



Emsworth Maritime & Historical Trust NEWSLETTER

Reg. Charity No 294965

President: Dr. Margaret Rule CBE, FSA, D.Litt

Emsworth Museum

10b North Street, Emsworth, Hants PO10 7DD

Tel: 01243 378091 www.emsworthmuseum.co.uk



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MUSEUM OPENS AFTER MAJOR ALTERATIONS Second phase to follow this winter



The David Rudkin Room



Despite delays, the museum opened again for business on Saturday 7th July. Although the major structural work is completed the construction and fitting of new furniture and built-in units will be delayed until after the museum closes at the end of the season.

This second phase will include the completion of the new activities room, which now adjoins the David Rudkin Room.

New facilities that have already been completed include a new disabled access toilet, and a refreshments station, which can be used by Stewards.

The first special exhibition in the improved David Rudkin Room is entitled 'Churches with a History Historic Churches of West Sussex' and will run until 19 August.

This edition of the newsletter is prepared by John Tweddell 01243 374416

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Hon. Secretary Dorothy Bone - 24 Hollybank Lane, Emsworth, PO10 7UE 01243 373780

Membership enquiries to Peter Morse 01243 375740

Outings organised by Eddie Lewis 01243 373197

Dates for your diary

25th August – 16 September

In the David Rudkin Room 'Chichester Harbour Conservancy – new insights into the past' by Robert Perry and Alison Fowler

27th August

Emsworth Show

Wednesday 5th September

A coffee morning will be held by Mrs. Liz Smyth at her home, 14, Bath Road on Wednesday 5th September from 10.30 to 12.30. All members are welcome, come and be sociable.

12th September

Talk by Bob Bravington 'A star is born'
This is linked to the October exhibition 'Journey to the stars' Mountford Rooms, Church Path Community Centre starting at 7.30pm. Admission Members £1.00 Non-members £2.00

22nd September – 28th October

In the David Rudkin Room 'Journey to the stars' by John Green

11th October

Travel video by Adrian Fox
Lumley Room, Church Path Community Centre
Starting 7.30pm. Admission Members £1.00 Non-members £2.00

On the EM&HT Treasure Hunt



(Photograph by Frances Sweeney)

21 June

Although the sun didn't shine this was a successful event. The clues, set by last year's winners Tony and Annette Reynaud, were to a slightly different format because they enjoy cryptic crosswords and puzzles. The winners, Simon Rickard and Becky Hancock, said that it was the first time that they had taken part in this Treasure Hunt. They like walking in the evening and this is an interesting way to do it. In second place for the second year running were James and Christine Hobson.

Simon and Becky have agreed to compile the questions for next year's hunt.

Evening Walkabout and Visit to the Museum

Also in July, Monica and Alan Hurd took 14 Members of the Portsdown Christ Church group on a guided tour of part of south Emsworth followed by a visit to the Museum.

Emsworth Show

27 August

The Trust will again have a stall at the show and we require a small amount of good quality bric-a-brac to sell - no electrical goods or food. If you have any items that might be suitable please contact

Liz Smyth 377995 or
Pam Clayton 378471 in South Emsworth
Eddie Lewis 373197 or
Dorothy Bone 373780 in North Emsworth.

If you are able to help on the day or in any other way I will be pleased to hear from you.

Dorothy Bone

Admin's Alcove

This is the first time I have had the opportunity to contribute to the newsletter, and I hope that I will be able to have a regular slot.

The first few months of being involved with the Museum have been frustrating and fraught with obstacles; not least the slow progress of the work at the Museum. I became involved after the plans had been laid and the Museum cleared for work, so I knew nothing!! Where were the artefacts? Where were the instruction manuals? How did the main exhibition hall work? What went in the office? I sat at the desk which had been put into the centre of the main exhibition hall and looked at the chaos, feeling like "Dido in the Ruins"!

Now, beginning of July, I think we can say that order is appearing out of chaos. I sit at David Rudkin's desk in the office, with a window that has sunshine coming through. I am still surrounded by boxes of what – I know not! However, I can now sort artefacts from information, information from instruction manuals and find the pens, pencils and paper to write on.

We are working again with Hampshire Museum Service to make sure we restore the Museum to high levels of excellence in archiving and public accessibility as well as appreciation and enjoyment. There are several meetings being held by the committee with the Liaison Officer to make sure we are achieving the standards required, and once we are operating at a satisfactory level we will be able to access grants and funding from various bodies for specific tasks.

At the moment we are hoping to have assistance from experts on our computer needs, and we need to find funds to upgrade our intruder alarms. There are bound, also, to be lots of little things which we need, which have not been apparent while we have been concentrating on the main building work. This means that our funds are getting depleted. We are not bankrupt or insolvent, but we do need to be aware that the income we get from opening the Museum does not meet the costs of running it. Therefore, we have to start making sure we encourage as many people as possible to come in and to give donations, as well as pay admission charges. With this aim in view, John Tweddell and I will be looking at the marketing and publicity for the Museum, so that we can maximise all the opportunities to make sure people are aware of us, and that we are friendly and welcoming.

After our longer than expected closure, our presence in Emsworth has declined, and we all need to make sure everyone is aware that we are alive and kicking, and that we are well worth a visit. Please, can you all do your part and bring your visitors and friends, and make sure that your neighbours are aware of what good value for money we are. Also, if you are travelling about in the area, can you please have the Museum in mind, so that you can mention it to other people? Word of mouth is always worth more than pieces of paper, which is why T.V. and radio work so well.

Please come into the Museum to see what has been done, and what still needs to be done, and if you are able to offer your assistance in any way – you will be welcomed with open arms. I am always in the Museum on a Tuesday and the door is always left unlocked, so if you want to come in for a chat, or to get involved in sorting or cross referencing or researching some of our fascinating stories, please do come in. No appointments – just friends dropping in.

Linda Newell

HELP!

The Museum has a band of helpers who are responsible for distributing Museum posters to various shops and notice boards around the district. This is an important part of our publicity and attracts a large percentage of museum attendances.

We urgently need a willing body to organise the distributors.

At the beginning of the Museum season the posters are available for each of the Rudkin Room exhibitions. These have to be given, in one batch, to all the distributors for them to put up at their chosen locations, shops, offices, libraries etc. In addition there are a couple of other annual events which need a smaller distribution.

All this may sound like a major job, but actually only takes a few hours three or four times a year.

Interested ?

Please contact
Dorothy Bone
01243 373780
or Howard Jacobs
01243 379925

A Memorable Holiday in North Wales

by Sue Young



On Monday June 4th

48 members of the Society set off by coach bound for Llandudno and an exploration of North Wales. The sun shone and the amiable coach driver, Roy, gave us an unexpected stop at Llangollen with its famous canal and aqueduct. Then on to the "Grand Hotel" in Llandudno, overlooking the bay and resplendent in the evening sunlight. The hotel proved to be not so grand but our stay was comfortable. Llandudno is considered to be "the cream of Welsh resorts". Designed in 1849 it has been developed and is still owned by the Mostyn family. The curved terraces are set against the surrounding limestone hills, the Great and Little Orme, and the seafront has the elegance of a bygone age as no cafes or arcades spoil the symmetry of the scene. There is a cable-hauled tramway dating from 1902 and cable-cars that go to the top of the Great Orme, a traditional pier and on our first evening the town brass band was playing in the seafront bandstand. Llandudno is reputed to be very windy so, "When the wind stops, the tourists fall down," but fortunately we managed to say upright throughout our holiday.

Tuesday June 5th

Today promised to be a full day visiting Snowdon and Betws-y-Coed, so accompanied by our Welsh guide, Elwyn, we set off for Snowdon. Wales has a rich history and on the way was Conwy Castle (built in 1283) and Penrhyn Castle that is built in a pseudo Norman style and was funded by the profits made from the three s's: "slate, sugar and slavery." We also passed close to the imposing Caernarfon Castle, renowned for the inauguration of the Prince of Wales and originally an outpost of Edward 1st. An English king in a Welsh land, Edward built a ring of fortresses in Wales as protection against any rebellion.

Once at Snowdon, the rolling hills changed to a more rugged landscape. At 3,569ft the mountain is the highest in both England and Wales and over 300,000 visitors reach the summit yearly, either by train or walking. We wouldn't be among them as the summit facilities are being refurbished so our train stopped at 2,500ft. The noise made by the 1896 steam engine blocked out the recorded commentary but that didn't spoil the journey as the sun caught the dramatic mountain ranges and the deep blue rivers and lakes below. The train track went very near the edge in several places so it was possible to have a panoramic view



of the mountainside. After a stop at Clogwyn that gave the photographers in the group a chance to capture the dramatic scenery, the train started off down the mountain with the billowing smoke reminding us we were travelling as in times past.



Then on to Betws-y-Coed (Elwyn helped us to pronounce the name correctly), The bustling town with its many souvenir shops was a contrast to the stark beauty of Snowdon. However, just a few minutes away from the centre it was possible to walk through quiet woods as tranquillity is never far away in Wales.



Wednesday June 6th

The rural island of Anglesey was our destination. On the way our charming guide, Donna, pointed out Puffin Island and a working slate quarry with its huge clock. The way across to Anglesey is by the Levan Sands to the Menai Straits. People once walked across the Sands until they met the ferry, before Thomas Telford built a suspension bridge in 1826. However, the main bridge is the Britannia Bridge built by Robert Stevenson. In 1970 the original bridge was destroyed by boys burning birds' nests, so the bridge was rebuilt with both a rail and road link. The Menai Straits can be treacherous and the worst tragedy was in 1851 when a ship full of gold from Australia was lost with 400 lives. After crossing into Anglesey, we stopped at the famous village

Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllantysiliogogoch

The shop at the village station was like the Tardis because the quaint station front led into a huge shopping mall. Originally the name had been devised in Victorian times to attract tourists and the present owners are carrying on the tradition. Surprisingly unspoilt was the nearby hut where the first WI meeting was held in 1915.

As was our next stop, Beaumaris Castle. Owned by the Bulkeley family until 1925, the building is an excellent example of a concentric castle. Begun in 1295 by Edward 1st after a rebellion in 1294, it was built to keep the Welsh at bay. Beaumaris has a commanding view over the Menai Straits and the gate near the sea entrance protected the tidal dock, allowing supply ships to sail right up to the Castle. The chapel is particularly well preserved with its vaulted ceiling, arcaded panelling and

lancet windows. Although there are 14 separate obstacles any intended invaders would have to overcome, from right-handed staircases to "murder holes", in reality the castle was neither completed nor used as a fortress.

Next we went onto Holy Island and an idyllic spot at South Stack. Here there were high cliffs and an RSPB nature reserve with the Ellin's Tower for keen birdwatchers. The puffins were out at sea hunting for fish but there were coughts in the bay. The view from the headland was breathtaking as a white painted lighthouse shone in the afternoon sun and puffins' nests were visible on the rugged cliffs. Donna said she wanted to show us somewhere in Anglesey that, "wasn't just flat," so she was pleased we were impressed by the stunning scenery.

Thursday June 7th

The last day of exploring North Wales was one of houses and gardens with a train ride at the end. We first stopped at Bodnant Garden (given to the National Trust by the Aberconway family in 1949). Our guide, Mandy, explained how the garden is renowned for its wealth of trees and plants, all set in 80 acres on the banks of the River Conwy. In the upper part of the garden, the Terrace, the magnificent Laburnum Arch was still just in bloom as were the rhododendrons. Colour in the garden also came from flowers such as lupins, foxgloves, roses and hydrangeas - and the noise from the peacocks. We discovered carefully laid out features such as the Canal Terrace with a pavilion at one end, and the Lily Terrace where the water lilies were in full bloom. A walk down to the Dell at the bottom of the garden revealed a small waterfall flowing from a lake surrounded by ferns and tall fir trees - a place to reflect.

Our next stop, Portmeirion, is very unusual. Clough Williams Ellis began this village in 1926, completing it in 1979. It is like an adult's toy-land with its brightly painted houses and many styles of architecture, ranging from Roman pillars to 30s suburbia. It is also a place of illusion because what looks like a large imposing hall is just a facade set into the cliff, a boat berthed by the shore is only a concrete hull. After exploring the village, most of us visited the Portmeirion pottery shops.

Compared to the busyness of Portmeirion, the journey on the Welsh Highland Railway from Rhyd-Ddu to Caernarfon was restful, travelling through woodlands and sheep-covered hills set against the backdrop of Snowdon. We were in a carefully preserved diesel train although steam trains do run on the line. Originally opened in 1878, the track was finally completed to Porthmadog then closed in 1936, not to be reopened until 1997. Now mainly run by volunteers, it is hoped to eventually link the line with the Ffestiniog Railway, making it the longest heritage railway in Britain. The journey was a fitting end to our exploration of North Wales - a land full of history, beautiful scenery and surprisingly good weather. Thanks to Heather and Eddie; as usual the organisation was flawless and the sights so varied we had plenty to reflect on as we journeyed back to Emsworth, via Worcester, on Friday.

“HI THEE TO A NUNNERY!”

by Tony Cowin

On Tuesday 15 May a full coach-load of members set out from Bridge Road for Dorset, Stape Hill Abbey and Gardens, and Wimborne Minster.

Stape Hill Abbey lies just outside the town of Wimborne Minster, adjacent to Canford School. Established as a monastery for a group of French Cistercian nuns, refugees from the French Terror, in 1802, the foundation was originally known as the monastery of the Holy Cross of our Lady of La Trappe.

We started in the Refectory, for coffee. Here the nuns met daily for many years. The walled Refectory Garden still has painted memorials to nuns who died at Stapehill on the brickwork. This well-tended garden, dominated by a tall cross designed by Augustus Pugin, is today perhaps the closest that the visitor will come to those Trappist ladies, held to a vow of Silence.

The nuns had been given an old farmhouse by Lord Arundell of Wardour, together with a patch of Dorset heathland. The first group of 9 nuns sought the help of the Cistercian monks at Lulworth, and later employed a local farmer. The monastery thrived in Victorian society, being visited by both Queen Adelaide and the Duchess of Kent (Queen Victoria's mother). By 1900 there were some 100 nuns at Stapehill.

By the Chapel are the cloisters, and a small Cloister Garden, with a great trellis dome rich with roses. In the Chapel, the nuns' stalls are still there, with a tape



of their singing. Fresh varnish on the Confessional suggests that the Chapel is still in use. Pugin's stained glass has sadly been lost.

In the 20th Century, fewer women were prepared for a vow of silence! By 1989, the few remaining Sisters could no longer manage the buildings and now-extensive Gardens. They moved to Wales, and the estate was sold. The gardens have been developed, and are well-cared for.

The pergolas were heavy with blossom, both wisteria and laburnum. Most striking was the Japanese Garden, large boulders surrounded with neatly-raked gravel, arching bridges over a pond full of agile carp, and a water-clock tapping out the passage of time.

We lunched by the lake, watching the mallards swimming round the island. We gave thanks for the care that has been put into preserving this peaceful place.

And then, back to the coach, and off to Wimborne Minster, the small town clustering in the shadow of the great Norman Minster, completed in 1085. The oldest structure visible today is probably the base of the Central Tower, dating from 1120. The Minster is dedicated to St Cuthburga, who founded a Benedictine nunnery here around 705AD. The Danes destroyed the nunnery in 1013.

There is much to see.....

Most striking is the High Altar, reached up a flight of steps by the lowly worshippers in the Nave. The set of modern altar frontals are most handsome.

Well worth the climb up a narrow reverse-spiral staircase is the Chained Library, housing some 350 leather-bound books, most over 300 years old.

High in the West Tower (which was built in 1464) is the Astronomical clock. The dial (and hence the clock) date from the early 15th century, and reflect Ptolemy's understanding of our galaxy, with the earth at the centre. The dial, on the inside of the tower, is similar to that at Wells Cathedral. Outside, on the North face, may be seen the Quarter Jack, in a grenadier's uniform from the Napoleonic era, who strikes the quarters for the people of the town. There is a working model of clock and Jack beneath the West Tower.

The main organ was last fully overhauled in 1965, when a new trumpet stop was added. These pipes are mounted horizontally, with spun brass bell mouths (en chamade), and look very fine. Although the organ was silent during our visit, your reporter, from an earlier occasion, can assure the reader that these trumpets make a most stirring sound!



Donors

As you are aware we are in the process of making alterations to the Museum, and this has been possible by bequests from various peoples' wills. However, it always seems a shame that we have to wait for someone to die before we can do something in their name.

Recently, we missed the opportunity to go to auction to try to purchase a letter written by P.G. Wodehouse. It is an important letter, and unfortunately, we did not have the money to even reach the reserve price, let alone put in a realistic bid.

I would like to propose that instead of waiting until you die, some of you would like to become donors. Two ways can be devised:

Either – you donate a sum of money at some time, or in small amounts on a regular basis, to our donations fund.

Or – you inform us of how much you would be prepared to assist us with, if we find something that is important to the Museum. Then we could attempt to purchase it or bid for it at auction. There may be strings attached, that you would contribute a certain percentage, or that you would only give us a sum if we were able to match it from other sources.

In this way, some of you could build up quite a collection of artefacts that could be stored in your name, as your collection, and they would enhance the reputation of our Museum, which would encourage people to visit and therefore increase our revenue. You could also see it and enjoy it.

We are always grateful for bequests of items, but we also need to look at some of the items that are on the market, so that we can have a fully rounded picture of the history of Emsworth.

Please think about it.

Linda Newell

Re-opening of Museum

Many of you will have heard that the Committee planned to celebrate the completion of the building work by inviting guests to a special open evening. Various dates in July were mentioned but as the work is not yet finished this has been delayed.



However, the Museum is now open on Saturdays from 10.30a.m. until 4.30 pm., on Sundays from 2.30 pm. until 4.30 p.m. and on Fridays in August from 2.30 p.m. until 4.30 p.m. Do visit - you will be surprised to see the changes that have already taken place.

Dorothy Bone

Oral history recordings

More taped conversations will be available in the museum this coming season. All are by local residents who have interesting anecdotes to talk about, not only regarding life and times in Emsworth, but also about their careers, hobbies and experiences - so many have childhood memories of playing along the local shoreline and around the boatyards.

It is hoped that CDs will replace the cassette tapes in due course, Apart from the list of people involved, more details of each recording are described in the BLUE FILE. The Emsworth library also holds information. Recordings may be borrowed by members of the Trust - if interested please contact me.

Heather Lewis - Telephone 01243 373197

Visit by Members of the P.G.Wodehouse Society



Norman Murphy signing his book for the museum

To celebrate the tenth anniversary of the foundation of their Society, Members and enthusiasts from all over the world met in London for a "Wodehouse Week". On 12 July, a coach brought 43 of them to Emsworth Museum to see the photographs, letters and documents that relate to the time that PGW spent in Emsworth. This was an exciting occasion for us and confirms the importance of the material that is held in Emsworth Museum.



The driver of the coach also took them to photograph "Threepwood" in Record Road and Stansted House.



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If you would like to provide an article or illustrations for the newsletter, please send to John Tweddell at jtweedell@btinternet.com (files preferred to hard copy)