting up camp in the museum grounds and showing you what life was like in the Stone Age (see image below). You can even touch some tools made thousands of years ago. A small charge may apply to this activity - please contact the Museum for more information.



### **Shell Creatures**

**Wednesday, 23rd August 11am-1pm and 2 pm-4 pm**

Get crafty and make your own sea creatures out of shells.  
Use one of our shells or bring any that you've collected from the beach!

Activities for children up to 12 years old Children come in free, but they MUST bring an adult Unless otherwise indicated, there is no charge for these activities but there is a discretionary donation box. Adults £2.50, concessions £1.25, For under 18s, entry to the Museum remains free.

### **Essex Mums**

Thank you to everyone who nominated Saffron Walden Museum for the Essex Mums Loves Awards; we are a finalist! Can we now please ask you to VOTE FOR US!  
<http://www.essexmums.com/awards/voting>.

### **Sales of books**

Vic Lelliott has recently taken over the task of looking after the books for sale in the Foyer of the Museum. He would like to have a greater selection of Non-Fiction books. If you have any items which you would like to contribute, then please contact Vic on 01799 526442, or bring your contributions to the Museum.

### **Museum Society News**

#### **Membership**

May I start with a huge "thank you" to the majority of members who paid their subscriptions promptly? This and the increase in those who pay by direct payment make my task much easier.

If your payment is still outstanding or needs increasing to the new minimum figure of £15 per person, please pay without delay to save the time and expense of reminders. I am reviewing any outstanding subscriptions now, but would be happy to check individual cases if you wish to contact me. My telephone number is 01799 527546.

In recent years, membership cards have been sent out with these reminders. If you received notification by email, please remember to print and complete your own card as you may need to show it when visiting the Museum. In the absence of a membership card, the volunteer on the desk may need to charge an entrance fee. If you receive your information by email and have a problem printing the card, do please let me know as I can let you have one of the spare cards I keep tucked away!

*Christine Sharpe*

### **Talks and Events**

#### **Corrigendum. Report on Maps talk by Peter Walker**

*Regrettably the captions relating to the maps in the report of Peter's talk in the last newsletter did not accurately reflect the information he put over. The Cobbett 1832 map illustrated was he considered a bad map, whilst the Blome 1671 was a very ugly map. We are glad to have this opportunity to put the record straight. Ed.*

### **Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> March**

**Dressing up: Costume in British portraits of the 18th century Speaker Hugh Belsey, formerly Curator of Gainsborough's House, Sudbury**

Hugh Belsey was, for over 20 years, the Curator of Gainsborough's House in Sudbury. He explained that the portrait painters' primary concern was not only to depict the likeness of their subject, but also their social status. Hugh Belsey showed the audience numerous 18<sup>th</sup> century portraits by such well known artists as Thomas Gainsborough, Sir Joshua Reynolds (both these painters specialised in clothing their subjects in an eye-catching manner), as well as William Hogarth and Sir Godfrey Kneller. A close study of all these portraits revealed how both men's and women's costume changed throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century.



**Mrs Thomas Wolfe**

Hugh Belsey began by showing the portrait of Mrs Thomas Wolfe by an unknown artist around 1740 that was given to Saffron Walden Museum and remains in its collections. The sitter's dress is made up of blue drapery around her shoulders with a matching petticoat. She wears a stomacher over a fine chemise and has pearls in her hair. A stomacher was a decorated, triangular panel that fills in the front of a woman's gown or bodice. It may be boned as part of a corset or simply decorated and cover the front panel of a corset. It would be stitched or pinned in place. Mrs Wolfe's portrait shows a formal pose so her costume was of the very best.

The 1740s sees the beginning of French influence on women's costume. Their dresses have hoops (or panniers) on either side and, on their heads, they wear linen caps topped with a straw hat. By the 1750s women's hair is dressed back from the face with a small flower at the front. The female portraits of Thomas Gainsborough in the 1750s show women in elaborate dresses and with headdresses wired and pinned onto their heads. The sack back dress was very popular. This style of dress had fabric at the back arranged in box pleats that fell from the

shoulders to the floor with a slight train. By the 1770s, both the sack back dress and the stomacher had gone out of fashions. Dresses were simpler and cuffs were shorter. Hair was piled on top of the head and powdered. Women's hairstyles at this time were very extreme with rolls of horse hair added to create height and volume. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, women's hair became much simpler. It was often frizzed and the fashion was to wear very elaborate hats.

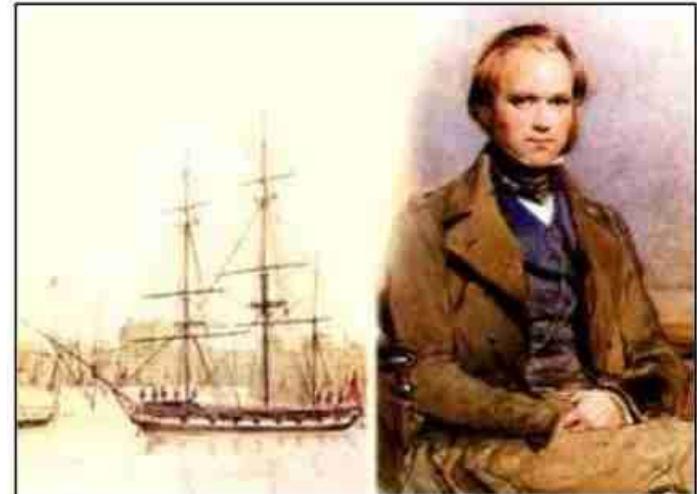
Men's costume in portraits painted in the 1730s show them wearing coats with stiff, elaborate skirts. By the 1740s silk waistcoats with braiding were popular, and shirts had ruffles at the wrists. In the 1760s frock coats and tight knee length breeches were being worn. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, men's costume was simpler with high collars on shirts. Wigs were no longer fashionable and men's hair styles were simpler. Wigs had been worn by men during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries to cover up baldness. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, however, wigs became essential for men to wear on full dress occasions. Men powdered their wigs to give them their distinctive white appearance. Wig powder was made of finely ground starch and often perfumed with orange flower or lavender. Wigs became very elaborate and were lampooned by William Hogarth in his engraving "Five Orders of Periwigs". Powderless wigs made from horsehair made wig-wearing more practical. In 1795, the British Government introduced a tax on hair powder of one guinea a year - this caused the demise of the fashion for wigs.

Fancy dress was often chosen in which to have one's portrait painted as it was thought timeless, especially classical dress. Such an example is the portrait of Mrs Sarah Siddons, an actress, by Sir Joshua Reynolds. Costumes were often over-painted to bring the portrait up-to-date. Sometimes portraits have been wrongly dated because of the costumes worn.

**Carol Law**

**Monday, 10<sup>th</sup> April**  
**Darwin's Life in Letters**  
**Speaker Sally Stafford, Cambridge University Library**

Sally Stafford is one of the specialist group working on the Darwin Correspondence Project at Cambridge University Library where her role is the Education and Outreach Officer. Several editors are working on the letters collection, decoding some and interpreting the writing, some of which criss-crosses the text when Darwin ran out of space. As Darwin is known to have had 2,000 correspondents and wrote at least 15,000 letters, of which the CUL have 9,000; it is thought that there will be 30 volumes. So far they are up to 24 - but are still accessing new material. It seems that Darwin always replied! His correspondents were from all over the world; they had a vast range of interests and Darwin would share some of his own observations. He wrote, for instance, to an Indian academic asking for his observations on how earthworms



affected the soil as compared with English worms.

Born in 1809, he had a brother and a sister and many friends, one of whom was Joseph Hooker the Botanist who, in 1865 became the Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens. However, his mother died when he was eight and Charles was sent first, to a boarding preparatory school and then to Shrewsbury. This was followed by Edinburgh to read medicine - his father was a doctor. This didn't work out and he transferred to Christ's College, Cambridge to read Theology. However, he was a less than assiduous student, spending most of his time out collecting natural history material. He gained support, however, from his Professor, John Stevens Henslow (founder of the Cambridge Botanic Garden) so that when Darwin left Cambridge destined for a life and career in the Church, it was Henslow who wrote suggesting Darwin's name as the naturalist on the voyage of the Beagle.

But Darwin very nearly didn't go. We have Darwin's list of reasons for and against going; among the 'unwise' column entries was "that it would be disreputable to my character as a clergyman" and anyway his father vetoed the idea. It must have continued to attract him, however, as he wrote to his uncle Robert soliciting his help in getting his father to come round, again setting out reasons for and against, but really hoping uncle Robert could work it. He did and so that is how Charles Darwin joined the expedition of the Beagle sailing from Plymouth in 1831 as the naturalist whose role was to collect specimens to send back to Britain.

As the main aim of the voyage was surveying and mapmaking, the route planned was to South America then up to the Galapagos, New Zealand, Australia and back via South Africa. Darwin collected and made many observations en route. We know quite a lot about what he sent from his letters and some replies from Britain.

Some of these reported that some specimens were too mouldy, others were broken and others had lost their labels. Some specimens were sent in used ketchup bottles acquired from the crew and some small ones in pill boxes. We know that Darwin suffered dreadfully from sea-sickness which was a considerable

setback and there were times, he wrote, when all he could eat were raisins.

When possible, fresh food was sourced from places where the Beagle had put in; there was one occasion when Darwin realised he was eating the very species of rhea he had wished to collect, called a halt to the meal and eventually got his skeleton. We know too, that tortoises were taken on board as they were easy to keep alive until required for lunch.

Arriving home, he wondered what to do; should he marry? Once again he made two long lists setting out the pros and cons but eventually decided to marry his cousin Emma Wedgwood. They moved from London to Down House in Kent where they settled for life, and there are records of boisterous family activities involving the seven surviving children. There are too some delightful drawings done by the children depicting the battle of the vegetables, for example the carrot vs. the potato done on the back of Daddy's correspondence. Moreover Charles enlisted his children and nieces in his work, getting them to make observations to help in his experiments. His children were asked to report on bees and he wrote to his nieces asking for observations on what made their dog bark -when his didn't.

In the 1860s his correspondents included Lady Florence Dixon who was, among other things, an overseas correspondent: the author George Eliot: Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, the first woman to become a doctor: Marianne North, explorer and botanical artist, and Lydia Becker a prominent suffragette. He also kept up his letters to Joseph Hooker, Charles Lyell and another young botanist, Alfred Wallace who shared some, but not all, of his ideas on natural selection.

For although Darwin had developed his ideas on evolution after the Beagle voyage, he did not publish them at that point or go travelling again, turning to other areas of research instead. However, there came a time when Wallace was close to making his theories public and it was agreed that both men should read out precis of their ideas at the same scientific meeting where these theses received a mixed reception. Nevertheless, Wallace wrote to Hooker to say that he was happy that both had been read out. Although there was disagreement between the two men, later on when Wallace had fallen on hard times, Darwin wrote to Gladstone, then Prime Minister, to ask him to award Wallace a pension, which was done.

So, why didn't he travel again and why did it take till 1859 to publish 'On the Origin of Species'? On the Beagle voyage, he had been dreadfully seasick and might not have wished to repeat the experience and, during his adult life, had been quite unwell. One theory about this is that he might have been lactose intolerant.

As to publication, his ideas ran counter to the teachings of the Anglican Church with regard to the Book of Genesis, and three people in his life whom he respected and cared about deeply were Anglicans. They were Admiral Fitzroy, captain of the

Beagle, Professor Henslow and his wife Emma, so perhaps this was an emotional bar crossed only when it appeared that Wallace was going to say much of it anyway.

This was the thread of Sally Stafford's talk, fully illustrated by slides of letters in Darwin's handwriting, the drawings of the battle of the vegetables and his lists! She also showed our Museum's copy of a letter to Darwin written by George Stacy Gibson on the tricky question of why, when oats were sown, barley came up. Alas, Darwin's reply has not yet come to light.

I look forward to the publication of the 30 volumes of the edited letters but even more to a condensed bedside version should there be one. Thank you, Sally, for your fascinating insights into Darwin's life; and just think, he nearly didn't join the expedition of the Beagle!

**Heather Salvidge**

**Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> May**

**Palace House, Newmarket**

**The Development of the new National Heritage Centre for Horseracing and Sporting Art**

**Speaker: Richard Fletcher**

Richard Fletcher is the Community Volunteer Ambassador for the National Heritage Centre for Horseracing and Sporting Art in Newmarket.

Richard described the development of this £15 million racing centre built in the remains of Charles II's old palace - this is where the long history of horseracing, with its royal connections and the beauty of the thoroughbred racehorse, can be fully understood. Today Newmarket has over 2,500 racehorses in 80 training yards around the town.



Richard began his talk by outlining a brief history of the domestication of horses in Britain and horseracing in Newmarket. The domestication of horses and their use to pull

vehicles began in Britain around 2500 BC. There are records of horseracing during Roman times - note the Circus at Colchester - and British tribes such as the Iceni led by Boudicca could assemble armies which included thousands of chariots. Richard pointed out that Devil's Dyke, the eight-mile Anglo-Saxon defensive earthworks near Newmarket is wide enough at the top to drive a horse and chariot.

While there are numerous records from the Middle Ages onwards of the Kings of England breeding and racing horses, it is during the 17<sup>th</sup> century that the royal connection between horseracing and Newmarket became well established. James I discovered the little village of Newmarket whilst out hunting and hawking, and since then it has been known as the home of horseracing.

James I stayed at the Griffin Inn on Newmarket Heath which he later bought, and commissioned Inigo Jones to build him a palace there in the Palladian style; this building no longer exists.

Charles I established regular horse races on Newmarket Heath and while visiting Newmarket in 1642 received the order from Parliament to stand down as Monarch. He was kept under house arrest in the palace for two weeks. Newmarket remained loyal to the King but, after the King's execution, the Palace was sold off and left to decay. There are still some elements of the old Palace that can be seen today.

Cromwell always remained suspicious of horseracing but, with the Restoration of the Monarchy, Charles II brought to Newmarket a passion for horseracing that has become the life and soul of the town. He built a new Palace, part of which has survived as Palace House, and set up the new Round Course, which is still used as the July Course. Queen Anne also loved horseracing and a part of the Palace was remodelled for her.

In 1750, the town became home to the Jockey Club. During the Georgian period, however, horseracing suffered a decline in popularity as the Prince of Wales accused of rigging races.

However, in the 1860s, Newmarket became the racing base for the Rothschild family who rebuilt the royal racing stables. Newmarket's reputation was re-established also in the 1860s by the patronage of Edward VII. and royal patronage has continued unabated.

The Palace House site was bought by the Forest Heath District Council to save this gem of Newmarket's royal history which had got into a perilous state due to inappropriate development. Three charities - the National Horseracing Museum, the British Sporting Art Trust and the Retraining of Racehorses charity have combined with the District Council and other organisations, foundations and individuals to create the National Heritage Centre for Horseracing and Sporting Art.

The Sporting Art Gallery shows paintings of prize fighting, shooting and other field sports as well as horseracing, in a traditional country house setting.

One of the most famous paintings on display is;



'Under Starter's Orders' by Sir Alfred Munnings

#### New media for communication and information

If you have an email address and would like the Society to communicate with you by email, please send an email to Paul Salvidge at [SaffronWaldenMS@gmail.com](mailto:SaffronWaldenMS@gmail.com) and he will add you to the database on the Society's laptop. This would not only assist our administration greatly but also helps us in containing costs particularly of postage.

We assure members that their details will not be made available to any other organisation. Many thanks for your understanding and co-operation.

**Museum Society e-mail address**  
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[www.swmuseumsoc.org.uk](http://www.swmuseumsoc.org.uk)

#### *Who to contact . . .*

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