



# Association for Suffolk Museums

## January 2016

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### Letter from the Chair

Over the Christmas break I came across a report that stated holiday visitors to Suffolk now bring over £1bn into the economy! I am sure our Museums are part of that attraction. We have such a variety to offer with some very diverse subjects which makes Suffolk such a unique county. It is the forte of Suffolk Museums that we can exhibit and talk on a variety of subjects related to our Museums and collections with a depth of practical knowledge not just from professional colleagues but also the incredible number of volunteers involved.

The newsletter yet again demonstrates how ambitious and innovative our museums are and these are the qualities that will continue to enable us to flourish whatever the challenges ahead. Do take note of the Family Friendly awareness event at Leiston Long Shop Museum on February 25<sup>th</sup>. I am sure this will be a very rewarding event. Family visitors with children account for a significant segment of museum audiences.

Our next AfSM meeting will be on 25 Jan at Ipswich Museum. I look forward to seeing you then and wish all our Museums a successful 2016.

*Graham Snelling, National Horseracing Museum*

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### Next AfSM Meeting

**Date:** 25 Jan 2016  
**Time:** 10.00 for 10.30-12.30  
**Venue:** Ipswich Museum

### Subsequent AfSM meetings in 2016

**Dates/Venue:** 19 April – Dunwich & 28 Sept - Newmarket  
**Times** always 10.00 for 10.30-12.30  
**AfSM AGM** – 16 June – Museum of E Anglian Life

## Notes from my desk

Bob Hale, AfSM Editor

While I sit here and the weather still can't decide what to do, I reflect on the upcoming season. This quarter has seen many of our smaller volunteer lead museums putting up the shutters, turning off the heat (if any) and getting ready for some down time for maintenance. There are gutters to clean, grass to cut (last time), exhibits to rotate and clean and records to update.

Otherwise, for our larger museums. They are preparing for more visitors over the half term and Christmas holidays. Each museum is unique in its way of winter operations, but we all look forward to our openings again in the spring. Don't forget your woollies this winter, and I hope you all had a safe and happy Christmas/New Year holiday.--**Bob**

### Special Note from the National Security Adviser

*(please note Chelmsford Museum recently had items stolen from an alarmed case – so this isn't an idle warning)*

William Brown, National Security Adviser, Arts Council wishes to inform all museums the threat level of an attack on Museums has increased. All should ensure that collections are secure and safe. Intruder and case alarms should be used correctly and any alarm trigger treated with professionalism and suspicion ensuring all causes are identified. CCTV systems used should be checked and good quality images recorded.

Staff should be vigilant to visitors paying undue attention to collections and ensure all cases are maintained and frequently cleaned to ensure forensic evidence is possible. The practice of checks on the displays at opening and closing should be carried out for the foreseeable future. Also ensure outside lighting and external aspects of museum buildings are checked regularly.

In the event of cause for concern, do not hesitate to ring 999 and advise the Police of your immediate concerns.

## Ipswich Museum

Like many museums, it was a big challenge for the Ipswich Museums when the National Curriculum changed. We went back to the drawing board, and tried to think beyond the 'history' offer. Ipswich Museum's collections are rich and varied – spanning natural history, decorative and fine art, world collections and social history.

In consultation with their Teachers' Advisory Panel and working closely with a local school, the museum developed two new school workshops – Animal Classifications and Mesolithic to Neolithic Man.



Animal Classifications encourages the students to use scientific methods to develop understanding of the five main animal classifications and their associated features. This includes an activity where they are presented with a range of skulls and the students have to work out what animals they came from – this involves observation, measuring and comparing the skulls to other skeletons on display.

The feedback to these changes was very positive,

*Teacher, Ditchingham Primary:*

"Hands on activities meant all children were really engaged. They left with much more knowledge."

*Teacher, Ipswich Prep School:*

"Excellent hands-on experience to engage and to enthuse interest. It extends learning of our topic and supports our understanding." --

**Eleanor Root**

## Leiston Works Makes it Work at the Long Shop!

The Long Shop Museum is delighted to have been awarded a grant from Arts Council England to embark on a 20-month project to celebrate engineering and creativity, build audiences, and engage communities. The project is being supported by ACE's 'Museum Resilience Fund' and is titled 'Making it Work' which pays homage to the fascinating industrial heritage that the museum profiles on the site of the former Leiston Works in which it is housed.

Some of this will be school focussed, to tie into the National Curriculum and some will take place during the holidays. There will be a "Makers Fair" to highlight the ongoing breadth and depth of creative talent and dextrous skill and the establishment of community workshops to nurture inter-generational activity and raise the profile of the works' history, its legacy, and collections in meaningful and engaging ways.

We aim to encourage local participation in a range of activities, share skills, provide volunteering opportunities, and develop partnerships to champion the continuing tradition of engineering which has flourished in Leiston for more than 200 years, and to highlight and support the role the museum plays in telling the stories behind the objects on display. -- **Tabitha Runnaces**

## Debach Airfield Museum

It isn't easy being a Volunteer! You may wonder what we volunteers get up to when the museum is closed. Do we disband, play cards, and laze around? No such luck! During the season, it's a mad rush to make sure everything is ready for our Open Days so any thoughts about new projects are simply added to a long to-do list for the autumn and winter months.

We start the closed-time planning over a celebration lunch on the first Wednesday after the last official Open Day. This involves

Richard and Prilly trying to organise potential projects into simple, medium sized, large sized, too expensive and pipe dream categories. They are also still organising the private visits (schools & veteran's families mainly) of which there are many. Fortunately, the project categories aren't fixed and as the lunch goes on there is some flexibility. After all the **Unexploded Bomb exhibit, which came second in the Suffolk Museum Object of the Year awards**, would normally have been in the pipe dream category but with skill and enthusiasm it became a major attraction.



And it's this that keeps the museum alive and the volunteers enthusiastic. The museum has to change and develop to keep all our visitors enthused and it has to evolve so that the memory of those who died for us are honoured and remembered  
**-Dr Helen E Thomson**

## Halesworth - Heritage Open Days

Halesworth & District Museum recently took an active part in the town's first sortie into involvement with the Heritage Open Days. A small organizing committee, on which the Museum was represented, managed to persuade fourteen properties to open for tours and displays during the September weekend. The Museum itself was one of those buildings; we are based in the town's railway station and, to meet the criterion of offering something which wasn't normally on offer, volunteers gave tours of the station building and yards, talking about the town's unique

'moveable platforms', the bombing of the station during the last war and the vestiges of the now vanished Southwold Railway.



But, over and above this, the Museum provided the backbone of research for others of the open buildings in the town, enabling the guides to talk with authority about sites' history and thus forging relationships, which will be valuable for the future.

By being part of a publicized list of buildings open for that weekend, many people who had either never visited the Museum before or not for many years, dropped in to see us. We had as many visitors in two days as we would normally have in a month!

All in all, a great success for the town and for the Museum. Plans are afoot for a second weekend in 2017 and the Museum will be in there planning from the very beginning.

--Vic Gray

## Mildenhall & District Museum events

Heritage Weekend in September passed off rather quietly, despite an Anglo-Saxon "team" and much preparatory work by volunteers. We are still trying to establish why the event was not as well attended as it might have been, even if the photo suggests how absorbed the children were.



A more successful venture was the reporting of the interview with Napoleon in 1815. Sir Charles Bunbury of Mildenhall Manor translated Napoleon's replies when he was questioned after capture- giving a remarkable description of Napoleon himself. We had intended to put on a mini-exhibition regarding this event, but sadly, no portraits exist of Sir Charles as they were all destroyed by a fire at Great Barton Hall in 1912.

The Annual Supper Talk was a success again this year; our speaker was the well-known crime novelist Alison Bruce, whose talk was entitled (perhaps unsurprisingly) "How To Commit Murder." This was very well received, but hopefully none of the suggestions will be put into practice!

Our final event this year was our Christmas Fair held from Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup>. December to Saturday 5<sup>th</sup>.December, during which time we sold home-made Christmas puddings, jams and chutneys along with other gifts. We are looking forward to 2016! --**Joe Moore**

## Ipswich Transport Museum's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday bash

Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2015 marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the purchase of the Museum's first vehicle. The 1938 Dennis Ace bus – affectionately known as 'the flying pig' - is nearing the end of an 18-month restoration, and was the centre of attraction at the Museum's Priory Heath depot.

'We've turned the anniversary into a 50<sup>th</sup> birthday bash' explained chairman Mark Smith. 'The purchase of the Dennis Ace was quickly followed by other vehicles to form the

nucleus of what has developed into our fantastic collection. We've finally got round to restoring it, and a party seemed the right thing to mark the occasion. We need to raise around £5,000 to complete the restoration, but the bulk of the work is done now, and people can admire what has been achieved.



The event was marked by a Cavalcade of Museum vehicles from the Cornhill to the Museum in Cobham Road in the morning, departing at 10.30 A selection of visiting buses and coaches provided rides along with members of the museum's own fleet – and a re-union for Friends and Volunteers of the Museum past and present took place during the evening.

--**Mark Smith**

## Woodbridge Tide Mill



In the spirit of sharing and exchanging knowledge the Woodbridge Tide Mill, Living Museum, Suffolk welcomed five American visitors to the mill this September. These five

are some of the volunteer team at Fulton Mill and Fulton Cultural Centre, Illinois, America. They chose to visit the only working Tide Mill in Britain as it has been recognised by the Heritage Lottery Fund as being an exemplar of good educational and community practice as well as successfully re-instating it as a thriving working mill under charity status.

The Fulton windmill is very different from the Tide Mill and because of not only the obvious difference of one mill using wind and the other power derived from the tide! Fulton Mill in Illinois was made in Holland in 1998 and shipped to America where it began milling in 2001. It has a cultural centre, which is open year round, and a lively programme of talks and activities. The visitors spent 3 days with the Tide Mill chairman Nigel Barratt, vice chairman Bob Spillett, learning co-ordinator Bee Farrell, and numerous mill volunteers. The two mill teams enjoyed many discussions and presentations on fund raising, maintenance, education, and how to keep up good visitor numbers. It was a very positive visit, with gifts exchanged and offers of a reciprocal trip to Illinois mentioned!

-- **Bee Farrell**

## Sudbury Heritage Centre's Windfall

A generous benefactor is a welcome gift in these hard times and that is how Sudbury Museum and Heritage Centre has managed to make a leap forward into new technology. It was left a substantial legacy in the will of local historian Tony Wheeler.

The legacy was matched by a Town Council offer of an additional room linked to the original museum. The Trustees decided to use it for a modern multi-purpose area. The brief was given to local designer Robin Drury who designed the original museum. The result is a project in Tony Wheeler's memory, the *Tony Wheeler Room*. The room has three computer screens, three new display cases, a presentation facility for the Sudbury Ephemera Archive as well as storage for a table and fold-up chairs.



At present, one screen has a rolling PowerPoint of Edwardian Sudbury, the second has the Trust's photo collection with a search facility, and the third and largest dominates one wall for PowerPoint presentations on new local history research. Many presentations have previously been seen only once in public or not at all. The museum is open Monday to Friday during normal office hours so do come and see the changes—**Valerie Herbert, Trustee**

### Moyses Hall, Bury St Edmunds

Takeover Day this year fell on St Edmund's Day so...almost 120 primary pupils from various schools within the Bury Schools Partnership came to Moyses Hall to learn the story of St Edmund then make mini Saxon shields. After a short tour and handling session led by heritage staff at the museum, Year 9s took younger pupils for a craft workshop to create shields that will be used for a Beowulf procession through Bury next year.



The procession is also being part organised by the Heritage Service. It was more of a 'Fun Day' than usual school sessions, aimed at exploring the legend of St Edmund and how the myth changed the town. We encouraged a couple of Year 9 pupils to contribute to 'Takeover Twitter' too. We all had a great time! --**Dan Clarke**

### Long Melford Heritage Centre

At the time of filming of Channel 4's 'Great British Story' series in 2011, Rob Simpson and John Nunn acted as village coordinators for the TV company. After the excitement of it all and the Big Dig weekend, they both agreed it would be an idea to try to set up a Heritage Centre to display small finds from around Long Melford. Following enquiries, they were fortunate to be granted use of a large room in the Village Hall for the new Centre.

We then asked the East of England Coop if they would help the project. They generously sponsored all the signage and a print run of 10,000 Heritage Centre brochures.



In May of 2012 Dr Carenza Lewis returned to Long Melford to open the Heritage Centre. Since then, we are extremely pleased to have a long-term loan of a complete Roman Spatha sword found during an evaluation dig in Hall Street in 2001 along with a specially constructed replica of the sword.

To date we have had tourists from as far afield as Australia, New Zealand, the USA and Canada sign our visitor's book. We open on Saturdays, Sundays and Wednesday afternoons – come and have a look, you'll be made very welcome.

--**John Nunn**

## Bentwaters Cold War Museum “Bobtail Restoration”

The Jeep CJ-10a was contract built for the US Air Force as a tug to move flight line support equipment and aircraft around the airfield. There were approx. 2188 made between 1984-1986 in Mexico.

The flight line tugs had some special features to make them better for towing, and most of this centred around weight. These are heavy, a lot heavier than they look! The front bumper is 1/2 inch channel steel, and had a large pintle hitch. The rear bumper is thick and heavy as well, and has three huge pintles, with the centre one being moveable for easy hook-up. They also have a large weight box under the "bed" that weighs 12-1400 lbs. All together, they weigh in the 6000 lb stock. Top speed is 25 MPH! This item is on loan to the BCWM from the Kemble family.

Many hours were spent sanding, priming and painting to bring it up to the museum display standard.

Before....



After... with Jason Himpson and Steve Howlett, part of the Restoration Team

--Jason Himpson

## Help Wanted: Woolpit Museum

We would like to borrow a wig, a false moustache and beard, for use on a model of an Anglo/Saxon warrior for the 2016 season. If you can help, please contact: Elizabeth Cockayne 01359 240792.

## Shortlisted for awards

Two education projects at the National Horseracing museum, run in conjunction with Newmarket Racecourses, were shortlisted as finalists for the Racecourse Association's Showcase Awards 2015. **“Under Starter's Orders”** was selected in the “All About The Horse” category while **“Dubai Future Champions Week”** takes its place in the Racing Together Community & Corporate Social Responsibility category.

### **TIP** An IT note from Saxmundham

Having volunteered to help at Saxmundham Museum, I found its web hosting didn't have a fit for purpose email address. I did a bit of searching and found Microsoft provide their excellent **Office365 service free to UK Charities**. We had to register with a UK firm to verify the charitable status. There was no cost involved and took a few days to process.

In the meantime, it is possible to register with Office365 for a 30-day trial, it's important to get the Charity edition of office365. There are several different versions and it can be a little confusing.

Once charitable status is confirmed, it's simple to buy Office365 for zero pounds and zero pence. The basic service gives business essentials level which includes up to 300 users, online office software, online storage, collaboration tool, calendars and more.

At Saxmundham Museum we now have a business class email service and use of proper email addresses which use our domain name rather than having to use 'fred@gmail.com', for instance. We feel that it will help make us look like we know what we are doing when it comes to interacting with contacts or making funding applications. -- **Kevin Gale**,  
[KevinGale@saxmundhammuseum.org.uk](mailto:KevinGale@saxmundhammuseum.org.uk)

## New Upcoming Events

### How family friendly is your museum?

This year there is to be an additional Family Friendly category in Suffolk's Museum of the Year Awards, which will tie in with **an exciting new scheme to promote summer holiday activities in museums** across the county.

To help museums prepare and plan for both of these things AfSM will be holding a Family Friendly awareness event at **Leiston Long Shop Museum on February 25<sup>th</sup>**, where you will be able to hear about some of the things a wide range of museums have done to enhance their appeal to family visitors.

Projects successfully run in Cambridge, Bedfordshire, Essex, and Hertfordshire have linked summer holiday activities in museums through combined leaflets. Properly marketed and supported these schemes can be highly effective in increasing visitor numbers and raising the standard and profile of family visits.

The half-day awareness event will also give you the low-down on all the 2016 Awards and how Suffolk's first Family Friendly Museum of the Year will be selected.

More information and a programme will follow. In the meantime, please get in touch with Lyn or Ruth if you have any queries or already know you want to book a place.

### Debach: 493<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Museum special weekend 27–29 May

The Eastern Angles are coming to the Museum to perform 'Somewhere in England' by Polly Wisemen on the evening of Friday 27<sup>th</sup> May, the afternoon and evening of Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> May and the afternoon of Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> May. The museum will be open before all performances.

As well as this, Sunday (28<sup>th</sup> May) is our monthly Open Day and our Vintage Military Vehicle Rally so we will be having a very busy time! The relevant Web Sites are:-

<http://www.493bgdebach.co.uk/>

<http://www.easternangles.co.uk/>

Also – in response to some requests about websites

### Mar 3 Parham Airfield Museum 10-3.30 Creating Engaging and Effective Websites Trainer – C Lister - Free

This day focusses on how websites can be used for marketing a museum, connecting with target audiences and driving visits. It is aimed at

- small to medium sized museums
- museums that are typically volunteer-run or have no paid-for staff member with significant marketing / website experience
- museums with no, or low, budget to spend
- people who have some basic experience of, or interest in, running a museum's website or who might have in the future. It will **not** focus on technical aspects, or require participants to have experience in or knowledge of how to build a website from scratch.

No need to bring computers although the day will be inter-active with lots of opportunities for discussion. For further details or to book, see <http://sharemuseumseast.org.uk/events/> after January 12<sup>th</sup> when details will be uploaded to the website.

#### *Final note from the editor*

I hope you have enjoyed reading this issue, if you have any inputs for the April edition, please send them to me @ [bobhale@suffolkonline.net](mailto:bobhale@suffolkonline.net)

