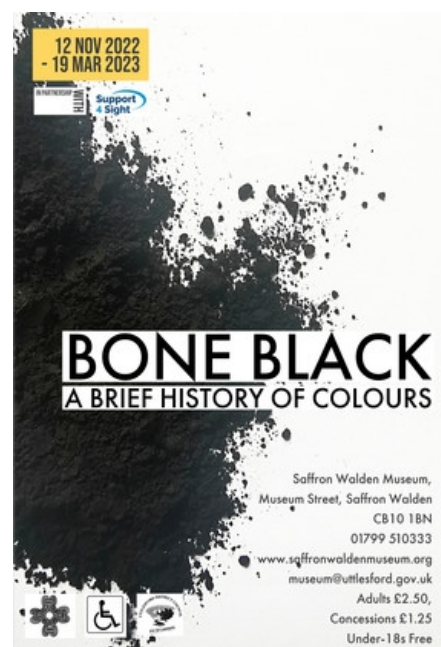


Newsletter of Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd

Autumn 2022 Issue 58

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Highlights and Happenings; From the Chairman

You, I know, will allow me to comment when I say I cannot believe it's 12 months ago I wrote my first Museum Matters introduction. We all feel time passes quicker as the years go by. You might know the origin of this notion and its truth, if so please let me hear or if we have out there a theoretical physicist, he can confirm it.

We are however going to hear, from other contributors to the Newsletter, good news. Visitor numbers are improving, we had a great exhibition in **Lost Language of Nature** as those who attended the Special preview in July will attest and our talks have now started.

Mick Ford, from the Essex Fire Museum in Grays gave the September talk Essex Fire Brigade through WWI and WWII with great enthusiasm and an amazing knowledge of the detail of operations through those difficult periods.

We continue to strengthen our relationships with other Museums, currently The Horniman in Forest Hill, London and other bodies such as The Francis Crick Institute. The Museum lent its support through the Town's Heritage Group to help make Saffron Day the success it was.

Finally to report, Douglas Kent our new director, arrived just in time to bring his experience to help the Curator add new sections to our Development Plan around historical building and archaeological issues.

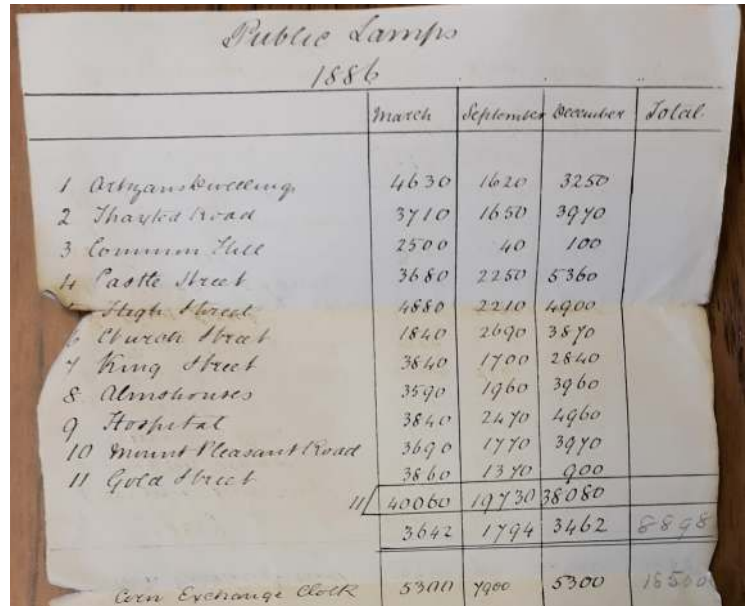
Keith Eden

Curators Column;

Lighting Up the Dark Months

Amid the anxiety over gas and electricity costs, we have had our own issues to contend with in the Museum lately with heating and phone / broadband connections. Thanks to the perseverance of our Council colleagues and various engineers, progress is being made with phone, broadband and Wi-Fi issues, so apologies to anyone who has had difficulty reaching the Museum by phone since 20 October.

With energy and utility bills very much on everyone's minds at present, I was intrigued to find the old gas meter records for the public street lighting in 19th-century Saffron Walden, during a recent visit to the Town Hall attics, where Jenny and I were invited to look through some old documents. These utility records are actually more appropriate for the Essex Record Office than the Museum, but the photo I took (shown right) shows a typical page and is titled 'Public Lights / Summary of Meter Lamps 1886 - 1887'. It lists the town centre locations where public gas lighting was provided, from 'Artizans' Dwellings' and the Thaxted Road via Common Hill and Castle Street to the town centre. The Almshouses (Abbey Lane), Hospital (now the Uttlesford District Council Offices), Mount Pleasant and Gold Street were also lit. The meter readings are given, but not the cost.



	March	September	December	Total
1 Artizans Dwellings	4630	1620	3250	
2 Thaxted Road	3710	1650	3970	
3 Common Hill	2500	40	100	
4 Castle Street	3680	2250	5360	
5 High Street	4880	2210	4900	
6 Church Street	1840	2690	3870	
7 King Street	3840	1700	2840	
8 Almshouses	3570	1960	3960	
9 Hospital	3840	2470	4960	
10 Mount Pleasant Road	3690	1770	3970	
11 Gold Street	3860	1370	900	
<i>11/</i>	40060	19730	38080	
	3642	1794	3462	8898
Corn Exchange Clock	5300	7900	5300	18500

With darker evenings, the Museum's annual 'galleries by torchlight' session was a big success, as reported elsewhere in this Newsletter. A big thank you to the volunteers who helped out with preparations, decorations and as ghosts and witches! It was a very busy and rewarding one-and-a half hours helping families to have a fun Hallowe'en evening. I certainly enjoyed being the ghost of George Wombwell, haunting the balcony near Wallace and helping visitors find the poster to answer the menagerie question on Charlotte's quiz-trail. I even met several of Wombwell's descendants!

Out and About to Tudor Hallingbury

It is good to have the opportunity to get out to other parts of Uttlesford, supporting other local community heritage projects when we can, so Jenny and I were pleased to prepare some loans from the handling collections and images of Tudor objects in the main collections, for display at the Tudor weekend events in St Giles Church, Great Hallingbury for the first weekend in October. Hallingbury has a very specific connection with Anne Boleyn, as her brother George married Jane Parker (known to history as Lady Rochford) the daughter of the 10th Baron Morley of Great Hallingbury. The splendid Tudor Court Cupboard in the Museum offers another connection with Anne Boleyn's trial, as one of the carved portrait heads on it is supposed to represent Sir Francis Weston, another courtier associated with George Boleyn and like the unfortunate George, accused of adultery with Queen Anne and beheaded. Looking round St Giles Church also reminded me how much of our local and national heritage is reflected in our historic parish churches, and so worthy of ongoing preservation.



Development Project

Progress in some areas has been delayed by various circumstances, but meanwhile Jenny has been taking our digital strategy forward with the Museum Society Board and I have been compiling a history of architectural and other changes to the Museum building, which will be needed for the 'heritage impact assessments' we now need to commission before moving forward with our Stage 1 Grant Application. Meanwhile plenty of other work and projects will be feeding into our long-term plans, as we get to grips with more digitisation and conservation of the collections and research suggests possible storylines for new displays.

Metals on the Move!

With the help of colleagues and volunteers, the collection of metal objects from archaeological excavations and chance discoveries is being moved from a very cramped store in the Museum to better storage conditions at Shirehill. This provides the opportunity for a long-overdue audit and drive to get everything recorded on computer and suitably packed and labelled. Volunteer Joanne Pegrum has been assisting me at Shirehill and she has contributed November's Object of the Month feature on a Bronze Age find from Arkesden.

Winstanley Late Night Christmas Shopping Event on 2nd December Can you support our stall?

Those of you who live in Saffron Walden may have seen posters for this year's Late Night Shopping event on Friday 2nd December, 4 – 9pm. This year it takes its theme from William Winstanley, the writer who amongst other things 'saved Christmas' by preserving Christmas traditions and celebrations through the austere years of the Commonwealth in the mid-17th century. You can read about his life on the Hundred Parishes website at this address;

<https://www.hundredparishes.org.uk/people/detail/william-winstanley>

The event is strictly charity stalls only and after discussions with the Museum Society Organisation Committee, I am hoping that the Society can book a pitch (using the Museum's spacious purple gazebo) to promote the Society and Museum for the evening. I need a rota of Museum Society volunteers to help me on the stall, so if you feel able to fill a slot in the rota (no more than an hour) please contact me by email - cwingfield@uttlesford.gov.uk or phone 01799 510333.

We'll use the stall to promote the Museum Society and Museum with posters, hand-outs and photos, and some mystery objects from the handling collections as an 'on-the-spot' quiz to engage people. Bookings have to be confirmed by 25 November, so an early indication of willingness to help would be much appreciated.

Carolyn Wingfield

Natural Sciences: Sarah Kenyon

This year is a climate record breaker. We have just had the warmest October day and so far it has been the UK's warmest year since records began in 1884. This Summer was the joint warmest in England, tied with temperatures in 2018, and the driest year since 1976. Huge thanks go to the Special Roadside Verge volunteers for doing their ecological surveys in the heat, as the vegetation dried out due to lack of water. Together we surveyed 22 out of the 46 verge sites in Uttlesford. The next job is to check the Autumn full width cut of verges which has been delayed until November. Money has been found to replace missing wooden marker posts and verge plaques so we hope these will be installed soon. Thank you to Saffron Walden's Essex County Councillor for raising the issue at County Hall.

For care of collections the monitoring of insect pests continues with traps checked every three months. Pyrite minerals and fossils affected by pyrite decay were moved out of the Archaeological Metals store at the Museum to the low humidity store at Shirehill where a new dehumidifier is keeping the amount of moisture in the air below 40%.

I've been delving into the mineral and biology collections to find objects for the next exhibition, 'Bone Black, a history of colours', curated by Charlotte. A harvest mouse nest made of woven grass from Sweetings Meadow nature reserve featured as Object of the Month for September. It was displayed with a picture of another nest made of straw, string and grass from the photographic archive of Essex Wildlife Trust volunteer Barry Kaufmann-Wright. The Museum now cares for his photographic archive of prints and slides. To publicise and complement Saffron Day on 16 October Jenny and I displayed objects related to saffron, including some specimens of Saffron Crocus, *Crocus sativus*, from the herbarium of pressed, dried plants collected during the nineteenth century (1800 to 1899).

- Three plants collected in the garden of Saffron Walden Museum.
- Specimen collected by Mr. J. Clarke. The Clarke brothers, Joshua and Joseph, lived at The Roos Farm, Debden Road in Saffron Walden.
- Two plants mounted in a book called *The Walden Flora*, collected from newly turned up ground on Castle Hill, Saffron Walden by Joshua Clarke and Thomas Spurgin in 1838.
- Three plants from the garden of C. Baron.
- Saffron Crocus specimens mounted in a wooden frame.
- Corms of the Saffron Crocus grown in the old nursery garden of Mr Chater in 1886.



110985-1 herbarium C Baron © Saffron Walden Museum

William Chater was a nurseryman, gardener and florist. He owned a nursery of twelve acres in size which employed fourteen men. The land was east of the road called Chaters Hill at the side of the Common in Saffron Walden. So we have a Museum mystery, does any local historian know who C. Baron was?

Natural Sciences: James Lumbard

Family Fun Day success

The Family Fun Day for Lost Language of Nature on 17th August welcomed 150 visitors to enjoy a range of activities. The day saw the successful launch of the Lost Language of Nature art commission, with artist Janetka Platun welcoming visitors to draw birds from the Museum's learning collection using real feather quills, and pigments or fixatives made using natural materials including eggs. A storyteller, falconry stand and Crafts at the Castle summer activities kept families entertained all day.

Lost Language of Nature art commission

Our commissioned artist Janetka Platun has established a valuable new relationship with Joyce Frankland Academy in Newport to create her community artwork. She will be working with pupils across all school years, including Ukrainian refugees and many who speak English as an additional language. We are very excited to see and hear what comes of this exciting project.



Lost Language of Nature continues

30th October saw the end of our experimental and successful exhibition to explore the folk associations of birds in the collection – responses to questionnaires in the gallery particularly praised the exhibition theme and the stories of the birds. A reduced exhibition continues in the Great Hall throughout November where pupils from Joyce Frankland Academy can learn more about the project and take inspiration from the birds and stories still on display. Photographer Ian, who exhibited his work during the exhibition, and Museum volunteer Jane shown helping to take down the exhibition on 1st November.



Wildlife in the Grounds

A second visit by Essex Field Club members has confirmed 135 species of plants in our grounds, encouraged by leaving roughly 0.6 acres to the east and south of the castle to grow from May to August. We're very pleased that this 'urban meadow' has been accepted as a contribution to the B-Lines project co-ordinated by conservation charity BugLife, which promotes biodiversity-enhancing projects on 'corridors' that link existing wildlife-rich sites. Read more about B-Lines and their other work here <https://www.buglife.org.uk/our-work/b-lines/>.



Image from Buglife website © Buglife 2022.

A new season



If October's downpours and mini tornadoes haven't been enough to convince you that autumn has arrived, the Museum's tubs and planters are here to help. A very kind donation of cyclamens have brightened up the Museum entrance steps but the stars of the show have been some surprise saffron crocuses in one of the planters between car park and tennis courts.

Location, Location, Location

It's been a busy time in the Natural Sciences store at the museum, with changes to the storage locations of around 200 items of the bird taxidermy to make them easier to reach for research, exhibitions and to check for pest infestations. Previously difficult and unsafe to access on top of some very high racking, they are now stored in easy reach from a stepladder.

Volunteering returns

As I write, we're looking forward to welcoming back a natural sciences volunteer to Shirehill in early November to resume cataloguing work on the geology collection. We had a short but successful stint before social distancing put paid to the work, and subsequent IT equipment issues have caused protracted delays.



Collections Officer, Human History : Jenny Oxley

Costume & Textile Project



On Monday 26 September removal company Eezeemovers, helped us to move our costume and textile collection stored at the museum to our external store on the Shire Hill industrial estate.

The museum costume store was essentially an overgrown walk-in cupboard, but you can see from this image of all the boxes once they'd been moved to Shire Hill (pictured left), it must have been a bit of a tardis and actually fitted in quite a few (hundred) boxes!

It took 4 hours to move everything out of the museum's costume store and a further 2 hours to unpack it out of the van and get it all onto the racks at Shire Hill!

This is the start of work to improve the storage conditions for these collections. They will be re-organised by type and categorised. Then gradually repacked, researched and documented. We hope to be able to hang the long garments on padded hangers in calico bags eventually, so they will no longer have to be folded in boxes, which can over time can cause significant damage to them.

If you or anyone you know is skilled at sewing by hand or at using a sewing machine and could spare us some time. It would be great if we could get some volunteers to help make up calico bags with velcro fastenings and sew padding onto wooden hangers for this project.

Contact the Museum by email at museum@uttlesford.gov.uk or ring 01799 510333 and use the reference Costume Project if you would like to be involved.

Greater in Spirit Larger in Outlook Project (World cultures collections)

Epping Forest District Museum in Waltham Abbey and Saffron Walden Museum received an Arts Council National Lottery project grant of £100,000 to work in partnership on their world culture collections.



Image of Saffron Walden Museum's world cultures gallery.

The aim of the project is to ensure the museums and their collections reflect their diverse communities by working directly with cultural groups to research different objects and tell their stories.

The project's title, 'Greater in Spirit, Larger in Outlook' is inspired by Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia from 1930 to 1974. Museum staff will work with relevant community groups including the Ethiopian History Society, to explore, explain and exhibit the collection leading to a new permanent display at Epping Forest District Museum, due to be completed by the end of 2022.

The project has begun to work with relevant community and cultural groups linked to the world cultures collections in preparation for the major temporary exhibition in 2023 at Epping Forest Museum for this project.

Alice Lodge, has now been employed in the role of Collections Connector on the project and is splitting her time between both museums. On Fridays, you will see her researching in the World Cultures gallery here.

For more about the project:

<https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/museum-world-culture-collections-project/>

Your Stories Display Space: Horniman Loan, Objects in Focus project

Objects in Focus is a loans programme run by the Horniman Museum in London, funded by Arts Council England, which aims to improve access to their collections and strengthen their partnerships with other museums and cultural organisations, by offering a range of objects for loan free of charge.

The Museum has loaned some tattoo design examples from the Horniman Museum under this Objects in Focus scheme. These tattoo models from Sarawak, Borneo date to the 19th century.

The display (in the "Your Stories" section of the museum) also features a tattoo implement from Fiji, made from a bone plate with a bamboo handle, which has been decorated with plaited coconut fibre. It was collected in Viti Levu, Fiji, Oceania Polynesia in 1876.

When the Horniman items on loan are returned in November. The display will be replaced with a new one, *Black Lives in Uttlesford*, which has been researched and produced by Saffron Walden Library.

Historic Loan Returns

Behind the scenes we are doing work to tidy up long standing historic collections loans. Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology have recently collected two clubs, a knife and necklace. The Science Museum recently changed their displays and a pacific club from our collections has therefore been returned to us. This has gone on display in the world cultures gallery in place of the two which were returned to MAA. The Horniman Museum in November when they collect the tattoo model loan will also collect a number of collections loans which have been outstanding to them. These agreements and returns are time consuming to negotiate and to process the associated paperwork but they are a useful part of rationalising the collections in the run up to re-developing the museum displays.

Saffron Day

Thanks to everyone who supported us on Sunday 16 October when Carolyn promoted the museum on the heritage development group stall in the market place and we extended the museum's standard opening hours on a Sunday from 2-4pm to 11-5pm for the town's first ever Saffron Day.

We were able to provide access to our Saffron Crocus (*Crocus Sativus*) themed natural history and human history collections which were on temporary display in the museum's Great Hall. The temporary display included beautiful illustrations, Crocus corms, a carved wooden panel from Saffron Lodge and the Crocus Tavern pub sign. We also highlighted Saffron Crocus themed items on display permanently in the museum, such as the Town Charter from Tudor times and the carved wooden pargetting block, both in the local history gallery and the Saffron Gold Moorcroft vase in the ceramics gallery. We also exhibited local artist, Eleanor Pye's saffron crocus themed artwork, titled *The Reawakening of Saffron*.



(pictures of saffron crocus themed collections, and Eleanor's artwork second from left)

ANIMAL MUMMIES

uncovered

An exhibition exploring the importance of animal mummies in Ancient Egyptian culture

EPHING FOREST DISTRICT MUSEUM

17 September -
17 December 2022

39-41 Sun Street,
Waltham Abbey,
Essex,
EN9 1EL

 **Epping Forest District
Museum**
A service provided by Epping Forest District Council

Exhibition Free

Facebook: www.facebook.com/efdmuseum
Twitter: [@efdmuseum](https://twitter.com/efdmuseum)
Instagram: www.instagram.com/efdmuseum/
www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/museum

A figure of Bastet the cat god and two Horus (falcon) figures, which are usually on display in the museum's Egyptian gallery, have been lent to Epping Forest District Museum for their current special temporary exhibition "Animal Mummies," which started in mid-September and runs until December.

Pargeting Researcher

Anna Kettle began a joint placement here at the Museum and with SPAB (the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings) in late September.



Example of pargeting

She is documenting and researching all the instances of pargeting on buildings in the town. Pargeting is the ornamentation of plastered and rendered building facades that would otherwise be smooth, lined-out or roughcast.

Wooden stamps and combs were often used to render the designs in the wet plaster. The finished effect is very distinctive and still regularly seen in Saffron Walden and the surrounding villages.

We expect that small displays and activities relating to this researcher project will be held at the museum and in the town early next year as the project progresses. Stay tuned to find out more about these and more about Anna's project over the coming months.

Staff Garden Party

On Friday 23 September, UDC council staff, museum volunteers and museum society officers & board members were invited to attend a council organised garden party at the Museum. Attendees visited the museum and took on the Utterly Uttlesford quiz and inspired by a coronation poster from 1863 on display in the Museum, had a go at gurning through a horse collar, the selfies were a picture!

Uttlesford District Council put on refreshments and wellbeing stalls for the garden party event. It was a lovely day for everyone to get together and catch up.



Council staff, Museum Volunteers and Members of the Museum Society enjoy the party in the Museum and Castle grounds.

Object of the Month

September 2022
Harvest Mouse Nest



Harvest mouse nest SAFWM : 2001.180 Saffron Walden Museum © The nest of a Harvest Mouse, Micromys minutus, made of woven grass. It was found in a clump of Knotgrass at Sweetings Meadow nature reserve, near Thaxted, in October 1999.

To celebrate harvest time our 'Object of the Month' for September is the nest of a Harvest Mouse, *Micromys minutus*, made of woven grass. It was found in a clump of Knotgrass at Sweetings Meadow nature reserve, near Thaxted in 1999. The Harvest Mouse is Britain's smallest rodent. Weighing only 6 to 8 grams it is light enough to climb grass stems and reeds, using its paws and long prehensile tail to grip the stalks.

This is our only mouse able to build nests by weaving living grass leaves together. In summer and autumn, the mice live above ground in camouflaged nests. Breeding nests are spherical and up to 10 cm diameter in size to accommodate litters of two to eight young. Single mice build smaller, less robust nests up to 5 cm in size. A Harvest Mouse survey in Essex found nests in the grass of roadside verges that bordered arable fields and in reedbeds, ditches, field edges and hedgerows. The nests may be sited in the base of a

tussock of grass or up to a metre above ground in dense vegetation, or in the base of a tussock of grass. In winter harvest mice live on the ground, feeding on grass seeds and sheltering in the bases of thick tussocky grasses. They live for 6-18 months.

Harvest Mice Fun Facts

Identification: Very small mouse. Orange-brown fur, with white fur on the tummy. Has a blunt nose, small eyes, small hairy ears and a long tail.

Size: Body and head are 5-7cm long. The prehensile, gripping tail is the same length!

Weight: 4-6 grams, about the weight of a 2 pence coin.

Food: Seeds, berries and insects. Will also eat plant roots, moss and fungi.

Breeding: Harvest mice have two or three litters of about 6 young between May and October.

Baby mice are born blind and hairless. They grow up fast, exploring outside the nest after 11 days. Their mother leaves them to live alone in the nest after just 16 days.

Location: Found in England, as far north as Yorkshire, and in parts of Wales.

Threats:

Predators: weasels, stoats, foxes, cats, owls, hawks, crows, pheasants.

Cold, wet weather can kill mice as they lose their body heat, especially if young are born later in the year.

Habitat loss and changes in agricultural methods and habitat management are thought to have reduced harvest mice numbers. However, the effects of combine harvesting, hedgerow removal, insecticide spraying and mowing of verges in October, when mice are moving from harvested fields, need to be measured. The Mammal Society are running a National Harvest Mouse Survey, visit their website www.mammal.org.uk/science-research/harvest-mouse-project/



A Harvest Mouse with its nest in a barn. The nest is made of woven grass, straw and string. It was photographed by Barry Kaufmann-Wright, "The Wildlife Man". Barry was a lifelong wildlife lover, keen photographer and author. As an Essex Wildlife Trust volunteer, he became warden of Sweetings Meadow nature reserve, near Thaxted, and gave numerous talks and exhibitions about wildlife. Saffron Walden Museum is proud to care for his 70,000 prints and slides of wildlife and landscape photography taken throughout his life in Essex, Britain and across the world.

October 2022

Alpine Swift

This month we're celebrating the Lost Language of Nature project, with repair work to this alpine swift. This bird has been cleaned and had its base refreshed to help preserve it for future exhibitions, and will be on temporary display in the Museum throughout October. Alpine swifts spend the warmer months around the Mediterranean Sea and further east, or in southern Africa, and spend the cooler months in parts of east and west Africa. They are related to the common swifts we see in Britain but are noticeably bigger.

Old beliefs about swifts said that they had no feet, and the scientific name of the common swift and related birds including the alpine swift and hummingbirds, even comes from the Ancient Greek for 'without feet'.



Saffron Walden Museum wants to hear your stories about wildlife and nature in your life, or that you know from parents or grandparents to help create more interesting, relevant and diverse displays in the future.

Head to our website for more information or pick up a postcard in the Museum to join in.

November 2022 Bronze Hoard

November's Object of the Month is a selection of objects from 'The Arkesden Hoard', chosen and researched by volunteer Joanne Pegrum.

Dating to the Late Bronze Age (1000 – 800 BCE), the hoard is a collection of bronze objects discovered in Arkesden, Essex in 1872. The hoard was originally found buried in a bucket-shaped hole by workers during land draining works. It was initially shared out between them but subsequently recovered by antiquarians.

The hoard consists of mostly broken or damaged pieces of axes, spearheads, sword blades and bronze ingots.

November's Object of the Month highlights three of these objects: a socketed axe, part of a 'palstave' which is an axe more typical of the Middle Bronze Age and a bronze ingot.



Late Bronze Age socketed axe. © Saffron Walden Museum



Fragment of Middle Bronze Age Palstave. © Saffron Walden Museum



Late Bronze Age bronze ingot. © Saffron Walden Museum

Bronze is an alloy of copper and tin, both of which were mined in Britain during the Bronze Age, tin in Cornwall and copper in North Wales and Cheshire. The objects on display today are mostly dull and tarnished but originally they would have been a shiny, yellow-gold colour. They exemplify the technologies and trade of the Bronze Age: the smelting of metals, the manufacturing of implements in moulds and the trade of raw materials.

Other similar hoards have been found in Essex and across the South-East. It is thought that the hoards were buried by travelling smiths but why were they buried and not collected again? Could the hoards be evidence for ritualistic burial?

Visit the Museum for a closer look and see what you think!

Learning at Saffron Walden Museum: Charlotte Pratt

It was a busy October half term at the Museum with a daytime craft activity to make a flappy owl and our ever-popular Museums at night event. The daytime craft event was held on Tuesday 25th and there were reports of owls flapping their way around the market and Waitrose in the afternoon. This year our wonderful staff and volunteers dressed up as friendly ghosts to guide our visitors around the Museum to solve the ghost hunter's trail. June Baker was on hand providing spooky glamour and a very warm welcome at the front desk in a fantastic witch costume, greeting our visitors who queued outside to get into the event, some for 20 minutes!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the staff and volunteers involved from those who dressed up and helped to decorate the Museum, to those who helped me assemble the ghost hunter activity packs, they all made the event successful and hope they will join me again next year for more dressing up!

In December we are giving the grown-ups an opportunity to get creative with our festive marbling workshop on the 6th of December, inspired by our temporary exhibition "Bone Black, A brief history of Colours" the workshop will give attendees an opportunity to dive into a world of colour with brief introduction to the art of marbling. They will leave with their own marbled papers, labels and baubles just in time for Christmas.

Exhibitions and Upcoming Events:

Bone Black: a brief history of colours

Sat 12 Nov – Sun 19 March 2022

An exhibition exploring the making, meaning
and use of colours from prehistory
to the present day.

A new exhibition Bone Black, a Brief History of Colours opens at Saffron Walden Museum on 12th of November 2022. Visitors can discover the wide-ranging materials and processes which create colour in both man-made and natural objects.

Using Saffron Walden Museum's broad collections, the exhibition traces the history of colours and explores both the making and meaning of colour across cultures and the natural world.

Bringing together the worlds of art and science, the exhibition explores how people overcame the technical processes involved in creating colour and examines the origins of colour, whether from the natural world or human invention, with objects from minerals to textiles and everything in between.

The exhibition presents a rainbow of objects, grouped by colour. Mineral specimens show the origins of many pigments and plant specimens explain traditional dyes and inks. Each colour will also be represented with a range of objects from across the Museum's collections, including social history, archaeological, worldwide cultures and natural sciences.

The exhibition is complemented by a series of hands-on interactives exploring how each of us perceives and interacts with colours. Visitors will be able to hear, smell and touch colours through a specially created sensory table, designed in partnership with Support 4 Sight. The interactives have been made in collaboration with a range of local groups including Creative Walden, museum visitors, a local choir and the Community Shed. The interactive elements, along with an audio guide, are aimed at making the exhibition more accessible for everyone including people living with sight loss and visual impairments.

Masuma Ali, Community Fundraiser, Support 4 Sight said:

“Everyone thinks of colours differently, what a colour may mean to them, what a colour may smell like or sound like. It has been fantastic to be involved to make the exhibition accessible for blind and partially sighted people. Our default is to think of colours in relation to sight, but colours can be experienced in many different ways by people using their other senses.”

Charlotte Pratt, Learning & Outreach Officer, and the exhibition’s curator, said:

“I am grateful for the support and advice given by the team at Support 4 Sight. They, along with the local groups and individuals, have hopefully made this the Museum’s most accessible exhibition to date. As well as the sensory table, we will be trialling our first audio guide using QR codes, so it will be great to get feedback from the public on that too”

Saffron Walden Museum is open Wednesdays – Saturdays 10 am – 4.30pm and Sundays 2 – 4.30pm (Tuesdays reserved for schools and pre-booked groups, closed on Mondays). Admissions £2.50 adult, £1.25 Concessions, children free.




Volunteer News: Wendy-Jo Atter

The Museum extends a big “Thank You” to all the volunteers who helped with our successful October half term events: making a flappy owl activity and our ghost-hunting ‘Museum by torchlight’ evening, which was very popular. Halloween just wouldn’t be Halloween without June’s fabulous Welcome Desk decorations and witch’s attire!



Photos supplied by Wendy-Jo Atter, include the Bewitched Welcome Desk and the Haunted Great Hall

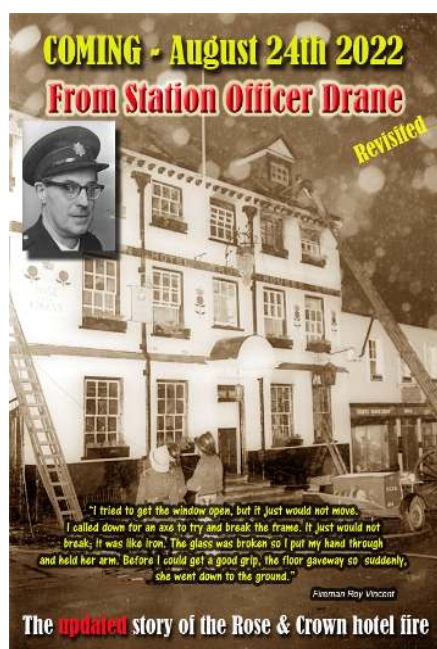
We are delighted to announce that, on Thursday 10 November, three Saffron Walden Museum volunteers - who have each been volunteering for 25 years or more – will be awarded a certificate and Silver Owl badge at the SHARE Museums East 2022 conference. They are:

<p>June Baker</p> 	<p>In addition to her regular shifts on the 'Front of House' Welcome Desk, June also covers occasional Sundays and Volunteer desk duties in the evenings at the 'Museum at Night' events (where she can be seen wearing a witches hat and mauve hair).</p> <p>She has taken on responsibility for inducting and mentoring new recruits, ensuring that 'Team Saffron Walden Museum' consistently deliver excellent customer service at the Welcome Desk.</p> <p>June is committed to contributing towards the museum's exhibition programme. She has loaned personal items and stories for many special exhibitions, including accessories for 'Completing the Look: 300 Years of Fashion Accessories'.</p>
<p>Jenny Day</p> 	<p>In her capacity as Welcome volunteer, Jenny is the 'Face of the Museum' being the first impression a visitor gets either in person or on the telephone.</p> <p>Jenny gives a friendly welcome to visitors; sells tickets and merchandise and provides information about the Museum.</p> <p>As well as the length of service, Jenny has demonstrated amazing commitment, by kindly covering double shifts on the 'Front of House' Welcome Desk on a fortnightly basis and coming in to cover other volunteers shifts when they are unable to attend the Museum even when she herself was struggling with a poorly leg!</p>
<p>Ann Holloway</p> 	<p>Over the years Ann has supported the museum in many ways, highlights include:</p> <p>Ann took part in our co-curated community exhibition, '<i>Uttlesford: A Community of Collectors</i>', working with curatorial staff to create a display of her collection of Pestle and Mortars.</p> <p>In the absence of a Learning Officer at the Museum, Ann kindly dressed as 'Mistress Ann' bringing her own collection of Tudor artefacts and conducted hands-on history activities with the school children. This really made a positive difference to the school visits and we received wonderful letters of thanks from the school teachers and children.</p>

We extend our congratulations and grateful thanks to them all.

Museum Shop Sunday: Sunday 27 November 2 - 4.30pm

Saffron Walden Museum will be taking part in Museum Shop Sunday, on 27 November, which is an international event celebrating the unique shops and products which play a vital role in helping arts, culture, and heritage attractions to survive and thrive.



After the chaos and crazy discounting of Black Friday, Museum Shop Sunday offers an alternative way to do your Christmas shopping and do some good at the same time!

Find original gifts – The museum shop offers bespoke ranges, stocking fillers and unique gifts such as our annual season tickets. All your Christmas shopping dilemmas solved in one go!

Shop with a conscience – By shopping at your local museum, you are actively contributing to Saffron Walden Museum's future sustainability and success. What better way to give back at Christmas?

Come along to Saffron Walden Museum on 27 November, from 2pm to 4.30pm, where author Paul Wood will give a talk about The Rose & Crown Hotel fire in Saffron Walden on Boxing day 1969, the bravery of the individuals that night and the long-lasting effect it had on the whole town.

Paul, a paramedic with the London Ambulance Service, was presented with a mounted firefighters axe for '40 years of services to Fire Brigade photography'. He will be available after his talk to answer questions and sign copies of his book, which will be available for sale.

This event is free, but normal museum admission prices apply.

Paul Wood holding an earlier edition of his book, "From Station Officer Drane" in the All Fired Up temporary exhibition put on here at Saffron Walden Museum by Essex Fire Museum and also an updated image of the book cover from its relaunch in August.



Museum Society News

Gift Aid - did you know?

The tax office allows Gift Aid on subscriptions under slightly different rules compared with donations!

For example, if you pay the minimum subscription of £15 and pay Income tax or Capital Gains tax in the appropriate year, we can claim a tax refund of £3.75 at no further cost to you. (Indeed, if you pay tax at more than the basic rate, you may be able to claim further relief in your own tax return. This would be entirely up to you, and we would not need to know)

In cases where one of a couple is a taxpayer but the other is not, it is only possible to claim gift aid on the taxpayer's subscription even when he or she pays both. If, however, the payment is for more than the basic subscriptions the surplus is treated as a donation from the taxpayer and we may claim on the higher amount.

The Society appreciates the financial help of those members who are UK taxpayers and make Gift Aid declarations, thus enabling us to claim tax refunds which boost our funds. If you have not already done so, please consider whether you too, could help the Society in this way. It is a very simple form and once completed can stand for many years unless you cease to be a taxpayer.

Please contact me if you would like more information.

Christine Sharpe

Membership

Many thanks to you all for renewing your subscriptions for 2022.

If you know of anyone who might be interested in joining the Saffron Walden Museum Society, we are running our special offer for new members again. For anyone who joins the society now, the next subscription will not be due until 2024. As the subscription year runs from 1 April to 31 March this means up to 17 months membership for the price of 12 months. Tell your friends!

Catherine Peacock
Membership

Evening Talks

Future Talks

At St Mary's Parish Rooms – 8:00 P.M.

Monday 14 November

Gladiators in Roman Life – by Richard Bale

2023 – – ON ZOOM Only in the Winter Months

Monday, 9 January

Simon Coxall on “Uttlesford- “the Little Shire” – A landscape archaeology approach.

Please Note ; The Museum Society is still looking for a Recorder to take notes at the talks and write a summary for inclusion in this Newsletter.

If you are able to help the Society by doing this please contact Paul Salvidge on email at – salvidge@uwclub.net

Recent Talks

Monday 10 October

Cooking with Saffron – by Samantha Bilton

Sam is a writer, cook and food historian who has recently published 'Fool's Gold: a History of British Saffron' who writes and broadcasts regularly and recreates historical recipes from as early as the 14th century.

Sam explained the history and mysterious origins of Saffron and how saffron was used in cookery through the centuries. This talk was a prelude to 'Saffron Day' on Sunday, 16 October, held in the Market Place from 11.00am-4.00pm., which celebrated the town's historic association with saffron cultivation. There were stalls selling saffron products, demonstrations of the use of saffron as a dye and talks on growing the saffron crocus as well as food and drink, music and entertainment.

Monday 12 September

"From the "Smoke" to the Coast, by Mick Ford from Essex Fire Museum

The talk covered Firefighting in London and Essex During the Two World Wars.

Essex Fire Museum has a website here » https://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/Fire_Museum/

The website contains a long list of articles written by Museum volunteers about the history of the fire service in Essex, which can be found here » https://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/Fire_Museum/Museum_Articles/ .

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 . . .

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