

Spring Newsletter 2019

Volume 15-1



Bishop Bonner's Cottage Museum,
Dereham Antiquarian Society
& Town

Membership
subscriptions are
now due -
see page 10!

editor Ken Hawkins ken-hawkins@tiscali.co.uk 01362 691455

Letter from the Chair *Peter Wade-Martins*

Thank you Natalie

Natalie Small has completed her work on the Archive Centre. Having supervised the move to the Assembly Rooms from Rash's Green, she has now produced a detailed manual on how to use the archive, with:

- guidance on where items in the collections are located,
- information about the documentation which supports the operation of the Centre.

Electronic, as well as printed, copies of all files, are included in the manual's folder. This folder will be available for consultation on the table in the Archive Centre.

Natalie has now decided that she needs to break off from the archive and get a job to earn a living. But what an achievement! As I said to her at her last committee meeting, the archive itself will be a monument to her hard work and commitment. We wish her every success in the future, and she will be a hard act to follow.

Before Natalie there was a whole stream of volunteers who developed this Archive, and what we have now is the outcome of generations of Dereham Antiquarians beavering away on Dereham's history. We now need more space, and I am in discussions with the town Clerk on possible options.

But we need to recognise that we now have nobody responsible for the archive which makes it vulnerable. So, we could do with a new archives manager to take charge of the care of the collections and their documentation, and if anyone would like to volunteer, please contact a committee member.

In the meantime, Beanie Brown has kindly agreed to deal with public enquiries, so if anyone needs access to the archive to study the collections, including the newspapers, please contact Beanie at candrbrown@hotmail.co.uk.

Museum re-opening

We have a formal re-opening of the museum arranged for **Saturday 4th May** when our Mayor Hilary Bushell will cut the tape and tea will be served at **1.30pm**. That day, the first day the museum will be open, will be free. All our volunteers will receive rsvp invitations to the event, and we hope to have coverage in the Dereham Times.

There will be an impressive display of our collection of "Metamec" clocks, a re-furbished "Hobbies" room and upstairs a display of early twentieth century domestic life and a map showing where people were employed in Dereham in the early part of the last century. Plus much much more.

We need more volunteers, please

But, and this is a "Big But", we are desperately short of volunteers to be on duty when the museum is open. So, if you can help, even if it is just for a few afternoons during the summer (Wednesday, Friday and Saturday), please contact our volunteer co-ordinator, Catherine Hawkins at cg.hawkins@outlook.com.

We are working towards being an "incorporated" organisation

The Dereham Heritage Trust is already a charity, and while there are no plans to change our charitable status, the committee has been looking into ways to strengthen our legal position. One of the disadvantages of our present status is that it is difficult for the Trust to

enter into contracts, or to employ anyone if, say, we had a grant to spend from the Heritage Lottery Fund. If we did, then each trustee (the committee members) would be legally responsible for all the debts of the Trust if things went wrong.

The Arts Council is encouraging societies like ours which are simple charities to become a **Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)** as well, which will remove these disadvantages. When we expressed an interest in this we were promptly offered a grant of £1,660 to work with Norfolk Museums Service to employ a consultant to convert to a CIO.

Such a change will have no effect on what we do or the way we do it, but it would involve further changes to the constitution. If all goes according to plan, we expect to put the details and a new constitution to the members at an Extraordinary General Meeting, perhaps at our June evening meeting. All the assets would then be transferred to the new charity, and we would all become members of the new organisation. Meanwhile, if you have any questions or comments, please have a word with Trevor Ogden, our vice-chairman, who is negotiating this transition (ogden@ogs.org.uk) or myself.

Our Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting was held on 13 February. During this, members considered three proposals from their Committee - to change the name of the Society, to amend the Constitution, and to increase subscription rates. All three proposals were debated, and votes (including postal votes) were cast and counted. In the event, all three proposals were carried.

Proposal 1: To change the name of **Dereham Antiquarian Society** to **Dereham Heritage Trust** and make consequent changes to the Constitution to reflect this change. Carried by 22 votes to 9 with one abstention. (Note - on the night, the abstention had incorrectly been counted as a vote against, though with the same result.)

Proposal 2: To accept the proposed changed Constitution. Carried by 28 votes to 2 with 2 abstentions.

Proposal 3: To increase subscription rates as from 1 March 2019 as follows

- single member £12 (formerly £10)
- joint members at the same address £20 (formerly £17)

Carried by 32 votes, all in favour.

The other, regular, business included receipt of Peter Wade-Martins' Chairman's Report, a report from Megan Dennis, our Museum Mentor (set out below) and a report from Natalie Small on the move of the archive to its new home in the Assembly Rooms. These reports also noted that the Society had achieved accreditation with the Arts Council at the beginning of the year.

The accounts for the year were also noted, in their new format tracking our three activities - Archive, Museum and Society - separately. These duly endorsed by our Independent Examiner Jim Stebbings, were approved by the meeting.

The following elections were made to the Committee.

Chairman	Peter Wade-Martins
Vice Chairman	Trevor Ogden
Secretary	Sue Rockley
Treasurer	Ken Hawkins
Committee members	Robena Brown, Natalie Small

Thanks were given to all who had helped the Society during 2018, with particular reference to Bob Davies and Amanda Lovejoy who were standing down at this meeting.

NOTE - changes to the Constitution require the approval of the Charity Commission, so you will see the name *Dereham Antiquarian Society* for a little longer yet pending securing this approval.

Bishop Bonner's Cottage Museum Mentor Report 2018 *Megan Dennis*

The museum and Committee should be commended for the huge amounts of work they have achieved this year to successfully move the archive from Rash's Green to its new home in the centre of Dereham at the Dereham Town Council offices. This move has already enabled more researchers to access the wonderful collections, in particular the archive of Dereham and Fakenham Times papers which has grown with further copies expanding the collection. The collections management work involved in such a move is often taken for granted, or simply not considered, as most of it is invisible. It does, however represent a massive step forward for the museum to have completed the rationalisation of the collection and the move and to have in place a new 3-year Forward Plan for the archive which will see documentation of the collections as a new priority.

The re-application for Accreditation was successfully completed and full Accredited status awarded on 22 February 2018. The Committee heaved a sigh of relief - but were also grateful as it gave them the opportunity to really understand how the museum works and to put forward planning as a priority.

This led to the development, at very early stages, of the idea for a new Heritage Centre for the town. Preliminary work has begun to look at what would necessary to take this proposal forward, and an assessment of the work required to begin feasibility assessment has taken place.

A complete re-fit of museum displays is never a simple project and May will see the re-opening of a number of new displays which really demonstrate the depth and breadth of the collections, and re-establish the importance of the museum to the town. Again, fantastic work by a team of volunteers to create a series of displays to create interest in the town and encourage further visitors.

It would be nice this year to see these new displays also reflected in digital display methods including the website and social media feeds (all in due course I expect!). These new methods of interpretation give opportunities to give a wider range of people (both local and further afield) a chance to get involved in their local heritage and history.

As always the museum couldn't open without the help and support of a loyal band of volunteers. Many thanks to the team who open the museum regularly and help out at events and the talk programme. One group of volunteers often unrecognised are the committee themselves - all giving of their time freely and often going above and beyond the call of duty. Many thanks to all committee members this year.

We look forward to an exciting new year - with the opening of the new displays in May. It will be fabulous to see previously unseen parts of the collection on display in the heart of Dereham once again and work progress on the committee's 3-year forward plan.

Mary Brown - obituary

We have been informed of the recent death of Mary Brown. It is perhaps a sign of how things are, that none of the present committee members knew Mary, so this brief note draws on an extensive piece on the Dereham Times website - details below. Mary was born on November 29, 1928 and was 90 when she died. She was a teacher at Swanton Morley school when she retired in 1989. In retirement she volunteered at Bishop Bonner's Cottage Museum. A major project involved making pen-and-ink drawings of clothes and exhibits; the drawings went in the museum catalogue. We send our condolences to her family. Article details are at <https://www.derehamtimes.co.uk/news/tributes-ex-norfolk-deputy-head-mary-brown-1-5963557>.

Notes from our recent meetings *Ken Hawkins*

9 January : Rethinking the Romans - Caistor Roman Town Dr Will Bowden

The New Year got off to a great start, when Dr Will Bowden gave an illustrated talk on 12



years of research at Caistor Roman Town. He started by setting the context. *Venta Icenorum* was stated by Ptolemy to be the only *polis* (city) of the Iceni (now pronounced *ee-kay-nee* rather than *eye-see-nee*). William Camden (1551-1623) was the first to recognise Caistor St Edmund as the location of *Venta Icenorum*. Evidence of the Iceni suggested small enclosed settlements; the large number of coin finds across East Anglia indicated minting at several sites, suggesting a

complex society, perhaps not ruled by a single king or queen. Will thought that the general understanding of the Iceni was strongly influenced by the story of the Boudican revolt.

The first excavation of the site was from 1929 to 1935, by Donald Atkinson, who proposed that it was occupied from AD70, following the pacification of AD61. This formed the idea of Caistor St Edmund as a small town with an 'imperfect degree of Romanisation'. The last 10 years has seen a mix of excavation, geophysical survey (50 hectares) and the application of the digitised National Mapping Programme. 13 trenches have found almost no stratified Iron Age material, though there have been many finds of Samian potters' stamps, indicating occupation in the second half of the first century.

Based on this research, Will found no evidence of a planned town before AD90. Where Donald Atkinson proposed streets being there in AD70, recent excavation indicated incremental growth from the early second century, with later streets added at the end of the century or early in the third. Excavation in 2011 found timber structures under masonry, with the central part of the town destroyed by fire in the middle of the second century; at this time, it was a small town, though with a ditch surrounding a much larger area. This ditch seemed to be from about AD120, but was backfilled before the end of the second century; this backfilling seemed to have had some symbolic purpose. One interesting find was what was considered the best fed dog in Roman Britain.

By the middle of the second century, some or most of the streets were in place, with buildings, possible a forum, surrounded by a colossal ditch (though being filled), and with a fire around AD140-150. By AD150, there were masonry buildings - baths, a forum, temples, possibly a theatre. There was evidence of Caistor as a centre for literacy, expected as it was a place for collecting tax and keeping records. There were no sculptures, inscriptions or mosaics, and little consumption of oil, wine or fish sauce - but there was a lot of putting things in the ground, apparently in a structured way.

Outside the town proper, Temple Field (to the north east) was excavated in 2018; ground penetrating radar indicated that there were several phases to the building, shown in several layers. St Edmund's Church was listed in the Domesday survey: human remains from later

9th/early 10th century were found by the church. It seems that Caistor St Edmund was a major regional political centre, perhaps developed because it was the site of a Roman town, and used to legitimise political authority. But it was also a local town for local people.

Following the end of his talk - and a string of questions and comments - Will loaded and demonstrated Virtual Venta (available from Apple and Google), which enables people to tour the site and talk to people there.



scenes from Virtual Venta

13 February : A Scullery Maid at Blickling Hall in the 1930s Lizzie Scott



Following the AGM, Liz Scott held us spellbound for 45 minutes as Kath - “A Scullery Maid at Blickling Hall in the 1930s”. Capturing the content of a lecture for writing up in this newsletter is always difficult, but on this occasion, impossible. Her entertaining full character monologue, with audience participation, called forth lots of laughter from all present. Stepping out of character, Liz confirmed that (with the exception of one event moved to a different person than the one originally claimed), every aspect of her piece was 100% true. Finally, with the assistance of Robert Scott (who did all the technical work and who had appeared as Philip Kerr, the 11th Marquis of Lothian), Liz gave us the history of Blickling Hall and the characters she had portrayed, bringing us up to date with a recent visit by her protégé to the Hall. A real treat of an evening!

13 March : Portraits of two sister Queens (Mary and Elizabeth) Michael Nash

At the start of his presentation, Michael reminded us that ‘every picture tells a story’; he then proceeded to tell a fascinating story, using pictures. This account can’t do justice to the images he showed us, so relies instead on their description.

The first images were of King Henry VIII and his various wives, followed by Edward, whose early death (before he came of age at 16) caused an accession crisis which brought first Mary Tudor and later her 17 years’ junior sister, Elizabeth, to the throne.

Michael showed a picture of Mary before she was queen, and then discussed in detail a picture by Antonio Moro. Philip of Habsburg (also known as Philip of Spain) was of the Habsburgs, a family which had been important for 600 years, and whose motto indicated they maintained power by marriage rather than force. Philip had been pursuing a marriage with the Portuguese Infanta, but withdrew from this when Mary became queen. The picture appeared to show Mary at her wedding to Philip, but was in fact painted some 6 months later, and Michael explained it was essentially a statement by the Holy Roman Emperor (Philip's father) that she was a Habsburg bride: he sent Moro, as 'their' painter. In the painting

- the flower Mary is holding is the red rose representing love and marriage
- Mary is wearing a table diamond from Philip's mother, the Empress Isabella, and attached is *La Peregrina* - the biggest pearl in the world, found after Isabella had died, so Mary was the first person to wear it four years later
- at Mary's waist is a holy relic



Michael then told us about the journeys of *La Peregrina*, which returned to Spain and France, passing to the Duke of Manchester and retained in that family until 1969, when the Spanish ambassador was outbid for it by Richard Burton who gave it to his wife (Elizabeth Taylor) as a 37th birthday present. In her ownership, it was bitten by her poodle. It is now believed to be in Japan!

At the time of her marriage in 1554 England (and Mary personally) were reconciled with Rome, and during the ceremony to mark this, Mary said that she felt her child move, but in 1555, the child was born from outside her womb. There were misgivings about the ability of a woman to rule, to lead troops and to act as a priest, but Michael showed an illustration of Mary touching people to cure the King's Evil (scrofula). Philip was not accorded the title of King, or even King Consort, and not allowed to be involved in the monarch's legal duties, but Mary ensured that images included him with her.



Mary died in 1558, and her younger sister Elizabeth became queen. She too was painted by Dutch artists, but also by English ones. Michael showed images of her as a princess, aged 13 or 14, carrying a bible and a prayer book with her finger marking a page as if she had been reading it, but also dressed in Tudor splendour. For her coronation in 1559, she wore the same robe as Mary had done. We were shown the Ermine Portrait, the Armada Portrait, and many others (Clapton, Darnley, Ditchley, Drewe), including her image as Gloriana (she manipulated the cult of the Virgin Mary to present herself as the Virgin Queen). These included images with her carrying the orb and sceptre, as well as dancing with Dudley, Earl of Leicester.

The images used in this article are taken from Wikipedia: Queen Mary: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonis_Moro#/media/File:Mary_I_of_England.jpg and Queen Elizabeth: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portraiture_of_Elizabeth_I_of_England#/media/File:Elizabeth_I_in_coronation_robos.jpg

News from the Museum *Natalie Small*

Since the end of the 2018 season, much work has taken place at the museum. A team of volunteers packed up the exhibits in preparation for a planned work programme by Dereham Town Council, which included lime washing the interior of the building and cleaning the

chimneys. Following this, the rest of the interior was cleaned in preparation for the 2019 season.

The chairman in the Hobbies room



Late last year, plans were made for each room and since then, the museum team has been researching and locating suitable objects from the collection to support each display. One of our rooms for the 2019 season features a creative display of Metamec clocks from our collection.

Other displays will include *Early 20th Century Domestic Life*, the construction of the cottage as well as its inhabitants, *Dereham Market Place*, *Dereham shops* and *Hobbies*.

The Museum will open on 4 May and close for the 2019 season on 28 September. We have swapped one of the opening days for Fridays, which coincide with Dereham's market.

Opening hours will be:

Wednesday: 1.30pm - 4pm

Friday: 11am - 2pm (to coincide with Market Day)

Saturday: 1.30pm - 4pm

BUT we are desperately short of volunteers to staff the museum. If you can help, even if it is just for a few afternoons during the summer, please contact our new Volunteer Co-ordinator Catherine Hawkins at cg.hawkins@outlook.com.

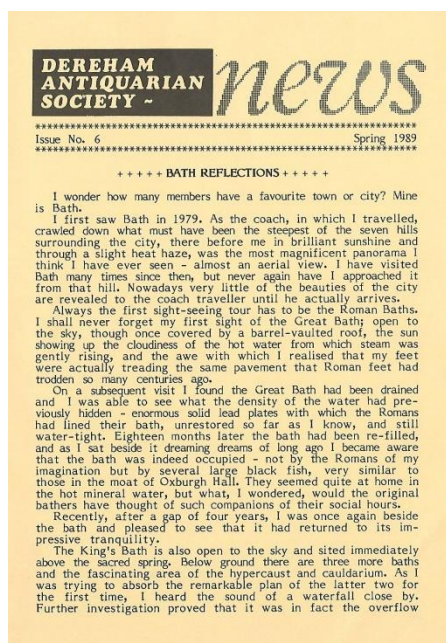
New acquisition Ken Hawkins

We are pleased to have accepted an addition to our collection in the form of 3 Toby Jugs from the King's Head in Dereham. They belonged Linda Greenwood, mother of Carole Doy, who tells us that her mother worked at the pub in the mid to late 1950s, though the jugs may date from before then. We are most grateful to Mrs Doy for thinking of us when dealing with these items. She has kindly sent us the photograph shown here.



Past Newsletters

1989



1999



Bonner's Boffins Win and Lose!

In a thrilling final at the Rashes Green Training Centre last June, our quiz team, Bonner's Boffins, emerged winners of the coveted shield, beating Dereham Operatic Society.

So congratulations are due to the team consisting of Margaret Davies, Rose Prior, Ann Betts and Glynn Burrows (capt.). However, the team's success was short lived as in the 1999 competition they were



Left to right: Margaret Davies, Rose Prior, Ann Betts, Glynn Burrows, and Tony Park (Chairman of the Dereham Society) who presented the shield

It was somewhat ironic that both teams in the final were beaten in earlier rounds but were reinstated as highest scoring losers!

sadly beaten in the second round by the "Know Eye Dears", a team which they had beaten in the 1998 competition. We'll be back!

There was no Newsletter in 2009, and the 1989 and 1999 were both just 4 pages. In 1989, there was a piece about Bath, reports from the Museum and planning for a 30 minute flight over the town. In 1999, the trip out being planned was on the Wherry Albion. Once again, the Museum was in the news, this time following repairs made after an arson attack had set fire to the roof.

Dereham Obelisk *Ken Hawkins*

The last Newsletter reported on the talk by Carol Haines of the Milestone Society, which included reference to the Dereham Obelisk (and its still existing companion in Holt). Robena Brown has searched the Dereham and Fakenham Times for 1946 to see if she could find anything about why the Dereham one was moved, and what happened to it, but without success. As a consolation, however, some further information from Carol and two postcards found by Robena Brown are included here.

Mildred Cook: *Looking Back at Dereham*, and Mildred Cook & Terry Davy: *Memories of Dereham* (1984)

At the north end of the market place was a large pit which held the town refuse, and near it a Market Cross and the bishop's courtroom and prison. In the early eighteenth century the pit was filled in and paved with granite setts and the obelisk was erected. Sir Robert Walpole subscribed towards the paving and the obelisk was donated by Sir Edward Astley.

Excursions in the County of Norfolk, Vol II (1819), p61

"In the centre of the town there is a square column, on the sides of which are inscribed the distances, in measured miles, from the principal towns and seats in the county. It has been remarked, that the distance expressed upon this pillar serves to fix the meaning of the term leuca, which some have supposed to be the French league of three miles, but which in reality signifies only one; for instance, Dereham is marked as being 16 miles from Norwich, and on the rolls of the King's Bench, it appears that the Bishop had a fair at this place, which was reckoned 16 leucas, viz miles, from the palace at Norwich."

White's Directory of Norfolk (1836)

"Before the year 1737, East Dereham was supposed to be the dirtiest town in the county, the streets uneven and choked with filth; and on the spot where Sir Edward Astley erected a handsome obelisk, was a pit of dirty water, serving as the drain of the parish."

Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Richard Gardiner, alias Dick Merry-Fellow (1782)

Inscription for the Pedestal of the grand Obelisk to be erected in the Public Market-place at EAST-DEREHAM, in the County of NORFOLK. [Long Latin inscription, dated 1768 and mentioning Edward Astley. See Google books, p.144]



Programme of events 2019-20

Here is our programme up to February 2020. Full details are also available on our website (www.derehamhistory.com/talks.html), which will also carry any necessary last minute changes. They are printed into our 'Talks Programme' cards - available at all of our meetings. We are indebted to Stef Spooner for co-ordinating the programme: if there are ideas for 2020, do send them in - she's already working on it.

Wednesday 10 April 2019

The library at Blickling, history and future

Speaker: Bunty Gotts

Wednesday 9 October 2019

Annual Dinner

Venue: The George Hotel

Wednesday 8 May 2019

Norfolk's Medieval Literary Treasure

Speaker: Dr John Alban

Wednesday 13 November 2019

'Seahenge' - history and display

Speaker: Hannah Jackson

Wednesday 12 June 2019

History of the Wool Trade in Norfolk

Speaker: Joy Evitt

Wednesday 11 December 2019

Herbert Cave - his life and early 20th century photography

Speakers: Sue Walker White and Robena Brown

Wednesday 10 July 2019

Carts and Carting - medieval and Norfolk

Speaker: Mary Fewster

Wednesday 8 January 2020

King's Lynn - History and buildings

Speaker: Michael Aldiss

Wednesday 14 August 2019

Members' only event

Wednesday 12 February 2020

Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 11 September 2019

Kett's Rebellion

Speaker: Barbara Miller

Unless otherwise indicated, all meetings are at Trinity Methodist Church, 31 Trinity Close, Dereham NR19 2EP (off Theatre Street), and start at 19.30. Admission to talks is £1 for members of Dereham Antiquarian Society and £3 for non-members. Visitors are always welcome, with the fee payable on the door, refreshments included.



Cranes Trailer Makers of 1930 at the South Green Works

This photograph shows 23 of William Crane's employees taken in 1930 when the business was rapidly growing in strength and reputation. The company provided major employment for the town from humble beginnings in Great Fransham right through the twentieth century when it had large factories locally at South Green and Toftwood and other factories in Norfolk and throughout Great Britain.

Membership matters

Our membership year runs annually from 1 March to the end of February. The new rates for 2019 are

Individual - £12

Couple at the same address - £20

You can renew or join at any of our meetings, or use our membership form from the website at http://www.derehamhistory.com/uploads/1/6/2/3/16236968/membership_leaflet_2019.pdf.

For the time being, cheque payments should still be to 'Dereham Antiquarian Society'.

And finally

We plan to produce a Newsletter every quarter, in January, April, July and October. The press date for the next issue is **15 June**: if you have material for this issue, please send it in to Ken Hawkins. And please don't hesitate to get in touch with us if you have any other comments of any sort.

In between Newsletters, our website www.derehamhistory.com is updated regularly so please have a look now and again.

Can you save us some money? If you did not receive this Newsletter via email, but would be willing to do so, please let me have your email address: we won't pass it on to anyone else without your permission, and we won't use it for anything but Dereham Antiquarian Society business.