



Museum atters

Newsletter of Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd

Spring 2017 Issue 41

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Highlights and Happenings From the Chairman

Following discussion in the Support Committee, some 40 volunteers working for the Museum were invited by both the Museum Society and the Uttlesford District Council to a tea party on 6 th December last year. Following an introduction by the Curator, I had the pleasure of thanking the volunteers on behalf of the Society for all the work they have done over the past year, both within the Museum and also at the Shirehill Store. The volunteers thanked included many of the Directors! Further thanks on behalf of the Council were given by Dawn French, Chief Executive of the Council. Certificates of long service were presented to volunteers with over ten year's service.

The Society held its Christmas party on 12 th December which this time had a variation on the quiz. The Vice Chairman, Paul Salvidge and his wife Heather devised a series of questions, some of which could only be answered if you had a good knowledge of history outside the Museum. We welcomed about 80 members and their Issue 41 guests and I would like to express our thanks to

all those who contributed to the excellent range of food which was greatly enjoyed - one of our guests asked who the caterers were! There was a raffle with some enviable prizes - thank you to all who supported this. We are most grateful to all those who worked hard to make this such an enjoyable evening. On 27th January, Society members and their guests had a preview of the latest exhibition "**Completing the look: 300 Years of Fashion Accessories**". We were delighted that Dawn French and some Councillors were able to join us on this occasion. Leah Mellor, who has curated this exhibition, has brought together many fashion accessories from the Museum's collections and also from our own Members and other museums. Leah should feel rewarded not only by the large attendance on 27th January but also by visitors attracted to the Museum over the next six months.

The Curator and I have met with representatives of the Church and Saffron Walden Town Team to form a Heritage Development Team to co-ordinate the Heritage assets of the town. The Revd. David Tomlinson (St. Mary's Church) and I were asked to discuss the possible inclusion of the Castle within this group with the Council. An initial meeting with the leader, Howard Rolfe, has been arranged for 10th March. The Curator and I have also met with Fry Art Gallery, Saffron Walden Initiative, Saffron Walden Arts Trust, the Tennis Club and the Town Library Society to discuss the future development of the Heritage sites in the centre of the town.

I hope that you will visit the Accessories Exhibition if you have not yet done so. A list of all the year's talks arranged by Carol Law has recently been provided to Members. The first two in January and February were well attended and their reviews appear at the end of this Newsletter. However, we are looking at improving the sound levels in the Parish Room so that those at the back can hear clearly. It seems the BBC have similar problems!! It appears we have made a good start to what looks like another busy year of events for Members and the continuing development of the Store and the Museum.

Tony Watson

Curator's Column

Lost medieval jewellery is Museum's gain!

Around 700 years ago, in the Manuden-Berden area, someone lost a precious little gold ring-brooch. It lay unseen on the ground until 2014, when a metal-detectorist found and reported it as treasure under the Treasure Act (1996). In due course Saffron Walden Museum had the chance to acquire it and last autumn the Museum Society purchased it for the collections.

The brooch is only 23 mm long, but the detail is exquisite. The clasped hands probably held a tiny pearl or gemstone originally (since lost). The letters and symbols inscribed around the ring reading clockwise from the pin are: (inner band) clasped hands WR quatrefoil MC quatrefoil IA (outer band) M quatrefoil ME (the E is back-to-front) quatrefoil VM clasped hands A star.



There are a number of similar brooches known from England and France, so presumably this was a popular type of brooch in the 13th and 14th centuries, perhaps the sort of personal keepsake which might be given to a sweetheart or wife. The inscriptions on these brooches all appear to be different and unintelligible to us, but must have had some private significance to the giver and the wearer.



Also in the Middle Ages, between the late 12th and 14th centuries, someone lost a gold finger-ring with a small blue-black gemstone (possibly a sapphire) in Stebbing

parish. Discovered by a detectorist in 2015, this ring has also been through the lengthy process of treasure inquest and valuation. At time of writing, the Museum Society is poised to complete the purchase, while we await the outcome of an application for a purchase-grant.



This plain, simple design was another popular type of medieval jewellery, but - like the ring-brooch - not one would have been contemporary with a farmstead which was excavated in the 1990s at Stebbingford in the neighbouring parish of Felsted. It is the sort of item which could have belonged to a reasonably prosperous member of the farming community or someone known to them. Precious stones such as sapphires were attributed with healing properties, so maybe this simple ring was more than just a decorative item to its owner.

The Treasure case in the Great Hall will be redisplayed in a couple of months time, to enable these and a few other recent acquisitions to go on display.

Carolyn Wingfield

More from the early records of the Museum

Preparations for the first opening of the Museum in 1835 *Len Pole*

My last article about the early records of the Museum ended with the acquisition of the bulk of the African animal skins and skeletons from the consignment of material sent by Robert Dunn from south-east Africa.

This occurred at a time before there was a museum building in which to display any of them. But plans, both in development and construction, were afoot. At the meeting of Trustees of the Saffron Walden Natural History Society, who were intending to run the museum, on 27 November 1834 "It was reported that the Castle Hill Society proposed to let to the Museum the Upper-Room in the newly erected house, also the Cellar under the staircase at a rent of £20 per annum. This followed the drawing up of a lease between Lord Braybrooke, the landlord of the new building, and the Castle Hill Society, the body who would have responsibility for administration of the building "lately erected .. and now to be used as and for a Museum (except the large room at the east end of the said Museum called the Agricultural Hall)".

Display cases and other pieces of equipment were being acquired before this. On 29 May 1834, mention was made of the presentation of a large upright case by the Chairman, Jabez Gibson, another (probably neither large nor upright) by Francis Gibson. On 19 June 1834, an Insect case was reported as being made by Mr Ward. There was mention of keys for one insect case, several desk cases and at least two upright cases, being allocated. On 31 July, glass case fronts for the case to take the Koodoo antelope were supplied. Presumably all these cases were housed in Jabez Gibson's house on King Street, together with the various specimens, of which there were several hundred by this time. It is worth noting that although the House was kindly and liberally lent by Jabez Gibson, it is entered as an element in the accounts ledger of the SWNHS; "House lent to Society, 2 years and a half at a notional value of £50, together with the large upright case. Francis Gibson's case was also stated to be a loan, mentioned in the ledger for 29 May 1834, and withdrawn at a later date.

Mr William Ward was generous in 1833, donating a Desk 27 April, a meeting of the Family and Life Trustees took which he donated to the museum. Thomas Spurgin, on 23 May 1833, donated an Entomological Case. Also, Mr Hannibal Dunn, on 10 April 1834, Zoological cases elements of large upright cases on 29 May 1834, 11 Sept 1834, and 24 April 1835. Other individuals were paid for their services. John Gould (see picture below), wild boar, antelope and other specimens on 11 February 1835.

Other individuals were paid for their services. John Gould presented his bill of £40 12s 2d for stuffing the koodoo (see picture below), wild boar, antelope and other specimens on 11 February 1835. The Koodoo (or Couu, or Kudu) was illustrated in the Abridges Catalogue, and said to be, "probably the finest specimen in the Kingdom". In March Gould reports that he is setting up the rhinoceros at his workshop in London and that it will be ready in a few weeks. It was collected in April by local farmer Waite Spicer and brought to Walden in April "free of expense to the Society". It is delightful to imagine a double horned rhinoceros trundling through the 1835 Essex countryside on a horse-drawn farm cart!



Koodoo pictured in the 1845 Abridged Catalogue

Before 11 February, it was reported to the committee of trustees that "the interval between the last meeting (on 31 December 1834) and the Present had been occupied in removing Cases and Specimens from the House so kindly and liberally lent to the Society since its first institution, to the new building on the Castle Hill". The Trustees, unlike the person who drafted Lord Braybrooke's lease, were not at this stage ready to call

this building "the Museum". Even on 1 April, the minutes state with some assumed sense of achievement, "a meeting held for the first time ... at the new House, Castle Hill", it was only the following week 8 April they stated that a meeting was "held at the Castle Hill Museum".

It was at this latter meeting that a division of curatorial duties was agreed:

Geology, Jabez Gibson: Mineralogy, Zoology, not in cases, J. Gibson & J. Player: Conchology, Mr Player: Entomology, Comparative Anatomy, Mr Spurgin: Ornithology, British, Joseph Clarke, Mr Salmon: Ornithology, Foreign, Joshua Clarke: Botany, Oology, Zoology in general, in cases, Joshua Clarke: Antiquities, Illustrations of different Departments of Art, Francis Gibson.

The Trustees by that date were meeting daily "at 3 o'clock PM in order to consult and arrange specimens". At the meeting of 24 April it was resolved "that a Board of Management may be appointed for the first year". On 27 April a meeting of the Family and Life Trustees took place: "The State of the Museum was shewn to them; and the propriety of opening on an early day was fully considered". On 4 May at the first meeting of the Board of Managers "The Day of opening was fixed for 12th instant, the Trustees with their Friends, and Subscribers with their families to be then admitted, the public having General Admission on the Friday following on the payment of a shilling each". The Board further resolved that it should be open during the Summer months every Tuesday from ten until three. It was minuted that on the next Meeting on 20 May "The Board considered the subject of Admission of Visitors on other Days", but does not record what the conclusion of the discussion was.

The Museum opened accordingly on Tuesday 12 May at 11AM; the Revd. Robert Fiske delivered an address to the Company "in explanation of the Objects of the Trustees". On that day, it was noted "The Treasurer and the Minute Secretary were stationed in the Museum Room, to record Subscriptions and Donation, Mr Dunn to superintend refreshments to be supplied by several of the friends, other members of the Board, with the Curator, to afford general assistance and information to visitors".

On the 15th, Friday, when the Museum was opened to the public for the first time, 51 persons paid for admission. One of the visitors was Nathan Maynard; he was the father of George Nathan Maynard, who later in the century became the first paid curator of the museum. Nathan Maynard recorded what he saw: "Stuffed birds and animals, shells, bird's eggs, nests, skeletons and several bones of - the mammoth - a beautiful rhinoceros, stuffed, which stands in the centre of the room, Indian curiosities, insects, casts of heads, medals, minerals, petrifications, etc., etc., head of an elephant, of a hippopotamus, horse, cow, etc.

"Concerning the birds, there were records in the meetings of many being prepared for display. Mr Stephen Salmon was stated to have given the sum required to stuff 300 birds, on 27 Feb 1834, as well as an Anteater and Dog, etc. Interestingly, no bird nests appear to have been accessioned before May 1835, but one hornet nest was, so maybe this was what Maynard saw. Alternatively, since some objects were temporarily borrowed, mainly from the subscribing members of the Society, such as "Geological case & specimens complete. Collection of Crag & chalk fossils", which it was noted, were returned on 7 Sept 1836 there may have been some bird nests on short-term loan as well at this time.

The rhinoceros was certainly a spectacular centrepiece. It is referred to in the 1845 Abridged Catalogue as "probably the first that was ever brought into this Kingdom or perhaps into Europe: another has been recently introduced by Dr Smith, and is in the British Museum".

"Indian curiosities" at that period covered any artefact from the Americas, the Pacific islands, Australia and Africa, as well as from the Indian sub-continent. It might well have included the Jamaican dress and cap made of lace-bark given by Marchioness Cornwallis: the South American arrows from Lord Normanby: four weapons from New South Wales from Charles Wedge, and a pair of "Eastern shoes" from the Reverend Nicholas Bull.

Although some animal skeletons were displayed at this time, only the heads of the large African mammals had been prepared. On 26 June 1834, a Dr Witt of Bedford had been applied to for setting up the "Specimens from Africa in the best manner, as he has a superior mode of preparing bones for skeletons". The Society haggled with a Mr Flower, of Lambeth, about the cost of setting up the hippopotamus skeleton; he offered to reduce his fee from £30 to £25 for the work but the Society offered to pay only £20 on the grounds that they had already "incurred considerable expenses", so maybe the preparation of the head was all that was agreed by 1835. A hippopotamus skeleton is depicted in the frontispiece illustration of the 1845 Abridged Catalogue, so it must have been completed before then. It was part of the Dunn consignment, but was originally listed in Dunn's invoice as "large Sea Cow skeleton" which was another name for the African mammal in the 19th century. The most renowned African mammal specimens, the complete elephant skeleton and skin, were not then on display: they were not prepared for display until 1837 and 1838.

Len Pole

Natural Sciences Sarah Kenyon

Secret drawers, ancient footprints, tiny trees and loans, loans, loans!

The last few months have been very busy. I have been involved with loans to schools, research visits, Museum events, valuation of Museum collections for insurance, removal of storage cabinets, improvement of a gallery

interactive, display of a dinosaur footprint for Object of the Month, doing work for local environmental groups and receiving a donation of 132 boxes of wildlife photographs and slides.

What I have not had time to do, as often happens, is complete work for the Special Roadside Verges project. I need to list the sites where marker posts have gone missing or been damaged in 2016: find sites for the Saffron Walden Wildflower Group to visit: organise the 2017 ecological survey programme: get an article into Uttlesford Life magazine: liaise about cutting at Little Chesterford verge: investigate more damage at a verge outside Ridgeons in Saffron Walden, and investigate how to get new marker plaques put on all the posts - 44 sites and 140 posts!

In January, three large wooden cabinets were moved from the Museum to Shirehill store by Schofield Removals. They worked very hard to move the heavy cabinets and had to remove a door to get an enormous bird's egg cabinet out of the natural history store. Rattling was heard from the bottom of the cabinet during its removal - the base of the cabinet was actually two "secret" drawers.



Cabinets at Shirehill store

Mark Fanthorpe, who has been trained in cabinet making, managed to get the drawers open. Inside, we found one drawer full of large bird's eggs such as duck, goose and guillemot eggs. Luckily only a few were broken during the move. The other drawer had been nailed shut and contained letters and pamphlets from the 1840s which belonged to the owner of the cabinet, Mr William Tuke. A fascinating find! I look forward to examining the documents more closely once I remove the 175 years of dirt covering them.



Mark with the drawer of Bird's Eggs

The Museum Society received a grant to improve school loan boxes and we have been working on these over the winter. The 23 natural sciences loan boxes of birds, mammals, fossils and rocks now have new laminated labels and information sheets. The geology specimens are packed into new plastic loan boxes which are easier to carry. 12 boxes were loaned to schools or used by classes in the Museum since the last newsletter. This is great for access to collections and user figures.

However loans do generate collection management work. Did you know that each loan box needs to be checked for damage and that the contents may need repacking when it is returned? Or that the bird and mammal specimens are frozen before they return to storage? This prevents pests such as carpet beetle or moth larvae being introduced into the natural history store where a pest outbreak would be disastrous.

Loans box



Coppicing is a form of woodland management. An interactive on the natural history gallery was in need of improvement because the models of trees did not reflect the different stages of growth during a coppice cycle of fifteen years.

When trees are coppiced, they are cut down to stumps near to ground level. These coppice stools grow new tree stems. The trees grow in size for a number of years before they are harvested again. Tony Morton, of the Essex Wildlife Trust and Museum Society Support Committee, agreed to make new models.



Coppice woodland models

The detailed models of trees have taken months of work to complete and they are very realistic. Have a look at these amazing models in the interactive and learn about coppice woodlands next time you visit the Museum.

Sarah Kenyon

Human History Collections

Leah Mellors

I have welcomed a number of researchers and groups to the Museum and the Shirehill store over the past few months, to view objects in the human history collections.

In November, Polly Bence and Julie Adams from the British Museum, and Dr Ali Clarke from the Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology visited the Museum to see our two examples of coconut fibre armour from the Pacific island of Kiribati. This was part of a project to identify all examples of coconut fibre armour in museum collections in Britain. It transpires that Saffron Walden Museum has the earliest example they have found so far - a suit of armour collected in 1837 by W Luard. Our examples will feature in an upcoming publication about Kiribati armour (see illustration heading the next column)

Coconut fibre armour



I have also welcomed researchers to view our collections of phrenological heads and death masks: early ethnographic items from Australia, and items from our document archive relating to local MP Herbert Gardner.

Before Christmas, I gave tours of our Shirehill store to museum professionals from the Horniman Museum in London and Stevenage Museum. Both museums are looking to improve their own storage facilities and I was able to talk them through our store move process and what we learned from it. The Shirehill store was met with much appreciation, especially the way that we have saved space by hanging objects from the social history collection. I hope to make a return visit to both museums.

Along with my team of volunteers, I am pushing forward with the documentation of the social history collections, in particular the local history document archive. I now have five volunteers working solidly on this collection, cataloguing everything from local health reports to documents commemorating royal coronations and jubilees. My other volunteers continue with their work to document the 3D social history collection: to transcribe information from our accession registers, and to catalogue objects in the education collection. Their time and help is an invaluable resource.

Finally, I have started to redevelop the social history schools loans boxes, to streamline them, bring them up to date with the new school curriculum and make them look more professional. I have started by creating a new "Civilian Life in World War II" loan box, which focuses on four topics relating to life in Uttlesford during the war. Objects include a tin helmet: a shell dressing: ration books: a gas rattle, and photographs of American airmen stationed in Saffron Walden. I will also be working on a new "Local History of Saffron Walden Loans Box"

Leah Mellors

Article Abolition Reticule Leah Mellors

Whilst locating objects for our current exhibition, *Completing the Look: 300 Years of Fashion Accessories*, I came across this abolition reticule which immediately intrigued me. The reticule is a beautiful but very delicate object, made from unlined pale pink silk with a drawstring at the top. On one side, the image of a seated male slave with his two children has been painted in black. On the reverse, there is a poem entitled 'The Slaves' Address to British Ladies (See illustration overleaf)



Abolition reticule

The reticule was made in the 1820s by a female campaign group to raise funds and awareness for the anti-slavery movement. Although Britain officially ended its participation in the slave trade in 1807, slavery continued in the British Empire. However, in 1823, William Wilberforce formed the Anti-Slavery Society to campaign for the end of slavery in the colonies. Whilst women were allowed to join the Society, they could not form part of its leadership, so a group of women in West Bromwich formed their own group, the Female Society for Birmingham. Other groups formed across the country shortly after and, by 1831, there were 73 female organisations campaigning for the immediate and full abolition of slavery.

Many of these groups produced objects such as bags, jewellery, prints and pin cushions decorated with abolitionist emblems, images and text, which were sold or distributed as part of their campaigns. Silk bags and reticules like the one in our collection were filled with campaign pamphlets and newspaper cuttings and distributed to prominent people, including King George IV and Princess Victoria, as well as to other women's anti-slavery societies.

The reticule is very similar to others made by the Female Society for Birmingham in the collections of the Victoria & Albert Museum, the Library of the Religious Society of Friends, and the Daughters of the American Revolution Museum in Washington DC. However, I have yet to find another example matching the particular design of our reticule.

Sadly, the reticule is too fragile to be displayed in *Completing the Look: 300 Years of Fashion Accessories*. I am currently applying to charitable trusts and approaching local groups to raise the funds to pay for conservation work, to stabilise the object and prevent further deterioration. This conservation work will enable us to display the reticule in the future and make sure that this important part of Quaker history is not lost

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.

November 2016 Flint dagger

November's *Object of the Month* was a beautifully-worked flint dagger, found in 1863 by workmen digging a new road from Windmill Hill, to the north of Saffron Walden, to the new residence of William Murray Tuke. The date and significance of the flint dagger were not fully understood at the time it was discovered. However, the dagger has now been identified and dated by Hazel Martingell, a specialist in lithics.



Flint Dagger

The Windmill Hill dagger is around 4,000 - 4,500 years old. It dates from around the end of the Neolithic (New Stone Age) and beginning of the Bronze Age, about 2,500 - 2,000 BC. This was a time of important changes in society and technology. Britain had developed its own traditions of flint-working and also particular types of ritual monuments, of which Stonehenge is the best known. At this time new ideas, materials and objects were being introduced from the Continent, notably the use of metals (gold, copper and bronze) and distinctive Beaker pottery.

The Windmill Hill flint blade is pointed and had a sharp edge down both sides. We can imagine it fitted into a handle of wood, bone or antler. It is generally thought that these blades were not used as spears, though we cannot always be sure. Where flint blades have been excavated in burials, they have been found near the hands of the skeleton, as if they were held in the hand. The Windmill Hill dagger is currently the only flint dagger of this type known from north-west Essex but is one of several hundred such daggers found in Britain, with many more known from across western Europe. It appears that British ones like the Windmill Hill dagger relate to flint daggers made in northern Europe especially Scandinavia.

Carolyn Wingfield

December 2016/January 2017 Sweetmeat Mould

The *Object of the Month* for December and January was a mould for making small, pyramid-shaped confectionery called "Sweetmeats". It would once have stood on the kitchen table of a Jacobean or Stuart home in the 1600s. Simple earthenware moulds like this were made by potters or brick makers. The same sort of clay could be used for



Sweetmeat Mould

everyday kitchen wares (earthenware bowls and dishes) or for bricks. The maker of this mould inscribed his initials 'IW' on the side of the mould.

There is a long tradition in England and Europe of using moulds to make decorative sweets and cakes for special occasions such as religious festivals. 'Almond Breads' ('marzipan' or marzipan), gingerbreads and spiced biscuits were often made in moulds. Wooden moulds were popular in the late medieval period and continued to be used for some foods. Earthenware moulds would have withstood high temperatures so may have been used for sweetmeats that were baked such as small cakes and pastries. By the 1700s, delicate glass moulds were sometimes used for sweetmeats and all manner of dishes, containers and stands produced for displaying sweetmeats at the fashionable dinner table.

February 2017

February's *Object of the Month* was a dinosaur footprint. The footprint was made by a young Iguanodon dinosaur 145 to 100 million years ago during the early Cretaceous period. The cast of the footprint was fossilised in chalky limestone rock.

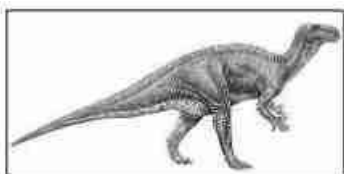


Iguanodon Footprint

You are looking at the underside of the three-toed footprint. It was purchased at a quarry near Swanage in Dorset during the twentieth century.

Dinosaur footprints can provide information about the type of dinosaur and the size, weight and speed of these extinct animals. This one was identified by a geologist as the footprint of a young Iguanodon, which were one of the most successful and widespread of the dinosaurs. Fossils have been found in Britain, Germany, Spain, Belgium and the United States of America. The name Iguanodon means iguana tooth: it is pronounced "ig -WHA-noh-don". Boulenger and van Beneden named the dinosaur in 1881.

An adult Iguanodon was up to ten metres long and weighed almost five tons. It is now thought that Iguanodon could walk on all fours or on two legs. The dinosaur had three toes, five fingers and large thumb spikes which may have been used to defend against predators. It had a horny beak and the teeth were chewing teeth so it ate plants.



Adult Iguanodon

Saffron Walden Museum has only five dinosaur specimens in the geology collection. They are this fossilised dinosaur footprint; a cast of a flying reptile fossil, a Pterosaur from Solnhofen in Germany; and three replicas in a school loan box. The replicas are of a tooth from a plant-eating dinosaur, the tooth of a meat-eating dinosaur and the footprint of a small carnivorous Theropod dinosaur which walked on two legs.

Fossils are evidence of ancient life or past environments. They have been preserved by complex natural processes. Fossils can be the remains of animals and plants that were once alive. Or they can be traces of events in the past, such as a dinosaur leaving a footprint, ripple marks on a beach or a burrow made by a worm. This footprint is a trace fossil of the past event of a dinosaur walking around in Dorset. It was preserved when the imprint left by the foot of an Iguanodon was quickly filled with lime rich mud from a lake or stream. The mud was buried deeper and deeper as more layers of sediment settled at the bottom of the lake. For millions of years the mud was compressed by the weight of more sediment laid down above it by water, wind or ice. Eventually the limy mud turned into limestone rock preserving a cast of the footprint on the underside of the layer of rock above. Fossils can be the fossilised remains of living things such as a bone, piece of wood, shell or seed. Once an animal or plant dies its remains need to be buried quickly. This is a rare event.

Carolyn Wingfield and Sarah Kenyon

New Museum email newsletter

The newsletter is sent out about every two months and delivers the latest news, events and exhibitions at the Museum straight to your email inbox. If you haven't already signed up to our new email newsletter, you can do so on the Museum's website www.saffronwaldenmuseum.org

Leah Mellors

Museum Outreach News Belt Up in Style! Half-term activities

Inspired by our new exhibition of fashion accessories *Completing the Look*, our half-term activities on 15th and 16th February explored how the well-dressed Anglo-Saxon or medieval person completed their "look" with a decorated belt. 174 children, plus accompanying adults, created their own belt to wear Saxon and medieval-style, with the long end of the belt hanging and finished with a decorative "strap end". Everyone enjoyed making up their own belt designs and as usual, there were some really colourful and creative ideas, two of which are shown here.



Thanks go to casual assistants Delia Delderfield and Amy Glover, and to volunteers Jane Evans, Jane Laing and Jeanette Fulcher for two very busy days in the gallery running the activities, and to our desk volunteers for coping so well with the great influx of visitors during half-term week.

We have a superb example of an Anglo-Saxon silver and gold strap-end from High Easter on loan to the Museum and on show in the treasure case. The image brings out the detail, including the animal head with round ears and eyes, incorporated into the design.



Anglo-Saxon Strap-End, High Easter

Carolyn Wingfield

Exhibitions

Completing the Look: 300 Years of Fashion Accessories

Our new special exhibition - *Completing the Look: 300 Years of Fashion Accessories* opened on Friday, 27th January with a private view for Museum Society Members and their guests. The exhibition features beautiful accessories from the Museum's collections, dating from as early as 1720, alongside loans from Southend Museum's service and local people.

The exhibition explores how fashion has been affected by social, political and cultural change over the past three centuries. Find out how the Victorians used gloves to show off their status; why people were scared of the first top hat; and how teenagers changed fashion forever. The exhibition is open until 30th July, 2017.

Victorian Shoes in the exhibition



Leah Mellors

From Wendy - Jo Atter

VOLUNTEERS

Recognition

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.

On 5th December 2016, International Volunteer Day, we hosted our first ever *Volunteers Recognition Event* when Tony Watson, Chairman of Saffron Walden Museum



Team Saffron Walden Museum at the Volunteers Recognition Event

Society Limited and Carolyn Wingfield, Curator, thanked the all for their dedication and commitment to Saffron Walden Museum.

We are extremely fortunate to have a team of loyal volunteers and, at the event, Councillor Sell, Deputy Chairman and Dawn French, Chief Executive of Uttlesford District Council presented *Long Voluntary Service Certificates* to ten of our volunteers, each who have worked with us consistently for between 10 and 41 years.

Warm welcome

We extend a warm welcome to our new volunteers, Ron and Lynne, who have completed their inductions and are now fully operational in their Welcome Desk roles.

Get well soon

Unfortunately over the last few months a number of Welcome Desk volunteers have, for various reasons, suffered ill health. We know that you will join us in wishing them all a speedy recovery.

Volunteering opportunities at the Museum

To keep the Museum open to the public and our programme of activities running, we need new recruits to our teams of Desk Volunteers and Learning & Activity Volunteers. If you are already a volunteer, or are unable to volunteer, don't stop reading yet - you might just know or meet someone who could be interested. Here are at-a-glance descriptions of the volunteering roles, and the staff to contact for more information or an informal chat.

Desk Volunteers

Our dedicated team of desk volunteers work a shift of between 2 and 3 hours on a regular basis, Tuesday-Friday and Sunday and Bank Holiday afternoons. Main duties are to welcome visitors, sell admission tickets and souvenirs, answer the telephone and relay enquiries to the appropriate member of staff. Contact: Wendy-Jo Atter, Museum Admin Officer 01799 510644. Watter@uttlesford.gov.uk

Learning & Activity Volunteers

For those who like working with families and children, an opportunity to help with preparing and running our popular holiday and half-term activities. Because this role involves direct contact with children, a DBS check (formerly known as a CRB check) is essential; this is arranged and paid for by Uttlesford District Council.

This role would particularly suit anyone with experience of teaching and helping out at schools or running clubs and activities with young people. Contact: Carolyn Wingfield, Curator 01799 510640 cwingfield@uttlesford.gov.uk

Collections Volunteers

We need volunteers to catalogue collections on computer. Accuracy in recording information and experience in using computers, especially Microsoft Excel, are necessary, but -depth knowledge of history or archaeology. There are also roles for people who are good with a digital camera or have good manual dexterity. Contact: Leah Mellors, Collections Officer (Human History) 01799 510645 lmellors@uttlesford.gov.uk

DIARY DATES

Activities for children up to 12 years old

**Drop in sessions, 11 am - 1 pm and 2 pm - 4 pm
Children come in free, but they MUST bring an adult
There is no charge for these activities but there is a discretionary donation box. Adults £2.50, concs. £1.25.



Complete your Look (Easter)

Wednesday, 5th and 12th April

Design and create your own accessories

5th April **Mad Hatters!

12th April **Brilliant Badges & Brooches

Easter Treasure Trail**

Every day from 3rd - 16th April

Take part in our Easter treasure trail around the Museum!

Museums at Night: 19th May

6 pm - 8 pm

Bring your torch & follow our night-time trail

Nature Explorers (Half-Term)**

31 st May and 1 st June

Nature Explorer craft activities and outdoor trail

And in case some grandparents are already looking at summer holiday dates -

Summer Holidays

Get hands on with history this summer with activities inspired by our collections. Drop in sessions 11 am - 1 pm and 2 pm - 4 pm. Children MUST bring an adult.

26th July - Seaside holidays

16th August - Stone Age day

23rd August - Shell creatures

Wendy-Jo Atter

Museum Society News

Talks and Events

Monday, 8th January

Place Names of Saffron Walden

Speaker: Malcolm White

Malcolm White began his talk by explaining that place names are necessary for ownership and direction, and a study of them becomes a study of the history of Saffron Walden.

The origins of the name of the town itself were then explained by Malcolm. It is believed that the name comes from the Old English *weala-denu* meaning "the valley of the Britons". By the 12th Century the town's name was spelt "Waldene". The appellation "Chipping" (meaning Market) was first documented in the 14th century and as saffron became so important to the town's economy, by the 16th century the town was known as Saffron Walden.

Malcolm was appointed Town Clerk in 1976 and, not long after, was asked to name a number of streets on what was then the new Fairburn estate being built in the south of the town. To help him in this task, he enlisted the help of a former Town Clerk, Cliff Stacy, who was one of Saffron Walden's best known local historians - his article "Saffron Walden: Derivation of Street Names" been of enormous assistance to Malcolm.

Other documents that have helped him with his research over the years are the 1758 map of the Manors of Saffron Walden prepared by John Eyre, a surveyor for the first Baron Braybrooke. The second document is the 1843 Tithe Award map kept in the Essex Record Office.



Saffron Walden map of 1758

More and more place names were needed as, over time, the town's population doubled. In 1752 the population was 10,000 while today the population is over 15,000. Street names in particular needed to be more imaginative as today there are over 240 streets in the town, many new estates and much rebuilding. Malcolm noted that there were five categories of place names: directional, personalities, topographical, field names and old roads and courtyards.

Directional names obviously include Ashdon Road and Radwinter Road, while West Road and South Road reflect the coming of the railway. Personality names include Goddards Way and Gibson Close. Allard Way was named after Geoffrey "Sammy" Allard, one of the most

decorated Battle of Britain pilots buried in Saffron Walden cemetery. Topographical names include Hill Street, Pleasant Valley and Common Hill.

Malcolm explained that as far as possible the Town Council preferred to use old field names as this helped to perpetuate the town's history, and also adds interest to new developments that are lacking in character. The history of old field names owes much to the research by Dorothy Monteith who identified a large number of field names extant in 1600. Some examples include Birdbush Avenue, Buckenhoe Road, Loompits Way, Lambert Cross and Swan Meadow.

A large number of former roads and courtyards no longer exist, even though in a few cases their name-plates survive, for example Middle Square and Sarah Place. Many of these were slum cottages. There was an extensive slum clearance programme that took place in the 1930s and after the second World War. A number of Rows existed for a wide variety of stallholders in the medieval marketplace of Saffron Walden that eventually became permanent as the stall holders acquired rights to the land. Butcher Row and Mercer Row remain, but the other Rows have disappeared. Malcolm's book entitles "The Place Names of Saffron Walden" provides an alphabetical list of place names and their origins.

Carol Law

Monday, 13th February
Essex Maps - the Good, the Bad & the Downright Ugly
Speaker: Peter Walker

Maps fascinate many people especially a "good" one. Peter Walker began by describing, to him, what made a "good" one. Was it accurate? i.e. did it have things on it that do exist and not have things that don't. Is it complete, constant and up-to-date? Is it aesthetically pleasing and clear? Does it have an (accurate) scale and orientation? Does it have symbols and a legend?



Blome 1673 – example of a "good" map

For different reasons not all maps meet these criteria, for example things that were expected to be there by the time of issue were, in the event, not, and things that were there at the time of issue changed very shortly afterwards. It was, he told us, finding an "obvious" error" on the route of the turnpike as it approached Littlebury from the south which began his serious interest in maps and mapmaking.



Cobbett 1832 - a 'downright ugly' example

Maps do not always tell you how to get to places, they sometimes show you simply where things/places are in relation to others. Christopher Saxton's 1576 map of Essex was one such. It was issued as part of a series of county maps of England and Wales and had some colour and several symbols, and showed and named Hundreds, principal towns and villages and watercourses and indicated woodland areas. A breakthrough in British mapping it was, however, not without errors - for example, Audley End and Newport are shown on the wrong side of the Cam whilst the Chelmer is drawn 14 degrees out on its approach to Chelmsford. This type of error is easier to explain when you consider the technique of the printing process which required the plate to be done in reverse. These maps were commissioned and paid for by the Tudor government which was getting worried about the possibility of a Spanish-led invasion.

John Norden's 1594 map in manuscript of Essex, was presented to the Earl of Essex and had the benefit of a grid of 2 mile squares, reference letters and a listing of Hundreds. However, it was mainly Saxton's map that John Speed used for his 1610 map which was richly coloured and decorated by a cartouche and the Arms of the Earls of Essex.

Later in the 17th century, John Ogilby produced many strip maps of principal roads and junctions for example, from Chelmsford to Saffron Walden and Bury St. Edmunds, and from Chelmsford to Maldon. These were the first maps with roads that the user could trust. In 1678, in conjunction with his son-in-law William Morgan, Ogilby issued a map 'exactly measured to 3" to the mile'. But what was 'a mile'? In 1693 Robert Morden had a scale of miles for his Essex map giving 'Great miles, Middle miles, Small miles'. The scale gradually stabilised over the next century, eventually settling down at around 1800 near the 'Middle mile' mark. Morden's maps were the first to show the prime meridian through London.

Then in 1725 John Warburton, a member of the College of Heralds, surveyed the counties of Essex, Hertfordshire and Middlesex which gave grid references and were ornamented by hundreds of coloured armorial shields.

The first issue of large maps did not sell well even to 'the Gentry' so a 2/3 size, sans shields, was published and sold better but the even smaller edition, which was less expensive, sold best. The map was used by many others (no copyright yet) as the basis for their maps for a large part of the 18th century until 1777 when Chapman and Andre got in on the act.

Their maps took cartography to a different level. Their map of Essex was the largest of the county so far and showed all roads and some big houses in the countryside with a scale of 2" to the mile, a gazette and was beautifully engraved using symbols and hatchings to indicate the rise and fall of valleys and higher ground. There is in the entrance hall of our Museum a copy of the Essex map showing the 'Littlebury anomaly', because the route of this stretch of the turnpike was not altered until 1811 and hatchings remained until the 1850s between the first and second editions of the Ordnance Survey maps when contour lines finally replaced them.

By 1800 the Government was once again getting worried over the threat of invasion from the Continent, this time by Napoleon. So the Ordnance Survey maps were commissioned, starting work in the south east; Essex was the first to be issued in 1805 on a scale of 1" to the mile. The design taken from Chapman and Andre with few symbols and those basic, no colour printing and no scale given. As these were largely for military purposes, military groups got training in their use but eventually after pressure they were made more 'friendly' for use by the general public.

In 1825 Charles Greenwood made a survey of Essex based on the first OS map but showed in addition turnpike roads and toll-bars. His later editions of this added the first railway lines to the satisfaction of Queen Victoria! The earliest to operate were coloured in black and later proposed ones in red. Some of the lines shown never did happen but continued for some time as features of the maps. An example of this is the red line showing the Romford to Shellhaven line on Charles Walker's maps in the mid 19th century. Other maps show the 'Cambridge Canal' which, I think many of us know, never happened.

Examples of what exists but is *not* shown are usually places connected with military security; locally for instance, Debden aerodrome was not shown as such until 1986 and, in Yorkshire, Fylingdales is off the map. Some maps are so unaesthetic that one wonders why they were produced. For instance, where calligraphy is so poor as to be almost illegible or having a yellow ground or simply having so much detail that the map is far too crowded and obscures important information.

Maps were not always made for military purposes. Some were very detailed estate maps, perhaps only two largesized ones drawn in manuscript to be hung on a wall. Others were very small and basic and of little use, but perhaps intended as first maps for young children. Others were commercial enterprises, some initially

funded by enough subscribers and later by entrepreneurs catering for a wider public; generally sales of around 400 could break the barrier between loss and some profit.

Nowadays there are some excellent reproductions for example of the Christopher Saxton map, and so one should be careful when buying if you are looking to purchase originals and pay the corresponding price.

Peter's talk was well illustrated and gave a good balance between pictures and interpretation. Peter also had copies of his book 'Printed Maps of Essex from 1576' (Essex Record Office) on sale at a discounted price and gave out information on where to follow up his talk: and where local map dealers can be found, plus the address of the website www.oldssexmaps.co.uk. Thank you very much, Peter.

Heather Salvidge

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 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.

<p>Museum Society e-mail address SaffronWaldenMS@gmail.com Museum Society web site www.swmuseumsoc.org.uk</p>
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Who to contact . . .

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