

FUTURE EVENTS AT THE MUSEUM

Big Draw 6th Oct –27th Oct

Shoes are our Big Draw theme this year. Come along and draw your own or lovely shoes from the Museum collection, add a drawing of your favourite footwear to our scribble walls.

Aldershot and District Traction Co Ltd 2nd November –17th November

A display celebrating 100 years of the Aldershot and District Traction Co Ltd, presented by the Aldershot and District Bus Interest Group.

Georgian Guildford 24th November –9th March

A look back in life in 18c Guildford

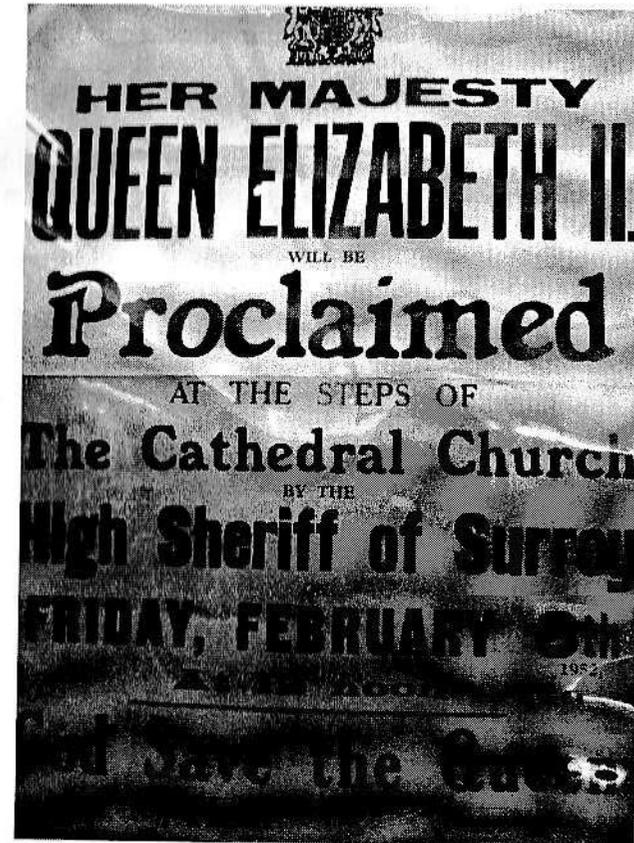
The Editor welcomes items for the Newsletter or comments Please send them to Eric Morgan 21 St Michael's Avenue, Guildford, GU3 3LY. Telephone Number (01483) 233344. eandmorgan@hotmail.co.uk

FRIENDS OF GUILDFORD MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

October 2012



Issue 32



From the editor

Nick Bales has kindly put together a piece on the state of the proposed Museum Development project. His document draws on information supplied to us by the Borough and I hope you will take the time to read it. This is an important time for the Museum and your support is valued more than ever..

Sadly two members of staff have left, Nick Booth earlier in the year to take up a post at University College and Dr Mary Alexander has taken early retirement. She has served the museum for many years and we shall miss her greatly. Her work on the castle has increased our knowledge and understanding of the building immeasurably. Marjorie Williams tells us about Mary's time at the Museum in later pages.

Nick Bale, referring to the Museum development, urges us to make our councillors aware of the importance of the Museum to the cultural heritage of the town. It is even more important that we should do so as, at this moment, there are no curatorial staff at the Museum. A situation that we hope the Borough will make every effort to rectify as soon as possible.



Nick Booth shows the 'Friends' around the Museum's reserve collection

Museum Development – a step closer to reality

Although still in the early stages of a long process, the last 12 months has seen a number of positive steps in the museum development project. Various refinements have been included in the plan which will improve the facilities for visitors to Guildford Castle grounds and to Guildford Museum, bringing together these important heritage sites.

Read on if you want to find out what is happening and how the Friends will be able to help.

What changes are proposed?

The proposed plan includes:-

- A new museum entrance and reception area will be built within part of the ruins in the Castle Gardens. This will help preserve the ruins by bringing them back into use. This entrance area will include a café and exhibition gallery providing better facilities for visitors to the museum and the gardens.
- An entrance into the Castle Grounds and one of the paths will be altered to provide an accessible route to the new Museum with interpretation points to help illustrate the history of the Castle site.
- The significance of the castle site as a Royal Castle, and, later, as a Royal Palace will be emphasised for visitors.
- Both floors of Castle Arch House will display the museum's collection of objects in a renewed interior. The permanent display will present "The Story of Guildford" in a more up to date and coherent manner than at present. There will be lift and stair access to the ground and first floors of Castle Arch House and other improvements to make access easier.
- The current gallery and shop area will become an education area for activities and events, such as the popular Victorian schoolroom.
- The Surrey Archaeological Society Library and other offices will be relocated to the other end of the current museum building at 48 Quarry Street.

What has been happening this year?

The Heritage Manager, Jill Draper, submitted the pre-application for the project to the Heritage Lottery Fund at the end of 2011. Containing an extensive description of the project and its importance culturally, this requests confirmation that the project would be eligible for Lottery funding, a necessary step before the detailed planning takes place.

Of importance in relation to approval by local communities, Jill made a presentation to a meeting of the Guildford Society earlier this year describing the proposed development. The response of this knowledgeable audience was very encouraging and positive.

Continued political support was also confirmed. The estimated cost of the project was updated in January 2012 so that Guildford Borough Council had up-to-date information before allowing the Heritage Lottery Fund process to be started. The indicative costs of the project were revised to £4.2 million, of which £ 2 million would be sought from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and £1 million sought from Guildford Borough Council. This would leave £1.2 million to be raised from other sources, such as private charities, company sponsors and other third parties.

What is the future timetable?

The development will not come to fruition until the second half of the decade, even if all runs smoothly. We should know by the end of financial year 2012 to 2013 whether the Heritage Lottery Fund will give the outline proposal the green light. This would allow the process of detailed planning to start involving architects, conservationists, fund raisers and so on. Specialist personnel will need to be engaged to work out the technical needs of the development and to identify private institutions and individuals who would be willing to provide funds. It will typically take about two years for these plans to be finalized. Based on this detailed plan, funding commitments from Guildford Borough Council, the Heritage Lottery Fund and others would need to be confirmed before work could actually begin.

What can the Friends do to encourage the development?

At this stage, the specific role and activities of our association have not been determined. However, it is clear from the experience of other Heritage Funded projects such as Watts Gallery and Woking

Lightbox that our activities can make a significant contribution to the project. Any financial contributions we can make will be appreciated, but, for a project of this scale, these are likely to represent only a small part of the total funding.

More important, I expect, will be for us to engage in activities aiming to secure the widest public support and political support for the project:-

The Heritage Lottery Fund places considerable emphasis on community support. It is not just a matter of establishing that local people are happy to have a better looking museum. It will be important to show to Fund officials that the new facilities will be used by significant numbers of local people and visitors.

For this purpose, I think we should be ready to enlarge our membership to a wider range of the local community over the next two to three years. Furthermore, we should develop a programme for new activities targeted at the general public as much as our own membership. Naturally, our current activities such as Undercroft volunteering and special outings for members should continue.

Whilst Guildford Borough Council have given the go-ahead to initiating the Heritage Lottery Fund process and have allocated a budget for the current year expenditures, there is no commitment at the present time to fund the large sum required if the project is ultimately approved. Councillors will need to weigh up the importance of funding this project as against other demands for funds as and when the detailed plan comes up for council approval.

As Friends of the museum, we need to take advantage of any opportunity that presents itself to ensure that our councillors are aware of the importance of Guildford's cultural heritage and the benefits that this project would bring in making Guildford an attractive and distinctive town.

What will happen if this development does not go ahead?

The project will only be possible if it can obtain sufficient levels of funding, community support, human resources etc., none of which is certain. It is therefore possible that the museum development will not happen by the time envisaged. In this event, support from the Friends of the Museum would potentially be even more important as

a means to make smaller scale improvements to the existing facilities.

Conclusion

Councillor Jen Powell has said "A tremendous amount of work has already taken place in preparation for this application. Communication with the Lottery Heritage Fund is ongoing and they have made changes in aspects of the applications which we have had to consider.

However, we are resolved to move forward to develop the museum – which has been relatively unchanged since the 1960s – and the Castle into a major heritage hub and tourist destination. As well as preserving our heritage for the future we will boost community involvement with increased learning and participation in public events and activities".

All being well, we will play our part in reviving and revitalising the Guildford Museum.

Friends of Guildford Museum

Should you not be a member we would love you to join us. Please send a cheque with the appropriate subscription to

Hugh Anscombe, Friends of Guildford Museum, Hollybush Cottage, Colman's Hill, Peaslake, Guildford, GU5 9ST

Subscription rates- Individual £6-Family £12- Youth £3- Individual Life £100

Please make cheques payable to **FRIENDS OF GUILDFORD MUSEUM**

Saxon Cemetery

I wrote this for a blind group but as there are no curatorial staff at the museum at present I hope this will adequately fill their place for this issue.

It was on one of those hot summer days, a few years ago I must admit, when the High Street was crowded with people, many of them visitors in their brightly coloured shirts and shorts, that for some unknown reason made me think back to those travellers of ancient time who also plodded up and down the same steep hill. For the route across the Hogs Back crossing the river at Guildford dates back several thousand years. After all it could be pretty wet in the valleys so they travelled along the drier chalk ridge descending at Guildford to cross the river. Most of these travellers appeared to have passed through or if they did stop they took their rubbish with them for we have no evidence of any settlers before the Saxons. The Romans were nearby at Compton, Wood Street and Farley Heath etc but no Roman remains have been found in the Town itself.

In Guildford museum there lies a figure of a Saxon woman dressed as she might have been buried. In the cases surrounding her are artefacts from a number of Saxon graves, male and female. These people were the first Guildfordians but how do we know that the Saxons were here?

In 1929 some new houses were built just below the top of the hill that we know as the Mount. That is the hill you see from Guildford High Street. The houses were built on the far side so that they could not be seen from Guildford but their gardens ran to the very top of the hill. A gardener working for one of the house owners was busily planting some trees when he came across some bones. The archaeologists were called in and they soon uncovered numerous skeletons.

As it was such a lovely day I could not resist the walk to find this Saxon cemetery. Down the High Street I went and through the subway, now gone, but which in those days took us safely under the road. At that time it was looking particularly splendid with its

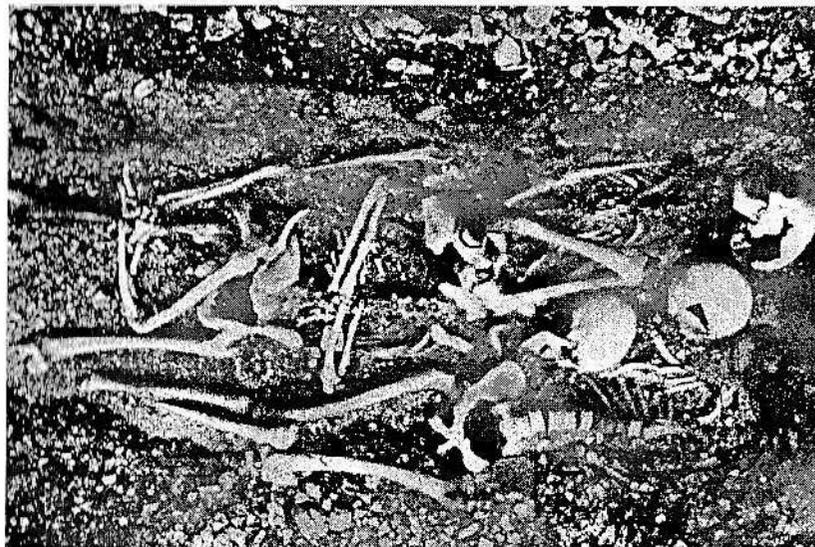
tilled mural. A thick wavy line ran through the walls to represent the river and a number of panels depicted river scenes such as swans, lock gates, barges etc. On emerging from the subway I crossed the Town Bridge and glanced at the position of the ford that gave Guildford its name. The ford is adjacent to the Godalming side of the bridge and even in Saxon times the town was known as Gyldforda. The first syllable of the name means golden and some say this refers to the marsh marigolds that used to abound along the river bank. I like to think of the delight those travellers must have felt as they came over the hill and saw the mass of golden blooms below. However I have to be realistic and the golden more likely refers to the colour of the sandy bottom of the ford.. For hundreds of years the bright yellow sand of St Catherine's Hill has gently slipped into the river and made its way down to Guildford colouring the river bed a golden colour. The hill ahead, up the mount, looked rather daunting on this hot day and it is easy to see why the old coaches needed an extra pair of horses to get them up the hill when this was then the only road to Farnham. Soon I reached the top of the hill with that tremendous view and the Cathedral just below. What a magnificent site for the Saxon Cemetery which was situated in a garden just behind me!

As I said it was in 1929 that Mr and Mrs Kempster's gardener came across the burial site. This was drawn to the attention of the Surrey Archaeological Society who under the direction of Colonel North painstakingly excavated the site inch by inch. Mr and Mrs Kempster kindly offered the services of their gardener (Mr Engall) for three days of every week. Some 36 Saxon graves were found, many of woman and children, together with some of their possessions. Food or drinking vessels were often found by their heads, Bead necklaces of varying lengths, perhaps showing the importance of the women, were found along with bracelets, brooches, buttons, and even a rock crystal pendant. Two conical glass beakers were also found. They are of an amber coloured glass and thought to originate from the continent. Many of these items are on display in the museum. All of these items help archaeologists to piece together the culture of the people.

I wrote to the owners and they very kindly invited me to visit their garden. I was delighted to find the grass path down the garden in

the same position as marked on the map of the excavations all those years ago. At one point two paths meet in a circular area with flag stones around the perimeter, again just as marked on the drawings. With the map of the excavations in one hand it was easy to visualize all that thorough work of the Archaeologists, the endless cups of tea that must have been supplied as well as the lunches. Yes, Mr and Mrs Kempster not only gave the assistance of their gardener but also provided lunches for the merry band of excavators. The site was cleared at the time and no remains were left. Part of the area was given over to vegetables while the remainder was a cultivated wild meadow which must look marvellous in the spring.

In the December 2000 Newsletter Dr Mary Alexander informed us that the bones were sent to the Royal College of Surgeons. This was bombed during the war and it was thought the bones had been destroyed. However it appears that about one third of the skeletons have found their way to the Natural History Museum. A video of Mary talking about the Saxon Brooch found at the Guildown cemetery can be found at www.exploringsurreypast.org.uk/brooch



The Medieval Undercroft

A big thank you from Marjorie Williams

'I wish to thank all our loyal stewards (34 this year) who have provided public access to this renowned building. Throughout the summer months on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons we, and the Guildford Tour Guides brought in over 4000 people during 2011.

'Most of our stewards have served for several years but due to natural causes several will soon be retiring and I should like to recruit a few more volunteers. There are always two people on duty together and rotas are very flexible. You have a chance of a gossip and a cup of tea between visitors. Can you help? If so, please phone me for further information on 01483 569794.

'Total number of visitors on Heritage Day, 8 September this year, were 515, but of course this should not put you off as the normal number is far less than this!



Dr. Mary Alexander, FSA

Committee Members of the Friends of Guildford Museum were saddened to learn that Mary had decided to take early retirement in order to devote more time to her own research, while of course wishing her a happy future freed from professional responsibilities. She will be sorely missed. Mary has been at the Museum since 1979 when Felix Hollings, the then curator, appointed her as a young archaeology graduate to serve as a trainee museum assistant with responsibility for archaeology and the needlework collection.

Over the years her responsibilities increased. As curator of archaeology she became responsible for the cataloguing, indexing and researching of the Museum's collections. Mary also took an important part in excavations in the town, the restoration of the castle, and the designing of the new archaeology gallery. Latterly, after the reorganisation of Guildford's Heritage Services, she was appointed Collections Officer.

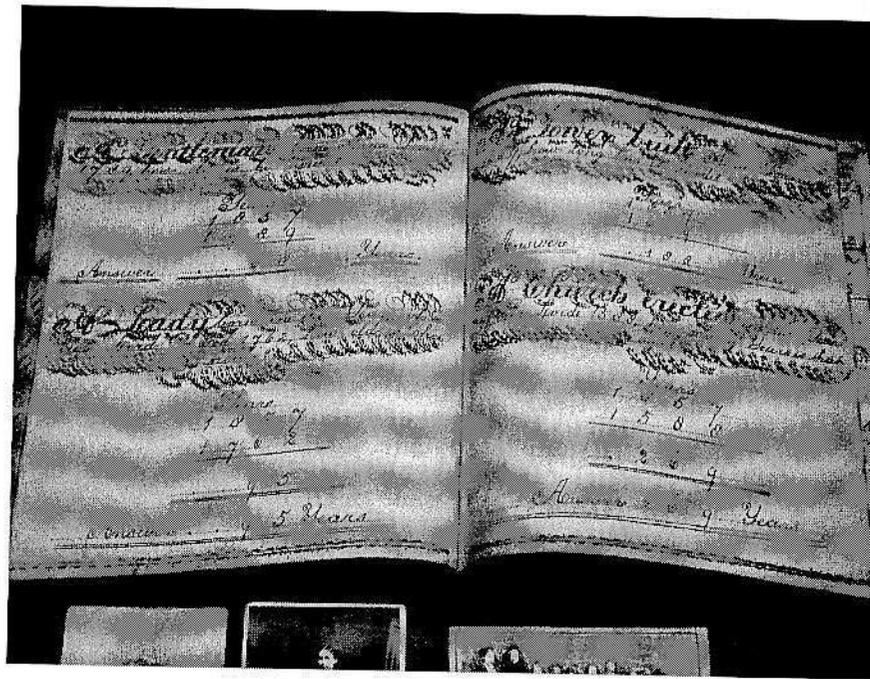
During her museum career she obtained firstly an MA in medieval studies, then a PhD for her thesis on Guildford Castle and its surroundings, her contributions to knowledge finally leading to her being honoured as a FSA. Mary has always been a mine of information on all aspects of medieval Guildford, willingly sharing her knowledge with all in answering questions, writing books, giving lectures and guiding visits. The Friends have especially benefited from the many articles Mary has produced for our Newsletters and now feel that the need to fill the vacancies created by both hers and Matthew's departures is urgent.

Past Exhibitions at the Museum

Victorian Child

The Museum used this most interesting exhibition to build on its permanent Victorian displays and it showed glimpses of childhood at the time when the Alice stories were written and published.

Education for most children in the early nineteenth century was not available and few could read or write. The churches did all they could by setting up Sunday Schools, weekday schools and dame schools. A national education system did not exist until the 1870 Education Act. In 1902 the education act allowed local authorities to provide secondary education.



One of several school books at the exhibition

Diamond Jubilee Exhibition

This has been an exciting year with the Jubilee, Olympic Games and all the cyclists going madly round the Guildford Streets. I hope you managed to visit the museum to see the Jubilee exhibition. Many people have lent their treasured possessions for all of us to see. Going back as far as Edward VII and Queen Alexandra, programmes show all that was going on at the time in our Town. The Street parties for various coronations produced masses of photographs of happily smiling children. I particularly liked the doll dressed in a coronation robe, probably, Queen Mary and beside her pieces of velvet from the actual robes and two different coronations – Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth (wife of George VI). The Borough of Guildford's official programme for the Coronation of George V was produced as a booklet in a red cover. Starting with a peal of bells at 3.30 am from St Nicolas Church to another at 6am at Holy Trinity. In the afternoon 3600 children processed from North Street to Guildford Sports Ground all wearing their commemorative medals. Military Bands played then it was tea and fireworks. What a wonderful day. I do hope you managed to see the exhibition.



DID YOU KNOW

The next two articles appeared in an early edition of the Newsletter (Issue 5 to be precise) and coincided with the 1998 Lewis Carroll festival. I hope they are new to most of you. The first is an extract from Marjorie Williams article.

Lewis Carroll, His Family and Guildford

On January 14th 1898 Charles Dodgson, better known as the famous writer Lewis Carroll, died at "The Chestnuts" and was buried in the Mount Cemetery. It is not widely known, however, that this house remained in the Dodgson family home until 1919, nor that The Mount Cemetery contains the graves of five of the sisters, their missionary brother Edwin and their dear aunt Lucy Lutwidge who had looked after them for twenty-nine years after the death of their mother. The other two sisters, Mary Collingwood who was the only one to marry and Henrietta who moved to Brighton, were buried elsewhere.

On behalf of the Lewis Carroll Society, I have been reading through the surviving Parish magazines of Holy Trinity and St Mary's Churches. It was amazing to find just how many references there were to the sister's work and really glowing obituaries for two of them. It certainly appears that the churches were at the centre of their lives; they organised teas for Mothers meetings, served as secretaries and treasurers for many societies, and as 'District Visitors' visited the sick and elderly in the neighbourhood. They were prominent on the lists of all church appeals, even giving a large brass altar cross to St Mary's. At the Chestnuts' they held every Saturday afternoon for many years a 'Home Working Guild' and on Sunday afternoons 'Bible Classes for Young Women'. They were always available to nurse sick relatives and they loved to entertain and visit friends and relations. With servants to look after the housework, thus they passed their lives.

The picture I have so far painted makes them appear very worthy but extremely dull genteel spinsters; however the research of Sarah Stanfield, secretary of the Lewis Carroll Society, has proved otherwise. She quotes the words of one of their nieces, Violet, 'We as children were amazed by the learning stored in the heads of our gentle, 'parochial visiting aunts'.

DOUBLETS

I am sure you have all played the game where you choose two words having the same number of letters and try to link the words by changing one letter at a time. For example change EYE to LID (EYE DYE DIE DID LID) Carroll first published this under the name of 'Doublets' in a letter to the editor of the Magazine 'Vanity Fair' in March 1879.

"Dear Vanity – Just a year ago last Christmas, two young ladies- smarting under that sorest scourge of feminine humanity, the having nothing to do- besought me to send them some riddles. But riddles I had none at hand, and therefore set myself to devise some other form of verbal torture which should serve the same purpose. The result of my meditations was a new kind of puzzle - new at least to me – which now that it has been fairly tested by a years experience and commended by many friends, I offer as a newly – gathered nut, to be cracked by the omnivorous teeth which have already masticated so many of your Double Acrostics.

So at Christmas why not try these which appeared in later editions of the magazine, PIG to STY, FOUR to FIVE, OAT to RYE, Army to Navy and FLOUR to BREAD.

In 1856 Charles Lutwidge Dodgson was a contributor to the train magazine and submitted a poem with the title 'Solitude' under the initials 'B.B'. The editor Edmund Yates was not pleased with this and suggested Dodson chose a *nom de plume*. He sent Yates a choice of four names, The first two were 'Edgar Cuthwallis' and Edgar U.C. Westhill which were made by transposition out of Charles Lutwidge. The other two were 'Louis Carroll' and 'Lewis Carroll'. Both being derived, also, from his first names, Charles and Lutwidge. The latter being his mother's maiden name. On March 1st 1856 Dodgson wrote in his diary "Lewis Carroll' was chosen".

Apparently the last Olympic gold medals that were made entirely out of gold were awarded in 1912. They (gold and silver) must now be made out of 92.5 per cent silver with the gold medal covered in six grams of gold. I understand that if a bronze medal from the London Olympics is melted down, it is worth less than £3