

FRIENDS OF GOSPORT MUSEUM

www.friendsofgosportmuseum.org.uk

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER/ OCTOBER 2011

22nd September Talk

7:15pm for 7:30pm start

The Studio Discovery Centre
'Alverstoke Charter of Liberty'
Joan Russell, Maggie Venham

Christmas Party

12th December 2pm

The Studio Gosport Discovery
Centre

Friends of Gosport Museum

Informal Coffee Meeting

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

Meetings before next Newsletter

Thursday 8th September

Thursday 13th October

Thursday 10th November

For around 1 hour

meet at Readers' Rest Café

Chairman's Letter

Since my last letter the Committee has had a meeting with Dr Janet Owens. She up-dated us on the completion of Stage 1 of the re-organisation of the Museum Services in Hampshire and gave an indication as to how Stage 2 would proceed in the next 5-10 years. I welcome Tom de Witt on his becoming Curator in Charge of the Museums in S.E.Hampshire and thank the other staff members, who have moved to other posts in the service, for all their help in the past.

I am pleased to report that Waitrose accepted our application for inclusion in their Community Funding Scheme. As you know we asked for help in funding the Inter-active Mammoth for the Geology Gallery and I thank all of you and the customers of Waitrose who donated. I would like to thank Maggie Venham for the work she did at extremely short notice.

The Exhibitions in the Gallery have been well attended and there are more in the coming months: 'The Treasurers of the Town Hall' should be interesting. Happily Joan Symonds is making progress following her recent illness and hopes to be more active soon.

Enjoy the rest of the holiday seasons. My best wishes to you all. Sydney Aynsworth, Chairman

Heritage Weekend 8th to 12th September

Don't forget the Heritage Weekend there are 33 locations this year 10 more than the past details at www.englishheritage.co.uk or pick up a leaflet. You may have had one delivered to your address.

This year includes: Fort Brockhurst*, Crescent Gardens, Diving Museum*, Holy trinity*, Explosion, a Number of events at Fort Brockhurst*, Fort Rowner, Forton Lake Maritime Archaeological Project, Gosport Airfield & Marine Engineering Musuem, Haslar Marina Lightship,'Mary Mouse II', Haslar Royal Naval Cemetery, Historic Walk to Walpole Park, Historic Diving Display*, Historic Diving Walk, HMS Alliance BSL Tour, HMS St Vincent Association Museum*, HMS Sulan Aircraft Tours, Institute of Naval Medicine,Jolly Accessible Bus Tours 'Army & Navy' and 'Angelseyville', Marine Artist Colin Baxter*, Mysteries of Stokes Bay, Royal Clarence Yard, RN Submarine Museum, St Marks Church Gosport, Victorian Photo Fun New Inn Public House*, Wild Harvest Festival Grange farm*. * = booking not required at that event, where not shown some or all places need to be booked.The organisers are also looking for more in 2012, let me know if you have any suggestions.

Subscriptions Final Reminder for 2011/12

The subscription for the year 2011/12 is due from 1st April 2011, £5 for a single and £7.50 for a joint membership. Thank you to all of those who have paid. If you do not wish to receive the next Newsletter and keep up to date with the Gosport Museum Service change and no longer wish to be a member of The Friends of Gosport Museum, you do not have to do anything. If you wish to continue to be a member, please send your payment and your Name and address to Linda Hedley, 7 Fairhome Close, Elson, Gosport, PO12 4HZ by mid October 2011, thank you.

COUNT GIORGIO EMANUEL CHARLES AUGUSTUS DES GENEYS 1848 - 1891

Mary Duly reports that, following her talk at the AGM, David Moore did some useful research which has added some 'flesh' to Count George Des Geneys' character as outlined in the Hants Chronicle account of his funeral, as a man 'who did not take any part in public affairs, but was well known and respected for his kindness and charitable disposition' The paper gives us, in their Christmastime reports of the Alverstoake Board of Guardians for 1887, 88 and 89 that amongst other kind seasonal donations, Count Des Geneys each time gave snuff and tobacco to the inmates. Another aspect of his character is shown in the reports of his involvement in local amateur dramatics in 1876 in productions at what is called The Military Hospital at Haslar, when he won plaudits both for his scenery painting and acting. A comment was made that 'the proceeds of the labours of Count Des Geneys and his able supporters' were to be applied to a worthwhile cause, the provision of engravings for the walls of the hospital'. 'Great praise' too was given to the acting skills of the Count, who took the part of 'a cantankerous old misanthrope' when he was only 28.

David also tracked down more information of the Count's Freemason activity including being installed as the Worshipful Master of "The Prince of Wales Lodge", a lodge for senior Freemasons, of which he was a founder member, the lodge still exists.

Mary knew that Kelly's Directory of 1886 records Dr.James Alder, with whom the Count lodged, as both a Surgeon Major to a Brigade Regiment, southern division and also medical officer to both Alverstoake District and Alverstoake Urban Sanitary Board. She had found this puzzling, but David explained that Dr Alder's military duties only were necessary in the summer when the army came to the area on exercises, otherwise he acted in his other capacity.

Jessie White

A question for you Dear Reader ... do you know who Jessie Mario, born Jessie White, is?

Well, she is an extraordinary Victorian English woman, who is of especial interest to us as she was born in Gosport, in 1832. I will leave her early life and go straight to the excitement of the years and experience that shaped her career..

Study at the Sorbonne in Paris in the early 1850's increased her interest in the radical politics of the time – remember the revolutions which swept Europe in 1848 were but a recent memory. In 1854, she was able to accompany a woman friend to Italy, a country she had long wished to visit. The friend had an introduction to Guiseppe Garibaldi, so Jessie was drawn into Garibaldi's circle and became an active supporter of his cause – the Reunification of Italy. Male prejudice prevented her from training as a doctor, in which direction Garibaldi had encouraged her, so she took to journalism to promote Italian re-unification.(Surprisingly her typical strict Victorian pater familias supported her, he having met Garibaldi in the course of his shipping business.)

At this point, I must explain that the cause of Italian reunification was far more complicated than I have indicated with others than Garibaldi involved with other ideas of what the aims were and how they were to be secured. For a time, Jessie had supported the approach of a very important figure, the republican politician, Mazzini, whom she had met earlier when he was in exile in England, in fact her outspoken activity in his support was why she was later imprisoned in Genoa for 4 months. It was then she exchanged her English surname of WHITE for MARIO. Her fiancé, Alberto Mario was also a political prisoner. Romantically, their courtship was by correspondence, they married on their release in Dec.1857 back in England. It proved to be a very happy marriage.

In the U.K., they worked to raise interest in AND funds for the Italian cause. They were in the USA for the same purpose when, in 1860, war broke out in Italy. They returned to Europe and joined Garibaldi in Sicily where he was quickly successful in his aim to overturn the unpopular Bourbon regime. Jessie was there in the thick of things, nursing the wounded. Mario undertook, on Garibaldi's initiative some worthwhile social projects to ameliorate the abject conditions of the poor. Garibaldi then moved up the Italian mainland and, after fierce fighting, Naples was captured. The Mario pair were again where the action was, Jessie running field hospitals.

At this point, Garibaldi ceased campaigning as he had agreed to support the claim of Victor Emmanuel, the King of Piedmont to the throne of a new Italian Kingdom. Then in 1863, Jessies's father, Thomas, died in an accident on a business trip to Portugal. The naming of Alberto as his executor caused, not surprisingly, some unfortunate friction with Jessie's brother but at the same time it demonstrated Thomas's high regard for his son-in-law. In 1864 Garibaldi made a visit to England where he was acclaimed as a popular hero, but he was persuaded by the government to cut short the visit, the government did not regard him so favourably.

1866 saw Jessie cut her ties with England on the death of her step-mother, From then on, she regarded Italy as her home. She took her journalistic career to a new level by working as the Italian correspondent for an important American journal 'The Nation' This she did for many years, even after a slight stroke which affected 3 fingers, as she had acquired and mastered one of the newly invented typewriters. In 1870, she was one of a band of volunteers who joined Garibaldi in Paris in support of the French against the Prussian invaders. She was devoted to Garibaldi but she could see that his moment had passed. The fact that Alberto thought the idea a foolish venture, and stayed at home, indicates what a

surprisingly modern marriage the couple had, Jessie did what she thought was right. In 1881, she wrote and published a biography of Garibaldi.

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In 1883, Alberto died after a long struggle with cancer of the throat and many operations, during which time Jessie was his devoted nurse. After his death, she remained in Italy, earning her living by journalism, writing as needs be in 3 languages, English, French and Italian, Her most important work were the 143 articles she wrote for 'The Nation'. Her research was assiduous, she travelled the length of the country for this purpose, an example being her description of the inhuman working conditions in the sulphur mines of Sicily. She died in Florence, aged 74 in 1906. The importance of her life and experiences in this crucial phase of Italian history were thankfully recognised, her papers were saved and deposited in the Museo Centrale del Risorgimento in Rome.

What an AMAZING woman. !!

I have made free use of Margaret Robert's excellent, much longer account of Jessie's life which is deposited in the Local Studies Building (the old Museum). Margaret herself acknowledges the book "Jessie White Mario: Risorgimento Revolutionary" by Elizabeth Adams DANIELS, an American historian, pub. by the Ohio Univ. Press in 1972. Also the article "Garibaldi and England" by a J. A. Davis in the 'History Today' magazine, Vol.12 Dec.1982

I have written this in response to a flurry of renewed interest in Jessie, a GOSPORT girl who we must see is never overlooked in future, she is such an incredible character. If the editor agrees, I will tell you something of her formative years which began in Gosport in 1832 in the next edition of the Newsletter. Mary Duly

If you have any information 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 14th October for the November/ December Newsletter, include details for events in early January 2012. 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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