



Museum Matters

Newsletter of Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd

Summer 2021 Issue 54

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Highlights and Happenings; From the Chairman

We have recently heard that a Memorial service for Mary Knight will be held at St. Marys Church on Saturday 9th October at 2.30. I hope that all those of you who knew Mary will be able to attend. We understand that refreshments will be served in the Parish Room after the service.

At long last the Museum is open for visitors. Thank you to Carolyn and her staff, and all the volunteers who have worked for a long time to make this possible. Director's meetings continue to be held on Zoom as we feel we should retain social distancing for the time being. July meetings of the Development Committee and the Board have been held by Zoom, but we hope that it will be possible for development meetings to find a way to social distance in the next few months.

You may also wish to put in your diary the date of the Annual General Meeting – Friday 22nd October at 6.30.pm. I hope that we may be able to hold this in the Museum this but it will be dependant on our unwelcome friend "Covid". Further details will be sent to you in due course.

The Castle was opened on the 18th June and of course it rained!! The access from Common Hill is also open and will assist in the future development of both the Castle and the Museum. The Castle is now open when the museum is open and there is no need to book to view! We thank the Council officers who have made this possible during the difficult months of various lockdowns.

The Development is making progress in the next stage of plans for the future of the Museum. A full report of the completion of the consultation process and our next steps will be made at the AGM in October.

The Zoom talks have continued successfully thanks to both Paul Salvidge and Richard Priestley. You will find full details in this newsletter. The Board are to consider if the zoom talks should continue during part of the winter sessions of talks.

Tony Watson

Curators Column; Open for Business!

The Museum re-opened on Thursday 20 May, and at time of writing in early August we have welcomed over 550 visitors into the building and engaged with over 800 users in total since 1 April ('users' includes people using our outreach services and events, such as our loans boxes or our August holidays activities outside, or research enquiries by email, as well as visitors). It has cheered us all to see familiar faces and new visitors back in the galleries.

At present the Museum is open Thursdays – Saturdays 10 – 5 and Sunday (and Bank Holiday) afternoons 2-5 and there is usually plenty of capacity for 'walk-up' visitors; it is no longer necessary to book in advance. We hope to open on Tuesday and Wednesdays as well eventually, subject to recruiting and training sufficient new Welcome Desk volunteers to fill remaining gaps in the shifts. So if you are interested in making a contribution to the Museum as a volunteer, or know of someone who might be willing to help, please contact Wendy-Jo Atter watter@uttlesford.gov.uk



Fete de la Musique in full swing

Museum Development Project

Returning to something like pre-Covid 'normal' operations has brought home how much the lack of appropriately designed and equipped space impacts on our work, now that the galleries are cleared for visitors again. On days when we are still closed, the Great Hall gallery is usually pressed into service with tables and layout space for all manner of collections and learning work, whether it is Charlotte and her team of volunteers assembling the popular 'activity packs' or curatorial staff undertaking work on collections which requires more space than our small, dark offices and stores can provide. This only adds impetus to work on the Museum Development Plans, and I am grateful to the Museum Development Committee for their work with staff as we continue to thrash out the 'nitty gritty' of a realistic development proposal and budget. We hope to take forward an outline proposal to the National Lottery Heritage Fund in the early autumn for their reactions. Meanwhile we are benefiting from the advice of Historic England about how development on a scheduled monument site should be approached (the whole of the Castle and Museum grounds constitute the historic castle bailey, which is protected by law). We have an outline plan for the next several years of development planning, grant applications and fund-raising, and an exciting, if challenging opportunity ahead.

Medieval Walden and the Castle

The keep of Walden Castle was opened to the public on 18 June by the Chairman of Uttlesford District Council, Councillor Arthur Coote, with representatives from stakeholder organisations in attendance and enduring the rain. This marks the culmination of a long project to conserve the historic ruins of the keep, believed to have been built around 1140 by Geoffrey II de Mandeville, Earl of Essex. By happy coincidence, Saffron Walden's Heritage Development Group, in which the Museum participates, released a new free leaflet, "Medieval Walden in the summer" ; you can pick up copies from the Museum or Tourist Information Centre. A short film by Creative Walden to accompany the leaflet completes this project, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. To view the film on U-tube, visit <https://www.visitsaffronwalden.gov.uk/explore-saffron-walden/battle-ditches/> and scroll to the foot of the page to find the U-Tube link.



Museum staff are now opening and closing the Castle keep, so you can take a look inside at any time between 10am and 5pm Tuesdays to Saturdays, and 2 to 5pm on Sundays. The Castle and grass area around it are also available for hire, for public events or private functions of a suitable nature. We have already welcomed a party from one local primary school who hired the space for their Year 6 leavers' party at the end of term. For Castle hire enquiries, please contact me cwingfield@uttlesford.gov.uk.

Carolyn Wingfield

Natural Sciences: Sarah Kenyon

We're back at the Museum in our natural environment and open to visitors! It is lovely to see volunteers and staff again. People are excited to visit the museum and we have welcomed back schools and researchers. It was wonderful to put an actual Object of the Month on display for people to see in May. It was the shed skin of a Grass Snake, *Natrix helvetica*, which was found at Wimbish Green. Because the Museum did not re-open until 20 May the skin stayed on display throughout June. The survey season for Special Roadside Verges is well underway. I would like to thank the team of volunteer surveyors for their hard work on this project. Each year we visit the verges in Spring and Autumn to make sure they have been cut properly and check posts. We also aim to carry out ecological surveys at half of the sites in the district. Last year surveys were suspended due to Covid 19 and it is nice to get back out into the countryside.

At Debden Road in Newport I found the key plant Wild Liquorice doing well and a beautiful Pyramidal Orchid amongst the chalk grassland flowers. Wild Liquorice is food for the rare Liquorice Piercer Moth, *Grapholita pallifrontana*, and research is underway at Little Chesterford Special Verge to find the pupa of the moth and where the pupae develop. It might be in the seed pods of the plant or in the soil nearby.



For those who are unfamiliar with the project, Uttlesford is very lucky to have 46 of the Special Roadside Verges in Essex. They are the remnants of chalk grassland meadows that once covered this area and are important for conserving wildflowers, including rare Crested Cow-wheat, Lesser Calamint and Sulphur Clover plants, and other native species like Cowslip. These verges are marked with wooden posts that bear white plaques. They receive specific management because mowing can only take place at certain times of year when the key plant species are not flowering. The Natural Sciences Officers at the Museum



coordinate the project in Uttlesford district; in partnership with Essex County Council, Essex Highways, Essex Wildlife Trust and the dedicated verge volunteers.

Collections Officer, Human History : Jenny Oxley

With the museum now back open to the public the collections enquiries are increasing again and artefacts are again being brought in for consideration for identification or to be donated.

Touring Loan

In a previous edition of this newsletter I detailed about the Wampum shell belts and beads from our world cultures collection being out on loan to Sea City in Southampton for exhibition, they returned briefly to the museum during lockdown and then went out on loan again to The Box in Plymouth and now to the Guildhall in London, all for a nationwide Mayflower 400 commemorative programme including the exhibition, Wampum: Stories from the Shells of Native America, in association with Wampanoag partners in the US.

Wampum is an indigenous material derived from whelk and quahog shells which were harvested along the eastern shores of North America and used to produce small white and purple beads strung or woven into collars, bands, and belts. Historically, wampum strands and strings were used for condolence or adornment. Wampum belts were woven with designs that recorded historic alliances and agreements among Indigenous and European nations during the colonial period, so they have a fascinating history. In our collections we hold a Great Lakes area glass beaded back ornament (sized to fit a child), a couple of wampum belts and a couple of the bead strings.

As part of their project they have secured funding from the Arts Council to commission a new wampum belt to be made in the US. The loan request is partly the result of us hosting academic researchers from the On the Wampum trail project last year.



Snapping the Stiletto Project : LGBTQ+ Archive

<https://www.snappingthestiletto.co.uk/queer-reflections>

This new online archive of LGBTQ+ relevant objects from Saffron Walden Museum and Southend Museums explores sexuality, gender, and identity, delving into the collections to highlight objects that have connections to LGBTQ+ histories. In doing so we have identified a range of items that demonstrate that non-binary gender identity, queer relationships, and fluidity in its many forms are represented in our museum collections.

We cannot define or label people or movements retrospectively, if queer histories are not identified and recorded at the time an object is collected that connection is at risk of being silenced. This project seeks to revisit areas of our collections where stories may have previously been overlooked or unexplored in order to hear from people living in Essex today. We have identified objects with different degrees of connections to LGBTQ+ history in order to begin a discussion.

We want you to submit your reactions and reflections to these objects, and research other objects in our collections. Help us collect your stories and document your experiences in order to preserve them for the future and celebrate them in the present. Is one of these objects significant to you and your experience? Do you have a story connected to it?

Get involved:

- React to the objects by sending in comments for us to upload on the website
- Share your stories and experiences of LGBTQ+ Essex
- Research relevant objects from our collections
- We will be adding new objects as we research them so don't forget to check back.



In June we started the process of recruiting an artist in residence to work with us on the Snapping the Stiletto project over the Summer. Watch this space for more information very shortly.

CV Walden : Community Archive

We are living through a pandemic which has changed every aspect of the world as we know it. The Covid-19 outbreak has propelled us into history books yet to be written as our lives have been reshaped beyond anything we could have imagined.

There is a great deal that we can do to help future generations to understand the impact of Covid-19 on communities such as ours. You can play your own valuable part in contributing to awareness of the sociological, psychological and economic impact of this disease. Saffron Walden Museum, in conjunction with Saffron Walden Tourist Information Centre is encouraging local people to submit their own experiences of this unprecedented crisis in the form of written articles (including diaries or poetry), photographs, art, music or film. Submissions will be curated by Jenny Oxley, the Museum's Collections Officer (Human History), and will in time form part of an online archive and possibly a physical or on-line exhibition in due course.

If you are part of an organisation, club, society or charity, consider asking all of your members and clients to take part; there is no deadline for submissions as it is recognised that people might wish to observe in their chosen media the development and eventual resolution of the crisis. If you are a teacher or a parent or guardian teaching at home, consider encouraging children to express their thoughts and feelings in whatever way sparks their imaginations.

Submissions should be sent to museum@uttlesford.gov.uk with 'CV Walden' as the subject. Please note that although digital submissions are preferred, non-digital submissions will be accepted at a later date, once the threat of infection is over.

If you want to keep up to date with day-to-day activities at the Museum, you can find out more information by following us on social media – we're on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, and/ or sign up for the museum's monthly e-news (there is a link to sign up from the museum's website).

Object of the Month

April 2021

Barkcloth

Chosen by Jenny Oxley

April's Object of the Month has been chosen by Jenny Oxley, Collections Officer (Human History) and is not strictly one object but a collection, in this case, items made from barkcloth, which form part of the museum's world cultures collections.

The museum holds around 80 barkcloth items, originating from all around the world, but largely from the Pacific region. Over the last year the museum has been involved in an international project: "A Living Tradition: Expanding engagement with Pacific barkcloth" being led by Glasgow University, which has provided us a great opportunity to shed more light on the cultural traditions surrounding their production, design and use.

Barkcloth is made from the inner bark of paper mulberry, breadfruit or banyan trees, which is soaked and stretched, then naturally dyed and hand-painted, printed or stencilled, to create often highly decorative barkcloths (sometimes referred to as Tapa). It is believed there are over 90 different pattern variations in existence. The barkcloths are used for utilitarian items as well as for ceremonial purposes.



In addition to large textile rolls and flat sections of barkcloth, the museum also holds clothing made from barkcloth. Notable examples include a barkcloth poncho believed to have originated from Samoa, as well as a lace-bark dress and matching bonnet from Jamaica, which were donated to the museum in 1833 by the Marchioness Cornwallis.

May 2021

Grass Snake Skin

Chosen by Sarah Kenyon

Our 'Object of the Month' for May is the shed skin of a grass snake, *Natrix helvetica*, that was found at Wimbish Green, Essex in July 2001. It was chosen by Sarah Kenyon, one of the Natural Sciences Officers at the Museum.



Cast skin of a grass snake, SAFWM : 2001.199 © Saffron Walden Museum

Snakes are reptiles and the grass snake is Britain's longest snake, measuring 90 to 150cm in length. They are grey to green in colour, with a striking yellow and black collar around the neck, a pale belly and black markings along the length of the body. Grass snakes are found in England and Wales in wetland areas, grassland, farmland, woodland and gardens with ponds. You may spot one from April to October, when they go into hibernation until March. Don't be scared if you do see one, because this snake is harmless. One summer I saw a grass snake swim across a pond at the Gardens of Easton Lodge in Little Easton. They are often found near water because they eat amphibians (frogs, toads and newts), fish and small mammals or birds.

Life Cycle

Grass snakes are Britain's only egg-laying snake. Females lay up to 40 eggs in June or July in rotting vegetation, like garden compost heaps, in which the heat acts as an incubator. The eggs hatch into tiny versions of the adults in the late summer months. To grow in size a snake will shed its skin in a process called moulting. Male grass snakes shed their skin twice a year. Females shed once a year before laying their eggs. The Museum's snake skin is 125cm long. Grass snakes live for 15 to 25 years. In the UK they are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), so it is illegal to harm or sell them.



Grass Snake near Morfa Nefyn, Gwynedd, Wales© Copyright John S Turner and licensed for reuse under Creative Commons Licence from www.geograph.org.uk

June 2021

Humpback whale photographs taken by Barry Kaufmann-Wright in New Zealand, in 2013 Chosen by James Lumbard

June's Objects of the Month are a selection of the 72,000 photographs taken by wildlife enthusiast Barry Kauffman-Wright throughout his life, selected by James Lumbard, one of our Natural History Officers.

Barry grew up in Buckinghamshire, but his first job was at Jersey Zoo, working under renowned naturalist and conservationist Gerald Durrell. Returning to the mainland, he joined Essex Police and was soon posted to Thaxted, where he took on duties as Wildlife Crime Officer for Uttlesford and Wildlife Liaison Coordinator for Essex. His photographs from all over the world are a modern treasure in the Museum's collection, which also includes two slide projectors which he used when giving talks – up to 250 times a year (that's 5 per week)!, and they featured in a recent talk given by James for Epping Forest District Festival of Culture. Barry's wife Pat very kindly donated his photographs and equipment following his death in 2016.



Image : ©Barry-Kaufmann Wright/Saffron Walden Museum

This photo is one of a set showing the sequence of a humpback whale, *Megaptera novaeangliae*, breaching then disappearing beneath the waves off the coast of New Zealand.

Humpback whales live in oceans all over the world, except the far north of the Arctic Ocean and around Antarctica in the Southern Ocean, where the sea is covered in ice. Whales are mammals, so sea ice stops them coming to the surface to breathe air. They are grouped into four major populations in the north Pacific Ocean, Atlantic Ocean, Southern Ocean and Indian Ocean. They usually migrate between summer and winter ranges, but there are year-round groups around Britain and Norway, and in the Arabian Sea between India and east Africa. – They can grow up to 16 metres long.

Humpbacks are one of the largest whale species. Females are slightly larger than males, usually up to 16m (50ft) long. They can weigh 30 tonnes – the same as 2½ double-decker buses. This picture shows the size of a humpback whale compared to a human swimming next to it, and its long pectoral fins.

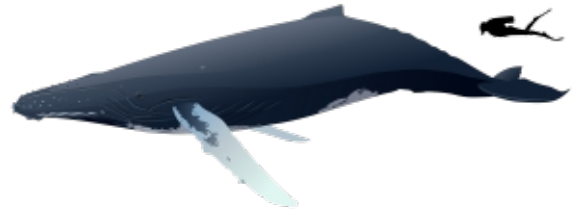


Image: Jjw, CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons

- They have 'big wings' -

The scientific name of the humpback whale, *Megaptera novaeangliae*, means 'big wing of New England'. Their 'big wings' are their giant pectoral fins – one female had fins that were 6m (20ft) long. The 'New England' part comes from where humpback whales were first discovered by European whalers, off the coast of New England in the far north-east of the USA.

- Each animal's tail is unique -



Image: Terry Howard CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons



Image : ©Barry-Kaufmann Wright/Saffron Walden Museum

A whale's tail is called a fluke, and has a wavy pattern along the rear edge. Like our fingerprints, this wavy pattern is unique to each whale and is an easy way to identify animals in a group.

Compare this Wikimedia image to Barry Kaufmann-Wright's photograph of a humpback's fluke, above right.

- They use nets to catch fish -

Humpbacks migrate between summer and winter ranges and only eat for 6 months of the year, in the cooler waters of their summer range. Hunting and eating for 22 hours a day means they can build up enough fat reserves to survive their winter breeding season without eating.

Some populations of humpbacks have learned to feed in groups using the 'bubble net' technique and use vocal calls to work together. The whales swim in circles below a school of fish, blowing bubbles from their blowholes to create a 'net' that the fish won't swim through. When one whale gives a feeding call, all the whales swim upwards inside the net with their mouths open to catch the fish.



A humpback whale using the bubble net technique on its own. Image: Christin Khan, NOAA/NEFSC, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.



Baleen plates and bristles in the mouth of a young gray whale. Image: Marc Webber/USFWS, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

- They sieve their food

Humpbacks are one of a group of whale species called baleen whales, which have bony, comb-like plates inside their mouths. With a mouth full of water and food animals, baleen whales partly close their mouths, and push water out through the baleen plates using their tongue. The baleen lets the water through but keeps in food such as fish and krill, which the whale then swallows.

Whale ear bone, probably from North Pacific right whale (*Eubalaena japonica*)

The North Pacific right whale is a baleen whale like the humpback.



All Images © Saffron Walden Museum

This bone is the tympanic bulla and may have come from a North Pacific right whale. It's a hollow shape but made of heavy, dense bone which helps sound resonate in the whale's middle ear, inside the head. In life, it would have been attached to the petrosal bone, which has snapped off.

Smaller bones called the hammer, anvil and stirrup would sit inside the hollow space, and actually transmit the sound from the outer ear to the inner ear, just like in humans.

The North Pacific Right Whale got its name because it is a large whale (up to 18m long but weighing 80 tons) with plenty of valuable blubber, it moved slowly, and would float after it was killed. It was the 'right' whale to go for because it was easy to catch and made lots of money for the whalers.

More than 15,000 were killed by whalers in the 19th and 20th centuries. Today, estimates say there are fewer than 400 North Pacific Right Whales left, split between an eastern and a western population, making them the smallest known population of all whale species. As a whole, they are listed as Endangered on the IUCN red list, while the eastern population is Critically Endangered, with less than 40 animals.

Use this link to listen to a song about the dangers of whaling, based on the songwriter's own experiences in Australia in the 1950s – www.swmuseumlearning.com/general-5



Image: John Durban (NOAA), Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

July 2021

Gold Bracelets

Chosen by Carolyn Wingfield

July's Objects of the Month have been chosen by Carolyn Wingfield, Curator



This pair of solid gold bracelets, found in North-west Essex are nearly 3,000 years old. They date from the late Bronze Age, around 900 – 750 AD and seem to have been deliberately buried on their own. The Museum purchased them through the Treasure Act thanks to the generous support of the Arts Council England / V&A

Purchase Grant Fund, Art Fund, the Beecroft Bequest and two local donors and they are now on public display in the museum.

Two members of Creative Walden's Writers' Room are pictured modelling the Bronze Age bling!!

Credits

ACE / V&A Purchase Grant Fund: - www.vam.ac.uk/purchasegrantfund

Art Fund: Twitter and Instagram - @artfund - Facebook - [facebook.com/artfunduk](https://www.facebook.com/artfunduk)

Website Link to Art Fund - <https://www.artfund.org>

Learning at Saffron Walden Museum: Charlotte Pratt

The limitations imposed by the pandemic have required Learning and outreach services to operate differently. This forced change has been very positive and opened new ways of working which we will continue to use in the future. One of these new ways of working has been to offer virtual work experience briefs to pupils. This new virtual format has meant we have been able to offer more placements and offer placements to people further afield. So far this year we have worked with 5 work experience pupils all of whom have produced an online learning session. The quality of the work received had been fantastic, so good in fact that some of the sessions will be used on the learning site.

One of the pupils has kindly agreed to write an article about her experience completing the work experience which you can read below.

From Bronwyn

For a week in June I had the wonderful chance to do virtual work experience with Saffron Walden Museum, learning about key artefact-handling skills and getting the opportunity to create online learning resources for primary school children. I was excited to do a placement at the museum to get experience of what working in the heritage sector is like, as I am hoping to work in this sector in the future, and the activities guided me through learning how to handle and pack museum objects, plan an educational session for a specific audience, and create it in a way that would be effective and fulfil learning outcomes from the national curriculum.



I chose to research the Vikings and their rule of England for my project, which is a period I find really interesting because of the vast cultural impact on Britain that Vikings had during this time, and I especially enjoyed finding out about Old Norse religion and the way that Viking religious symbols were often represented in jewellery, such as learning that pendants in the shape of Thor's hammer Mjölner were popular since they were believed to protect the wearer.

It was also very exciting to be able to learn about the objects displayed at Saffron Walden Museum that came from the Viking period, and I enjoyed the challenge of thinking about how I could design an educational session focussed around the museum objects in a way that would be accessible and interesting for primary school children. I found the project very useful for thinking about how history and heritage can fit into an educational setting. I also loved being able to do independent research on a topic of my choice and produce a complete resource based around fascinating local examples of the material culture of the period I was interested in.

Next Exhibition

New special exhibition "Fossilisation: a slice of the Anthropocene" runs **Sat 18 September 2021 – Sun 20 March 2022**. Featuring original bronzes by sculptor Kabir Hussain, who has previously exhibited in the Sainsbury Centre in Norwich, and has completed various artist residencies across London and the East of England. His work for this exhibition draws on fossilisation and preservation, as well as the processes of discovery and fossil reconstruction, to explore what traces of modern society might remain in the archaeological and geological records hundreds or thousands of years from now. Accompanied by objects from across the Museum's collection of geology, natural history, social history and world cultures.



This is a selling exhibition: Kabir's original bronzes will be available for purchase during the exhibition period.

The Museum is sad to announce that, due to concerns over Covid-19 and the limited space available in relevant parts of the Museum, there will be no Private View for this exhibition launch. SWMS members will, of course, benefit from free entry to the exhibition and the rest of the Museum as usual, and may wish to visit the exhibition on its opening weekend.

Volunteer News: Wendy-Jo Atter

Service of thanksgiving for Mary Knight



*Mary Knight pictured with her Museum
long service certificate*

**Saturday 9th October at 2.30 PM
at St Marys Church , Saffron Walden**

A celebration of her life and all her incredible energy and achievements, as well as a memorial, and launching the charity being set up in her name The Mary Knight Foundation for Budding Gardeners which is being established with support from Bridge End Gardens to support young people wishing to learn about, study or practice horticulture and gardening but with small local grants.

Museum Society News

Membership

Members' subscriptions

Thank you to all who paid their subscriptions promptly.

If you have yet to pay and would like to pay on-line, please contact Christine by phone 01799 527546 or, better still, by email, - s.christinesharpe@hotmail.co.uk -- for the Society bank details.

Cheques made out to Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd are not a problem, we can even cope with cash payments but these should preferably be sent to the Museum marked Society membership. Despite many problems caused by Covid we can still put money into our bank account.

If you know of someone who would like to join the Society, application forms may be downloaded from our website www.swmuseumsoc.org.uk. Paper copies are available at the Museum or from the Treasurer

Reports on Talks and Events

'Latin Didn't Kill Me – a wander round Pompeii'.

Speaker : Richard Priestly.

10th May 2021, via Zoom

Richard introduced his talk by reciting a saying, well known in its day from an added comment in Latin text books, of “Latin is a language as dull as dull can be, First it killed the Romans, and now it's killing me”. It didn't of course nor did his visits to the ruined town, but now methods of teaching Latin have changed and the new Cambridge Course is based on knowledge from recovered records kept by a family who lived in Pompeii and whose *pater familias* was a wealthy lawyer. The records survived the eruption of Vesuvius; he and his family did not.

Pompeii was situated in the Bay of Naples, south-east of Vesuvius and 140 miles away from Rome. The nearby town of Herculaneum, a coastal resort, was to the south of Vesuvius. Originally Pompeii comprised five little settlements, founded in 8th BC by the Oscan people, then came Etruscans, Greeks, Samnites and, late first century BC, the Romans when Latin started to be spoken rather than Oscan. Today Pompeii's ruins lie inland from the sea, then it was a coastal town, right up to the water's edge, where our 'wander' started, at the Seagate where moorings were attached to the sea wall.

The Seagate itself had both a pedestrian gate and a cart gate, and its road led towards the Forum, the most important part of the town. Here was the business centre, the Basilica, the courts, important temples e.g. to Jupiter, Apollo and the temple to the city gods, the *Lares*. In the pedestrian precinct was the *macellum* or meat market, the *Eumachia* Guildhall, the vegetable stalls, the weights and measures tables, the town offices – and the latrines. Richard put up a picture of a reconstruction of the temple of Apollo showing its layout; the front area was covered but open as this was always where the altar was – outside the enclosed part of the temple. In Pompeii, there were steps down to the underneath of the Temple of Jupiter which led to the town's treasury. The town officials had allotted tasks according to their ranks and were elected annually. Pompeii's constitution was the same as Rome's. To keep out the sun the Forum had a wide roof all the way round giving partial shade. The latrines were kept clean by the flow of water engineered to go underneath the stools and you kept your backside clean by using leaves or rags.

There was a long shopping street with smaller alleys off it leading to houses. Because there was a lot of horse-drawn traffic, delivering etc. , there was a lot of horse dung so the kerbs were high and there were “stepping stones” for pedestrians to cross the road, tailored to fit the gullies needed either side for standard width cart's wheels. Thus the dung could be washed away. The kerbsides were fitted with tethering holes where the horses and donkeys could be secured during deliveries. The 'Banksy's' of the time wrote graffiti everywhere on many different subjects and acted by night. There were too, the *thermopopulae*, the hot food takeaways scattered throughout the town and very much used.

Water management was important; much of Pompeii was on a steep slope and heavy rain could cause flooding lower down so arrangements had been made to divert it and channel it into the River Sarno. That was one way of getting the water out of the town; to get it in, a channel and aqueduct was built to bring it in from the hills, to the *Castellum Aquae* - and 12 further water towers supplied it to where 'ordinary' people lived; the rich made their own arrangements.

All dwellings had a *Lararium*, the area in a Roman house where the *Lares*, the gods that protected the household, were placed. Cemeteries were always outside the town's walls. The rich had large and splendid tombs with detailed descriptions and dedications; ordinary people's were much plainer and smaller. Richard had a picture of one grand tomb, that of Neratium Nero, a baker, standing for office, "*candidatus*" i.e. clad in a plain white toga. Beside him were pictured his wife holding a stylus and wax tablet showing her to be a woman of learning, his shop with grindstones for the flour (which would be worked by either slaves or donkeys) and an oven.

One house, The House of Faun, was massive. It stretched for ages and had not one, but two, internal gardens, the usual atrium and the pool under the roof opening and a personal *Lararium*. Another very large house was fronted by two shops. There would be entertainments; in the small theatre late Greek comedy and music was popular

The amphitheatre had a floor covered in sand to soak up the blood of wounded victims. Watching the variety of gladiators with their various weapons and defences, men would sit down at the front and women and slaves at the back, up at the top. The baths were very popular with separate facilities for men and women. The various standard bath rooms were well decorated with mosaics, there was underfloor heating where needed and the corrugated roof dealt with the condensation. There would be slaves there to scrape the male bathers, using oil and a strigil. For men of particular tastes, there were the brothels – often with helpful pictures on the walls.

This was the picture of Roman town life that Richard 'painted' for us as we wandered round it. Busy, populous and very well thought out and organised at all levels for its inhabitants – idyllic for some and 'getting by' for others and some important and wealthy and others tradesmen and women with a useful income. So when did it all go wrong?

In August 79AD, in the middle of the day Vesuvius exploded sending a pillar of ash, smoke, gas and rock rubble high into the atmosphere and it went on and on, affecting Herculaneum and Pompeii. Then came the totally deadly pyroclastic flows of lava, streaming inexorably down the volcano's sides, smothering, covering and burning every thing and every one in its path. Overnight the wind changed to blow away from Herculaneum towards Pompeii where it fetched up disastrously early next morning, pyroclastic flows leaving 11,000 dead but with the majority of the population getting out. The two towns lay buried under the blanket supplied by Vesuvius until the C19th when archaeologists started to excavate. Now we are familiar with the pictures of people and animals fixed in time where they lay or fell when the pyroclastic flows got to them and, as the excavations continue, so we see more and you can visit it and wander round and see for yourself.

Thank you, Richard, for your pictures, details and explanations of 'the wander'. The errors in this write-up are all mine.

Heather Salvidge.

William Tompkins and the Landscapes of Audley End -

Speaker – Dr. Peter Moore, Curator of Collections and Interiors for English Heritage at Audley End and Wrest Park

A Zoom talk hosted by Richard Priestly

19 April 2021 -

In 1763 Sir John Griffin Whitwell inherited the Audley End estate from his aunt, Elizabeth Griffin, Countess of Portsmouth. A condition of his inheritance was that he changed his surname to Griffin, so he did and subsequently became Sir John Griffin Griffin. Like all grand houses, various owners made alterations to structures, room sizes, purposes and décor and Sir John and those who followed him were no exceptions. Some of these adaptations were further changed when the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works took charge of the premises.

On his inheritance, Sir John started to make his collection of paintings and other works of art. Some were bought, including Henry Winstanley's 'General Prospect of the Royal Palace of Audley End 1688', and others of his landscapes, and some were commissioned and among those were the landscapes painted by William Tompkins.

He also like many in his position, commissioned 'Capability' Brown to lay out the grounds of Audley End, and Robert Adam to work on some aspects of the house – and to design the delightful bridge over the River Cam.

As with other gentlemen in his social milieu, Sir John had a London House where he spent 'the Season' mingling with other people from similar backgrounds and wealth. One of the things that 'one did' if you had an estate or a grand house, was to have it painted by a recommended landscape artist. At these social gatherings Sir John could have discussed the topic when he would have had the opportunity to learn from others whom they recommended and why - and thus would have come across the name of William Tompkins (c1730 – 1792). Tompkins lived and worked in Queen Anne Street in London and patronised the up-market picture framers at 10, New Burlington Street. He would attend the social gatherings and thereby get the necessary introductions to people looking for his services. In 1768 he debuted in the Society of Artist's Exhibition, showing a country seat, Bolderwood Lodge, with landscapes and spent the next 20 years or so doing much the same for other patrons.

He was around 60 when he painted his first two landscapes of Audley End. There were some aspects of the estate paintings that were “fashionable” at the time. Often there would be pairs of paintings depicting 'morning' and 'evening' of roughly the same subject. Sheep with shepherds and a sheep dog were frequently seen and, after a Stubbs' painting was shown of a gentleman driving a phaeton with a lady passenger, so were a variety of carriages. Employees shown in the pictures would be dressed well.

The Tompkins' Audley End landscapes show, among other views 'Audley End from the south-east looking towards Ring Hill', the 'Tea House in the Elysian Garden' & 'Audley End House from the south-west' with, in front of it, a very young cedar tree which was part of the Capability Brown landscape design.

See “Audley End from the South West, William Tomkins (c.1732–1792), English Heritage, Audley End House “ on this Link <https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/audley-end-from-the-south-west-4243> From the Historic England Archive.

There is, too, one of Sir John in a carriage with a lady passenger passing along the road, showing the house in the background to the east. There are well-dressed employees on the right hand side.

As a group they are thoroughly enjoyable paintings and we gained much from Dr. Moore's explanations and descriptions but if you plan to visit with the main purpose of seeing 'The Tompkins Landscapes' do make sure that you ask if they are currently on display and where – before “Lockdown” they were in the Tompkins Gallery ' but things change.

Heather Salvidge

**THE SPY WHO LOVED – Talk by Clare Mulley
about her book of this title – via Zoom, hosted by Richard Priestly
14 June 2021**

This book is about the complicated life and lovers of the Polish-born, part Jewish, lapsed Roman Catholic, Countess Krystyna Skarbek who became known as Christine Granville, the name I shall use for this resumé. Born in 1908, hers was an intricate upbringing, comprising much complicated detail, as indeed did the rest of her life, especially during the war years 1939 -1945 when her name changed and she managed to 'lose' seven years from her age. She also had to use many false names during her career as a secret agent. She was married twice and divorced once after a short marriage , remarrying in 1938 a top Polish diplomat, some 20 years her senior. She was very attractive, audacious, incredibly brave, inventive, an excellent skier and an astonishingly effective secret agent who saved the lives of many of her male colleagues. She also had many lovers and it was the last of these who murdered her in London in 1952.

I'll pass over her earlier life and pick it up in the summer of 1939 when Christine's second husband, the diplomat Jerzy Gizycki, was given a posting to Africa and they took a boat to Cape Town for the overland drive to Kenya. They got no further than Johannesburg when, on 1st September, Hitler invaded Poland and on the 3rd, Britain declared war followed by the Soviet invasion of the west of Poland. They went straight back to Cape Town and eventually found a ship bound for Southampton. It was while they were on board that Warsaw fell to Hitler's army and the lives of many Polish troops were lost in the struggle. Jerzy travelled on to France to try and find a role in the Polish Government in exile in Paris. Christine stayed in Britain but determined to do her bit for her country, presented herself to MI6.

The MI6 records show that 'a flaming Polish patriot expert skier and great adventuress' submitted a plan to ski into Poland from Hungary to take British propaganda to the Poles there and to bring out intelligence on the Nazi Occupation. Through connections she had made in her earlier life, Christine was interviewed and 'taken on' by the secret service and given the soubriquet of Madame Marchand. Sent to Budapest in Hungary just before Christmas 1939 she was given a small flat as a base to work from. In Budapest she also re-met someone from her childhood and days in the resort Zakopane, Andrzej Kowerski, now a dashing Lieutenant in the Polish resistance smuggling men and officers out of Poland from an internment camp; he was also missing part of a leg below the knee from an accident. The day after they re-met, they became lovers and Christine now sometimes helped his work.

One ski trip she had made on her own mission was with Jan Maruszewski who was escorting a 'VIP' into Poland during the most vicious winter in years but survived the night in a rough shelter crossing into Poland at Zakopane, the winter resort where she had spent time before and after her first marriage. Laden with her propaganda, she caught a train to Warsaw and by some trickery managed to get her rucksack past the armed guard.

Christine was subsequently paired up with Wladimir Ledochowski - who turned out to be a comrade of Andrzej's - who had a mission to take papers into Poland. Andrzej drove them and their equipment to the lower slopes of the mountains. While they were waiting in a deserted railway station the local police found them and led them away. By a bridge, Wladimir slipped an envelope containing some of Christine's compromising papers into the water below and this infuriated the guards and they then cross-questioned the pair. All their possessions were laid out including the various currencies they had and Christine's forged travel documents. Still waiting for the Gestapo, one of the guards held up Christine's necklace of flint glass that glittered like diamonds. When Wladimir saw it a short struggle ensued and shouting 'My, diamonds, my diamonds' Christine snatched it and broke it scattering the stones and distracting the guards while Wladimir grabbed the torch and then Christine. He then towed her across the field, over the railway line and into the wood where Christine injured her leg but two days later they made it over the Hungarian border and on to Budapest to report the failure of their mission. In her report Christine managed to fudge the issue of some of the money that Wladimir had had so as to soften the blow. Wladimir became another lover.

The British Minister in Hungary was Sir Owen O'Malley where he had been posted before hostilities had broken out. His 18-year old daughter, Kate, took her part in her father's information service ; both of them became devoted fans of Christine. Andrzej and Christine eventually moved in together and was often party to his secret operations. News came that British were being held in Warsaw so Christine asked the British for money to get them out. But after a delay she decided to get them out herself. Eventually she managed to get two of the pilots out and got Sir Owen to drive them to Belgrade. She had managed to smuggle microfilm and papers out which gave details of, for instance, up-to-date information on new gases and plans for an ammunition factory. When questioned by the Gestapo or other officers she had cover stories but became emotionally and physically exhausted and ill. Then one morning at 4 A.M. in January '41 the Gestapo military police called; she put on a dressing gown and Andrzej his leg. Christine concocted a subterfuge and managed to flush papers down the lavatory and Andrzej by switching his code book very cleverly from pocket to jacket was not discovered. They were both, however, brutally interrogated for 48 hours. Christine was ill before this started but used it to start coughing and retching and biting her tongue till it bled - symptoms of TB. The terrified military summoned a doctor who after an X-ray and examination declared "tuberculosis". They then let her go and, assuming Andrzej was also contagious, released him as well to the flat with many conditions. The Opel car he had hidden in the back garden together with a store of fuel was the one that had belonged to a German Officer and which Andrzej had used earlier to escape from the internment camp with three fellow officers. It worked. A friend came with drinks and left the flat, which was under constant observation, in Andrzej's usual car allowing the Opel, Andrzej and Christine to escape and drive round side roads to the British Legation.

By this time Sir Owen was becoming convinced that the Gestapo were 'on to' Christine and that she should leave the country - and it would be better for other reasons if Andrzej went too. New passports were issued to "Christine Granville, from Jersey and born in 1915" and to "Andrew Kennedy". Christine left for the border in the boot of Sir Owen's Chrysler which was allowed to cross the border into Yugoslavia because of its official British pennants and by concocting a story, 'Andrew' got the guards to help him push the Opel across and then drove off at high speed before collecting Christine. They made for Belgrade and checked in at the British Legation where they were expected. Then they 'relaxed' and were joined a day or two later by Sir Owen who still had the pair 'on his books'. They were then sent south east to Sofia in Bulgaria and reported to the British Legation to be received

by the young Aidan Crawley. They produced their letters of introduction and several rolls of microfilm which were highly sensitive and significant as they included the German plans to invade Russia. Crawley was much impressed and duly passed them on. Churchill saw them and told Stalin who didn't believe it.. But this was enough for Andrzej to be enrolled in the S.O.E. They then moved on to Istanbul in Turkey where the guards "confiscated" the Opel but gave them a receipt. It was here that for a short while that Christine was re-united with her husband before he was despatched to take over Christine's role as the British contact for the Polish underground and Christine and Andrzej moved on via Syria to Cairo in the Opel which Christine had reclaimed by means of a large bribe. In Cairo they were billeted in the Continental Hotel and here waited for instructions. At this time the Germans had reached North Africa and Vichy France was starting to co-operate with the its military facilities. But they were then cold-shouldered and interrogated. It seems that Christine was thought to be a double agent as how come she was still alive if she was not working for the Germans and despite the support from a colonel who knew them they were dismissed – but kept on the pay-roll of the British who sent them to Syria a little while later. And so Christine's war continued, taking her in and out of danger and meeting new lovers. Her mission was finally cancelled in the early spring of 1945 when she was back in Cairo and where she was when Germany signed the formal surrender and VE Day declared on 8th May.

Not a real victory for Christine though, as Poland had suffered so much and lost so many. Her life went on post war, but to find out about all the bits I have missed out and what happened next, you had better read Clare's book. Here I apologise sincerely to Clare for my mistakes and misinterpretations. It's a jolly good read.

Heather .Salvidge.

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