

FRIENDS OF GOSPORT MUSEUM

www.friendsofgosportmuseum.org.uk

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY/ FEBRUARY 2014

Talk by Peter Keat 23rd January

Queen Victoria's Funeral

7:30pm Free for FGM Members

Please Book

Look out for the talks that FGM members can attend for free in 2014 in the Discovery Centre What's On booklet during the year.

Friends of Gosport Museum

Informal Coffee Meeting

in the Discovery Centre 10:30am every 2nd Thursday of the month.

Dates of Next Few Meetings

Thursday 9th January 2014

Thursday 13th February

Thursday 13th March

Thursday 10th April

meet at new place, Community Table in the Quiet Area after the café.

Chairman's letter

Once again Christmas is nearly upon us and I wish all of you a Happy and Joyous Christmas and I extend this greeting to the New Year. (By the time you receive this Christmas and New Will have passed so hope it was all good for you Ed.)

When you are out shopping how many think of going in to the Museum? Not being parochial I do not only mean The GDC, what about when you go to Portsmouth or Southampton or Winchester or even nearer home Fareham. Do you visit the Museum? All the Museums are well worth visiting. In Portsmouth there is the City Museum and the Cumberland Museum of Natural History. Winchester has the Regimental Museums, the City Museum, Intertech and its Discovery Centre. Southampton is also well endowed with Sea City, Solent Sky (Aviation Museum), among others. Southampton also has an excellent City Art Gallery, as has Portsmouth with Aspex Gallery at Gun Wharf. Don't forget our neighbour, Westbury Manor, Fareham it's not far away, when did you last go there?

I am not acting as an "advertisement," but the life blood of any Museum is its visitors. In these difficult times they are all, like us, struggling and its only by such visits, that we not only learn more about South East Hampshire with its wealth of history, but the future of our Museums is more assured. Not only visiting helps, but membership of the Friends Groups of the Museums supports the activities and the over-worked Staff and their efforts behind the scenes. To this end I am grateful to Cllr Chris Carter who has generously given a donation to aid our up-coming Recruitment Drive.

Finally some notes for your diary: there is a Friends talk on 23rd January 2014, where Peter Keat will tell us something about Queen Victoria's funeral.

My best wishes for 2014 to you all, Sydney Aynsworth Chairman, Friends of Gosport Museum

Annual SE Western Counties Area Conference 10th September 2013 by Sue Hall

Courtesy of the Friends of Abingdon Museum, the conference was held in the Roysse Room, which dates from the late 1400s, in the Guildhall.

Sheila Hills, Chairman of the Friends of Abingdon Museum, welcomed everyone and asked the Mayor, Councillor Samantha Bowring, to open the conference.

The Abingdon County Hall Museum has undergone a major £3m restoration. Peter Clare, the Treasurer of the Friends, together with Jane Bowen, the Curator of Abingdon Museum, gave a joint presentation entitled 'A Sense of Place: Abingdon County Hall Museum – a focus for the town. It showed very clearly what can happen when everyone pulls together and puts their shoulders behind the wheel. A major point was that commercial/ advertising type backing was not available. The days when everyone knew someone with a business promotion budget have gone, and it is reckoned one is thus liable to have to rely on internally generated fund raising and grants. The results showed that the result of months of hard work, worry and fundraising was that this lovely old building (once the County Hall) was saved from decay. Energy saving improvements were made and modern systems for changing displays were set in place. Oxfordshire County Council pays the running costs but maintaining the structure was prohibitive. The Lottery Heritage Fund provided £1.7m but required matched funding. The Restoration Committee obtained charitable status for the Museum Appeal Fund which allowed them them to apply for grants from a range of sources.

Tony Simmons, Director of Combe Mill on the Blenheim estate, spoke about the recent outstanding restoration of this historic Victorian Mill. It was an example of internal resource maximisation and the inability to say “impossible”. Tony led by example and there are unfortunately few like him, with either the vigour or the ability to think “out of the box”. Combe Mill is his doing virtually solo, although he would no doubt decry this. His excellent presentation skills and a very open attitude to questions were extremely helpful. It was the estate's saw mill until 50 years ago and was in a state of collapse. With a team of volunteers, the structure was saved and has taken on a new role to give visitors and schools parties a real experience of working life in Victorian times. Qualified volunteer craftsmen demonstrate the restored machinery. The Tea Room, with home-made refreshments, is a great success and money spinner.

There was a visit to the Abingdon Museum after lunch and people were invited to climb on to the roof area, with a glass of wine in hand, to see the magnificent panorama of Abingdon-on-Thames.

Our Open Forum was particularly successful, ably led by Colin Greig, Director of the Pendon Museum. Slowly, very very slowly, some people are coming to realise that unless they put themselves about, their future is threatened. Those Museums where there is an “us versus them” standoff are obviously going to struggle. The area where there is little consensus, if any, appeared was the role of Friends. For some Friends are a source of income and for others the differentiation between Friends and helpers may either be absolute or in some cases very blurred. There is also an obvious difficulty with the role of Friends when there are paid staff around. These staff are (probably justifiably) scared for their jobs and are likely thus not to be too co-operative to amateurs. All in all it is still a difficult scenario, but Abingdon and Combe Mill show what can be done.

At the end of the afternoon, Sheila Hills conducted a short walking tour to St Helen's Church, which dates from Saxon times, and the nearby Almshouses. Sue Hall.

BAFM Conferences 2014

AGM and National Conference 26th to 28th September at the Marriott Hotel, Swansea. Conference Facilitator, Jean Knight telephone 020 8669 1546, email irvineknight@btinternet.com .

Annual SE Western Counties Area Conference 3rd June at Southampton Solent University Conference Centre held courtesy of Friends of Southampton's Museums. Details in March 2014. WFFM Council and General Assembly and World Congress 14th to 18th May in Berlin.

Museum and Heritage Show 14th and 15th May 2014 Olympia free entry. www.bafm.org.uk

Alverstoke Parish History an Introduction for Revd Andy Norris

Alverstoke's new Rector – the Reverend Andy Norris – has arrived here with lots of “luggage”! This includes his friendly wife Libby. She has shared with him the joys (and parental anxieties) of raising their children to the point of making their own ways in the world – all except for the youngest, Matthew, who is just finishing his pre-University course at Fareham College.

Andy has also brought a lively mind to the job, showing a very practical interest in all aspects of his new “patch”. As well as teaching us how to blend our “ancient Bible-based” Faith into our modern God-given technological lifestyles, he does us good by encouraging us to laugh in Church!

Likewise his effort in “walking nine miles around our ancient Parish Bounds” with a band of Parish enthusiasts was much appreciated. That walk was first described in what we call “The 948 A.D. Royal Saxon Charter of Stoce”. In 1948 the 1000th Anniversary of this remarkable Latin document lying in Winchester Cathedral passed uncelebrated. Neither Alverstoke's Rector nor any Gosport Councillors knew about it!

However, when Gosport's ex-1940's wartime Education Officer, Dr Leonard White Ph.D, wrote his “STORY OF GOSPORT” in 1965, he opened the gates to the amazing Local History of the whole Gosport area. The advent of “magic” photo-copiers at that time pushed the gates even wider. It remains for our future citizens to judge what the frenzied speed of modern communications has added.

The original 948 Boundaries were written in Anglo-Saxon, not Latin. Briefly they started from the shingle end of Stokes Bay (the stone-ridge) via Gale Moor (and Gomer Lane), north to the boundary of the “men of Rowner” where an old Saxon “herpoth” or war-path, led to the Elson meadows. It finally slipped back through the Harbour-mouth, ending up on Stokes Bay, “where it began”. The same handful of Anglo-Saxon place names still survive amidst our modern estates. Nowadays these are built for a population total of 70,000 people, where our ancestors' family groups are variously estimated at 750 – 12,500.

How it was granted by young King Eadred (a grandson of King Alfred the Great) to his faithful Thane “Alfric” will be told later. But first we must introduce Andy Norris to his 56 Reverend predecessors, the Former Rectors of St Mary's Church, Alverstoke, 1284 A.D. to 2012 A.D. Andy is the 57th. (the list was included but unable to fit here, please see the web site) By Joan Russell

Could you be a Volunteer?

There are a number of things that can be done by members to help the Museum Service in Gosport. I understand that there are about half a dozen members who volunteer for things such as stewarding exhibitions, parts in events for children, passing on memories, helping with items in the

store and other things. I am sure Margaret Ventham will give answers to any questions about volunteering for the Museum Service. Ian

Christmas Party

On Monday 9th December at 2pm the Friends of Gosport Museum had its annual Christmas Party/ Meeting in The Studio next to the Museum on the Mezzanine in the Discovery Centre. Around a third of the membership as well as Wendy from The Museum Service. Unfortunately a number of members were unwell so unable to attend.

There were light refreshments, tea, coffee, a number of other drinks as well as mince pies. It was a chance to talk to other members, Gosport's history was discussed among other things. It was finished off with one of Jack Poole's great Gosport quizzes.

It was suggested that it would be easier to get to if was a bit later, say from 2:30pm rather than 2pm. Do you think that or any other changes, would make it easier or more likely to attend, please let me know. Ian

Friends of Gosport
Museum

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Do You Have Email?

Do you have an email account that you check at least once a week? If yes, have you considered having the newsletter sent by email? It is sent in the Adobe Reader PDF format. If you are not sure, you could try it and if you find it doesn't suit you, then go back to receiving a printed one. In addition to receiving the newsletters, at times notices are sent for sending to the membership for example, by the Discovery Centre. If you provide your email address, please advise whether you are happy to receive one or both notices and newsletters.

As well as receiving the notices, you will also receive the newsletter as soon as it ready, and if needed corrections, rather than waiting for post or hand-delivery. ian@gosport.info Ian

A big thank you to those who provided items for this newsletter.

If you have any information, articles, events or photos that you think may be of interest to members of the Friends of Gosport Museum or others, please let me have them by post or email, details below, by 21st February for the March/ April Newsletter. if you have something please let me have your item as soon as you can, thank you. Ian

Friends of Gosport Museum web site at
www.friendsofgosportmuseum.org.uk

Please send contributions for the Newsletter to
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