

**BRADFORD ON AVON
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2018**

**HELD IN THE LIBRARY MEETING ROOM AT 7.30PM ON THURSDAY 15TH MARCH
2018**

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Rob and Jenny Arkell, David and Angela Moss, Jocelyn Bury, Sophie Hawke, Derrick Hunt, Roy and Viv Canham, James Holden, Stephanie Laslett, Dorna Daw, Elizabeth Harris, Ethel Johnson, Murray King, and Mary Clark.

27 members attended: John Banks, David Chambers, Lesley Chambers, Roger Clark, Chris Dale, Brian Davison, Margaret Dobson, Mervyn Harris, Valerie Holden, Sarah Howard, Victoria Landell Mills, Jane Mann, Peter Mann, John Salvat, Annette Seekings, John Seekings, Dilys Mckechnie, Edward Shaw, Joyce Shaw, Nancy Shaw, Gareth Slater, Ivor Slocombe, Pam Slocombe, David Stokes, Ian Tappenden, Kate Turnbull and Chris Young.

2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 23rd March 2017.

The minutes of the previous meeting were adopted and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

3. Matters Arising.

There were none.

4. Correspondence.

There was none.

5. Reports from Officers.

5a. Chairman's Report.

The Iron Duke. The year since the last AGM had been very busy; the Iron Duke again accounting for much of the Chairman's activity. Mervyn had attended at least forty five meetings during the year of which five were trustee meetings and eight were events which publicised the museum in one way or another. As part of the community involvement in the project the Chairman and the Curator pledged to give talks to local organisations who asked for them, and to date they had given five between them. The museum has published one substantial book on the rubber industry, titled *Riding on Rubber*, which is selling well, and another book is being written on the social history aspects of the rubber industry by Maggie Dobson and should be completed by the autumn.

Signage for the Iron Duke. This had accounted for much of the Chairman's time since the Iron Duke was installed in the town. It is vitally important that we have adequate signage to direct visitors to the site of the Iron Duke, and work on this continues. Plans to erect new permanent signage at the Iron Duke site are well advanced.

Library/Museum Signage. The Museum's signage is and always has been inadequate, and the Trustees are attempting to change this. Following his meeting with the Librarian, Joanna Head, Mervyn has approval in principle on how to improve the signage at the library. We hope to report good news about this next year.

Holt Premises. 2017 marked the year that the Museum Research Group vacated both the Holt Road Chapel store and their unsuitable premises in Silver Street and moved into more appropriate, if rather cold, premises in Holt. The new premises are both more spacious and suitable for the work the group carries out. However the museum has not yet been given a lease on the premises, so its tenure is not assured.

The Vaults. The developers of the Vaults have offered the museum the use of the small platform area alongside the ramp, as long as we produce something "worthy" of the site. Mervyn has approached the architect's practice of Bruges Tozer and asked them to produce plans of how we might use the area to publicise/ interpret the Iron Duke in an interesting and engaging way. The vaults is en route to the Iron Duke and good interpretation in this area will draw visitors towards the display and hence to the Iron Duke itself. Both the site owners and retail units in the Vaults support the museum's draft plans for the area. However the owners are due to start work on the conversion of the first floor area to flats, meaning that our work on the platform area will be delayed until later in the year when it is safe to proceed.

New Trustee – Valerie Holden – has been appointed to the museum. She is also the Hon. Secretary.

New Museum. The search continues. A number of options were considered during the year, but each proved unsuitable. Councillor Simon McNeill- Ritchie was invited to a recent meeting of the trustees to explain the workings of the new town council and how organisations can make representations to the town council in future. He talked about a feasibility study for a new museum in the station car park and invited the museum to participate in the Countdown to Peace programme of events to mark the centenary of the end of WW1. Mervyn said the museum would be involved in both events.

Vote of thanks to Trustees, Stewards, and Museum supporters. Mervyn finished by saying that the museum ran solely on the goodwill and willingness of its unpaid staff, and that it was his pleasure and privilege to be associated with the all the people involved. He finished by reminding members about the huge work, often unseen, that our Hon Curator carries out. He gave grateful thanks to all.

5b Treasurer's Report.

The Treasurer outlined the key points in the Museum's accounts. Of note are:

- Increases in visitor numbers during the year by 18% to 5925, with 322 attendances at meetings of Discussion Group.
- Closure of the Iron Duke project following receipt of HLF's final instalment of grant.
- Closure of the project with costs within budget and donations and grants exceeding the target.
- The restricted fund held specifically for future maintenance on the Iron Duke is above target by £268.

- The unrestricted funds held by the Museum increased during the year from £77,085 to £83,451.

Other achievements during the year included a WW1 exhibition, a fundraising talk on the archaeology of Stonehenge, the publication of *Riding on Rubber* - a history of the rubber industry in Bradford on Avon, and continuing research and recording by both the museum research and oral history groups. Finally, the year had seen more historical information added to the museum's website, making it a "virtual" museum.

Structure, governance and management. The company is a Company Limited by Guarantee, and a registered charity. It has trustees and directors and it currently has eight trustees, who are also directors of the company. New trustees are appointed by the board of trustees. Roger Clark is Honorary Curator.

5c. Curator's Report.

The Curator used the winter closure period to carry out a number of improvements to the museum's display cases including fitting of LED lights in some and re doing signage in others. LED lights have the advantage of producing virtually no heat while giving a bright light. Other improvements included the fixing of new 'for sale' signs in the shop and new donation signs. A new acquisition, a 14th century carved lion found in the Thai Barn restaurant, is now on display and a number of other new acquisitions have been made. Of note is a chemist's shop bottle bearing the name of Thomas Prideaux Saunders who was the founder of our chemist's shop, and a set of unused tennis balls made for the Lawn Tennis Association, in their original tin, made by the Spencer Moulton factory. Roger purchased a Lamb Inn token issued by Thomas Holloway because the museum did not own one. A portable font has been acquired (from Bearfield Chapel), a missionary collecting box, and medals and binoculars which belonged to Tony Underwood.

Roger reported that visitor numbers were up over the past year, partly due to the WW1 exhibition, and to good reviews on Trip Advisor. We have gained a 5* rating from Google. He has been working with the Research Group helping to identify pottery, dealt with inquiries coming via the website, and has written an article for *A Local Life*. A busy year!

6. Reports from museum groups.

Peter Mann. Last year's museum survey pointed to a number of things we were not doing very well and the Trustees are working to rectify them. One is signage, which the Chairman alluded to previously. Trustees are working to improve signage outside the museum and have made changes to signage within.

Kate Turnbull confirmed a full programme a discussion group talks until the end of the year. The last one will follow a slightly different format, being a question and answer session with a panel of museum experts.

Ivor Slocombe. A second publication on the social aspects of the rubber industry is being written by Maggie Dobson. Rob Arkell has used his talk on Bradford Leigh Fair as the topic of a new book, and this is nearing completion. Pam Slocombe and Roy Canham are working on a book on Budbury. Gill Winfield is writing a book aimed at children in the 10 – 12 age range.

Sophie Hawke sent a report. The research group is working towards a report to be submitted by October for inclusion in the next issue of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine (WAM). Field walking at a Roman site near Cumberwell has been assisted by the purchase of a hand held GPS. Geophysics has been carried out near Hartley farm, and the museum research group has been visited by experts who have helped with the attribution of several objects.

Valerie Holden listed a programme of events which were planned for the coming year: embroidery exhibition for a month, an exhibition in August on the Romans, a second talk in St Margaret's Hall in the autumn, and another WW1 exhibition in November as part of the Countdown to Peace event. Stephanie Laslett is working on re-running her shops exhibition in July and August.

Sarah Howard. An education visit by a local Rainbow group took place in the autumn, and was a huge success. The visit was in pursuit of the 'At the Museum' badge. Sarah used the visit to update quiz and colouring sheets. A second Rainbow group is interested in making a visit to the museum.

7. Election of Officers, Approval of Accounts and Appointment of Accountants.

The meeting unanimously approved the election of officers for another year.
The meeting approved the accounts as presented by the Treasurer.
The meeting approved the appointment of the accountants – Monahans, for another year.

8. Any Other Business

Maggie Dobson gave an update on the oral history project on which she had been active in the past. There has been little recording recently and Maggie had decided, for health reasons, to stand aside. Stephanie Laslett will take over the running of the project.

Edward Shaw proposed a vote of thanks to the Museum's energetic Chairman. All agreed. The Chairman thanked members for attending and the meeting closed at 9pm.

FUTURE EVENTS

28TH MARCH to 28 APRIL, library meeting room, MILLENNIUM EMBROIDERY

24TH JUNE, SECRET GARDENS EVENT

JULY AND AUGUST, Shops exhibition.

AUGUST, ROMANS EXHIBITION, library meeting room. Dates to be confirmed.

FUND RAISING: Annual lecture planned for the Autumn. More details will follow.

3rd to 19th NOVEMBER. KEEP THE HOME FIRES BURNING, library foyer. Part of the Countdown to Peace initiative.