



FRIENDS OF GOSPORT MUSEUM

www.friendsofgosportmuseum.org.uk

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY/ FEBRUARY 2015

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 8th January 2015

Thursday 12th February

Thursday 12th March

Thursday 9th April

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

Friends of Gosport Museum Sponsored Talk

Thursday 16th April 7:30pm

Forgotten Wrecks of the First World War

Tickets £3,

Friends of Gosport Museum Free.

Booking Essential

Along the south coast of England lie
approximately 700 wrecks from the First
World War.

Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund,
the Maritime Archaeology Trust

FOGM Event November 2014

On 20th November the committee of FOGM invited members to come for a drink and a chance to meet other members before a talk by Abigail Coppins on the "Prison Hulks in Portsmouth Harbour". They also got a chance to meet Erica Munro, our new curator, and Hassi Shah-Leverett, area co-ordinator for the South East of the British Association of Friends of Museums. The FOGM have three opportunities a year to attend talks at the Discovery Centre for nothing and this was one. The next is on 16th April entitled "Forgotten Wrecks of the First World War".

Abigail's talk was excellent and I am sure we all learnt something new. She divided her talk into five parts covering the background of the prison hulks between 1793 and 1815 (this period covers the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars); the locations; Portsmouth Harbour Prison Hulks; what Prison life was all about and her conclusions. The talk was a result of her archival research at the National Archives, Kew and was only a brief summary of all she had discovered.

I have no intention of writing a long essay on her talk but will just cover the highlights. We learnt that a prison hulk was usually a retired warship or captured vessel that had had their masts, sails and rigging removed; their lower decks stripped bare and the gun ports barred. Also extra

building were added to the top deck as extra accommodation and stores. They were used to either contain prisoners of war (military use) or convicts (civilian use) and came into being round about 1770 to house POW's from the American and French wars. The hulks were located in Portsmouth Harbour (POW's), Langstone Harbour (convicts), Chatham and the Medway and Plymouth Harbour but Abigail concentrated her talk on those in Portsmouth Harbour.

The first of the hulks arrived in Portsmouth in December 1796 to help relief the overcrowding at Portchester and Forton Prisons and the two vessels could hold approximately 1,600 prisoners. Between 1793 and 1815 a total of 22 ships were used with 10 to 12 being in operation at any one time. The POW's were separated by nationality and one or two of the hulks were used as hospitals for the sick. Using documents and letters from the period Abigail was able to give us a flavour of the prisoner's life which was far from pleasant. We learnt about the various illnesses that could occur; how the prisoners amused themselves and how they could be involved in cooking for themselves and also opportunities to make money. We also learnt a little about the life of the staff on the hulks (drunkenness was not unusual), about the people actually working on them and about those applying for jobs on the hulks. Abigail finished by telling us a little about what happened in the end to some of the prisoners – they could be released or exchanged, some stayed in England, some joined the Royal Navy or British Army, it is estimated about 10% died while in captivity and a very small number managed to escape.

With regards to the hulks themselves – what happened to them?. It is possible that some may have been broken up and recycled as timbers for breakwaters, foundations or even used in buildings. There is still an assemblage of wrecks in Langstone Harbour that may be the remains of some of the hulks. All in all an excellent talk. **By Yvonne Riddell**

A Week in the Life of the Community Engagement and Learning Officer for Hampshire Cultural Trust SE Area

Having been asked many times recently what my job title means and what kind of things I do, I thought I'd do a quick write-up of 7 days in my working life which demonstrate the range of activities I undertake and audiences I work with. Running alongside this, usually at the beginning and end of the day, are the more desk-bound strategic planning and management tasks and the admin and liaison work that sits behind every activity.

Saturday 22 November

Christmas Lights Switch-on event at Eastleigh Museum. I provided a display of 1914 toys in a gazebo outside the museum for One Community staff and volunteers to work with, a table of WW1 handling objects for the newly-trained volunteers to run in the exhibition space, and 2 activities making 1914 style Christmas presents in the museum, run by myself and more volunteers. It was a real feel-good event which attracted 214 people into the museum with more engaging with us outside.

Monday 24 November

Home Explorers workshop at Eastleigh Museum for Year 1 children from Shakespeare Infant School. This is a session devised to meet the needs of the new primary curriculum where KS1 children have to consider Changes Within Living Memory. Then back to Gosport to set up for a Mammoths & Men school session at SEARCH on Tuesday and to get all the Hampshire Futures paperwork together for a Museums for Seniors workshop on Tuesday. The Assistant Community Engagement and Learning Officer delivered a bespoke art and design workshop at SEARCH for a school group on Packaging in the Past.

Tuesday 25 November

Two more Home Explorers workshops – one in Eastleigh Museum in the morning, and one at the school in the afternoon because the museum had a power cut so I packed up all the artefacts and activities and went to the classroom to deliver it (sparing the children a very wet walk too)! Meanwhile, the ACELO was delivering the Mammoths & Men school workshop at SEARCH, followed by a Christmas-themed reminiscence workshop for the Gosport Live at Home Group in Bridgemary, part of our Museums for Seniors strand. A casual session leader delivered a Time and Toys workshop at SEARCH.

Wednesday 26 November

After helping to welcome two school groups to SEARCH for Time and Toys and Victorian Christmas workshops, I left the ACELO and casual session leader running these and headed off to Bursledon Windmill to help the curator get the site ready for our first visitors after the restoration – a group of visually impaired children from Kings Copse Primary School. The contractors finishing off the work kindly worked around us whilst I delivered a Grain Chain tactile and auditory workshop for these children.

Thursday 27 November

Whilst the ACELO delivered two more Mammoths & Men workshops, I headed off to Westbury Manor Museum to catch up with colleagues there about the up-coming school visits to the site, to hand over resources for the Windmill event on Sunday and to attend a Trust finance and HR meeting. Then it was back to Gosport for a bit of project planning for projects next March in Fareham and Eastleigh that I had to have some phone conversations about, and to set up for an evening talk on the Artists Rifles by the exhibition curator and an evening opening of the exhibition which I was hosting. With a turn-out of 40 on a cold night, this was a great success.

Friday 28 November

In the morning I delivered outreach from Westbury Manor Museum at Meon Valley Day Care Centre. This was part of our Museums for Seniors Strand in the SE Area, which (being a priority audience) has attracted significant funding from Hampshire Futures. Like the one in Gosport earlier in the week, this was a reminiscence workshop about Christmas Past. I took along two themed collections of artefacts, one covering Christmas cards, presents and decorations, and one on Christmas food and drink. The carefully structured session used a mix of quizzes, discussion topics and multi-sensory activities to evoke memories and trigger discussions. When I arrived there was a quiet, subdued atmosphere in the centre. By the time I left the atmosphere was lively and animated and staff commented that some of the participants talking and singing along were people who had not spoken for the last few weeks. Then I headed back to Gosport to set up the displays and activities for the open day on Saturday.

Saturday 29 November

To support the switch-on of Gosport's Christmas lights, we opened SEARCH for Science with a display of winter animal specimens set out according to their adaptations for surviving the cold, and in SEARCH for History we opened the Victorian House by Candlelight and laid on a decoupage gift-tag making activity and Victorian-style postcards to Father Christmas to post in our Victorian post box! The Victorian kitchen table was presided over by volunteer and FoGM vice-chair Maggie Ventham in costume as the cook, showing visitors all the ingredients that went into a traditional Christmas pudding. 470 people came into the museum to enjoy these activities.

Thankfully I took Sunday off whilst my wonderful colleagues ran the windmill's opening event. Then it was back for another week of varied activity before I grabbed a few minutes to write this up!

Janet Wildman, December 2014

Several of the Friends have helped with the planning From Saturday 17 January, 'Youth Open Art' will display works submitted by young people aged 14-18 and selected by judges from Hampshire Cultural Trust. To 21 February 2015 at Gosport Gallery, part of Gosport DC and is free admission.

This is the first youth open art competition run at the Gallery and the quality of the response has been startling. A large range of media and styles are on show and the level of talent amongst these young people is obvious. Sculpture, photography, textiles, pencil drawings and mixed media pieces create a striking and varied exhibition full of skill and thoughtful creative flair.

We are proud to offer these young people to show their work in a national-standard flagship gallery. Several will be for sale, may the first step for some of these considering art as a career.

The sponsors, Fareham financial management firm Newman Cozens, have already selected the Sponsor's Choice from the 47 artworks on display. The winner will be revealed once the exhibition has opened. Visitors will also be able to vote for their own favourite piece. The winner of the Public Vote will receive a prize once the exhibition has closed, all votes have been counted. Erica Munro

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Yvonne Riddell

David Taylor

New (old) Logo

The Logo used above takes us back to the Newsletter of March 1991, which I believe is the second one produced. The caption at the time was,

'The new logo has been designed by James Davidson, Senior Designer for the Hampshire County Museum Service' so this is a flash-back to the early days of the Friends of Gosport Museum.

Would You Like to Volunteer?

If you would like to volunteer for SEARCH it would be me at wendy.redman@hants.gov.uk you need to contact. If it is for the Gosport Museum Collection then it would be Jacqui Ready Jacqui.ready@hants.gov.uk. If you would like to volunteer for the remainder of the Discovery Centre it would be Rose Redman rosemary.redman@hants.gov.uk. Wendy

If you have information, articles, events or photos that may be of interest to Friends of Gosport Museum, please let me have them by post or email. If for the March Newsletter by 13th February or as soon as you can to :

Ian Jeffery 11 Harcourt Rd, Gosport, Hants PO12 3NR – ian@gosport.info

The Newsletter can be received by email (Adobe Reader .pdf) let me know if you would be happy to receive it this way. Ian

Please send contributions for the Newsletter to
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11 Harcourt Road, PO12 3NR ian@gosport.info
If you would be happy to receive this Newsletter
by email please let me know.

The views expressed are not necessarily those of
Hampshire CC Museums Service or its staff.

Membership of Friends of Gosport Museum is
open to all - Please contact any Committee
member. Annual Subscription
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