



# Museum Matters

## Newsletter of Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd

Autumn 2023 Issue 61

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### The End of an Era – Retirement of Carolyn Wingfield: From the President

**In** early January 2000, the beginning of the 21st Century, the then curator Christine Allison retired. The Curator Saffron Walden Museum post was the responsibility of Uttlesford District Council. Although the appointment was made by the Council the Society was asked to appoint two members to assist the interview board. This role fell to the Chairman, Brian Newman, and the Vice-chairman, Tony Watson. From the number of applications received four candidates were selected for interview. It was no surprise that Carolyn Wingfield was selected as by far the best candidate and she has proved over the last 23 years that the correct appointment was made.

From the beginning of her appointment Carolyn was very supportive of the then Management Committee of the Society and formed a close working relationship with the Society officers, which has continued over the years as officers have come and gone. There was a major change in 2008 when the Society was reformed as a Company limited by guarantee. This came about following the proposals for a Resource Centre in 2004. Because the proposals for the Resource Centre were the responsibility of the Council and they were applicants for a new charity, there are no records in the Society Minutes. Although a Lottery grant application was successful, the applicants could not register a charity within the requirements of the Charity Commission. The Society was asked to take on the responsibility and the committee agreed that the Society would need reform as a Charity Company to provide limited responsibility financially for trustees. Carolyn had put a lot of effort and time into the proposal, and she and other officers at the Council worked closely with the Society. This resulted at long last in the opening of the Shire Hill store on the 1st July, 2014. Carolyn has said, “that getting the new storage and research building at Shire Hill has made a major difference to how the Museum can care for and use the collections. The facility also provides access to objects for people who want to study them. By moving stored

collections to an off-site location this has also opened up the possibilities for making changes and improvements at the Museum.”

While this was going on the management of the Museum and in particular its contents was a major task. In 2005 the Museum had a request from the Wellington Museum, New Zealand, for the return of three Maori heads. Because the contents belong to the Society the Management Committee had to determine how to respond to this request. Carolyn led the research into the moral and legal requirements of the Society donating the heads back to New Zealand. This resulted in our agreeing to gift the heads back to the Wellington Museum. The heads were handed over in a Maori ceremony and those present found this a very emotional meeting.

Carolyn again led the research for the ‘Dig on the Common’ project. Carolyn explains. “The ‘Dig on the Common’ in 2013 was made possible through a Heritage Lottery Fund grant. With that support Dr Carenza Lewis and Access Cambridge Archaeology were commissioned to locate a corner of the original Norman town ditch, dating back to the construction of the Castle around 1140. The team of sixth form students from Saffron Walden County High and Newport Free Grammar School worked brilliantly all week and at the end of the dig in the bottom of the ditch, they uncovered a group of pot sherds which conclusively dated the ditch to around 1140.” Carolyn does not, of course, mention that she had a major role in this project.

One of the successes Carolyn has led was the working arrangements with detectorists who find treasure. This has resulted in many additions to the collections, the most important being the Anglo-Saxon ring. Carolyn says “My personal highlight has been the acquisition in 2014 of the unique gold Anglo-Saxon signet ring, known as the ‘north-west Essex ring’, which must have belonged to someone of royal or very high status round about the time of the Sutton Hoo burial. I shall never forget the moment the finder brought it into the Museum and handed it to me, asking me what date I thought it was. It was a ‘once in a lifetime’ experience to be one of the first people to see such a fascinating object of national importance.



*Carolyn, with an artwork from the recent Art Exhibition which has been presented to her on her retirement*

There have been many other events where Carolyn has represented the Museum; there was the celebration of the Battle of Assandun in Ashdon in 2016, and the display notices provided for the Battle Ditches in 2018.

More recently Carolyn and the Society have endeavoured to progress the development of the Museum. Unfortunately this has not progressed as well as we all wanted. The future of the Museum will depend, as always, on finding funding not only for development proposals but for day-to-day running of the Museum.

This article has been headed ‘The End of an Era’. Carolyn has been in post for 23 years; time catches up with us all eventually. So, with end of an Era begins a new era. If only we could see the future it would make life easier!

We are sure that there many other memories of Carolyn's time at the Museum. Please feel free to send your own memories to the Editor who may be able to share these with members in a later newsletter.

The Society has recently asked Carolyn to accept Honorary membership so we hope we will continue to benefit from her professional expertise for some time yet.

We wish Carolyn a rewarding retirement and thank her for all her excellent work over the last twenty three years.

*Tony Watson*

## Highlights and Happenings: From the Chairman

**M**any of you will have attended Carolyn's Talk in early October which regretfully I missed as I was with old Greeks and Romans in Sicily. It is not surprising that reports of the talk were indeed praiseworthy. Our President's report above comments fully on the over 23 year contribution that our retiring Curator has made to the Museum's development.

You won't be surprised to know the farewell Tea Party on Carolyn's last day as our Curator was well attended and I was honoured to share the goodbye speeches with Richard Auty, Uttlesford District Council's Corporate Director. Richard spoke of Carolyn's over-40 year career, including work at a variety of museums before coming to Saffron Walden.

My opportunity to speak had me dwell on Carolyn's legacy and how we protect it in an uncertain future world of Heritage. As a foundation stone to one of the great pillars of a civilization, Education, preserving Heritage, becomes ever more difficult, as across the United Kingdom new funding models are introduced to lower the tax burden on the public, as at Epping Forest Museum .

The last 10 years have seen our museum team, led by Carolyn, work hard to reach out and engage with our residents in multiple ways with much success. That successful strategy and others will need to be continued to draw in the young. I did confirm that our ideas for the development of the Museum will be carried forward, and further searching for development grants will be maintained.

An opportunity was also taken to encourage all those present to leave the party remembering to remind neighbours, family and friends to support in whatever way possible to ensure that education funding recognises the heritage we need to know, to support and grow and to manage, modify and adapt to absorb a wealth of new cultures as we have done for centuries if not millennia.

Carolyn's legacy depends on all our support.

*Keith Eden*

## Curator's Column: Jenny Oxley

**J**enny Oxley has been working full-time as Collections Officer (Human History) at Saffron Walden Museum since 2018, from Monday 30th October, on Carolyn's departure, she took on the additional full-time role of Curator (Museum Manger) interim until the end of March 2025, as the Museum is under Council review (Blueprint Uttlesford).

In her role as Collections Officer (Human History), Jenny has led on the local and social history, decorative and fine art, world cultures and costume and textile collections. Her day-to-day role has included managing the weekend team: responding to research enquiries and overseeing the Museum's website: E-News and social media accounts: cataloguing and auditing collections: designing and delivering exhibitions: as well as collections-based events and community projects, such as Snapping the Stiletto and Greater in Spirit Larger in Outlook, the latter with Epping Forest District Museum.



Highlights so far have included, re-designing the Museum's website with design agency Tela, working on the Resilient Heritage and museum development plans, doing an audit of the firearms collection with a senior curator from the Royal Armouries and moving collections, e.g. decanting and later reinstalling the entire ceramics gallery for maintenance work (not for the faint hearted, packing and moving all that glass and china!) and moving the social history and the costume and textile collections from the stores in the Museum to the off-site store at Shire Hill.

Jenny has a BA in Archaeology & History from the University of Nottingham (which involved digging in Bulgaria) and an MA in Museum Studies (Museum Management) specialising in archaeological curation, from the University of Newcastle.

She has been working in museums for 20 years, at eight very different venues including the museum services in Peterborough, North Hertfordshire and North Lincolnshire. She was formerly Curator of Welwyn Hatfield Museum Service (a working watermill and a Roman bath house) and Curator/Manager of Royston Museum, where she re-energised the museum, doubling the visitor figures.

She worked for a brief stint as Collections Standards & Care Manager at the National Army Museum based out of their Stevenage store, working on the installation of their £23 million 'new' museum in Chelsea, managing cross-discipline teams who were moving collections out of the giant storage warehouse store, transporting them across London and installing them in the new museum. Transit van driving, power dressing and hard hat wearing (on a building site), whilst still maintaining collections standards were requirements there!

Jenny loves the encyclopaedic nature of Saffron Walden Museums' collections and is passionate about being visitor focussed: improving the Museum, increasing access to collections and working on community driven collections projects, which have real social impact. Her prime goal for her 18-month tenure as Curator is ensuring the Museum is fit for the future, sustainable and available for future generations to enjoy.

## **Upon Carolyn Wingfield's Retirement: Richard Auty, Director of Corporate Services, Uttlesford District Council**

**C**arolyn started at Saffron Walden Museum on 2nd May 2000 having relocated from Doncaster, back when it was possible to move halfway across the country for the princely sum of £729.60. Also back in the days when councils paid for relocation expenses!

After graduating from Durham University with a degree in Archaeology, Carolyn's museum life started with a voluntary role at Southampton Museums before joining the South Lincolnshire Archaeological Unit on an Manpower Services Commission funded small towns study before being transferred to the permanent staff as a 'Phasing Assistant'. I have no idea what that means.

In 1982 she moved to Letchworth Museum as Museum Assistant before becoming the rather splendidly titled Keeper of Archaeology at Bedford Museum from 1985 to 1994. A move north saw her take up the role of Senior Museums Officer (Collections Management) in 1994 under Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council before coming to Saffron Walden six years later.

So what this means is that including the voluntary role way back in 1979, today marks the end of an incredible 44 year career in museums.

I became Carolyn's manager at the start of April 2007 which means she has the dubious 'honour' of being the person I have managed for the longest – more than 16 years now.

There have been numerous successes and notable events over the years. To name just a few, the move to the new museum store from a dilapidated flood-prone unit in Newport to the purpose-built facility on Shire Hill in Saffron Walden. This was a major project which Carolyn and team tackled with laser-like organisational precision. The Battle of Assandun event was a huge success, and I think we conclusively proved it definitely took place in a field outside Ashdon despite what anyone else might say.

Under Carolyn's direction we've seen increased use of the Museum and castle grounds for events including most recently the Coronation Concert which saw the site filled with people for an evening of music.

These and many, many other projects are testament to Carolyn's unceasing commitment to ensuring access to heritage and history. And all this on top of the day-to-day demands of a local authority-run museum, from performance data to quarterly reports, from meetings of the Museum Society Board and Museum Management Working Group to curatorial support for other heritage organisations.

There are many things I will miss about Carolyn – her unstinting professionalism, her ability to spin about a thousand plates at once, her calm wisdom and an uncanny knack for always listening to what I tell her and then doing whatever it is she wanted to do in the first place while still making me feel like she'd followed what I said.

So how will Carolyn spend her well-deserved retirement? Well perhaps her application form from 23 years ago will give us a clue because she thoughtfully listed her interests, I assume in the knowledge that eventually someone like me would need that information for a retirement speech.

Here's what she wrote:

"Music (early, classical – my interests range from 10th century to contemporary works), opera, theatre. Currently membership secretary of local music society which promotes an annual concert programme.

Walking in good countryside, but mainly in Cumbria and Peak District. Arts in general, and visiting archaeological and historic sites, monuments". (This sounds like a bit of a busman's holiday but when you have a life-long passion for something that you are lucky enough to make your career, I suppose it is not that surprising).

I know that Carolyn is still a keen walker – some years ago my family bumped into her in countryside outside Saffron Walden while she was getting some miles in her shoes in preparation for a long walk somewhere. Incidentally, that place is to this day referred to by our family as "Carolyn Corner".

I know she also retains a strong interest in music – I have seen her at Saffron Hall and once even had the pleasure of seeing her perform with her Medieval recorder group in the middle of the maze at Bridge End Garden of all places.

So whatever the future holds Carolyn, I hope you are leaving us today in the knowledge that we are all very grateful for everything you've done during your tenure as Curator. Personally, I will miss you enormously and wish you all the best for a long and happy retirement. Thank you.

## Natural Sciences: Sarah Kenyon

**I**t is all change at the Museum with the retirement of Curator Carolyn Wingfield whom I have worked with for 23 years. I remember her coming for interview because I looked after the candidates whilst they waited. After her appointment and move to the town Carolyn first lived in the lodge building at Uttlesford District Council offices. This is now the police station for Saffron Walden. Carolyn is knowledgeable, professional, tireless and dedicated to the Museum service. Personally, my highlights of the major achievements whilst working with her were fundraising and obtaining grants to build the ill-fated Heritage Quest Centre at what is now Knight Park in Saffron Walden, the building of the Museum Store at Shire Hill together with "store move" of collections from flood prone Newport store and the Museum, and finally the audience development and feasibility study for development of the Museum and site funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Alongside the hard work, we had many fun times. Dressing up in costume for the opening of the Victorian Values exhibition, fish and chip suppers when working late to finish off exhibitions, celebrating engagements and birthdays at staff members' houses and even trying belly dancing, staff drinks and Christmas events at pubs and restaurants around Saffron Walden. Have a long and happy retirement Carolyn.

The Malaysian stick insects are also on the move. If you love them like I do, then visit them soon to say goodbye. They will be moving to the Agricultural Sciences Unit at Saffron Walden County High School to train students how to look after live insects. I will miss them very much. They need a lot of looking after: finding bramble for them to eat, daily cleaning of the bug cage, putting eggs in the incubation tray, removal of dead vegetation stalks and spraying bramble leaves to provide extra moisture. They will certainly keep the students busy and provide good livestock care experience. The bug cage area in the Museum Discovery Centre will be changed into a Climate Hub by James, so watch this space.



Malaysian Stick Insects, girl and boy © Saffron Walden Museum

This summer we had more rain and varying temperatures which ensured that flowering plants continued to grow and flower so they could be surveyed by Special Roadside Verge volunteers who are members of the Essex Wildlife Trust and the Saffron Walden Wildflower Group. It was a good year for butterflies, and I saw lots of different ones when I was out on the verges. Small Coppers have been seen in Stebbing and Purple Emperors at Essex Wildlife Trust nature reserve Shadwell Wood in Ashdon. Purple Emperors need Sallow trees for their caterpillars to feed on, and there are plenty of those trees in the wood. The next job is to check the Autumn / Winter full width cut of verges which stops the chalk grassland turning into scrub.



Xanthoria parietina © Saffron Walden Museum

With our varied collections work, I have just done the October check of insect pest traps. Good news is that we have solved the problem of woodlice getting into the Natural History store. Soon it will be turning chilly. Each year we put a cover on the glacial erratic boulder in the Museum grounds to protect it from damage by frosts.

I am continuing to document some of the Museum's unique nineteenth century collections of non-flowering plants. These herbaria are Algae, Bryophytes (Mosses and Liverworts), Fungi and Lichens. Pictured is yellow Lichen *Xanthoria parietina* collected by Frederick Yorke Brocas in 1874 at Audley End Park wall on Windmill Hill, Saffron Walden. This Naturalists Agent from London collected six volumes of plants around the Saffron Walden area in 1874 and they are cared for by the Museum. I will be featuring a different specimen from the herbarium as the January Object of the Month. My September object was a Spiny Seahorse, details are in this newsletter.

## Archaeology & Human History: Jenny Oxley

### Community Showcase The Art of Pargeting



Last year we were approached by pargeter and researcher, Anna Kettle who was interested in surveying the town's pargeted buildings and seeing any related tools or documents we held in our collections.

We subsequently partnered with SPAB (the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings) to host Anna doing a placement with both organisations, researching local examples of pargeting.

Having completed the survey, Anna has now provided pargeting tools and samples for a new temporary display in the Museum and the tools will remain in the Museum's collections for future generations.

This display also links nicely with the recent pargeting workshops held in the Museum's grounds, and the pargeting which was demonstrated at the recent Heritage Craft Day.

Both pargeting activities were run by The Pargetting Company and the workshops were kindly funded by Paul Fairhurst and the New Homes Bonus scheme.

### Dating the Tudor Bed

Researchers have been successful in getting a grant from the Regional Furniture Society, administered by the V&A Museum to enable carbon 14 dating to be done in November on the Tudor bed on display in the Museum, to test the belief that it is one of the few 'flatpack' travelling Tudor beds left in existence.

### Loaning one of our Objects

The Abolitionist reticule (purse) c. 1827 in the Museum's collections, will be going out on display to the Fitzwilliam Museum for the Black Atlantic: Power, People, Resistance exhibition (working title) which will run from 21 February 2025 - 1 June 2025.

### World Culture Collection

Rebe Taylor, Associate Professor of History at the University of Tasmania is producing an online resource about the Helder Wedge connection to the world culture collections; we will link to it from the Museum's website once it is available.

### Captain Cook

A wooden flute originally on loan to us from the Cuming Collection Southwark, on display in our world cultures gallery for many years, is going out on loan for the Cook250: Commemorating Captain Cook's Mapping and Naming of the New Hebrides exhibition in 2024 in Vanuatu, South Pacific, with support for couriering the item to them coming from the Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology (CUMAA).

### Outreach Heritage Roadshow

The grant for an outreach heritage roadshow granted by the United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund (administered by Uttlesford District Council) to the Museum has had to be returned, due to the interim management arrangements, we sadly no longer have the capacity to deliver it.

### Museum website

We went live with a re-design of the Museum website [www.saffronwaldenmuseum.org](http://www.saffronwaldenmuseum.org) at the beginning of October and are using Google Analytics 4 to help collect data on users of the new site.

## Learning News. A Summer of Art: Charlotte Pratt

**S**ummer 2023 saw a summer of art at the Museum. The Wild about Walden lion art trail and The Uttlesford Open exhibition were well received by visitors. The Summer of Art theme continued with a full programme of family activities over the summer including seashell self-portraits, relief paintings and flower collage.

The Museum also collaborated on a 'Fantastic Fossils' event with Saffron Walden Library and Gerald Lucy who kindly brought along some super dinosaur models and gave up his time to identify visitors' fossils.

The summer of activities culminated in our Heritage Crafts Day. There was plenty to see and do on the day, including lots of hands-on workshops such as willow weaving and demonstrations from Saffron Walden Community Shed. The replica Roman pottery wheel from the archaeology gallery was also resurrected and reassembled and with a few additions in the interest of practicality, visitors had a go at throwing their own air-dry clay pots!

Since the start of the school term, I have been busy with school sessions and loan boxes, including two days spent at Saffron Walden County High School introducing the whole of year 7 to the joys of history. We looked at British history from the Iron Age to the



Norman conquest, with each class divided into four groups, each producing a presentation advocating for the impact of one of four cultures: the Celts, the Romans, the Anglo-Saxons and the Vikings. Persuasive presentations ranged from posters to some surprisingly good raps! It was a great couple of days, and I hope to visit again next year.

We will finish up 2023 with two art workshops for adults, a paper wreath making workshop on the 2nd and a Christmas printing workshop on the 5th of December.

## Object of the Month

**August 2023**

**Condiment stand and bottles**

**Chosen by Eleanor Cadogan**

**In** April, three university students Eleanor, Elizabeth and Katie joined us for a week to help inventory the ceramic and glassware store, behind the scenes at the Museum. Eleanor has remained volunteering with us for the rest of the summer.



(Pictured left): this condiment stand and bottles were selected by Eleanor, as her favourite item in the store so far.

The three bottles are labelled "Oli", "Azyn" and "Peper". "Azyn" means vinegar in the Frisian dialect, which is an area north of the Netherlands. "Oli" means oil in Dutch and "Peper" is pepper.

The stand and bottles were donated to the Museum in 1895 by Dr Henry Stear. When he died in 1917, much of his ceramics collection was bequeathed to the Museum.

This item is particularly interesting because the handwritten note and drawing on the base of the stand, written by Guy Maynard, the then Curator of the Museum in 1920, gives an idea of the doctor's influence on the town, his family, character, occupation and a physical description of him.

Henry Stear was a surgeon and worked as one of the first four doctors in the Saffron Walden General Hospital, which was founded in 1866.

© Saffron Walden Museum

Maynard took over as Curator of the Museum from his father in 1904 and had grown up in the building.

To see this item and read the inscription on its base, read the blog article on our website

<https://www.saffronwaldenmuseum.org/2023/08/01/object-of-the-month-august-2023/>

**September 2023**

**Spiny Seahorse**

**Chosen by Sarah Kenyon**

**S**eptember's Object of the Month is a Spiny Seahorse found on the east coast of England at Skegness, Lincolnshire in 1904. The dried specimen was donated to the Museum by a resident of Saffron Walden. It is 12 cm long from head to tail.

**British Seahorses**

There are two species of British seahorse. The Spiny Seahorse, *Hippocampus guttulatus*, and the Short Snouted Seahorse, *Hippocampus hippocampus*. The main difference between the two species is the length of the snout. The Spiny Seahorse has a longer snout and spines on the back and the head. They can grow to 18cm in length and live for 10 years.



*Spiny Seahorse, Hippocampus guttulatus* SAFWM : 1975.68 ©





Seahorse SAFWM : 164003 showing the prehensile tail ©

Seahorses live in shallow coastal waters around the British Isles, up to the Shetland Isles, and Ireland. A Short Snouted Seahorse was seen for the first time at Harwich Harbour, Essex in 2023. They are poor swimmers and rely on their prehensile tail to cling onto seaweed and seagrass to stop themselves being swept away. A small dorsal fin beats 35 to 70 times per second to provide weak forward propulsion. Seahorses feed on small shrimp, crab and plankton. Their eyesight is good and the flexible snout can get into crevices in rocks. Prey is sucked up through the snout because seahorses do not have teeth. In winter they migrate to deeper water and anchor themselves to rocks or seaweed to ride out storms.

### Seahorse facts

Fish:

Seahorses are fish! They are related to pipefish and sea dragons.

Pregnancy: the males get pregnant.

Seahorses are the only animal with a true reversed pregnancy. The female transfers the eggs to the male with her ovipositor. He fertilises them and keeps them in his brood pouch to grow. Then he gives birth to live young called fry. Seahorses are monogamous and have one partner for the breeding season from April to October. It is not thought that they mate for life now.

Colour:

seahorses can change colour like chameleons. This helps camouflage them to hide from predators and in courtship. Each day the female meets the male in his territory, they change colour and perform a dance where they may circle each other, or an object, and hold tails.

Threats:

Seahorses are endangered. They are legally protected by CITES (Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species) and The Wildlife and Countryside Act. It is illegal to import, kill, capture or disturb a seahorse.

Habitat destruction:

Seagrass meadows can be destroyed by anchors, fishing nets, dredging, drilling for oil and pollution. 92% of meadows have been destroyed. Marine Protect Areas are being set up around Britain to protect biodiversity.

Illegal trade:

Seahorses are captured for the pet trade or killed and dried for use in traditional medicines or sold as souvenirs.

Climate change:

A marine heatwave around Britain in April 2023 saw seas reach their highest recorded surface temperature of 21°C. Seagrass meadows are stressed by heat. Ocean heatwaves cause mass mortality of marine plants and animals and the collapse of food chains. Sea ice also is melting and ocean circulation has slowed down due to higher global temperatures. If ocean currents change direction or stop, the supply of plankton that seahorses depend on for food may be disrupted.

How can you help?

- Never buy souvenirs of dried sea creatures such as seahorses, starfish or shells which are homes for hermit crabs.
- Reduce your use of plastics and buy fish that is caught sustainably.
- Use eco moorings when sailing to anchor your boat.
- Support a marine conservation charity such as The Seahorse Trust [www.theseahorsetrust.org](http://www.theseahorsetrust.org) . Donate or volunteer and you can even adopt a seahorse!
- Report sightings of seahorses to The Seahorse Trust via the British Seahorse Survey website [www.theseahorsetrust.org/conservation/british-seahorse-survey/](http://www.theseahorsetrust.org/conservation/british-seahorse-survey/)

## October 2023 Iguanodon fossil

October's Object of the Month is a fragment of bone from a dinosaur, probably Iguanodon, from Lord Braybrooke's personal collection. Teeth from the dinosaur were found in Sussex, and first described and named by the English geologist Gideon Mantell in 1825.

The name means iguana-tooth ('odon' is Greek for 'tooth'), and comes from the resemblance of the teeth to modern iguana teeth, only much bigger.

Iguanodon was the second dinosaur to be named thanks to the discovery of fossils, after Megalosaurus.

The first person to use the word 'dinosaurs' to describe a group of giant, lizard-like animals was the English biologist and palaeontologist Richard Owen.



*Iguanodon bone fragment © Saffron Walden Museum*

## November 2023 New treasures



November's Object(s) of the Month are three new treasures, found by detectorists, which have been reported through the Treasure Act.

The oldest is a delicate ornament made from a ribbon of gold sheet which has been carefully rolled up at each end. It was found in High Easter parish. It dates from the Bronze Age and is around 3,000 to 4,000 years old. We do not know how small gold objects like this were worn: perhaps in the hair or on clothing?

The small silver ingot from Leaden Roding is associated with Viking traders. It weighs just under 4.5g, which equates with a Viking unit of weight (one sixth of a Viking ounce). It has been nicked with a knife to test the metal. Vikings were very particular about the quality of their silver!

The gold ring, set with a small, polished amethyst, is medieval and was found in Wimbish parish by Simon Rutter. Rings of this style were popular from 1150 to 1450. Amethysts were thought to help ward off drunkenness.

Thanks to finders and landowners generously waiving their right to a financial reward, all three of these finds have been partly or wholly donated to the Museum.

For more about the Treasure Act and archaeological finds, visit the Portable Antiquities Scheme website <https://finds.org.uk/>

## Volunteers News: Wendy-Jo Atter

A 'thank you' to all our valued volunteers who helped at the 'Museums at Night' event in October, which was a huge success!

Two of the Museum's weekend team did a stall on behalf of the Museum at the UCAN volunteer fair held at the Jubilee hub in the town centre on the 24th October. Signing up new volunteers for the Museum.

### 'The Museum needs you!'

New volunteers are always very welcome to join the team on a regular basis or to provide ad-hoc cover. To find out more, visit the Museum website at

[www.saffronwaldenmuseum.org](http://www.saffronwaldenmuseum.org)

call 01799 510333

or email [museum@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:museum@uttlesford.gov.uk).



*Denizens of The Spooky Forest evening trail at the October Half-term Event*

## Museum Shop Sunday, 26 November: Wendy-Jo Atter



MUSEUM SHOP  
SUNDAY  
Sunday 26 November 2023

Museum Shop Sunday  
26 November 2023  
2.00 - 4.30pm

### Original Gifts

Our Museum Shop offers bespoke ranges, stocking fillers and unique gifts inspired by our collections.

All your Christmas shopping dilemmas solved in one go!

### Shop with a Conscience

Every purchase helps Saffron Walden Museum look after years of history.

What better way to give back at Christmas?

### Meet the Inspiration for our New Exhibition, Evacuee: A Wartime Childhood

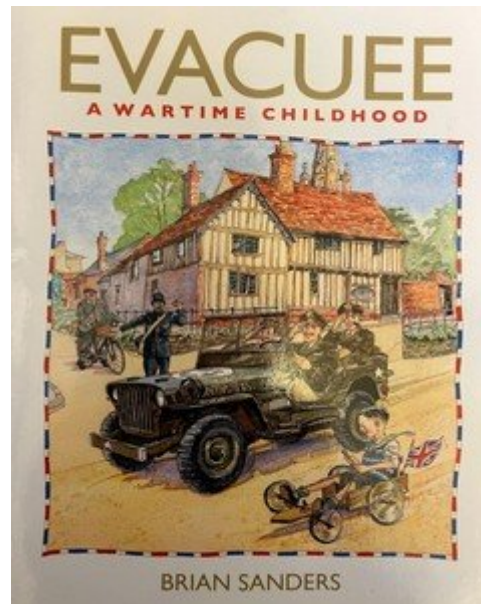
Come and meet artist and author Brian Sanders, who will be answering questions and signing copies of his book. His original artworks will be on display along with wartime items and photographs from the Museum collections.



## Meet the Author Event

Admissions: Adults £2.50; Concessions £1.25; Under 18s Free.  
Website: [www.saffronwaldenmuseum.org](http://www.saffronwaldenmuseum.org) Tel: 01799 510333

We will be selling Brian Sanders' book, 'Evacuee a wartime childhood' at £8.99



You can read more about the exhibition here: [Evacuee : A Wartime Childhood - Saffron Walden Museum](https://www.saffronwaldenmuseum.org/evacuee)

You can read more about Museum Shop Sunday in general here: [Museum Shop Sunday – The Association For Cultural Enterprises](https://www.associationforculturalenterprises.org/museum-shop-sunday)

## Exhibitions and Upcoming Events

### Evacuee: A Wartime Childhood Sat 11 November – March 2024

The museum will exhibit the original artwork of artist and author Brian Sanders.

His career spans decades working on books, magazines, stamp and coin designs, editorial and advertising projects. High profile work such as Mad Men and Stanley Kubrick, which will feature in the exhibition.

Scenes of Saffron Walden and the district from his two books, *Evacuee: A Wartime Childhood* (2010) and *Return of Evacuee: A Post-war Childhood* (2016) will dominate the exhibition, accompanied by wartime items and photographs from the Museum's collections.

Visitors will be able to explore the second world war context and the lived experiences of evacuees who came to live in Saffron Walden and Uttlesford during that time, such as Sandy.

Sandy's original artwork features well-known places in the town including Bridge End Gardens, St. Mary's Church, Bridge House, the Eight Bells pub and the Boys British School, as well as venues of the time which no longer exist or are much transformed such as the cinema and public baths, which many will remember.

The exhibition will also reflect on the experiences of those who have come to Saffron Walden and Uttlesford as modern-day refugees, as a result of ongoing conflicts around the world.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a Community Town Trail (self-guided tour map) capturing moments and places from around the town from the books.



## EVACUEE

### A WARTIME CHILDHOOD

11<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2023 – SUNDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2024

Exhibition of original artwork of a wartime childhood in Saffron Walden by artist and author Brian Sanders. Plus highlights from a lifetime's work including Kubrick's 2001 and AMC's Mad Men.

Saffron Walden Museum  
Museum Street, Saffron Walden, CB10 1BN  
01799 510333 | saffronwaldenmuseum.org | museum@uttlesford.gov.uk



### Saffron Walden History Re-constructed: Tony Morton

How quickly do things become 'history', and how quickly are they lost and forgotten? Saffron Walden once had its own railway station, on a branch line which ran from Audley End Station to Bartlow Station, but there is now very little trace of the line left since its closure in 1969, a relatively recent date. Of the station itself just the former station building, now in residential use, and the bridges in Debden Road and South Road remain to mark its former location.

But this history has been brought back to life on-line on the YouTube website by someone, who I can only acknowledge as "@SaffronWalden-ro5ks", who has built a scale model railway of Saffron Walden Station, as it was on June 11<sup>th</sup> 1942, with a series of videos that reconstruct the entire timetable of that day, complete with a realistic sound track. These show the passenger trains, goods trains bringing in materials to the industries that used to be on the south side of the station ( a corn mill, a sawmill, a brass foundry and a cement products factory ), coal for the town, fuel for the Ministry of War destined for Hadstock aerodrome, sounds of warplanes flying over, and many other authentic details. On one video it is noted that engine drivers tried to avoid taking on water in Saffron Walden because it was so hard that limescale would build up in the boiler, and of course this is still a problem for us in our domestic kettles today.

I think there can be no doubt that if this were in the Museum it would be a very popular exhibit, but I think it is built into a house and is not portable. You may have time to take a look at either the main page here; - <https://www.youtube.com/@SaffronWalden-ro5ks/videos> or perhaps this video as a sample showing a 'morning 09:15 mixed train' - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wKL3u1jQBfo>

A vanished history brought convincingly back to life, congratulations to the builder.



© Saffron Walden Model Railway <https://www.youtube.com/@SaffronWalden-ro5ks/> A scene from the 1930s

If you have any recollections of the Station, its operations or its staff, we would be interested to collect them, both to improve the Museum's own records, and to help the builder of this model with additional details. You can send comments to [museum@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:museum@uttlesford.gov.uk), and if you click this link to do that the message will open with a prepared subject title "Saffron Walden Railway Station Recollections".

## Museum Society News

### Membership

**Oh** dear!

I am still chasing a few unpaid subscriptions. It would make life easier for us all if more members paid by standing order which is quite easy to set up and saves finding cheques or cash each year.

If you are a taxpayer and have not already done so, please consider making a Gift Aid declaration. This enables the Society to reclaim tax you have already paid (currently) to the equivalent of one quarter of your subscription at no extra cost to you

Please contact me if you would like more information.

*Christine Sharpe*

#### Membership

Membership subscription is a minimum of £15 a year and includes,

- Newsletters sent to members three times a year
- Unlimited free entry to the museum during opening hours – and children get in free, but Special Events may attract a charge

- A programme of evening talks with wide ranging subjects, currently delivered via Zoom during winter months and live during the other part of the year
- Private viewings before the opening of special exhibitions for you and your guest
- An Annual Winter Social Evening, with a museum quiz trail
- Annual General Meeting – Attend and vote; have your say in how the Museum Society is run.

## Reports on Talks

### One Man's Saffron Walden

by Bruce Munro

11 September 2023

**B**ruce Munro has a long association with Saffron Walden, since he moved here in 1950 as an articled pupil to Cheffins at 7 Hill Street, involved with the monthly auctions then held in the Corn Exchange, and weekly cattle sales. Farming was then the mainstay of the town, with many other businesses existing to supply services to farming. He stayed with Mr & Mrs Johnson, and he was a drover for the cattle sales. Bruce met a large number of rural characters in his working life; his job ranged from accounting for the stamps used on letters to collection of rents mainly in Castle Street. There were auction sales on Thursdays of furniture etc, and thrice yearly antiques sales of maybe 500 lots. So he became acquainted with many people. The farmers dressed well to come to market, and used the town's many pubs for lunch; it was all about farming, and a real market town with Corn Merchants and Agricultural Machinery dealers

Bruce talked about the history of Castle Street, (which was also the subject of an Exhibition at the Museum in the autumn of 2012). In 1950 there were 23 pubs in the town for a population of 7000; now we have 10 pubs for 20,000 people.

A book has been written by Bruce Munro called 'One Man's Saffron Walden' published by Saffron Walden Historical Society Vol 6, and this can be ordered from Saffron Walden Tourist Information, price £15.00; and see <https://saffronwaldenhistory.org.uk/swhs-publications/>

### Meet them at the Museum

by Carolyn Wingfield

9th October

**M**useums are not just about collections of objects. They are about people and the stories behind the exhibits. Carolyn's theme was a Curator's-eye view of some of the personal stories behind the exhibits, entwined with the collections, and the many remarkable people, from all walks of life, who have contributed to our shared heritage and sense of community. By choosing a few of the many objects in the Museum's collections, Carolyn recounted her memories of how she first came to see these items.

This talk marked the culmination of Carolyn's 23 year career at our museum, and a presentation of flowers and wine was given to her at the close of the talk by Paul Salvidge.



## Who to contact ...

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