

# The Museletter

January/February 2014



## Surviving and thriving

Bradford on Avon Museum is one of only two museums in Wiltshire, and four in the south west, to be invited to take part in the Sustainability Pilot Programme funded by the South West Museums Development Programme (part of Arts Council England's Renaissance programme).

The aim of the programme is to help museums to 'survive and thrive' in these uncertain times.

The project is running from January to March this year and the project team (made up of trustees, volunteers and members) is

currently involved in the 'self-assessment' phase, aided by Tim Burge, the museums advisory service officer for Wiltshire.

We are lucky to have been assigned Susan Fox, collections manager for the Roman Baths Museum, and a resident of Holt, as our mentor for this project. Susan will be helping us to draw up our development plan, and will also be on hand to advise on the implementation of the plan after March.

For further information on the project, please contact Kate Turnbull at [turnbullk@gmail.com](mailto:turnbullk@gmail.com) or on 01225 866328.

## Briefly ...

In the last issue of the newsletter, chairman Mervyn Harris wrote about the ongoing search for new and expanded premises for the museum. One of the possibilities being considered was the Riverside Inn. However, it has just been announced that the building has been sold to the Draco Group – which includes Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's River Cottage restaurants and a small chain of pubs – which intends to continue its current use. Another alternative would be purpose-built space in a heritage centre that could be provided as part of the Bradford Campus development. The trustees are also interested in looking at Kingston House, in Kingston Road, currently being used by Linden Homes as its Bradford offices.

## New displays go on show

The museum may have been closed for a few weeks over the winter, but there was plenty going on behind the scenes, and when we reopened there were a number of new items on display, and some existing exhibits rearranged.

The 'Cobblers & Cordwainers' display – mostly objects from the former Uncles & Son shoe shop – has been taken down, and replaced with a selection of recent acquisitions: two silver-plate tankards won in a bowls competition in 1930 (coincidentally by members of the Uncles family); a silver-plate fruit basket presented to a teacher at the Church Street school in 1908; a cap belonging to a member of the Bradford Red Cross; Second World War medals; rules for the Women's Almshouses; Bradford football team items and more.

The Civil War cannonballs have been removed from one of the corridor cases and replaced by as many of the articles from the shoe shop display as would fit into the smaller space.

Shelves have been installed behind one of the glass windows in the corridor, to form a new case. The window was formerly used to display a

Second World War hand-painted poster, which has now been removed from display.

The new case, with its shallow shelves, gives us an opportunity to display a miscellany of objects which could not be shown to their best advantage in larger cases. Some of these items have not been on show before, including some of Guy Underwood's divining rods.

A photographic portrait of Canon Clarke, vicar of Holy Trinity and chairman of the governors of Fitzmaurice School in the 1930s, is now displayed in the pulpit.

Many of the objects that remain in storage in the museum were checked, some photographed and repacked. There is a little more space available now.

Recent acquisitions include: WRVS and Civil Defence medals; mounted photograph of Holt Football Club 1906-7; photographs, Gudgeon magazines, Speech Day programmes of Fitzmaurice Grammar School; Willson and Norris medicine bottles, and photographs of the Tithe Barn and Saxon Church from the Roman Baths Museum.

## Lidar project enters its second phase

Lidar 2014 is the title for further research work we are planning relating to the development of the Bradford Hundred landscape. This stems from the investigations jointly funded by the museum and Heritage Lottery Fund in 2013.

We now need to focus on parts of the Lidar imaging which offer further insight into the ancient landscape, or in some cases are simply perplexing!

The computer applications assembled by

Ritchie Brown (and his skills in processing the data) offer many options for re-examining the archaeology, so a series of technical sessions are planned.

If you are interested and not already on my mailing list, please get in touch.

*Roy Canham* ([roycanham@btinternet.com](mailto:roycanham@btinternet.com))

● A museum publication about the project – *A Land Through Time* – is now available from the Museum, the library and Ex Libris, priced £3.

**The Museum AGM will be held on Wednesday 3 April 2014, at 7.30pm in the Library meeting room**

Visitor figures for the half-month in January are encouraging – almost twice the number who visited last year – and early February is promising too. Being able to be open for all our advertised hours has helped: thanks to everyone who has stewarded.

Mary Clark and Gillian King are now looking after the stewards' rota. There are new information folders for every steward, and new identity badges on lanyards to replace the old pin badges. If you haven't yet received your information pack, please give Mary a call. And if anyone would like to join the stewards' team, please call Mary on 865785 or Gillian on 866387.

**The trustees are still looking for an honorary secretary. If you would like to help, please contact Mervyn Harris on 863440.**

# What's On

January/February 2014

## Discussion Group

First Wednesday of the month, 7.30pm

We have had a great turnout for the monthly Discussion Group sessions since we started this new Museum Group in September last year. The meetings take place on the first Wednesday of each month (except for March 2014!) at 7.30pm in the Library Meeting Room, and are FREE to members. Topics for the next couple of months will be:

Wednesday 12th March (PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DATE)

Researching Bradford's Buildings – Fieldwork and History  
(led by Pam Slocombe)

Wednesday 2nd April

My Military Ancestors  
(led by Jonathan Falconer)

If you are interested in leading a session, please contact Kate Turnbull at [turnbullke@googlegmail.com](mailto:turnbullke@googlegmail.com) or on 01225 866328.

## Exhibition: Peter Maundrell's Bradford on Avon

We are currently planning an exhibition of photographs by well-known Bradford photographer Peter Maundrell. The exhibition will take place from 12 – 31 May in the Library Meeting Room. The photographs, largely dating from the 1970s and 1980s, capture views, buildings and everyday life in the town

## Event: Finds day

A Finds Day is planned for Saturday 5 April, at the Community Dig site, to stimulate more interest. Roger Clark, Roy Canham and Sophie Hawke will be on hand to help identify items brought along by members of the public.

## Museum online

Details of upcoming events and news are posted on the website, Facebook and Twitter.

The website – [www.bradfordonavonmuseum.co.uk](http://www.bradfordonavonmuseum.co.uk) – also contains a wealth of information on all sorts of topics relating to the Bradford Hundred.

We have a Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/BradfordOnAvonMuseum](http://www.facebook.com/BradfordOnAvonMuseum). If you are on Facebook, then go to our page and click the Like button. This means that SOME of our posts MAY appear in your Facebook news feed – the more times you 'like' posts on our page the more likely you will see ALL our posts. Otherwise, if you want to ensure that you don't miss anything, click on the little blue arrow on the Like button and then click 'Get Notifications'. Then, each time you're on Facebook, any new posts from the Museum will be listed in your Notifications tab.

And finally, we're now on Twitter: follow us at @BoAMuseum

## Community Dig plans progress

A number of museum members have been chatting about organising a community dig in Bradford. To move the idea forward, museum trustee Sophie Hawke carried out a geophysics survey in the paddock east of the Tithe Barn, adjacent to Victory Field. This is part of the Countryside Park and is now under the management of the Preservation Trust, which will shortly be planting a community orchard there.

This field, according to an 18th century map, was part of Barton Farm, so perhaps there is some potential for archaeology. We have permission to put a trench into a corner of the field, at a point where the geophysics suggests a downcut feature such as a boundary ditch or perhaps a holloway

leading to the barn.

Our plan is to dig from Saturday 29 March to Sunday 13 April, and we will need volunteers to help clean any finds at our work centre.

If you are keen try your hand at digging, let us know, but you may like working with bits of pot and bone. We shall arrange sessions at our work centre when we wash and mark our finds – if we get any – and then try to date them. It's important to try to make some sense of the results of an excavation and an informal chat is always helpful.

If you are interested in helping or just receiving updates, contact Sophie Hawke ([sehawke@supanet.com](mailto:sehawke@supanet.com)) or Roy Canham ([roycanham@btinternet.com](mailto:roycanham@btinternet.com)).

## First World War centenary exhibition

We are currently planning an exhibition to commemorate the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War. The exhibition will take place in the Library Meeting Room from Monday 4 – Sunday 24 August and will be based around four themes: The Eve of War, The Front, The Home Front and Twin Towns.

We have scant material related to the First World War in the Museum's collection, and would especially love to hear from you if you have any old photographs or items relating to this time or to the period just before or after the war.

Additionally, we are hoping to include some oral history as part of the exhibition and would really like to hear from anyone who has memories of relatives who lived through the Great War.

If you can contribute in any way, please contact Kate Turnbull at [turnbullke@googlegmail.com](mailto:turnbullke@googlegmail.com) or on 01225 866328.

## Useful numbers

Museum trustees:

**John Banks:** 863134

**Roy Canham:** 866748

**Chris Dale** (Hon Treasurer): 862198

**Mervyn Harris** (Hon Chairman): 863440

**Sophie Hawke:** 863934

**Ivor Slocombe:** 862525

**Kate Turnbull** (Membership): 866328

**Gill Winfield:** 868179

**Roger Clark** (Hon Curator): 865785

**Mary Clark** (Stewards' organiser): **865785**

**Gillian King** (Stewards' organiser): **866387**

**Joceline Bury** (PR & Newsletter): 867348

We hope you enjoy reading this new-look 'Museletter'. The new format is significantly cheaper to produce, so we will be bringing out an issue six times a year. We will continue to distribute the newsletters to members, email to those who prefer to receive their copy electronically, and make it available online, via our website. We will also have copies available in the museum, and at events and talks, to hand out to visitors.