



# NEWSLETTER

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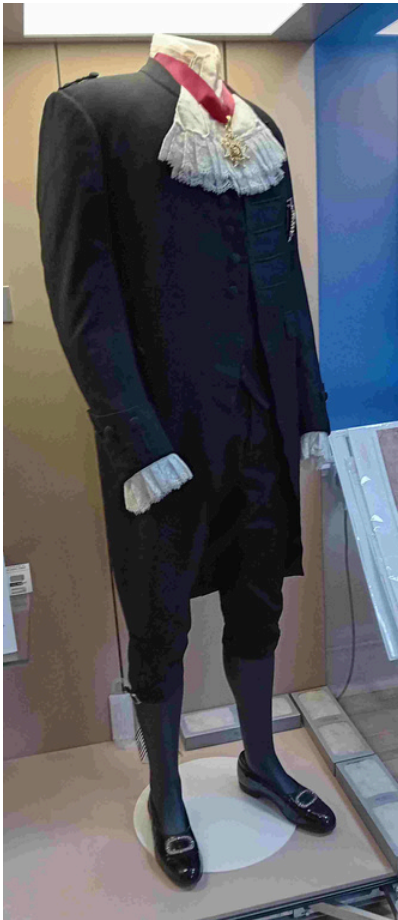


President: The Rt Hon. Lord Willetts of Havant | Charity No. 1204910

May 2026

## Museum opens with new exhibits

# Our volunteer expertise is often hidden in plain sight



### Sue Wallis explains how Black Rod's uniform was prepared for display

Displaying garments to their best advantage and protecting the textiles from strain or damage are crucial elements in preparing a mannequin.

Trevor Davies (EMHT chairman) commissioned a custom-made mannequin for Black Rod so the basic foundation to work on was already there. The body is made of a light but solid resin/plastic which needs to be covered and padded ready for the final display.

The first task is to tightly cover the body with conservation grade cotton jersey so that there is a base to stitch the padded elements to. Most of the weight of a garment is carried through the shoulders, and so to prevent damage the shoulders of the mannequin are padded with inert polyester wadding. Other layers of padding were added where necessary to 'fill out' the basic form.

Once the padding is satisfactory it is hand-stitched over the top base layer of cotton. An outer layer of jersey is then stitched over the top so that the whole form is smooth. This is a meticulous and time-consuming procedure but immensely satisfying.

It can be a challenge to get the layers of the costume onto the rigid mannequin. The arms are detachable, so they are placed through the sleeves of the shirt, waistcoat and jacket first. The arms are then attached to the body and the layers of the outfit smoothed into place. Ideally when the display is finished the only thing you 'see' is the costume and the mannequin itself is 'invisible'.

All textiles deteriorate with time and over exposure to light. Black Rod will be carefully packed away at the end of the season to rest until next year.

SW

*"Emsworth museum is run by volunteers, not amateurs" Trevor Davies, chairman*

## Museum Shop

Remember, if you have a NATIONAL ART PASS, you are entitled to a 10% discount on purchases from the museum shop. These stylish pens cost £5 each and every purchase supports the museum, so BUY ONE!



## Pig-hoo-o-o-o-ey

### PGW fans visit museum

Experts on the life & works of PG Wodehouse gathered in Chichester in mid-March for a conference on this versatile and comedic author. EMHT chairman, Trevor Davies, gave a paper and was able to enlighten his audience on 'The gift that keeps on giving'. PG Wodehouse lived in Emsworth for ten years from 1904 - 1914 and the Wodehouse gallery is an attractive addition to the museum.

As part of the conference, Trevor and volunteer stewards opened the museum on 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> March to welcome over thirty PGW enthusiasts from the UK, USA, India, Germany, and the Netherlands. One of the visitors, Robert Bruce, sent the team the following email:

*"Belated and huge thanks for all that you did on our visit to the museum the other week. It was quite glorious, quite apart from fascinating, eye-opening, revelatory, and so on. I loved it. And it was a great opportunity to provide you, and the museum, with a copy of my map, 'Blandings and Beyond'. Fortuitously, Emsworth is on the map."*

CB



Trevor Davies (L) welcomed (L-R) Jon Pender, Paul Kent and Peter Nieuwenhuizen to the museum

## Summer Walks

### Explore Emsworth's history on foot

Wednesday evenings on  
June 3, July 1, August 5 and September 2

6:15pm – 8:00pm

Cost: £5 per head

Meet: at Emsworth Museum in North Street by 6.15 pm. If possible please book in advance but your walk can be paid for on the evening.

Email [walks@emsworthmuseum.org.uk](mailto:walks@emsworthmuseum.org.uk) to book a place. Numbers are limited to 12 so that stories can be shared more easily.

## The Spring Arts Centre

### Genealogy advice available

The Spring Arts Centre is the home of Havant's local history museum, which is always worth a visit. It is open Monday - Saturday 10-4 and also for an hour before evening performances.

Adjoining the museum is the Spring's research room which is open whenever the museum is open. It provides free access to a range of resources including:

- Two computers with free internet access
- Printed records for births, marriages, deaths, baptisms and burials for Havant and the local area from as early as 1635
- Census returns for Havant from 1841
- Maps of the local area from as early as 1875

What many people might not know is that the Spring also provides a free genealogy and local history service

Appointments with their specialists are free but it is important to book an appointment by emailing [info@thespring.co.uk](mailto:info@thespring.co.uk).

## Exhibitions

### Margaret & Warblington Castle

Discover more about the life of Margaret Pole, her influence on national politics, and her home, Warblington Castle.

Exhibition runs 3<sup>rd</sup> April - 25<sup>th</sup> May

### Emsworth Memorial Garden

The memorial garden, within the footprint of Emsworth Recreation Ground, celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. This exhibition explores its origins and development.

Exhibition runs 30<sup>rd</sup> May - 12<sup>th</sup> July

### Nore Barn Woods

Nore Barn Woods is an attractive area of public open space in Emsworth, adjacent to the shore of Chichester Harbour. This exhibition explores its flora and fauna, and the work that the Friends of Nore Barn Woods have done to protect and enhance the area for everyone.

Exhibition runs 18<sup>th</sup> July - 30<sup>th</sup> August

## From the Chairman

### Another season is upon us



#### We are ready

A major winter project to re-display Black Rod's uniform on a museum standard mannequin has been completed. It replaces the wedding dress which needs a rest and some conservation work.

#### Upcoming lecture

Those who attended the AGM had an opportunity to view the first temporary exhibition: Margaret Pole and Warblington Castle. To accompany the exhibition we arranged for the last lecture in the 2025-2026 winter series to be given by Dr Rachel Delman, an Oxford scholar who has researched and published work on the powerful women of the Tudor period, of whom Margaret Pole was undoubtedly one.

#### Garden exhibition

The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Emsworth Memorial Garden is our second temporary exhibition. It will show how and why the garden was created, and exemplifies the symbiotic relationship between the museum and the community it serves.

#### PG Wodehouse visitors

On Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March the PG Wodehouse Society held their spring conference in Chichester. The museum was opened for the conference delegates on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> and 36 society members visited. They were generous with their purchases and donations.

#### Sharing our displays

The Swing Riots exhibition which was on display in the David Rudkin room during the summer of 2025 has recently had another showing in the Spring Arts Centre in Havant.

TD

#### From our visitor book following the visit from PGW Society members:

"A lovely museum - very informative and lovingly tendered." Andrea Jacobsen, USA

"Superb - absolutely brilliant! Thank you." Chris Brand, UK

## AGM

### Members show support

Last year, we held the Trust's AGM in the museum because the Community Centre was closed by the fire the week beforehand. It was a success so the committee decided to run the AGM in the museum again this year.

31 members joined us on 19<sup>th</sup> March. After the formal business of the evening had been finished, there was an opportunity for a drink and to look at the changes that we have introduced over the winter.

48 members gave us their postal vote prior to the AGM so in total 79 members participated. This is slightly better than last year and means that a quarter of our membership participated in the AGM decisions - a healthy sign of good governance.

TD

**Lecture tickets** (£5 each) can be purchased from **BOOKENDS**, 7 High Street, Emsworth

**Summer walks tickets** (£5 each) can be paid for on the day but numbers are limited and your places should be booked in advance by emailing [walks@emsworthmuseum.org.uk](mailto:walks@emsworthmuseum.org.uk)



#### MUSEUM WEBSITE

[www.emsworthmuseum.org.uk](http://www.emsworthmuseum.org.uk)



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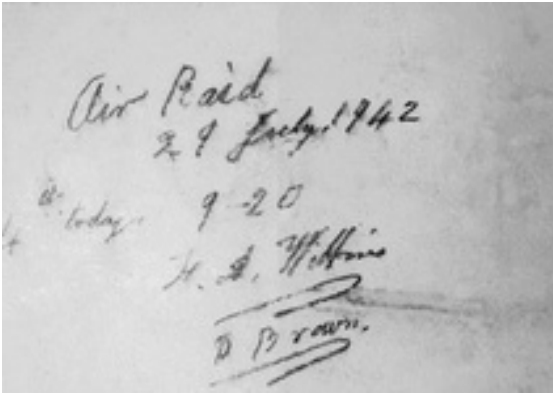
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## Graffiti

### Decorators uncover wartime graffiti in Holmwood House



Graffiti (top left) found underneath wallpaper during recent redecoration at Holmwood House in King Street recorded an air raid on 29<sup>th</sup> July 1942.



Another example of wartime graffiti (bottom left) can be seen on the boundary wall of Warblington Castle Farm where 'ET' and 'HC' scratched their initials into the concrete in 1941.

The Watch Hut in the south east corner of Warblington churchyard may be a Grade II listed building but that hasn't stopped people scratching their names into the brickwork over the years (right).

Do you know of any other examples?



## Town of Culture 2028

### Wemsfest organiser leads bid

Mark Ringwood, longtime organiser of Wemsfest, is spearheading a campaign for Emsworth (together with neighbouring villages) to become Town of Culture 2028.

The deadline for submitting an Expression of Interest was March 31<sup>st</sup> and the meeting of interested parties to discuss that possibility took place on March 6<sup>th</sup>. Mark successfully managed to meet the deadline.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport will award bid development grants of £60,000 to each of those shortlisted places invited to submit a full application. Shortlisted towns will be announced this spring.

The winning town will be awarded £3 million to deliver a six month cultural programme in 2028. Additionally, the two finalists from their category will receive £250,000 each to deliver elements of their bid.

Our chairman took part in early discussions about this proposal and will be kept informed of progress.

## Curator's Quiz

### What am I?

And if you know, then can you date me and do you know where I was found? (Answer on the back page)



## Lecture Review

# Poverty, Mudlarks and War

In this, the fourth in his series of talks on the history of Portsmouth, Andrew Negus focused on the run up to the Second World War and the immediate consequences of that struggle for the city.

By 1930 the population of Portsmouth had grown to some 180,000, of which 10,000 were employed within the Royal Dockyard. However, this did not lead to prosperity, as the workers were not well paid and were in danger of being laid off when there was less work to be done in the dockyard as was increasingly the case after WWI, leading to increasing unemployment and poverty. The thirties were also a period of world recession and things only started to pick up when the government decided that it needed to rearm to confront Hitler's Germany.

The mudlarks of the title, were young children who would lark about in the mudflats by the dockyard, inviting passers-by to throw coins into the mud. This was begging (an illegal activity) by another name to help feed their families. The streets of Portsmouth were narrow and the houses overcrowded and lacking in basic amenities – for instance it was not uncommon to see animals being butchered in the open on the street.

The 1930s did see some investment and preparations for war being made. Preparations for war included the construction of an additional sewage treatment plant at Fort Cumberland at Eastney and the provision under Portsdown Hill of an underground storage site for 180,000 tons of naval heavy fuel oil, as well as a network of tunnels fitted out as a huge bomb shelter complex with associated medical and other facilities. These certainly proved their worth in the war when it came.

During the war, some 23,000 workers worked in the dockyard which was extensively damaged. As for the city itself, 40,000 buildings were destroyed, including the Guildhall. Losses among the population were, however, less than might have been expected at 970 killed over the course of 670 air raids.

After the war ended, the council was determined to improve local housing and moved families into ten single-storey prefab housing estates outside the city. In 1951 the council purchased the Leigh Park estate and set about the building of new permanent housing with up-to-date facilities.

Despite these positive developments, it was unclear what the future would hold for the city with a much smaller Navy and associated dockyard providing less jobs than before the war. What happened next will be covered in the final episode of Andrew's talks about the history of Portsmouth.

PE



Andrew is a retired history teacher, a Blue Badge guide for central southern England, and a popular local historian

## Exhibition

# Margaret's legacy

Our first exhibition of the season, **Margaret Pole and her Castle**, was officially opened on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April by the current owner of Warblington Castle, Mrs Diana Bishop.

The museum was busy from the moment it re-opened which we hope suggests that we will be a popular destination this spring and summer. Please do recommend us to your friends and neighbours.

**EXHIBITION RUNS UNTIL 25<sup>TH</sup> MAY**



## Lecture Review

# Global Wars & Chaos: an overview, revisited



Field Marshal the Lord Richards of Herstmonceux GCB  
CBE DSO DL

**“TAKING COMMAND”**  
by General David Richards  
can be purchased online

Even atrocious weather could not deter the citizens of Emsworth from filling the Baptist Church almost to its full capacity on the evening of 5th February to hear Field Marshal David Richards speak. At the outset, it was determined that the meeting should be run under the Chatham House Rule to give as much opportunity as possible for an open and frank discussion.

Field Marshal Richards gave a fascinating talk on the current world situation. Modestly advising the audience that his perspective should not be viewed by them as being in any way definitive, he started his talk by giving a brief overview of his interesting and impressive career in the British Army and UK Defence.

Rather than addressing certain issues in detail, he chose to give an informed and wide-ranging overview of the world situation and the changing nature of the threats we face today, including the downstream effects of climate change.

This was then followed by a lively Q&A session which included inter alia a discussion on the adequacy of current and future funding for the UK's armed forces, especially in the light of other calls on defence funding such as the nuclear deterrent. There was a discussion about the need for a longer-term perspective of the role of military in world affairs. The continuing relevance of some existing national and multilateral organisations was also discussed.

After the formal part of the meeting, Field Marshal Richards, remained to answer further questions and sign copies of his book which were on sale, with the profits going to Emsworth Museum.

PE

## Lecture Review

# Violette Szabó: an ordinary woman doing extraordinary things

The second winter lecture, given by retired army major Jeremy Prescott, covered the life of Violette Szabó, one of only four women awarded the George Cross.

Jeremy's extensive research meant that he was able to give us a remarkably full and rounded picture of Violette's life from her early years growing up with four brothers in Stockwell, London.

She was recruited to the Special Operations Executive (SOE) in 1943. Her trainers identified an impulsive character and an inclination not to follow rules but she successfully completed her training and was sent on her first mission in 1944. She escaped capture and completed her mission. She then visited her aunt in Paris and, on a whim, spent a lot of SOE money (the equivalent today of around £6,000) on couture dresses! Her second mission, in June 1944, resulted in her capture at a road block and imprisonment within Ravensbrück concentration camp, where she was later executed.

It was a fascinating story of one woman's short but extraordinary life.

PA



Jeremy Prescott

## The Museum's Future

# Will local government reorganisation affect the museum?

The museum and the local fire brigade are housed in what used to be local government offices on North Street. The EM&HT pays a peppercorn rent to Havant Borough Council (HBC) and while the Trust is responsible for decoration, HBC is responsible for the fabric of the building. We have a lease until 2034.

It is an arrangement that has worked well since we opened in 1988. However with the upcoming reorganisation of local government the museum's landlord, HBC, will be replaced by the new, larger, South East Hampshire unitary authority. The big question is what will this new authority do with 'our' building?

Emsworth has no Parish Council, and must rely on its councillors for support within local government. We are entering a period of significant uncertainty regarding the museum's home: if you ever have an opportunity to speak up for the museum, please do!

*The museum is housed in what were originally the council offices for the Warblington Urban District Council.*

*The offices became surplus to requirements in 1932, when Warblington Urban District Council merged with Havant and Waterlooville Urban District Council to become Havant Borough Council.*

*Since then, the upper floor of the building, which once consisted of offices and meeting rooms (with sprung floors and imposing fireplaces), has been living accommodation, a dance studio, and a room for hire.*

*The Emsworth 1st Company of Girl Guides moved their headquarters from the Central Hall to the Council Offices in 1937. The yearly rental for the large room on the top floor and the Committee Room was £5.*

## Museum Research

# The Emsworth Laundry

Quinton Fields is situated off New Brighton Road, just north of Wickor Way. It used to be the site of the Emsworth Havant & District Steam Laundry. The museum possesses a few laundry artefacts but the reality is that even though it was a significant employer in the village, we don't know that much about it.

Around 2013, an Emsworth Laundry basket was donated to the museum by Mrs Fisher of Mytchett near Camberley, and we have a pair of laundry tongs, an iron, and a photograph of the staff from the early 1920s (see right). We also have two posters that would have been on display within the buildings. The Emsworth Steam Laundry was clearly an important component of Emsworth life.

What we do know, from the 1911 census, is that it was a thriving business at that time, operating two commercial laundries and employing 50 people, mostly women. It continued to operate until the early 1960s.



Peter Morse put out a request for information about the laundry when the basket was first donated, with a view to curating an exhibition about the business. Peter is once again asking us all, "Do you know anything about The Emsworth Havant & District Steam Laundry"? It seems such a shame we still know so little about an employer of so many local women.

If can help us, please email: [museum@emsworthmuseum.org.uk](mailto:museum@emsworthmuseum.org.uk)

# MUSEUM NOTICEBOARD

## VIOLETTE SZABÓ GC MUSEUM

open 2-4pm every Wednesday April-October  
by appointment

**"Carteff", Tump Lane, Wormelow,  
Herefordshire HR2 8HN**  
Call 01981 540477

## Flora Twort: Draw from Life

will include rarely-seen early life-drawing sketches from Twort's time as a student at the Slade School of Fine Arts in 1920, as well as pages from her sketchbooks that she drew in throughout her life.

**Opens 29th April  
at Petersfield Museum**



In 2025, a family from Hong Kong visited Emsworth specifically to see our museum's PGW exhibit. They donated a box of Oolong tea, Bertie Wooster's favourite non-alcoholic tippie.

## THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR LOCAL HISTORY

THE NATIONAL CHARITY WHICH  
PROMOTES LOCAL HISTORY AND  
SERVES LOCAL HISTORIANS

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## Your visitor experience matters

If you want a really close look at anything on display in the museum, ask a steward if you can borrow one of our magnifying glasses



"Young, Brave & Beautiful" by Tania Szabó  
"Carve Her Name with Pride" by RJ Minney  
"Violette: The Life That I Have" by Susan Ottaway  
"Violette: The Missions of SOE Agent  
Violette Szabó GC" by Tania Szabó

## VIOLETTE BOOKS

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## Curator's Quiz

I am a long cross silver penny issued from 1279 (Edward I or Edward II). The purpose of the long cross was to make it very difficult to trim the edges and so debase the coinage. This was found in a dig close to Warblington church.

