



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

May 2022



Dorothy, the BEM and the Lord Lieutenant.....

.... all three came together in the Museum on Wednesday 16th March when, on behalf of HM The Queen, Nigel Atkinson, Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, presented Dorothy Bone with the British Empire Medal (BEM). It was an auspicious if rather wet day when Dorothy came to the Museum along with friends and family to receive the accolade awarded to her in the New Year Honours' List.

The Lord Lieutenant was accompanied by Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Emsworth resident and Trust member, Lord Richards of Herstmonceux. Before the presentation Lord Richards explained the significance of the BEM. Since 2012, to coincide with the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, the medal has been awarded to civilians only for meritorious service worthy of recognition by the Crown. The medal was first created a hundred years ago for the armed forces. It later became a gallantry and bravery award for military and civil recipients.

Dorothy's award was given in appreciation of her services to both the Trust and the Emsworth Stroke Club. It is nearly 40 years since Dorothy became our honorary secretary and it was only fitting that the presentation should take place in the Museum to which she has dedicated so much of her time and effort.

Trust members and distinguished visitors including Gill Knight, former Emsworth Stroke Club Chairman, were welcomed by Dorothy's sixth and current EM&HT Chairman, Trevor Davies.

The Lord Lieutenant expressed delight at meeting Dorothy and was proud to have been asked by HM The Queen to represent her when he duly pinned the medal to Dorothy's jacket. John Tweddell was on hand to photograph both the presentation and the guests. Dorothy symbolically cut the first slice of the presentation cake and everyone toasted her well deserved good fortune.



Left: Dorothy (seated) and Wendy Bright with from left to right, Museum Curator Phil Magrath, the Lord Lieutenant, Trevor Davies, Tony Stimson and Lord Richards of Herstmonceux. Tony and Wendy first instigated the campaign for a medal.



Above: Dorothy, poised to cut the beautifully decorated sponge cake held by Phil Magrath

Diary Dates

Mask wearing is no longer mandatory. However, current government advice is to continue to wear masks in crowded places. In compliance with this advice please continue to wear masks at our events in the interest of the welfare of others.

May 7th – 29th	Exhibition “The Falklands War: The Story of a Ship” by Captain Christopher Morrison and Vice Admiral Sir Anthony Dymock KBE. The ship is the Portsmouth manned guided missile destroyer <i>HMS Antrim</i> .
June 2nd – 19th or 26th	Exhibition “A Celebration of the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee”
June 25th – July 3rd or July 2nd/3rd only	Ropemaking Demonstration by Trevor Davies
July 9th – August 21st	Exhibition “20th Anniversary of the Murder of Sir Peter Blake” by Lady Pippa Blake and Trevor Davies
August 27th – September 4th	Exhibition “Past and Present Visual Marks” by Elizabeth Saunders/Visual Marks Textile Group
September 10th – October 30th	Exhibition “The Valerie Bacon Diaries 1939 - 1945” by Nigel and Wendy Gossop
October 30th	Museum closes for the winter

Dorothy Bone 01243 373780, email: dorothybone@btinternet.com

Preview of Exhibitions in the David Rudkin Room



HMS Antrim

The ship led the retaking of South Georgia and her helicopter ‘Humphrey’ crippled the Argentine submarine *Santa Fe* – the first such attack in history.

Included in this interesting exhibition is the ceremonial Argentine flag that was captured from the *Santa Fe* and a 1.6 metre model of *HMS Antrim* as well as historical artefacts, pictures, documents and items of memorabilia.

Visitors will be able to watch a film that was taken during this time and see the original signal that caused Margaret Thatcher to tell the British public to ‘rejoice, rejoice’.

If you have memories of the Falklands War, either as someone who took part or a member of your family was involved, you will have the opportunity to record your thoughts and recollections so that future generations can read about the events of 40 years ago.



The centre piece of this display is a beautifully crafted model of the gold Coronation coach in which the Queen travelled to and from the abbey. In addition, pictures from the Museum collection will show how Emsworth residents have celebrated this historical event over more recent years.

Pictured left is a 1/16th scale model of the Coronation coach. It was made by the late Don Shearman in 1953 and the intricate modelling took him about 600 hours. Don was the father-in-law of the Museum’s photo archivist, Bernie Gudge. Don worked at Dell Quay Marine in the drawing and design office and at Southbourne Sheet Metal Company.

Photo: C Paul Wilson

EM&HT’s 47th Annual General Meeting

Just six months after the 46th delayed AGM was held last September the Trust felt that, as Covid restrictions were easing, the 47th AGM should be held as usual in March. Thus 26 members gathered in St James’ Parish Hall on the evening of 7th March. A further 45 members voted by post, making a quorum for the meeting.

All members had been sent an AGM pack containing reports by the Trust’s officers and a voting slip prior to the meeting. On the evening the minutes of the 46th Annual Meeting were approved as were the 2021 Trust accounts. Members agreed that the number of ordinary committee members be increased from five to seven. Trevor Davies was re-elected Chairman of the Trust and Margaret Rogers was re-elected to the committee. Sue Soames and Trevor Smith were elected to the committee. The appointment of Councillor Julie Thain-Smith as the Havant Borough Council representative was ratified and Richard McMillan was re-appointed as the independent examiner of the Trust accounts for the year ending 31st December 2022.

Once the formal part of the proceedings were concluded, the audience viewed PowerPoint presentations from the Chairman and Curator Phil Magrath which mainly showed the work to enhance the displays that had gone on in the Museum during the long Covid-caused break in the winter of 2020/21.

The meeting ended with a free raffle.

Cheese & Wine Evening

For many years now Emsworth Maritime & Historical Trust members have been fortunate to have an excellent relationship with the P G Wodehouse Society based in London and from time to time we have welcomed visits from members of the Society to Emsworth. Members have learnt how ‘Plum’ spent some of his earlier formative writing years here between 1904 and 1914. It was here too he began some lasting relationships, culled ideas for names from people and neighbouring places, learnt how to cope with the demands of publishing deadlines and writing for theatrical productions.

As you will know, major refurbishments continued to be done over lockdown in the Museum’s Main Hall, one of which was the relocation of the P G Wodehouse display area. And it is with great pleasure that we are now able to welcome members of the P G Wodehouse Society once again to view our new display on Friday 29th July 2022.

If you are a P G Wodehouse Society member, or a local aficionado, please do join us on Friday evening at 6 pm for an hour or so to spend a convivial hour meeting members of the Society and Trust Committee Members to chat with them. Please register to do so with **Dorothy Bone on 01243 373780** as numbers are limited.

Margaret Rogers

From the Chairman



First, I must apologize to all of those who were contacted by the Post Office with a request for extra payment for the postage of the February Newsletter.

We did check the weight of the package. The printers slightly confused us by using a heavier paper than we had expected. We checked again, and thought the package was still within the weight limits. Some sorting machines are obviously fussier than others, so we will allow a larger margin of error next time.

In the last few months, the Museum has received generous donations of records from:

- The Minutes of the Annual General Meetings of the Emsworth Conservative Association from 1947 until 1994, presented by our President, Lord Willetts (see picture)
- The records of the Emsworth Marching Band presented by John Ambler
- Records from 1921 of the Emsworth 1st Company of Girl Guides presented by Colin Marley
- Records of the Emsworth and Havant Round Table
- Documentation surrounding some Emsworth properties.

As you know the Museum is desperately short of storage space. Moreover, for these records, your committee has to ask the question "If not the Emsworth Museum, who?". They will be invaluable for research. Your committee continues to wrestle with this conundrum.

In June, the Museum will mount an exhibition of Coronation Memorabilia. The centre piece will be the magnificent 1/16th scale model of the Coronation coach made by Bernie Gudge's late father-in-law. We have been promised a second Coronation coach model and some memorabilia.

Do you have any items of Coronation Memorabilia in your loft that we could borrow to add to the display, please? Please email me at chairman@emsworthmuseum.org.uk. The Museum will not plan to keep any items. They will be labelled and returned to you.

Those of you who have volunteered to steward will have noticed some changes in our approach to planning:

- On Sundays, we are trialling opening at 1:30 pm to see if that increases the footfall on Sunday afternoons. So far, it seems to have been beneficial.
- We are planning to revert to Opening on Friday afternoons in August as was the practice in pre-Covid times.
- We are attempting to relieve the need for last minute telephone calls, by asking stewards to indicate the sessions for which they are happy to volunteer in an online schedule. This is a precursor to implementing an online booking system which will be visible all the time to all stewards.

The objective behind these changes is to have a system that meets everyone's needs, combined with the ability to have a reasonably certain forward plan.

Lord Willetts presenting the Minutes of Emsworth Conservative Association to EM&HT Chairman, Trevor Davies

Extracts from the Minutes will be published in The Emsworth Echo, November 2022



I hope that all those who can, will come to the Museum to see the new display of objects from Emsworth Chemists'. Thanks to the generosity of Nick and Jane Yoward, we have been able to add the objects from Yowards' Chemists to the objects the Museum held already to produce a more comprehensive display, curated by retired Medical Consultant, Ben Timmis. The display demonstrates the radical changes in the way that pharmacies now operate. These changes occurred over a relatively short period.

The project to construct a ropewalk centred around the Museum's ropemaking jack is well underway. The ropemaking jack donated by Bob Lewis in the mid-1990s has been remounted (see picture, top

From the Chairman continued

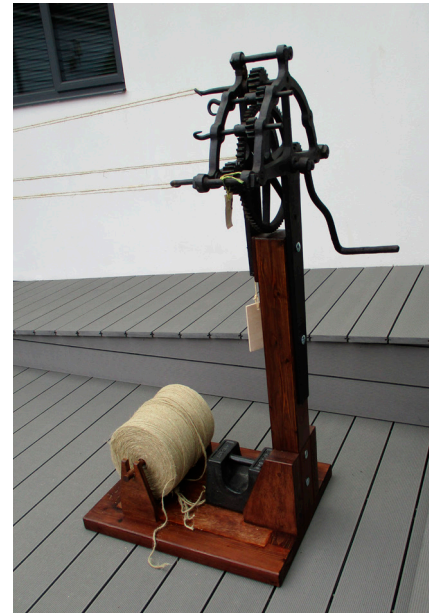
right). The swivel and counter weight at the other end have been built (picture below). The rope is formed by turning the handle of the jack, and allowing the top to move along the rope (pictures bottom). Once complete, we will have to serve a seven-year apprenticeship as a ropemaker quite quickly, so that we can produce usable rope, albeit in short lengths. We hope to have a ropemaking demonstration during the summer.



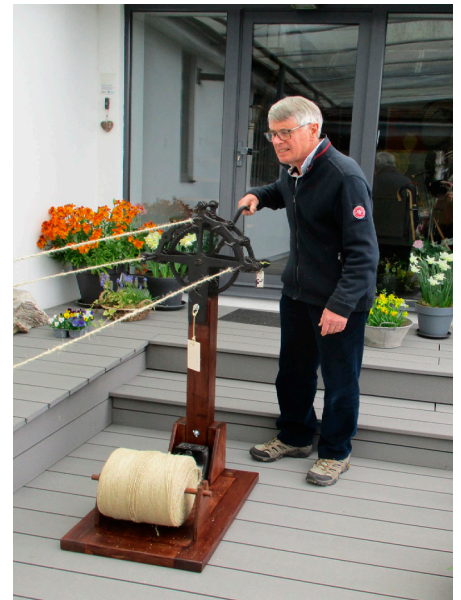
Left: The other end of the ropewalk – the swivel and counterweight



The top is used to form the rope



The Museum's ropemaking jack on its new mount



Turning the jack to make the rope



Emsworth Walks

8th June, 6th July, 10th August

Summer Walks

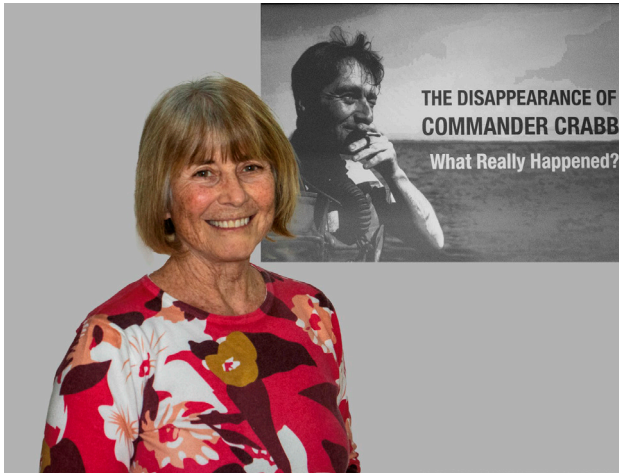
Where: Guided 1½ to 2 hour walks looking at the history of Emsworth

When: Wednesday evenings 8th June, 6th July and 10th August

Cost: £5 per head

Meet at Emsworth Museum in North Street by 6.15 pm. Walks must be booked in advance but can be paid for on the evening. Please email walks@emsworthmuseum.org.uk to book a place. Numbers are limited to 12 so that stories can be shared more easily.

The Disappearance of Commander Crabb: What really happened?



The disappearance of Commander Crabb while diving in Portsmouth Harbour in 1956 was a sensation both locally and nationally. Had he taken part in covert operations to spy on the Russian warship *Ordzhonikidze*? Was he killed by the Russians or taken prisoner? When a headless, handless body turned up in Chichester Harbour off Pilesey some 15 months later, speculation was again rife.

It is still a hot topic locally judging by the interest shown in the two talks at Emsworth Community Centre on Wednesday evening, 9th February and Saturday afternoon, 19th February. The speaker was Ann Bevan.

Ann was introduced to diving through her late husband, Dr John Bevan and she is now the curator of The Diving Museum in Gosport. Commander Crabb's life and demise were the focus of forensic research by her husband who published books and gave talks about it until his death in 2020.

The Premier of the Soviet Union, Nikolai Bulganin, and First Secretary of the Communist Party, Nikita Khrushchev sailed into Portsmouth aboard the cruiser *Ordzhonikidze* for a trade visit in April 1956. The cruiser was accompanied by two destroyers, *Sovershenny* and *Smotryashchie*. The three vessels moored alongside the then South Railway Jetty close to where *HMS Warrior* is now berthed in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

What happened next?

Commander Lionel Crabb was a decorated RNVR war hero who began diving while training at *HMS Vernon* and *HMS Excellent* in Portsmouth in 1942. He later took part in several hazardous operations and specialised in underwater investigations and mine clearance. Crabby has been described as a loveable rogue but by 1956 he was also physically unfit. He was a fearless man who loved a smoke and a drink. In pictures he is often shown with a cigarette in his mouth while wearing oxygen-rich diving gear. Not a good combination. Crabby favoured a shallow water rebreather and it was this apparatus that he was wearing when he submerged to investigate the Soviet cruiser's cavitation 'Agouti' system. In fact he aborted his first dive and disappeared during the subsequent dive on 19th April 1956.

Conspiracy theories abound as to what happened next. The dive was later discovered to be a covert operation mounted by MI6. Explanatory documents

that could have been released in 2006 have been further embargoed until 2056. Ann described various conspiracy theories and showed how the dives were accomplished. Conditions in the harbour and currents in the Solent were also investigated. In particular, how did a body end up in Chichester Harbour. Was it Commander Crabb? Opinions differ but the body is interred in Milton cemetery and the headstone is that of Commander Crabb.

There were several questions after Ann's illustrated talks and on the Saturday a relative of the fishermen who found the body gave their account of what happened.





The Triangle Girls of WW1 by Cheryl Jewitt, Portsmouth Royal Dockyard Historic Trust

The story of the Triangle Girls begins in 1916 when conscription into the armed forces was introduced, and many hundreds of men were forced to leave the dockyard to join those who had already volunteered to fight.



repaired and refitted. This would have made a vast, extremely noisy, smelly and dangerous industrial workplace that became the reality for the Triangle Girls. Highly trained skilled men were

retained but the Triangle Girls had to learn on the job; they became pioneers as some of the first women, certainly in this country, to work in heavy industry. At the start of the war there were 15,646 men but only 50 women, who were mainly sewing flags and kitbags. By the end of the war there were 22,509 men and 1,786 women, the majority of whom worked alongside the men carrying out oxy-acetylene welding, working on lathes, on drilling machines, and plate forming for the ships. Their fine motor skills were particularly invaluable in the electrical shop.

Cheryl's talk featured two Triangle Girls: her grandmother Clara who married James Sillence on New Year's Day 1912 and Beatrice Penfold who was interviewed about her war work when she was in her 90s. Both James and Beatrice's husband William were killed in action, their wives were now widows each needing to care for a small child.

By the end of the war The Triangle Girls were earning considerably more than could have been expected outside of war work. However in 1919 the Restoration of the Pre-War Practices Act forced most women to leave their wartime roles when survivors came home to reclaim their jobs at a time when

there was grave concern about the impact the war would have on everyday life.

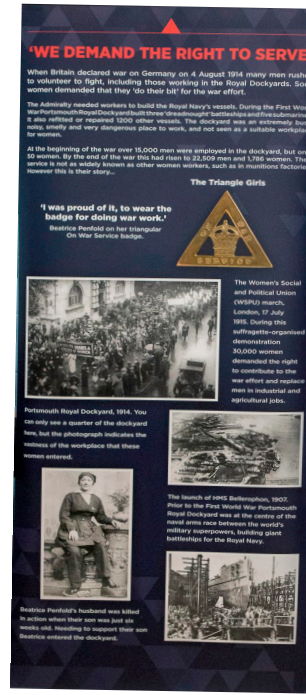
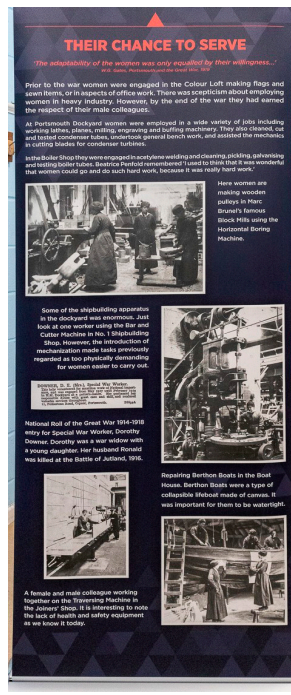
Despite it being recorded that many women would have chosen to stay on in the dockyard almost all had to leave. The loss of a good wage came at a time when many women were grieving or perhaps caring for injured husbands, young children or other family members. They also lost the camaraderie that they had built up while being 'all in this together'.

The women workers who heeded the call to take their place were known as Triangle Girls as their badges were triangular shaped to accommodate the words 'On War Service'. They wore their badges with immense pride.

There was a great need for workers to fill the gap in the workforce but there were still restrictions on who might apply. Although there was a general acceptance that some women could be employed on war work, whether dockyard work was appropriate for women by the standards of the day was another matter entirely. The stipulation was made that for any woman to be employed in the dockyard she would have had to have a relative working there or be a war widow. Sadly, of course, some women fitted both categories.

Three battleships including the *Iron Duke* were built in Portsmouth Royal Dockyard in WW1 as well as five submarines; in addition 1,200 vessels were

Some of the banners that illustrated the talk



Curator's Corner

The Trust recently acquired through donation a half-penny trade token (EMHT1705) featuring, as far as the important Emsworth link is concerned, a reference to John Stride – more of him later. This adds to the two other Stride trade tokens in the collection (EMHT207 and 955) both dated 1795 and, although as a museum curator one has to be wary of accepting duplicates, each not only has a different design of interest to the numismatist, each adds to the Stride story.

Trade tokens were coins issued by a private company, group, association or individual and used as a substitute medium of exchange due to the periodic scarcity of coinage of the realm. The earliest Stride token dated 1793 shows on the reverse side a seated Britannia with her outstretched right hand on a large globe at the base of which is a crowned lion's head. Her left elbow rests upon a large anchor. Around the outside are the words HALF PENNY. This style was probably designed to commemorate British naval power and intended as a reminder of the Napoleonic Wars which started that year. The other two examples have depictions of Britannia that are more recognisable to those of us who remember pre-decimal coinage. A lance is in her right hand, her left arm rests upon an oval shield carrying the Union flag and around the outside is the inscription RULE BRITANNIA.



EMHT207, 1705 and 955 reverse sides

Upon the obverse of the earlier example is a three-mast ship of the line with the word EMSWORTH around the edge. The obverse of the others is completely different: by 1795 a crucial naval battle, the first of the conflict, had taken place the year before off Ushant following a series of earlier



EMHT207, 1705 and 955 obverse sides

engagements in the same area. This side features the head of Admiral Lord Howe (1726-1799) who, in command of the Channel fleet of 22 ships on 1st June 1794, defeated a French force of 25 ships escorting a grain convoy from America and capturing seven of them. Both sides claimed a victory, the French because the convoy made it to France and the British because the French fleet was so damaged that it was confined to port. This date was thereafter known as The Glorious First of June with an inscription on the outer of both 1795 coins reading EARL HOWE & THE GLORIOUS FIRST OF JUNE.

Punched into the thin edge of the 1795 coins is the inscription "EMSWORTH HALF PENNY PAYABLE BY JOHN STRIDE". John Stride features in two Trust magazines. One in the May 2001 Newsletter and the other in *The Emsworth Echo* No. 15, June 1993.

John Stride was baptised at Warblington Church in 1767. He became a grocer and tea dealer and by 1792 was operating from the Square in Emsworth. By 1839 he had diversified becoming a stationer and book seller and was also a Collector of the Land Tax. His marriage to Sarah Fry of Chichester produced 15 children between 1791 and 1815. He died in 1853 aged 86. The earlier trade token reveals from its edge the fact that he had a warehouse and must therefore have enjoyed considerable success with his business. The inscription reads "PAYABLE AT THE WAREHOUSE OF JOHN STRIDE".

Two of the three tokens may be seen in one of the Main Room cabinets and the new acquisition will soon join them.

Philip A. Magrath, Curator

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

Membership: Shelagh Standen
shelaghstanden@gmail.co.uk

Website: www.emsworthmuseum.org.uk Newsletter Editor: Christine Bury
01243 377870 christine.bury@ntlworld.com

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