



Emsworth Maritime & Historical Trust NEWSLETTER

President: The Rt Hon. Lord Willetts of Havant
Reg. Charity No. 294965

Emsworth Museum

10b North Street, Emsworth, Hants, PO10 7DD
Tel: 01243 378091 www.emsworthmuseum.org.uk

February 2019

A Very Special Evening

Thursday evening, 11th October was a very special occasion for our Membership Secretary, Peter Morse, when he finally met face-to-face with Paul and Lynda Desgris. Throughout September and early October Peter had maintained email contact with our French visitors which culminated in their visiting in person and gifting to the Museum over 50 photographs of life in Caserne Bir Hakeim, the World War II Free French barracks off Southleigh Road, together with the uniform and greatcoat of a French naval officer. The barracks were occupied by the Free French from 1942 to 1944.

Paul's father, Kleber Desgris, was a chief petty officer (premier maître) who married an English girl, Isabel Baty. Paul fleshed out the family story in his opening remarks. Isabel came from Northumberland and with her first husband, Neil MacDonald, moved



Paul Desgris

to Micheldever, near Winchester in 1939. The couple later divorced and Isabel met Kleber at a dance in nearby Westbourne. Their son Paul was born in 1944 in Dawn Maternity Hospital in Beach Road, Emsworth, and the young family remained in Emsworth, living in Kings Road, before moving to France in 1946.

Prior to joining the Free French Naval Forces in July 1940, Kleber had taken part in the evacuation of Dunkirk. He later served in the British and Free French Navies and was awarded the rare honour of medals from both Britain and France. Following the cessation of hostilities, Kleber worked at the French Embassy in London on the decommissioning of merchant vessels.

Paul's English wife, Lynda took up the story and unveiled Kleber's uniform and greatcoat, both made of doeskin by Gieves of London, which had lain safe in a trunk for over 70 years. The clothing was in first-class condition and Museum Curator, Phil Magrath, was delighted to receive them on behalf of the Museum. He and former Chairman, Tony Stimson, displayed the uniform and greatcoat to the welcoming gathering. Among those present was visitor Jane Pett, Paul's distant cousin who was both chauffeuse and his guide to local sites.

Jill Littleton, EM&HT Steward, was also there on that Thursday evening in October. Earlier she had helped gather information on other men at Bir Hakeim who married English girls. Lynda too had more information about those combatants to whom Bir Hakeim was home. Margaret Rogers, Vice Chairman, and Geoff Higgins, co-opted General Committee member, arranged a special display of information held in the Museum on the Bir Hakeim barracks.



Lynda Desgris with Phil Magrath, left, and Tony Stimson displaying the French naval uniform and greatcoat gifted to the Museum

Diary Dates

All monthly exhibitions are held in the Museum's David Rudkin Room. Talks are now held on **Wednesday** evenings, in the Mountford Rooms, Emsworth Community Centre, North Street, Emsworth PO10 7DD at 7.30pm. Doors open at 7.00pm. Admission: Members £3.00, Non Members £4.00.

February 20th	Illustrated talk – “Mothballs and a Whiff of Whisky” by Nigel Gossop
March 18th	Annual General Meeting (agenda in envelope with this newsletter) Please note that this meeting will be held on a Monday evening in the Emsworth Community Centre.
March	Stewards' Instruction Sessions If you Stewarded in 2018 (or you volunteered late in the year and your first duty will be in 2019) your invitation will be in the envelope with this Newsletter. If you haven't yet volunteered but would like to be a Steward in 2019 please contact me on 01243 373780.
April 6th	Museum Re-opens
April 6th – 23rd	Exhibition – Funtington Parish – Past and Present (to be confirmed)
April 27th – May 19th	Exhibition – Paintings and sculpture by Deborah Richards (Emsworth Art Trail: April 27th/28th and May 4th/5th/6th)
May 8th	Local History Walk led by Christine Bury
May 25th – June 23rd	Exhibition – Title to be confirmed
June 12th	Local History Walk led by Christine Bury
June	Treasure Hunt – Date to be confirmed
June 29th – July 28th	Exhibition – Title to be confirmed
July 10th	Local History Walk led by Christine Bury
August 2nd – Sept. 1st	Exhibition – 100th Anniversary of the Emsworth Sailing Club
August 14th	Local History Walk led by Christine Bury
August 26th	Emsworth Show
September 7th – 29th	Exhibition – Transport in Emsworth up to 1950s
October 5th – 27th	Exhibition – Title to be confirmed
September	Emsworth British Food Fortnight
October 16th	Talk – “The Naval camps of Bedhampton and Leigh Park in WWII” by Bob Hind
November 20th	Talk – “Commander Crabb: What really happened” by Dr John Bevan
December	Stewards' Christmas Tea Party

Emsworth Museum will be open from 6th April until 27th October on Saturdays and Bank Holidays 10.30am – 4.30pm and on Sundays 2.30pm – 4.30pm. On all the five days of the Art Trail (April 27th/28th and May 4th/5th/6th) the Museum will be open 10.30am – 4.30pm. In addition it will be open on 23rd April 10.00am – 2.00pm.

Members are welcome to visit the Museum for research on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons 2.00pm – 4.00pm (except Tuesdays 26th February, 9th April, 21st May, 2nd July, 13th August, 24th September and 5th November). If you would like to visit and be sure that the Museum will be open, please telephone or email me.

ADMISSION TO THE MUSEUM IS FREE We are always grateful for financial donations to help with the expenses of running the Museum.

Dorothy Bone 01243 373780 dorothybone@btinternet.com

Thank You

The 2018 'thank you' party in the Parish Hall was a scene of furious mental activity on Thursday afternoon, 6th December. Museum volunteers were confronted by three quizzes devised by Christine Bury on themes of Christmas carols and Emsworth people, places and shops. The quizzes proved popular and provoked lots of discussion. Fortunately plenty of festive food was on offer for people to eat while trying to solve these puzzles.

Vice Chairman, Margaret Rogers compered the afternoon and presented Maureen Barrett with a special prize as a thank you for her regular volunteer work as well as for the knitted poppies she had made for the Great War exhibition in the David Rudkin Room.

Former Chairman, Tony Stimson gave an update on the refurbishment work being undertaken in the Museum during the winter closure and Membership Secretary, Peter Morse shook the 50/50 club draw tokens for December. The winner was Madeleine Juniper, who not only won first, but also second prize, which she generously put back in the bag for a third draw. It only then remained for Margaret to wish everyone a 'Happy Christmas', the chairs and tables cleared, the pots washed and the lights put out, leaving the Parish Hall tidy once again.



50/50 Club

The rules of the 50/50 Club require that 50% of the proceeds are returned to Club Members in a monthly draw. With over 200 shares held by some 80 members there are two winning prizes, £35 and £15, every month. The prize list for 2018 is shown in the table on the right. Congratulations to all the winners.

Proceeds from the 50/50 Club are used to enhance the Museum in various ways – for example to improve the lighting of displays or, more rarely, the acquisition of new items of particular interest to the history of Emsworth.

Have you considered becoming a member? The minimum holding for new members is two shares at a cost of £12 per year. Entry forms can be obtained from the 50/50 Club Organiser, **Peter Morse**, 01243 697582 or peter.morse@talktalk.net

2018 winners are:

Month	No	Name	Prize	Value
January	91	Mr B Baines	First	£35.00
January	106	Mr P Chisnall	Second	£15.00
February	96	Mr J A Saunders	First	£35.00
February	20	Mr W Dawes	Second	£15.00
March	181	Mr A W Stewart-Fitzroy	First	£35.00
March	103	Mr & Mrs W A M Stimson	Second	£15.00
April	136	Dr W Bright	First	£35.00
April	69	Mrs M S Taplin	Second	£15.00
May	97	Mr A W Stewart-Fitzroy	First	£35.00
May	172	Mrs S Ridley	Second	£15.00
June	82	Mrs V J Rigby	First	£35.00
June	51	Mrs Vickers	Second	£15.00
July	125	Mr D Beckman	First	£35.00
July	109	Mrs M S Taplin	Second	£15.00
August	51	Mrs Vickers	First	£35.00
August	53	Miss C Rudkin	Second	£15.00
September	115	Mr A C Yoward	First	£35.00
September	59	Mrs M Riding	Second	£15.00
October	47	Mr & Mrs R Lawson	First	£35.00
October	228	Mr R Campbell	Second	£15.00
November	27	Mrs S G Lonsdale	First	£35.00
November	44	Mrs A C Kennett	Second	£15.00
December	101	Mrs M Juniper	First	£35.00
December	161	Dr P M Last	Second	£15.00

Our thanks to David and Sue Young who have kindly sponsored the printing of the article on pages 6 and 7 about the 2018 Trust Holiday to Devon.

Our thanks also to Mike Edwards and John Tweddell who provide most of the photographs that appear in these newsletters.

From the Vice Chairman

I am so pleased to be able to start the New Year with really good news. Dr Trevor Davies has agreed that his name should be put forward at the next Annual General Meeting on 18th March for the position of Chairman of the Trust, and I hope everyone will agree that we could not have found a more fitting person to fill this role. As a local person renowned in the field of archaeology for his work at the Warblington Roman Villa site he is amply qualified both academically and as a well-known local speaker. I know that many members are loath to spend a Monday evening to attend the AGM, but it is vital that we achieve a quorum on this important occasion so that we may confirm Trevor's appointment.

Now for the not-so-good news. We are still urgently in need of a Membership Secretary to replace Peter Morse who has filled this position for 12 years. He has done this so seamlessly that we have perhaps underestimated how good he has been, but he now feels it is time for him to retire. Not that he wishes anyone considering the post to feel without assistance for Peter has volunteered his help over the transition. Despite widespread advertising from Dorothy, so far she has not been able to generate any interest. If you know of anyone with computing skills who would consider becoming Membership Secretary please do let Dorothy know and she will provide all the details.

With spring on the horizon – my snowdrops and crocuses are already up – it will not be long before the Museum opens its newly painted blue door again on 6th April. And I hope members will be suitably impressed at all the work carried out over the winter. The sash windows now work, the Rudkin and Archive Rooms have a fresh look and a great deal of re-organisation has gone on to continue to make the Museum appeal to as many visitors, both local and from further afield, as possible. To enable us to do this we need your help – please do volunteer – and we are sure to be able to find you a niche helping us which you will find both rewarding and interesting.

Margaret Rogers
Vice Chairman

Exhibitions Planned for 2019

For many years a variety of changing exhibitions have been staged in the David Rudkin Room during the spring, summer and autumn months. Emsworth has an interesting and unique past and residents and visitors to the town write very favourable comments in the visitors book indicating the enjoyment they get from seeing these displays. To encourage more people to visit, and hopefully re-visit, the exhibitions are changed frequently and as a result six or seven new displays need to be produced every year.

Please let me know if you have seen a suitable display in a nearby village, would like to research and put on an exhibition or perhaps assist someone who is already planning a display.

The proposed diary of events and displays for 2019 is on page 2. So far a celebration of the 100th anniversary of the start of Emsworth Sailing Club, a display of photographs and models of horse drawn and powered transport used in Emsworth up to the 1950s and the Arts Trail artist have been confirmed. Three other displays are being negotiated.

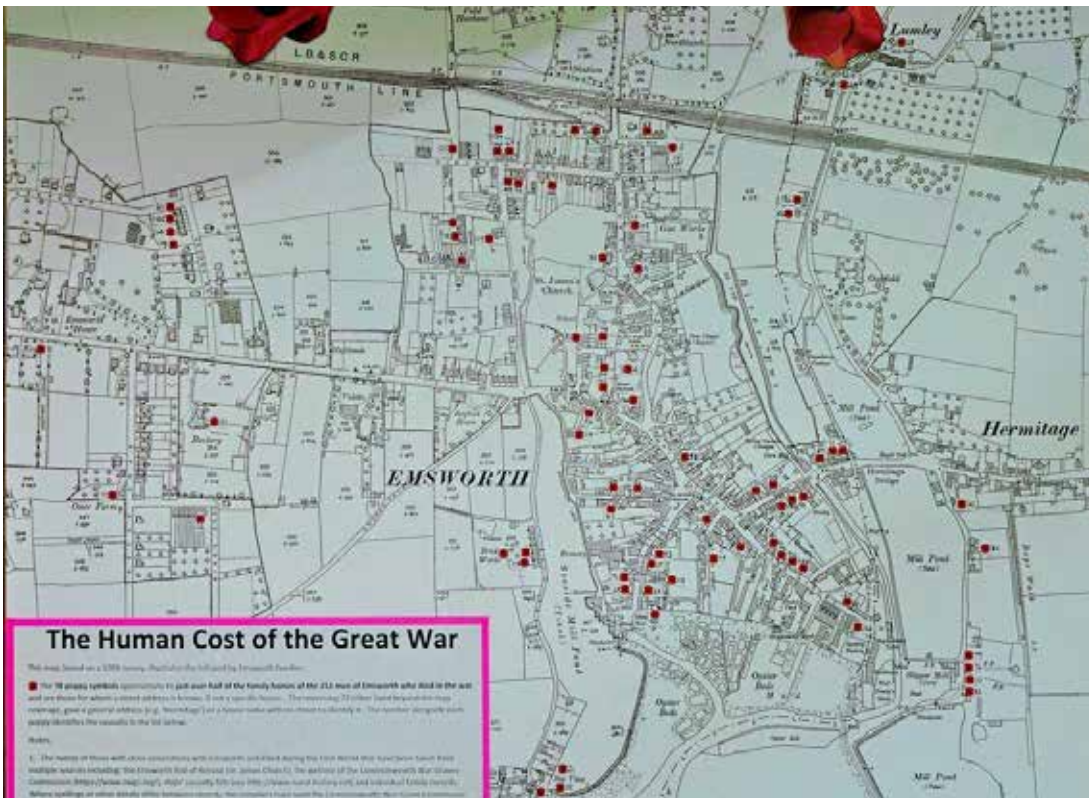


Bob Duncan

In past years Bob Duncan researched and put on extremely interesting, attractive and well planned exhibitions – the last of which, the commemoration of Emsworth men who served in WWI, he unfortunately did not live to see displayed. We miss Bob's enthusiasm and dedication to detail: and along with the maintenance and decoration work that he willingly undertook he also re-organised and enhanced the Museum sales area. He was an inspiration to us all.

Dorothy Bone

Great War Commemoration



The red dots mark the known homes of families in Emsworth who mourned the death of a loved one

One hundred and fifty one Emsworth men died as a result of the four years of world-wide conflict between 1914 and 1918. To mark the centenary of the Armistice, Emsworth Museum mounted an exhibition in the David Rudkin Room that ran from 6th October to Remembrance Sunday, 11th November 2018. Curated by the late Bob Duncan, his daughter Jane Kidd and Richard Sanderson, the exhibition set out to commemorate the men from this town who had given their lives both on land and at sea. Emsworth had a significantly higher proportion of deaths at 48% than the country as a whole at 11%.

Emsworth soldiers and sailors were remembered on each of the exhibition boards which attempted to show not only the human cost of the Great War but the toll it had on Emsworth families. Topics covered included the key factors that influenced the war, recruitment, conscription, food rationing, air warfare and the use of Zeppelins, U-boats, mines, mustard gas and tanks. This was an in-depth look at the war which had taken over two years of painstaking research by Bob Duncan, already in his nineties. The result was a meticulously detailed exhibition that also considered the role of women, medical improvements and the mobilisation of animals as well as men.

Among the many people who visited the exhibits was Bob Hind of the *Portsmouth News*. The paper devoted a full page on 6th November to this major presentation and called it 'a display that should

not be missed'. Another visitor was local MP, Alan Mak, who toured the exhibition on 9th November. Both men also saw various memorabilia on display from books and cigarette cards to cartoons, shell cases, medals and postcards including one from Bob Duncan's father to his future wife sent from Jerusalem in 1917.



Maureen Barrett, left, and exhibition curator, Jane Kidd, wearing Maureen's knitted poppies



Jane Kidd with Alan Mak, centre, and Tony Stimson

Trust's Devon Holiday in 2018



There were 41 people on board the Woods' coach that set off on Monday 15th October on a four day holiday to explore Devon and its heritage. Led by Peter and June Morse we were soon guessing at the mileage to our destination, Tiverton, and attempting a quiz based on literature to keep us amused on the journey – the winner getting a prize.

Our first stop was at a 416-year-old Elizabethan renaissance house, Montacute. Inside the house dim lighting didn't make visibility easy but it helped to preserve the impressive paintings, sculptures and books in the library. Built by Edward Phelips, a wealthy and ambitious member of Queen Elizabeth's



Montacute's splendid array of portraits

Parliament, Montacute's main purpose had been to advertise the owner's lofty position and success. It is the paintings of noblemen and Queen Elizabeth that have a special history. Loaned by the National Portrait Gallery and displayed on the top floors of the house, many of the portraits were by "unknown artists," invited into studios that belonged to such distinguished artists as Holbein who allowed copies to be made of his paintings, presumably for a fee. Another interesting feature is the heraldic-designed windows, contemporary with the building of the house. The gardens are very grand with avenues of carefully shaped trees, cloud hedges and two "wibbly wobbly" hedges.

After settling into our comfortable Great Western hotel near Tiverton, on Tuesday morning we had a tour of Exeter that seemed to be a city that had

once been historically interesting but nowadays is rather modern and developed. All the Roman gates were destroyed in 1819 with many of the city's historical artefacts remaining below the surface. Exeter had once been famous for its cloth trade, old Tudor buildings and a medieval bridge constructed in 1203. However there are still some historic places to visit, including Exeter Cathedral and passages under the heart of the city. After the city tour our group split into two, one to visit the Cathedral interior, the other to explore the passages. As I chose the underground passages one of our party, Maureen Ballard-Neale, kindly wrote about her visit with the other half of the group to Exeter's Cathedral:

"The Cathedral was enjoyed by those not wishing to brave the subterranean passages. It's the third religious building on the site: first a Saxon church, then a Norman cathedral, finally the present gothic building. The Cathedral boasts the longest vaulted roof in the world, an enormous bishop's throne, a 4,000 pipe organ, 14 stained glass windows and



Inside Exeter Cathedral

many interesting and inspiring artefacts – all brought to life by a delightful and knowledgeable guide. Exeter Cathedral, clad in golden stone, is a mighty statement of faith that retains its tranquillity.”

By contrast, Exeter’s underground passages were built in the 14th and 15th centuries to bring a supply of fresh drinking water to the city. So much rubbish was being thrown into the river, the water from it was becoming a health hazard. The piped water came from springs in the surrounding countryside and the pipeline was completed in 1776. Deep trenches were cut through the rock, stone blocks and lead pipes were laid on the passage floor and capped with stone.



The underground passages

We donned hard hats and once in the passages we could understand why. The passages are narrow and low with support props that are easy to bang your head on – most of us did this at least once. The ground was uneven, the walls damp and the atmosphere cold so we could imagine the poor working conditions of the men who laid and maintained the pipes and also kept down the number of rats. There was an opportunity to crawl through a passage under three feet high but we all declined.

On Wednesday we went for a visit to Tiverton Museum. This proved to be a very interesting and



Farm Wagon, Tiverton Museum

informative museum with different topics housed in separate rooms. Devon’s association with farming for many centuries was clearly illustrated and presented. There were examples of farming equipment ranging from ridge ploughs to cider makers. Other displays showed examples of lace making, wool and textile industries. Some of the 1940s and 50s memorabilia such as the gas masks, Anderson shelters and Meccano sets encouraged many of us to reminisce about this familiar period in history.

In the afternoon we went to the Grand Western Canal to enjoy a leisurely cruise, followed by a cream tea. Pulling the hand-painted barge was a large, strong horse, decorated in traditional colours and patterns as was the 75 seater barge – owned and run by the Brind family for over 40 years. We enjoyed a peaceful journey observing ducks, reeds, kingfishers and people walking their dogs along the towpath. On board a very competent female trainee skipper gave us a brief history of the canal, which is eleven and a quarter miles long, six feet deep. Half way through our journey we were asked to stop talking, put away any mobiles, the boat windows were opened wide and we listened, with eyes closed, to the bird song, the lapping of the water and the rhythmic trotting of the horse – a truly memorable experience.



The steam train on its journey through parts of Somerset

On our last day, Thursday 18th October, the highlight was a twenty-mile journey on a steam train from Bishop Lydeard, winding through the picturesque Quantock Hills, along the Exmoor coast to Minehead. The steam train runs on a standard gauge track. It is immaculately maintained and obviously cherished by the 200 volunteers that guarantee the train runs regularly. After a brief visit to a Garden Centre we took the road back to Emsworth, concluding a varied and enjoyable exploration of Devon and its heritage.

Sue Young

Photos: David Young and Mike Edwards

Emsworth Weather: storms, tides, floods and winds

The exhibition last August in the David Rudkin Room, curated by EM&HT photograph archivist Bernie Gudge, certainly lived up to its billing. There were ten boards full of photographs depicting extreme local weather conditions. Some of the mainly black and white images were Bernie's own while others came from the Museum archives. The earliest photographs were of conditions in January/February 1895. This winter was regarded as the culmination of the Little Ice Age that had lasted for over ten winters. In February 1895 temperatures dropped to -20°C and lasted for about four weeks. The harbour froze to a depth of about six inches. Inland, underground water and gas pipes fractured as the ground froze.

Conditions must have been dire when the thaw set in. Emsworth people were used to flooding though, particularly around the marshy, low-lying Hermitage area. There were still regular floods in that section in the 1920s to 1940s and Ken Jeffrey's memories were part of the exhibition. He lived in Lumley Road as a schoolboy and recalled how his Dad knocked a hole through the wall of the house to drain the flood water. Dad believed it to be quicker and easier than using a bucket.

Violent storms, especially those in 1935 and 1987, have caused a lot of damage in the harbour. In 1935 the mooring chains holding Foster's logs broke and the timber smashed into many boats. In the exhibition, Bernie recounted the tale of his experiences in the Great Storm of 1987 which caused horrendous damage in the harbour and country side.

He recalled that "his fishing partner, Nick Dridge, and I had purchased a fishing trawler on 15th October



Bernie Gudge, left, with visitor and Trust member, Roland Rogers

and moored it at Thornham Marina. Nick came and got me at around midnight as we were having a tidal surge due to the incredibly low air pressure, resulting in a high tide at low water. We went to the Marina to check the boat and had to go down the pontoon on our hands and knees because of the high wind gusts. All along the shoreline there were flashes of light as power lines were ripped down. The noise was incredible with the wind in the yacht rigging and bits of wood and branches flew past us in the powerful wind. The pontoon next to us broke free and along with the yachts still tied to it was swept over to Nutbourne sea wall. As daylight came and the storm abated the damage became apparent.....It was the worst storm in the south since 1703."

Not all extreme weather was considered so awful and happier pictures showed residents skating on the mill pond, children playing in the snow in 1947 and in the summer swimming in the warm sea.

More Volunteers Wanted

Although we received a good response to the appeal last year for new Stewards we are still hoping to add to our team of volunteers who welcome visitors to the Museum, help them to find answers to their questions and make their visit enjoyable and interesting. Please let me know if you would like to join this cheerful and keen band of helpers. All Stewards are requested to attend an information session before the start of the season so that we can provide an update on safety and security and give details of changes and improvements (see the diary for more information).

If being a Steward doesn't appeal to you but you would like to help in some other way please telephone or email me to offer your time and expertise. Many thanks.

Dorothy Bone

Growing Up in Emsworth in the 1940s and 50s

Nostalgia: that was the underlying theme of Stephen Miller's September 2018 exhibition in the David Rudkin Room. The sights and sounds of an Emsworth childhood of 70 years ago proved to be extremely popular with local residents and their friends.

Extracts of early radio broadcasts such as Dick Barton, Special Agent; Much Binding In the Marsh; ITMA (It's That Man Again) and Hancock's Half Hour played in the background as visitors read of Steve's personal recollections of life when a young boy living in a maisonette overlooking the High Street at Central Buildings.

The contents of the cabinets brought back many memories. There were comic books, railway and farm models, Meccano, sports and school mementos, together with leaflets for the water carnival and other recreational activities.

The boards provided a wealth of information about home and family life, school days, Emsworth shops, health, travel and leisure pursuits. Steve began by telling the viewer where he came from:

"My birthplace at 5 Palmers Road, Nan and Grandad's terraced house. A small back garden, with a cold outside toilet complete with newspaper squares and a rusty old cistern. Long summers spent with my cousin Nick and the Palmers Road gang in the Chapel Meadows and on the banks of the Ems.



A cabinet full of memories

My Nan's voice drifting like a mist across the quiet fields calling us home at mealtimes. Trips to the Little Green pub in North Street to return empty beer bottles and paid a penny for each."

As part of the exhibition, visitors were also asked to record their memories and this proved to be a fascinating catalogue. The first was signed by resident Gordon Braddock. He wrote:

I first came to Emsworth (as a child) for six months in 1975. I loved the fields and the sea and the woods, but what was the gas cylinder about? I returned in 2010 to find it still there. Many fields have gone and more are going or threatened. It is still a lovely place to live.



Central Buildings in the 1950s

The Square in the 1950s



How Chichester was shaped by the 1960s

Retired chartered civil engineer, Alan Green has a passion for local history and the conservation of Georgian properties. So what better place for him to have been born and bred than Chichester with its many Georgian façades and centuries of history.

On Monday evening, 15th October, he shared his love and despair of the city and its planners with his audience at the Emsworth Community Centre in the first of the Museum's winter series of illustrated talks.

Alan chose the 20th century decade in which the most dramatic changes had taken place, the 1960s. Many of the older properties were demolished as part of slum clearance and to make way for wider roads. This was a decade of great political turmoil and the rise of both the developers and their tower blocks. Chichester is lucky that the Fine Arts Commission wrote to the Council saying that there should be no skyscrapers in the old town and fortunately the council planners listened. In some places the heart of historic cities was ripped apart.

The most influential document to shape most of 'modern' Chichester was published in 1949. Thomas Sharp proposed demolishing and reconstructing much of the outer city while maintaining the historic core which would have had a dual carriageway hugging the ancient city walls. Some but not all of his plans came to fruition in the 1960s.

Alan recalled seeing buses going round the Market Cross the wrong way because of the narrowness of the turns, older buildings being propped up with raking shores, bomb-damaged areas and apparent slums. The 60s was a time of intense planning debates and campaigns to save properties. Indeed, some of what was swept away could (with hindsight) have been saved.



Demolition of properties in Somerstown

1964 was the "Annus Horribilis". Somerstown with its late Georgian artisan buildings was very run down and the decision was taken to demolish the site. However, it was left derelict for many years until redevelopment in the 1970s. On East Broyle Farm there was a battle royal between the city and the council over plans to redevelop the acreage for housing. Westgate Fields, Chichester's water meadows were earmarked for housing and a school. The Sloe Field was tarmacked over and became Northgate Car Park.

Not all redevelopment plans were poor though and Chichester has been left with some iconic buildings such as the Bishop Luffa school, the chapel at Bishop Otter College, the circular library and the Festival Theatre, the latter being financed by public subscription. Incidentally, the town centre was pedestrianised in the 1970s.

Former EM&HT Chairman, Tony Stimson, thanked Alan for his excellent and nostalgic presentation. The evening ended with a lively discussion between Alan and his audience together with the drawing of the raffle.

Annual General Meeting Monday, 18th March 2019

In her report on page 4 Vice-Chairman Dr Margaret Rogers has expressed her pleasure that Dr Trevor Davies has agreed to be the committee nomination for the position of Chairman of the Trust and also said that we are still looking for a volunteer to take up the vital post of Membership Secretary.

In addition, under the terms of the constitution one officer and one other committee member must retire annually by rotation. This year it is the turn of Margaret Rogers (Vice-Chairman) and Marguerita Taplin. Both are eligible to stand again for re-election and have agreed to do so.

The agenda is included in the envelope with this newsletter. After the business of the AGM Peter Morse, Mike Edwards and David Young will show pictures of the Trust holiday in October 2018.

Dorothy Bone

The Butler's Christmas

Vice Chairman, Margaret Rogers welcomed an 'aged gentleman' to the second talk held in the Mountford Room of the Community Centre in North Street. The 'aged gentleman' was John Dine, Victorian butler at Petworth House, but the speaker of the illustrated talk on 19th November was actually Dr Bob France in costume. Dr France is a popular raconteur and a full house had gathered to learn more about how Christmas traditions changed between Georgian and Victorian times.



a month of celebrations starting with the Feast of St Nicholas on 6th December and ending with 12th Night on 5th January. Balls started at 8.30pm with suppers at about 1am. These would be of two courses but each course could consist of about 20 dishes set out to tempt appetites before the guests embarked on yet another round of dancing until dawn.

As Dr France mentioned, Jane Austen does not write much about this fete day and newspapers were still being

published then on 25th December. Father Christmas in the time of the Georges was a character dressed in green in a Mummings Play and he was slim.

The story began though with a look at how the 25th of December was celebrated in earlier times. The Romans feted the god Saturn at Saturnalia with parties and the giving of small gifts. Christians did not mark the day until AD 350 when Pope Julius set 25th December as the day to celebrate the birth of Christ. Puritans banned festivities altogether but Christmas was restored with the rise of the Stuarts though it was not a public holiday.

Turkeys were around and mostly came from Norfolk but were for the wealthy. Rural villagers might have a rabbit, a scrawny chicken or umble pie. Workloads for servants were immense but the poor villager and the servant made their money on Boxing Day when gratuities were sought and handed out by those more wealthy than themselves.

The day did not become a public holiday until 1834. Indeed the Georgian Christmas such as John Dine might have known as a young boy in 1790 was quite different from that portrayed in 1870.

The way we celebrate Christmas changed with the advent of Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and their growing family. Dickens and his fellow authors helped the reinvention too and the popularity of the day grew. St Nicholas became Santa Claus. His dress became red and he grew fat. Gifts, trees, cards, crackers, candles, decorations and parties, all were known and loved. Games too were popular.

Georgian Christmasses were not for children. No one gave presents, there was no Santa Claus, no tree but green leaves and boughs were collected and displayed. Ordinary working class people did not celebrate the day, the upper middle class employee might distinguish the day but the rich enjoyed

Dr France rounded off his talk with descriptions of wassail and the tradition of carol singing.

Mothballs and a Whiff of Whisky

Nigel Gossop's talk on 20th February is about eccentric 19th century novelist Dr William Gordon Stables. The Doctor was a prolific writer of adventure stories for adults and children. Born in 1837, he trained as a medical doctor in Scotland and then joined the Navy in Portsmouth as a Naval Surgeon. After his retirement in 1871, Stables designed and commissioned a unique gypsy caravan that he named *The Wanderer*. He travelled in it around the country with his dog, Hurricane Bob, his valet and coachman. The novelist is remembered today as the founder of the Caravan Club.

The Museum Outdoors

There was a lot of interest in the Museum stand at the Emsworth Show on the 27th August and we were able to put on a good display despite the previous day's storms that damaged the marquee. On display was art work from Michael Bury and Angela Loader who had both had exhibitions at the Museum earlier in the year. Warblington Roman Villa boards drew attention to the now permanent exhibit in the Museum. There was a board of photos from our archives to illustrate life in Emsworth and extracts from some previous exhibitions.

We limited the sale of publications as previous years have shown that visitors are not really interested in purchasing these when they come to the Show.

There were five participants who answered five out of the six questions correctly from our pictorial quiz and Margaret Rogers was asked to draw the winning entry. The winner, who received a bottle of prosecco and a box of chocolates, was Gwen Perchaud. She and her husband moved to Emsworth several years ago and they have a keen interest in Emsworth's local history.

We made a last minute decision to have a stand at the Emsworth Farmers Market on 15th September and this proved extremely popular. Our position in Emsworth Square just outside Treagusts was ideal. It may have been the smell of their cooking sausages that drew visitors towards our stand but we were delighted to sell thirteen memberships. It was encouraging to find that so many people wanted to talk about the history of Emsworth.

My thanks to all those who helped both with the Show and Farmers Market stand.

Marguerita Taplin



Above, Sylvia Courtnage, right, with Marguerita Taplin and a visitor at the Emsworth Show



Left, Gwen Perchaud with her quiz prizes

Below, Aerial view of the market in the Square with the EM&HT stand on the left



Summer Walks

The first of this year's walks around Emsworth will be on 8th May. Starting at 6pm from the Museum at 10b North Street, the walks will take between one and a half and two hours. Why not join Christine Bury for a walk around the town looking at buildings of local interest and sharing stories about some historical Emsworth personalities. Three further walks on the same theme are planned for Wednesday evenings on 12th June, 10th July and 14th August. The informal strolls will cost £3 per person, payable on the evening.

The views expressed by contributors to this Newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of the General Committee. All rights are reserved. Please contact the editor for permission to use any material.

Website: www.emsworthmuseum.org.uk

Hon. Secretary: Dorothy Bone
01243 373780
dorothybone@btinternet.com

Membership: Peter Morse 01243 697582

Newsletter Editor: Christine Bury
01243 377870 christine.bury@ntlworld.com

If you would like to provide a news article or illustration, please send it to the editor, preferably on a USB stick or by email.

Printed by PDCprint, Unit 9, Kingscroft Court, Marples Way, Havant PO9 1LS
Tel: 023 9247 1333

© Emsworth Maritime and Historical Trust