

In this Issue

- 1 Highlights and Happenings; From the Chairman
- 2 Curators Column; Carolyn Wingfield
- 2 Natural Sciences News: Sarah Kenyon
- 3 Natural Sciences: James Lumbard
- 4 Human History Collections: Jenny Oxley
- 5 Events : Jenny Oxley
- 6 Volunteer Voices Display: Jenny Oxley
- 7 Object of the Month
- 10 Learning and Outreach: Charlotte Pratt
- 11 Volunteer News: Wendy-Jo Atter
- 11 Join our Team!
- 12 Museum Society News
- 13 Membership
- 13 Reports on Talks and Events
- 17 Forthcoming Talks
- 17 Who to contact . . .



Current Exhibition - Take Away the Walls - Until 3rd November

Dates of future Events - see Noticeboard attached

Highlights and Happenings; From the Chairman

This edition of the Newsletter 'Museum matters' covers the period of the Society's year which begins from March. Next month on the 30th is the Annual General Meeting of the Society.

The Board has now appointed Alice Wilson as minute secretary. Keith Eden has replaced Paul Salvidge on the Museum Management Working Group (MMWG). Following the changes in Councillors at Uttlesford District Council we were pleased to hear that Barbara Light has been re-nominated as a Director of the Board. We look forward to meeting the new members of MMWG later in July.

The Development Committee is in the process of working with the Curator for the various aspects of the planning for the re-development of the museum funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund. The appointment of consultants will take place soon and further news of progress will be announced in due course.

Our winter series of talks has now come to an end. Vice-Chairman Paul Salvidge was unable to attend the final talk of the year in June so I take this opportunity express our thanks for all the hard work he has put in arranging a complete season of talks. These are all reported in detail in this and earlier editions of the Newsletter.

On the 24th May we had the members preview of the latest exhibition "Take away the walls" James Lumbard has produced not only an exhibition of interesting natural history but led an extension outside the museum involving children and other interested bodies to look at the wildlife in the museum grounds, which include both Moths and Bats. Well done.

Finally a further thank you for all the donations to our recent request for funds to acquire further treasure. We exceeded our target so we have now paid for the items we applied for and these will soon be on display in the treasure cabinet in the Great Hall. So do not forget "Wallace Great Bake Off" on the 9th August and the AGM on the 30th August. Look forward to meeting you all at one or both of these events.

Curators Column: Carolyn Wingfield

Thanks to the magnificent response to our public appeal, and generous grant-aid from the Art Fund, the Arts Council England / Victoria & Albert Museum Purchase Grant Fund and the Headley Trust – the Museum Society has been able to acquire three objects through the Treasure Act 1996. We also expect to complete the purchase of the fourth object – the silver coin of Harold II – quite soon (this item, being a single coin find, does not fall under the Treasure Act). The treasure finds are a medieval gold Reliquary Pendant in the form of a cross, a post-medieval gold Posy Ring and a Bronze Age gold and copper alloy penannular ring, as described in the last newsletter.

I now have to complete paperwork for the grant-aid claims and work out a timetable for displaying the objects in our secure case, and there will a press release as soon as we have a date for this, so watch the local papers!

Our National Lottery Heritage Fund project is now slowly gathering pace. We have published an invitation for consultants to quote for the in-depth studies we require, and expect to make appointments in September. Meanwhile staff and volunteers have been pooling ideas on how we might be able to 'develop our audience' in future. This means not only increasing the number of visitors to the Museum, but also broadening the range of visitors we attract. Jenny has been leading this, with a 'brainstorming session' for staff, and volunteers were invited to contribute to this at our 17 June Volunteers' Event. There will an opportunity for Museum Society members to add their suggestions at the beginning of the AGM on 30 August, so please do come with ideas on how we might encourage visits from different age groups (e.g. families with toddlers; young adults) or other audience-types (e.g. local residents; visitors to the area).

My news is that I have broken my left arm! Despite the pain, this is very interesting to a natural scientist. The mechanism of injury was a FOOSH (fall onto outstretched hand) on 3 June. I broke the distal ends of the radius bone, described as a Colles fracture, and the ulna bone - at the styloid process, which is the tip on the outer side of the bone. This is classed as a wrist fracture because the radius and ulna bones line up the metacarpal wrist bones to form the wrist joint. Natural sciences work ground to a halt at this point because I could not drive, write, lift items and could only type with one hand. My holiday to Mexico on 17 June was well timed. A huge thank you to staff and volunteers for their get well wishes and for giving me lifts to work, Addenbrookes hospital and other places. My arm is out of a cast now and the wrist is on the road to recovery.



What else has been happening? It is the survey season for special roadside verges. Survey forms were updated, printed and distributed to the volunteers who are busy surveying plants at verges across the district. Reports indicate it is a good year for pyramidal orchids and crested cow-wheat. There are lots of these orchids along the M11, south of Bishops Stortford down to Harlow, on the motorway verge on the east side. You can see crested cow-wheat outside High Wood at Langley Upper Green, between grid references TL450356-TL453358, on the verges on each side of the road.

Did you catch the exhibition about Volunteers at the Museum? This is Heather Douglas who has been beavering away since October 2017 updating storage locations on thousands of Modes records for objects that moved to Shirehill store or have been on display in exhibitions. Now we have moved on to standardising the format of locations for specimens in the Museum Natural History store. A big thank you to Heather for all her hard work



Natural Sciences: James Lumbard

Thank you

First of all, a big 'thank you' to my colleagues and enthusiastic volunteers who offered help and advice to prepare and install the current temporary exhibition Take Away the Walls. It was a daunting but exciting experience and I've learnt how not to do a lot of things when preparing an exhibition! Some personal highlights in the gallery include the red kite kindly loaned to us by Essex Field Club, and the Museum's own newly-prepared polecat specimen, to celebrate both animals' recolonisation of Essex more than a century after their extermination. There is also a fortnightly-changing display covering the full historical and modern diversity of butterflies in Uttlesford. Take Away the Walls runs until 3rd November so I hope you'll find the chance to pop in and have a look around.

I also need to thank those of you who offered your time to help make such a success out of Wildlife at Night on 17th May. RSPB Hope Farm and Saffron Walden Community Shed were particularly popular attraction, with the Shed kindly sharing their proceeds from selling bird boxes and bug houses to enthusiastic visitors (see picture). Essex Field Club led two-dozen visitors, including families and individuals, on a wildlife walk and recorded common newts, several species of bats and a range of moths at Swan Meadow, Bridge End Garden and in the Museum & Castle grounds.



Friday 31st May saw 34 keen visitors help plant up new areas in the Museum grounds using plants kindly donated by SWMS members and Museum volunteers (see picture). Three wooden planters now sit proudly along the tennis court boundary fence opposite the Museum building, and 4 sunflower beds are growing seeds first planted by visitors earlier in the year. Again, thanks are due to Saffron Walden Community Shed who kindly built and donated the planters, and to Dig It Community Allotment in Saffron Walden, whose members provided welcome expertise and tools on the day.



Natural Sciences Nasties – can you help?

The month of June saw another quarterly pest-monitoring exercise, with mixed results. The finding confirmed the need for a 'deep clean' of the Natural Sciences store at the Museum, which must be a priority to reduce dust levels and opportunities for museum pests to become established. This is no small task, and is an important chance to check the specimens themselves for signs of pest damage. Lucky volunteers will pamper the pelts and plumage of deer and seals, swans, ducks disguised as other ducks, and many more, all in an air-conditioned haven tucked away in the roof of Saffron Walden Museum.

Please contact James Lumbard or Sarah Kenyon on 01799 510641 to find out more. Volunteers should be comfortable working at height and in confined spaces.

- James Lumbard, Natural Sciences Officer.

Human History Collections: Jenny Oxley

Collections enquiries this quarter have again been coming in thick and fast, and cover a huge variety of topics from the Second World War, to Aboriginal & Hawaiian collections, myths and legends, the histories of local schools, police related items, witch bottles (from the Museum of London), St. John's Ambulance, the architecture of the Museum building, military uniforms, Bridge End Gardens, the Dix family's Cement Factory and cycle racing. Acquisitions to the human history collections which I organise (local & social history, world cultures, costume & textiles and decorative & fine art) have recently included relatively modern items such as commemoratives from the Saffron Walden College, petrol coupons from the 1973 OPEC oil crisis, and coach timetables. All useful items which will be recorded and preserved for future generations, providing a snapshot of life in Saffron Walden and the district as a whole. We've also received Victorian items, such as valentine cards, embroidery samplers and daguerreotype photographs. A recent donation of Victorian Ice Cream making equipment will appear as August's Object of the Month.

Our collections include 300 items (largely costume) related to China which have been donated to the Museum by several private collectors. It was lovely in June to welcome colleagues from Cambridge Chinese Centre who viewed a selection of these items on a tour of the Museum. They really enjoyed seeing the items and hadn't realised the wealth or variety of Chinese collections that we hold. We look forward to working with them in the future.

Gallery improvements continue with re-painting and tidying up sections of the local history gallery. The tapestries in the furniture gallery are due to be swapped over shortly, and we are imminently expecting the paintings and grandfather clock to return to the ceramics gallery (after the decorating work earlier this year). Behind the scenes, my time is usually consumed by processing collections and enquiries, compiling rotas, preparing the monthly E-News and regular social media updates, and updating the website. In June I facilitated a brainstorming session with staff on audience development. Work with the volunteers continues with cataloguing and digitising the photograph, document and art collections. Special thanks to Ian for finishing transcribing all the accession registers, which was a huge task, but very valuable in helping us improve how the collections are documented, so that we can respond to enquiries quicker and use the material more for exhibitions and events. He has now moved on to transcribing sections of the Museum Society minute books, again to aid with documenting the collections. We appreciate the ongoing help from all our volunteers.



Pictured are human history collections volunteers David, Jane and Hamish working on listing and checking the photograph and document collections at Shire Hill, which they do weekly on Mondays.

Events : Jenny Oxley

12th Century Live

Saturday 1st June saw the Museum host 12th Century Live! a group of 12th century themed historical re-enactors often called the Angevins and a local history fair, which was co-ordinated by Jenny. The 12th century theme was selected for its link to the castle remains. The re-enactors pitched their traditional tents and demonstrated aspects of domestic life in Norman times.

There were demonstrations of typical fashions, foods and crafts of the time. The highlight was definitely the demonstrations of the Ballista and archery. The re-enactors were great with the visitors and got everyone really inspired and involved. In the marquee we had a selection of 10 local history groups and societies representing the different areas of the Uttlesford district and Essex Museum Development also came along to promote their Snapping the Stiletto project.

Each organisation showcased their respective activities and publications, and in some cases were able to sign up new members. Visitors also enjoyed exploring the Museum and trying out the on-site food vans. Over 200 people attended on the day and we had some really lovely feedback from visitors.



Princess Bride Outdoor Screening



On Sunday 2nd June, Saffron Screen with organising support from Jenny hosted their first outdoor screening in the Museum and Castle grounds. The day was a great success with over 400 people turning out to see the film, and the Museum was open to greet this influx of visitors. The Princess Bride is a bit of a cult favourite, a much-loved adventure comedy, which was originally released in the 1980s. Local families enjoyed lunch from on-site food trucks before watching the film. Saffron Screen used the event to announce the winners of its inaugural Grand Prize Draw which raised almost £1000 towards the cinema's Outreach Programme, which supports Dementia and Autism-friendly screenings, subtitled and audio described films as well as Pop-up Saffron Screenings and free workshops for children. We hope to build on this relationship with Saffron Screen and run future events together. It was great to have an advert on the cinema screen for Wallace's Bake Off in August before the Princess Bride film in front of such a large family audience. A bumper weekend of over 600 visitors made all the planning and hard work really rewarding.

Volunteer Voices Display: Jenny Oxley

To celebrate National Volunteers Week in June: Jenny, Wendy-Jo and June compiled a display about the vital role which the volunteers play in the running of the Museum. The aim was to make the display fun and interactive for visitors too. There was an interactive activity putting together cogs, to show how the volunteers are crucial cogs in our organisation, enabling it to operate smoothly and efficiently. June recorded a talking tile to explain her role as a volunteer at the Museum which the visitors could press and listen to. Visitors could also apply to become one of our new volunteers and also record their feedback about being a volunteer at the Museum or for other organisations. There was also an activity which had all the museum's different volunteer roles and the visitors had to match them to the correct volunteer tasks. This really showed the broad range of tasks that our volunteers undertake from working on the collections, to running the Welcome desk, to assisting with the learning activities in the school holidays. The display complimented the Volunteer Tea Party organised by Wendy-Jo on Monday 17th June. (See the article by Wendy Jo later in this Newsletter , Ed).



Object of the Month

April 2019

Napoleonic Prisoner of War Objects

Chosen by: Jenny Oxley

April's Objects of the Month have been selected by Jenny Oxley, Collections Officer (Human History). She developed an interest in Napoleonic Prisoner of War items whilst working on the Norman Cross collections at Peterborough Museum in 2005.

During the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815) over 100,000 French prisoners of war (POWs) were held captive in Britain. Many remained captive for the whole duration of the conflict.

The existing land prisons on the South Coast and at Norman Cross (Peterborough) were insufficient to house them all, so extra land prisons were built. Decommissioned naval vessels known as "hulks" were also used, with over 50 in operation by the end of the conflict. Medical inspectors from the Transport Board visited and reported to Parliament on the state of the hulks and prisons, with contractors and staff reprimanded and in a handful of cases dismissed for providing substandard services.



The standard daily ration for prisoners was: "half a pound of bread and half a pound of beef supplemented with barley, onions and cabbage or turnips; twice a week the meat was replaced with herring and cod."

The luckiest of the POWs were probably those who were paroled officers. They were given a tiny allowance and had to live within the bounds of a designated parole town, but they were free to socialise with the local community. Many prisoners whiled away their days making craft items to sell or teaching the locals French, Latin, Drawing, Music, Dancing and Fencing.

On display in the Museum throughout April as Objects of the Month will be examples of craft items made by French POWs, including intricately carved bone models and examples of straw-plaiting and marquetry.

May 2019

Leopard Moth

Chosen by: Sarah Kenyon

The object chosen by Sarah Kenyon, Natural Sciences Officer, for May 2019 is a moth. This leopard moth, *Zeuzera pyrina*, was found in a house at Elsenham, Essex in July 2012. After it was identified it was given to the Museum.

Butterflies and moths were featured during May at Saffron Walden Museum. This beautiful black and white leopard moth was on display all month in the natural history gallery, where more information was provided about the species. In Curiosity Corner Peacock butterfly caterpillars were on display where their transformation into adult butterflies could be over the ensuing days. On 17th May as part of the Wildlife at Night evening, moth trapping with the Essex Field Club was on offer, with the opportunity to see the moths that live in the Museum grounds before they fly back into the wild.

Leopard moths are distinctive and easy to recognise.

Colour and markings: They have six black spots on the white furry thorax (at the top of picture one). The white wings are almost transparent and covered with black spots.



Size: A medium sized moth, the wing span ranges from 4.5 cm to 7.8 cm wide. Female moths are much larger than the males. Male wing spans range from 4.5 to 5.8 cm and female wing spans are from 6 to 7.8 cm.

These moths belong to the family Cossidae - the Leopard and Goat moths. Only three moth species from this family are found in the British Isles.

Adult leopard moths are nocturnal. They fly during the night and are attracted to lights. During the day they rest on tree trunks and fences. You can see these moths from the end of June to early August.

Leopard moths are common in woods, gardens, parks and orchards. They are found in England, as far north as Yorkshire, and in Wales.

Life Cycle

Adult leopard moths cannot feed. Male and female moths fly from late June to early August to find a mate. The female moth lays hundreds of eggs under the bark of a tree or shrub with her pointed ovipositor.

After ten days the larva that hatches from the egg tunnels into a stem or branch where it feeds on the pith of the wood for several years.

Larvae feed on the wood of a variety of deciduous trees and shrubs. These include apple, ash, beech, blackthorn, black currant, cherry, elm, hawthorn, honeysuckle, lilac, oak, pear, plum, privet, sallow, sycamore and willow. They can sometimes be a pest on fruit trees and can weaken trunks and branches of young trees.

The larva lives in its tree for two or three years. It feeds during the summer and is dormant in the winter.

In spring of the third year the caterpillar forms a pupa. It takes four weeks to transform into an adult moth which emerges from the tree through a hole at the end of its tunnel.

June 2019

Cabbage White Butterfly

Chosen by James Lombard



June's Object of the Month has been chosen by James Lombard, Natural Sciences Officer, and links with the current exhibition, Take Away the Walls, which he has curated.

Following on from last month's moth selected by Sarah, this month we have a 'cabbage white' butterfly. This is actually two closely related species – the Large White, (*Pieris brassicae*) and the Small White (*Pieris rapae*). Apart from the size difference, the large white has heavier black wing spots, and a dark black band at the front of its wings. Both lay their eggs on cabbages in gardens, allotments and farms, as it is the preferred food of their caterpillars. The large white takes the outer leaves, while the small white prefers the soft inner leaves. The adult (imago) of both species often feeds on nectar from buddleia flowers.

The image of the museum's object on display in June, shows a male and female of each species, a caterpillar, and a cabbage leaf with feeding damage. There is a cabbage white chrysalis to the left of the leaf, and, on

the right, some cocoons and adults of a parasitic wasp, *Cotesia glomerata*, which lays its eggs inside cabbage white caterpillars. After hatching, the wasp larvae feed on the caterpillar and eventually kill it, helping to control cabbage white numbers in a natural way. The adult wasp feeds on nectar.

Life cycle

These butterflies have two 'broods' per year, and three in a good year. In the spring, butterflies which survived the winter as a chrysalis emerge as adults in April and May. They lay eggs in May and June (spring brood), which hatch into caterpillars in June and July. The caterpillars feed and grow quickly, and shed their skin 4 times as they grow. After about a month, the caterpillar finds a sheltered spot to transform into a butterfly in a process called metamorphosis. The caterpillar spins a pad of silk against the surface of its shelter, and sheds its skin again to reveal a hard skin (chrysalis), which has a small hook to keep it attached to the silk.

Adults emerge from the chrysalis about two weeks later, in July and August. They then lay eggs which develop into caterpillars through September and form chrysalises into October. The caterpillars go through a very slow metamorphosis to survive the winter, and emerge as adults the following April and May to start the process again.

Like many insects, these butterflies have declined in number recently. Currently the large white and small white are not the focus of conservation efforts, but many other more specialist butterflies have declined severely or have gone extinct in Essex since 1900.

Visit the Take Away the Walls Exhibition until 3rd November at Saffron Walden Museum to discover the plants and animals to look out for in Uttlesford, including some new arrivals that haven't been seen for hundreds of years.

James Lumbard will be giving a talk to the Society about the themes of this Exhibition on September 9th at 8pm in the usual venue at St Mary's Church Hall.

July 2019

Arrowheads

Chosen by Carolyn Wingfield

July's Object of the Month has been chosen by Carolyn Wingfield, Curator. They are arrowheads found on the site of Stansted Park's hunting lodge by Framework Archaeology.

If you are heading off on holiday via Stansted Airport this summer, and leave your car in the Long Stay Car Park, spare a thought for the medieval and Tudor 'parkers' who once tended this area. They were responsible for maintaining the extensive deer park and its stock of fallow deer which provided recreational hunting for the late medieval and Tudor lords of the manor of Stansted. Before the Long term Car Park was created, nearly 20 years ago, archaeologists from Framework Archaeology excavated the site and discovered remains of successive hunting lodges, dating to the 15th and 16th centuries. Iron arrowheads and deer bones found on the site helped to identify the building as a hunting lodge, situated in the centre of the park. It provided accommodation for the parkers and other retainers through the year, and accommodation for aristocratic hunting parties, when the lord of the manor would entertain guests with a day's hunting followed by a feast. The important archives (records and finds) from Framework's excavations at the Long Term Car Park have just been deposited with Saffron Walden Museum. The vast majority of archaeological finds are fragments, but these two rusted arrowheads (with a modern 1p coin for scale) were among the more complete items of hunting equipment unearthed by the archaeologists.



(Saffron Walden Museum)

The arrowhead of typical triangular shape was widely used for hunting. The other arrow (it's blade partly missing) is of forked or crescent shape; complete examples are shown in the second image. Arrows of this type were probably used for hunting birds, as the shape of the arrowhead bunched the feathers and killed by impact, rather than cutting into and disfiguring the bird, an important consideration for roasting and displaying birds at table.

Not far from the Airport, you can find another relic of Stansted Deer Park in the historic St Mary's Church, to the east of Stansted Mountfichet. Here there is a notable painted effigy of Hester Salisbury, who died in 1614. She was daughter of Sir Thomas Middleton, lord of the manor in the early 17th century, and it is said that she was killed in Stansted Park by a stag.



(Historic UK

<https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofEngland/History-of-Arrowheads/>)

Learning and Outreach: Charlotte Pratt

The spring and summer terms at the Museum have seen a good take up of our Learning and Outreach services. Loan boxes continue to prove a popular choice for schools as a good way to enrich the curriculum in a variety of subjects.

Learning Services have also been utilised by local care homes for enrichment for residents. Our decades boxes have been used for reminiscence as part as a visit to the Museum from residents of a local care home. I have also been out to a care home near Bishops Stortford to deliver sessions there. I hope to continue to build on this area of our services and make more connections in the future.

July also saw my first work experience student spend a day experiencing working life at the Museum. It proved to be a very productive day with the student taking the lead on researching, designing and developing material for our next Curiosity Corner display on Wallace the Lion to celebrate his 200th birthday. His work will be up in Curiosity Corner in August ready for our upcoming event, Wallace's Great Big Birthday Bake-Off on August 9th.

Activities and Events

Over the last few months the Museum has held a very full program of events and activities. May was a particularly busy month with our May Day Celebration, Wildlife at Night and May half term culminating in two great events organised by Jenny Oxley.

Wildlife at Night built on our usual Museums at Night event. Rather than the usual spooky trail (which is difficult to achieve in the light evenings of May) we organised an evening focused on nature, inspired by our current exhibition "Take away the Walls". The event presented the opportunity to work with a number of community partners including RSPB Hope Farm, Community Shed, Essex Wildlife Trust and Essex Field Club. It was a great night with lots of activities including bat, moth and amphibian surveys, making seed bombs, plant stall and lots of information on how people can engage with nature. A big thanks to all who gave up their time to come along and help and or donated plants.



Following the nature theme May half term saw some challenging craft activities for our visitors including build a bird house and a bug hotel. Our young visitors rose to the challenge with some brilliant creations.

We also had the pleasure of planting our nature tubs and planting out the sunflowers that visitors planted during the Easter holidays. A big thanks to Saffron Walden Community Shed and Madingley Mulch for their donation of soil and the planters, as well as all those who donated plants. I am happy to report the pollinators tub is already buzzing with life!

Volunteer News: Wendy-Jo Atter

On 17 June Saffron Walden Museum hosted a Volunteers' Tea Party to mark the end of the UK wide week celebration of volunteering and thank our volunteers for the amazing work they do. The event, which was attended by representatives from the Saffron Walden Museum Society and Uttlesford District Council, also gave our volunteers a chance to meet each other and reflect on their experiences in the different areas of the Museum. The Museum has over 65 volunteers who fulfil a number of different roles including running the welcome desk; sorting and cataloguing collections; assisting with admin tasks and helping to run the popular learning and activity events during school holidays and half terms. Over 40 attendees viewed the Volunteer's Exhibition, took part in Audience Development focus group and Nature Studies exercises and also had the opportunity to follow the new 'Lion's Museum Trail'.



Warm Welcome

We extend a warm welcome to Christine Lelliott, Brenda Prior and Ann Sadaghiani who have joined our team of Welcome Desk volunteers.

Grateful thanks to:

- June Baker for her input to the Volunteer's Exhibition, the induction of our new recruits, supporting the Museums at Night event and all her help with the catering for the Volunteer's Tea Party
- Angela Jones for kindly serving the refreshments and clearing up after the Volunteer's Tea Party and manning the Welcome Desk on both the bank holidays in May
- Melanie Lopez-Welch who continues her work on the labelling and storage of shop stock
- Ron Lowe for his befriending duties to the other Welcome Desk Volunteers and, his help clearing up after the Volunteers Tea Party

We wish a speedy recovery to our Welcome Desk Volunteers who are currently recovering from operations or awaiting test results, including Pauline Lederer, Gillian Ram and Carol Wiseman.

Join our Team!

Do you want to gain valuable experience in a customer-facing role. Then why not apply to become one of our **Welcome Desk volunteers**.

We're also seeking volunteers to help us research and provide content for our **social media** accounts (Facebook, Twitter & Instagram).

To enquire about any of our volunteer roles **please ring 01799 510333 or email museum@uttlesford.gov.uk**

Keep Me Posted

For a Monthly Newsletter from the Museum with the latest news about Events you can sign up on this web page

https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKUTTLESFORD/subscriber/new?category_id=UKUTTLESFORD_C11



The July Newsletter contains these ideas;

At the Museum Shop

Wildlife Packs....

Linked to our new wildlife themed exhibition, Take Away the Walls our shop is stocking **Insect Explorer Kits** (only £4.99) and **RHS Garden Bugs sticker books** (60 re-usable stickers). Perfect for getting outside and exploring nature this Summer.



Henry Winstanley & the Eddystone Lighthouse

HENRY WINSTANLEY



Artist, Inventor and Lighthouse-builder
1644 - 1703

Alison Barnes

Henry Winstanley was born in 1644 in Saffron Walden and later lived in Littlebury. He was famous for his sense of humour and ingenuity and he was a regular inventor of new gadgets. His house was reputedly filled with amusing inventions he had created. While Clerk of Works at Audley End House he engraved 24 prints of the house and grounds. He is best remembered for his design and building of the Eddystone lighthouse.



As a souvenir of your visit to the Museum you can purchase an illustrated booklet about Winstanley for £2.00.

We are also selling marble lighthouses which are made using the finest marble from the foothills of the Himalayan mountains. Their highly polished and smooth finish makes them an attractive and decorative gift idea for the home. They are on sale in the shop for £5.95.

Museum Society News

Books for the Museum Society Please

The Museum Society has a Second-hand Bookshelf in the museum lobby where donated books are sold to raise funds for the Society. We would be very grateful for any books, Fiction or Non-Fiction, that you can donate to us for sale from the Bookshelf.

Please leave donated books at the Museum Reception Desk.

Membership

Thank you to the majority of members who paid their subscriptions promptly. If your payment is still outstanding please pay without delay to save the time and expense of additional reminders.

In recent years, membership cards have been sent out in March with the annual invitation to renew membership. 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 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!

Do you have a friend or neighbour who might be interested in joining the Society? Talks start again on September 9th.

Christine Sharpe

Reports on Talks and Events

April 8th 2019

An Essex Diary – wildlife images throughout the year

Speaker : Liz Huxley

By way of introducing her talk, Liz told us that she grew up in rural Essex and had a life-long interest in wildlife, especially birds. This developed into a great interest in wildlife photography having been given a camera. Self-taught she acknowledged early difficulties, but persevered. Having worked for the Essex Wildlife Trust for several years she left to become a deliverer of guided walks and talks. This talk takes us through the wildlife year in Essex illustrated by her images . I won't list all of them, just highlights to give you the flavour.

January took in birds often seen in the back garden e.g. blue tits and goldfinches and some of the winter visitors to Essex's many estuaries; dark bellied Brent geese and pintails in particular. February gave us some mammals, a red squirrel on Mersea Island where the greys have been eradicated, foxes, badgers and a barn owl, another crepuscular hunter. By the end of the month many native birds are now in their best breeding plumage. March, she said, stirs many things into life; early flowers such as primroses; adders warm up on sunny days; hares pair up and early summer breeders e.g. chaffs arrive. Swallows arrive in April along with nightingales – Fingringhoe Wick is especially good for these – and yellow wagtails. Bluebells carpet some woodlands. By later May some small birds have stopped singing and concentrate on rearing their young, but cuckoos, fewer now, take over with their song and such turtle doves which now make it here arrive to their favoured habitats. Now that some of these birds have become so rare Liz's photographs were especially helpful as so few of us can see them on a regular basis without a 'pilgrimage' to a known site.



In June and July the the emphasis in the wildlife calendar switches away from birds and turns to rabbits and baby bunnies everywhere and to common seals giving birth at Hamford Water and to red poppies in fields or on verges. Juvenile birds are about, learning to fly and to feed for themselves. Other bird activity, breeding for instance, tends to decrease further except for those with second or third broods. There is even less song and the moult starts but insects become more prevalent. There was a gorgeous photo of a silver washed fritillary, an Essex speciality, and more of dragonflies and damselflies.



There are still a few swifts about in August though others have already left making way for the return of the earliest winter residents. Blacktailed godwits and grey plovers start to come back, often still in their summer plumage. Toads move away from their birth ponds. In September the fruiting season goes up a gear with blackberries and more grass and other seeds. Flycatchers, spotted or pied, depart as do many other birds and in October swallows gather on wires as they prepare for the journey to Africa. Rarities turn up e.g. red-backed shrikes or hoopoes either blown off course by autumn gales and unsure of their route or kicked out of the family nest by parents perhaps buzzards or red kites. Thaxted

has become a hot spot for these. As vegetation dies down, kingfishers are easier to see – that flash of electric blue – as some of these youngsters head for our coast.

Late autumn sees a few hedgehogs about into November; here Liz emphasised the importance of 'hedgehog highways' as one way of helping to keep up their numbers. She showed us some good shots of a variety of fungi and of the wonderful starling murmurations. Rooks and jackdaws if in great enough numbers, will do the same, she said and illustrated her point. December gave us a picture of sanderlings, black eyes, bill and legs, working the shore lines; estuaries, The Naze and Southend are good spots to see these. She finished with shots of two iconic birds; the 'art deco' waxwing and a Christmas robin, all fluffed up against the cold. So there you have it, a calendar of what to expect in Essex the year round all beautifully illustrated and explained. To know more I suggest you visit www.lizhuxley.co.uk.

Heather Salvidge

13th May 2019

The Woman who Saved the Children - the story of Eglantyne Jebb

Speaker: Clare Mulley

In 2019 Save the Children Fund marks its centenary. Clare Mulley's interest in Eglantyne Jebb, however, is rather more recent deriving from the time when she, Clare, was working for the Save the Children Fund. There, thanks to Eglantyne's diaries, she became familiar with her scratchy black writing by looking through her recorded thoughts. Then one day she found her typewriter and decided that, when she, Clare, went on her first maternity leave she would devote some time to investigating Eglantyne who seemed to be “the woman who broke all the rules”.

Born on 25th August 1876, Eglantyne grew up in Shropshire, a member of a pleasantly well-off family, her father Arthur, a barrister and her mother 'Tye' (from 'Eglantyne') the founder of the “Home Arts and Industries Association”. She was the fourth of six children but she and her younger brother, Gamul, and her younger sister Dorothy formed a 'covey of partridges' and went around together as a threesome. Older siblings were Emily, Louisa and Dick. Their father thought it most important that his children grew up with a strong sense of moral responsibility and of course their mother, an energetic woman, founded her society so that as they grew up there was much conversation and intellectual discussion on a wide variety of ideas and about 'what should be done'.

In 1895 Eglantyne went up to Lady Margaret Hall at Oxford to read history and there she involved herself in many aspects of university life such as sports and the Oxford Women's Debating Society. No degree of course because this was before women were awarded them. Another difficulty was the tremendous emotional blow of her beloved brother, Gamul, dying suddenly from pneumonia, aged just 16 and still at school. But she did want a worthwhile career and so enrolled in Stockwell Teacher Training College, known for being progressive rather than glamorous and recruiting its students from backgrounds far more deprived than Eglantyne's. It was not the happiest time of her life as she was rather shunned by the others partly because among other things she had not actually experienced 'going to school'. Nor was her time teaching in a church school in Marlborough where she discovered that she did not 'like children' and called them 'little wretches' and other uncomplimentary names but she did see that they were the next generation.

She lasted only a little while at this school but affected by ill health she resigned and returned home to recuperate, moving with her mother to Cambridge where Dorothy was about to start a degree. Here, partly through her Uncle Dick's connections, she encountered many of the academics and their families, the Darwins, Keynes, Trevelyan etc. falling very much in love with a young don and enjoying herself socially. This led to another crushing emotional blow when the don proposed to a great friend of Eglantyne's and was accepted by her, leaving her distraught and very low. Then Florence Keynes, a notable lady from that notable family, took Eglantyne under her wing and provided her with social work projects over a period of years, some involving studies on poverty and its effects. During this time Florence's daughter, Margaret, became her 'dearest and best



friend' and they shared an intense relationship but she, too, married a don in 1913 leaving Eglantyne with a breakdown. Then later in the year at the suggestion of Charlie Buxton, now Dorothy's husband, she went to Macedonia, where there was the on-going Macedonian war, to oversee the distribution of the Macedonian Relief fund, for which she had been fund-raising. The appalling conditions she encountered and witnessed affected her for the rest of her life hearing for the first time peoples said to be "without human feelings" She saw the thousands of starving, sick and helpless people, adults and children and recognised that "although aid is great it is short-term and a long-term solution is needed". Back in England where WWI had broken out in 1914, she was not able to do all she wanted as her health gave way again and in 1915 she was diagnosed with a thyroid disorder. As part of the war effort the Allies imposed sanctions on enemy armies by means of an economic supplies blockade. By 1915 there were already shortages of food, medicines and fuel and this also now badly affected civilian populations. At the end of the war, the Allies continued the blockade. Eglantyne was horrified by this deliberate punishment of children who were dying from starvation.

Then she and sister Dorothy hatched the idea of a distinct relief fund for the starving children of Europe. Eglantyne arranged the printing of leaflets showing the picture of a starving 2-year-old Austrian child and in advance of a planned meeting, distributed them in Trafalgar Square where she was arrested as being in breach of the Defence of The Realm Act 1914 as she had not had permission to do so. At the trial she conducted her own defence eloquently but was found guilty. She was, however, only fined the minimum of £5:00. This she regarded as a victory especially when the prosecution counsel, Sir Archibald Bodkin, presented her with a £5:00 note for the fine. She accepted saying she would use it as an early donation to the Save the Children Fund. The story of the trial and her eloquence and the £5:00 made front page news, all of it sympathetic. A few days later in May 1919, she and Dorothy held their meeting in a room in the Royal Albert Hall. At first sections of the public in the overcrowded room appeared to be antagonistic and armed with rotten vegetables but when Eglantyne began her passionate speech the mood changed, people put their tomatoes away and pulled out their purses to donate to the S.C.F. and subsequently more donations poured in.

Working with the Society of Friends, she bought a herd of cows in Switzerland and moved them to Austrian farmers who provided a good supply of cheap milk for the famished children, any profits went to the S.C.F. Thus was the S.C.F. born and moved into offices in Golden Square, London – all furniture was second-hand to save money. Eglantyne was a talented fund-raiser, using the Press, advertisements, speaking engagements and her network of contacts and friends – and The Friends. By the autumn of 1921 they were running feeding programmes in Russia alone for 300,000 children. S.C.F. had now become a life's passion for Eglantyne. Her best effort came when she wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury who did not reply so she wrote to the Pope who granted her an audience in Rome. It lasted for two hours and he immediately donated £25,000 and promised to repeat the appeal to the world-wide Catholic community. This prompted the Archbishop to reconsider his response and so the Church of England came on board as did the Jewish Community.

In 1920 she launched the Save the Children Fund International Union as she wanted a "powerful organisation for child saving" and 40 countries affiliated to it. In 1923 Eglantyne took the revised version of her British Children's Charter to a meeting of the Union for approval. Many revisions followed but enough remained for Eglantyne to support what we now know as "The Declaration of the Rights of The Child". In 1924 this was signed by a host of dignitaries including Eglantyne and adopted by the League of Nations! After this, workaholic that she had become, she continued with appeals, fund-raising drives, and general support for desperate children of the world. Once again her health failed her and she died in December 1928 and was buried in Geneva. She is commemorated by a special chandelier in the L.M.H. Chapel and, of course, the S.C.F.

Clare's fascinating illustrated talk, was very detailed – this is only a sketch. Her book "The Woman Who Saved The Children" fills in all the gaps and provides a full account of the background, friendships, passions, breakdowns and achievements of a remarkable woman.

Heather Salvidge

10th June 2019

The Georgian Papers

Speaker: Professor Arthur Burns, K.C.L.; F.R.S.H.

The Royal Family papers are kept at in the Round Tower at Windsor Castle in the Royal Library and a very modern internal archive. Launched on 1st April 2015 by Her Majesty the Queen, the Georgian Papers programme is a project to make the historic manuscripts relating to the Georgian Monarchy more widely available to the public by digitizing them! The Georgian Papers section of the Royal Archive comprises 425,000

items and were at the start of the project stored, uncatalogued, in cardboard boxes, unlabelled except for the few saying “miscellaneous”.

All the pages are to be digitized, even the blank ones as these too, can provide information as to whose were the watermarks and who used them. Many documents proved to need careful conservation which took time. Some other problems encountered were marginalia that needed deciphering from their codes. “Skeleton” cataloguing could not be used because, until fully done, the information would not be of use to someone using the search engine process as for which keywords are essential. The computer could just about “read” George III's writing but not George I's which was in an old-fashioned Germanic script. Sometimes dates were difficult to sequence because of changes to the calendar. People's names change over time throughout the period covered by the archive; “Mr. B” could eventually end up as “Lord X”. What was a place called in Germany when it differed from the spelling in English and was it, indeed, still in Germany? Technologists were needed to help capture the most difficult parts of the text.



GEORGIAN PAPERS ONLINE

(Visit the website at <https://gpp.rct.uk/> to explore the catalogue of the Georgian Papers held in the Royal Archives and the Royal Library at Windsor Castle.)

Because of these challenges, the approach to publishing had to be different and all areas had to be covered simultaneously. Thus scholars who were already using the website could report back on their own findings whether the subject was food, childhood or the American Revolution from the American perspective. For not all the papers relevant to the Georgian part of the archive were held at Windsor; the programme had partners in the project elsewhere, some in America, for instance the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, where American scholars were doing their research. On the whole, Professor Burns said, researchers using the Georgian Papers programme would approach it with a specific theme or question in mind that they wished to follow up. The same applied to script writers or film directors. The historians working on the programme couldn't do this; they were dealing with “just a bunch of stuff” and would look to see what themes or questions came out of it.

Papers from all the Georges are held, fewest of George I and most of the collection were in a sorry state until rescued. They include papers not only from monarchs but queens and other family members. Non-royal letters are there too, e.g. passionate letters from Nelson to Lady Hamilton which also made derogatory comments about the Prince Regent – acquired to keep them from the public eye. Professor Burns had an illustration of a coloured 'cake' diagram showing the percentage devoted to various topics, early Georges, Queens Charlotte and Caroline, household, courtiers and so on. Another 'stack' diagram showed the relative amounts devoted to subjects such as music, theatre, travel, politics, art, agriculture and things military. Although George III has most written about him, because he reigned for 60 years, less is known about him per year than any other. Much though has been written about him: the years between 1750 and 1780 were particularly productive on the subject of George III, his policies usually on the theme of liberty vs. monarchy and of course, his madness which appeared to change the country's perception of him. Now there is the thinking that he should be considered 'an enlightened Prince' and a polymath.

The draft of his abdication speech, complete with his own crossings-out and alterations give insights into his feelings and personal struggles. He wrote essays on various topics. He did not have a secretary but his writings in 1775 and later showed he had memorised troop deployments and the name of every French ship. Indeed, he had his own “back channel” from the front e.g. Rear Admiral Hood wrote telling him what went wrong with Chesapeake Bay when the French naval fleet siding with the American rebels, defeated the English fleet. He was an autodidact and a wide range of subjects were of interest to him reading the output of many writers, essayists and critics. He had an interest in science, had his own scientific equipment and had had a memorandum about the Transit of Venus written for him. He also kept note on more mundane things such as monies and the household and although he travelled no further than Worcester he had maps so “knew his kingdom”.

During his reign the way in which politics had worked no longer did. The archive in the Royal Library offers some explanations. Letters between George III and his ministers on policy are most revealing not least for the knowledge that the King not only wrote the address of the property where he was writing – usually in London –

but the date and the time. A runner would take it to the minister who would be bound to reply immediately and so the King's understanding of a policy would be settled by the interchange.

Family affairs and his illnesses also figure with doctors' accounts of symptoms, treatments and case notes. The King's illnesses affected all the family members most especially the youngest Princess, Amelia. She felt unable to talk about her own serious illness or seek much sympathy in the light of the seriousness of the King's illness and thus suffered more than necessary and died young.

The digital age has meant that bits of the archive now housed elsewhere, in America for instance, can be digitally reassembled. Recently volunteers have been asked to have a go at transcribing some documents and a group of retirees in North Carolina have accepted the challenge and are thoroughly enjoying it.

We sincerely thank Professor Burns for his fascinating and enlightening talk on the complexity of the task and for giving us insights into what can come to light as, from around the world, various researchers delve into the Georgian Papers.

Heather Salvidge

Forthcoming Talks

9 September Taking away the Walls. Speaker; James Lumbard Saffron Walden Museum

14 October Church Graffiti. Speaker; Anthea Hawdon

11 November The Battle of Rorke's Drift. Speaker; Paul Fairhurst

13 January The Essex Regiment during World War One. Speaker; Peter Layzell

Distribution List

If you have an email address and would like the Society to communicate with you by email, please send an email to SaffronWaldenMS@gmail.com and we will add you to the distribution list. 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.

Who to contact ...

Museum Society

Donations/legacies: Peter Walker 01799 521868

Membership: Christine Sharpe 01799 527546

Newsletter: Tony Morton 01799 523489

Talks/Visits: Heather Salvidge 01279 814153

Museum

Carolyn Wingfield, Curator (cwingfield@uttlesford.gov.uk)

Wendy-Jo Atter, Museum Admin Officer (watter@uttlesford.gov.uk)

Sarah Kenyon, Natural Sciences (skenyon@uttlesford.gov.uk)

Charlotte Pratt, Education and Outreach Officer (cpratt@uttlesford.gov.uk)

James Lumbard, Natural Sciences (jlumbard@uttlesford.gov.uk)

Jenny Oxley, Human History Collections (joxley@uttlesford.gov.uk)

Stefan Shambrook, Security & Premises Officer (sshambrook@uttlesford.gov.uk)

Telephone numbers:

Museum 01799 510333

Shirehill 01799 510631

Saffron Walden Museum Society Limited

Museum Street

Saffron Walden, CB10 1BN

Telephone: 01799 510333

Company Registration no: 6469141 Charity no: 1123209



Museum Society e-mail address

SaffronWaldenMS@gmail.com

Museum Society web site

www.swmuseumsoc.org.uk