



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 2022



Dorothy holding a barn owl. The owl was a welcome visitor to the Stroke Club.

Photo: Nik Knight

Accolades For Dorothy Bone, BEM

'Tireless' 'Dedicated' 'Determined' 'Great sense of humour' 'Excellent Hon. Sec.' 'Encyclopaedic memory' 'Outstanding service to the community'

'Much of the reputation of the Trust and the Museum is down to Dorothy, Hon. Sec. for nearly 40 years.'

Tony Stimson, EM&HT Chairman, 2013-17

'Dorothy's selfless efforts have made a significant contribution to the lives of hundreds of stroke survivors and their families as she puts the care and welfare of others above her own needs.'

Gill Knight, Emsworth Stroke Club Chairman, 2002-2021

Dorothy Mary Bone is far more than an Honorary Secretary in the work she does for the Trust and the Museum. Like many volunteers she began with a simple task – just writing labels for an August 1982 exhibition in the South Street Centre. By the time the exhibition ended the Secretary of the Trust, Stan Morgan, had died suddenly and Dorothy was asked to take over. As she said in 2005, 'The volume and the variation of tasks have changed enormously over the years, there were only 45 members in 1982'.

The Museum did not have a permanent home until 1988 and for many years Dorothy kept, along with other artefacts, a six foot length of mast believed to be from JD Foster's boat, *Echo I*, in her garden.

Dorothy's formidable knowledge of protocol and record keeping, her meticulous attention to detail, guidance, support and encouragement to both charities, EM&HT and the Stroke Club, has been built up over the intervening years. She has worked with six Trust chairman, including the present Chairman, Trevor Davies who said, 'Dorothy has vigorously supported the Trust as it developed into a fully functioning, wholly volunteer Museum'.

Today, among other roles, she co-ordinates the volunteer stewarding rota, deals with local history queries, promotes publicity and liaises with exhibitors as well as supervising events.

In recent years, in spite of her increasing immobility and frailty, Dorothy has been carrying out all these responsibilities from home – by telephone and email.

Dorothy was awarded the British Empire Medal in the New Year Honours list but the campaign to have her stalwart service recognised began pre-Covid at the instigation of former Chairman, Tony Stimson, and former committee member, Wendy Bright. Secret meetings between Tony, Trevor Davies and Trust President, Lord Willetts of Havant resulted in letters of support being sent from them and Gill Knight to the Cabinet Office in 2020. The award given last month was in recognition of Dorothy's services to both the Trust and the Stroke Club.

Dorothy was 84 on 8th January 2022 and this award was a great birthday present. Congratulations, Dorothy from all the members of EM&HT.

The last words are hers. 'I enjoy talking to people, and that's what keeps me going.'

Diary Dates

All **Talks** are held in the Mountford Rooms, Emsworth Community Centre, North Street, Emsworth. Admission £4.00 Tickets only available in advance from Bookends, 7 High Street, Emsworth.

The **AGM** will be held in the St. James' Church Hall, Church Path, Emsworth.

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.

Mon., March 7th	47th AGM of the Trust at 7.30 pm. The minutes of the 46th AGM and the agenda for the 47th AGM are included with this Newsletter.
Wed., March 9th March 2022	Talk "The Triangle Girls" by Cheryl Jewitt at 7.30 pm. Doors open at 7.00 pm. Instruction Sessions for Museum Stewards and key holder Stewards
Sat., April 2nd	Museum Re-opens
April 2nd – 18th	Exhibition To be confirmed (TBC) (includes Easter Monday 18th April but not Good Friday 15th April)
Wed., April 13th April 23rd – May 2nd	Talk "The Mary Rose: A Unique 500 Year Story" by Glenn Dunaway Exhibition Emsworth Arts Trail The 5 days include the early Spring Bank Holiday 2nd May)
May 7th – 29th	Exhibition "The Falklands War: The Story of a Ship" by Captain Christopher Morrison and Vice Admiral Sir Anthony Dymock. The ship is the Portsmouth manned guided missile destroyer <i>HMS Antrim</i> .
June 2nd – 26th	Exhibition TBC (includes the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Thursday 2nd and Friday 3rd June)
July 2nd – 31st	Exhibition TBC
August 6th – 29th	Exhibition TBC (includes Bank Holiday Monday 29th August)
September 3rd – 25th	Exhibition TBC
October 1st – 30th	Exhibition TBC
October 30th	Museum closes for the winter

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

Falklands Exhibition: The Story of a Ship



HMS Antrim

2022 is the 40th anniversary of the Falklands War and this exhibition is based mainly on *HMS Antrim*, a Portsmouth manned guided missile destroyer, which re-took South Georgia and then spearheaded the landings in San Carlos Water. Here she 'collected' an unexploded 1000 lb bomb which passed through her main missile magazine.

If you have any photographs or other memorabilia related to Emsworth men who took part in the Falklands conflict then please contact Dorothy Bone in the first instance. We would love to hear from you.

PG Wodehouse Essay Competition

Trust Holiday, September 2022

Happiness, as solid thinkers have often pointed out, comes from giving pleasure to others.

PG Wodehouse

To celebrate the work of this remarkable writer, the PG Wodehouse Society (UK) launched a new international essay competition which is open to all.

The Essay Prize marks the 140th anniversary of the birth of Wodehouse in October 1881. The Prize of £1,000, for the winning adult entry and £250 for the winning junior entry will be awarded by a distinguished panel of judges including Stephen Fry, the actor, broadcaster, director and writer.

Essays will be judged according to:

- the originality of the work in drawing attention to interesting aspects of PG Wodehouse's writing;
- the quality and scholarship of the essay in exploring PG Wodehouse's writing, and the arguments and ideas the essayist presents.

While not wanting to be restrictive in the areas or topics that may be covered, the Society are seeking essays that primarily focus on PG's novels, stories, lyrics, plays and journalism, rather than essays of a purely biographical nature.

As part of the prize, winners will have their work published and runners-up may have their work published by the Society through one of its channels or publications. Entrants may wish subsequently to submit their entries for inclusion in learned journals, but the Society reserves the right to publish them first.

Entry is free and open to all, regardless of whether entrants are members of any of the societies around the world that promote the work of Wodehouse.

Entries must be submitted by 1st September 2022. For more details go to: www.pgwodehousesociety.org.uk/essayprize

2022 Subscription Reminder

Anyone who has not paid their subscription to the Trust and does not pay their subscription by standing order should send their cheques to the Membership Secretary at Emsworth Museum, 10b North Street, Emsworth, PO10 7DD.

We have cancelled two holidays to Yorkshire and it is, perhaps, a long way to go at this time.

I have asked Woods to look at a 5 day holiday to Derbyshire visiting Chatsworth House, the plague village of Eyam, a National Trust house as well as visits to other attractions of interest. On the way home we will probably visit the National Arboretum in Staffordshire.

For this trip I will need a minimum of 30 people so although Covid is still an issue, I hope we will be able to have a trip for 2022.

If you are interested, please send me an email and I will be publishing and circulating the deals soon.

**Janet Butler: email: jan_butler@outlook.com
Tel: 01243 430926**

Congratulations to all winners

The proceeds of the 50/50 Club are used to enhance the Museum and the next major project will be to finance the lighting for the new chemists' display cabinet.

New members are always welcome. Please ask for an application form from **Peter Morse** on peter.morse1934@gmail.com or phone **01243 697582**.

50/50 Club Winners in 2021

Month	No	Name	Prize	Value
January	120	Mr A Ring	First	£35.00
January	45	Mrs M Riding	Second	£15.00
February	173	Mrs R Wickhart	First	£40.00
February	244	Mrs D B Hemmings	Second	£20.00
March	23	Mr K W Harry	First	£40.00
March	236	Mrs F Cassidy	Second	£20.00
April	70	Mrs V J Rigby	First	£40.00
April	57	Mrs P Marshall	Second	£20.00
May	153	P Atkin	First	£40.00
May	263	Mrs S Morgan	Second	£20.00
June	15	Major & Mrs E Allen	First	£40.00
June	151	Dr P M Last	Second	£20.00
July	133	Mrs J Uttley	First	£40.00
July	70	Mrs V J Rigby	Second	£20.00
August	265	Mr & Mrs A H Davies	First	£40.00
August	114	Mr M J Knowles	Second	£20.00
September	15	Major & Mrs E Allen	First	£40.00
September	175	Prof. A C Pugh	Second	£20.00
October	83	Mr A R E Hazell	First	£40.00
October	206	Mrs F Cassidy	Second	£20.00
November	265	Mr & Mrs A H Davies	First	£40.00
November	195	Mr D A W Wells	Second	£20.00
December	201	Mr A W Stewart-Fitzroy	First	£40.00
December	17	Mr W Dawes	Second	£20.00

From the Chairman



I am really pleased to be able to tell you that Dorothy was awarded a British Empire Medal in the New Year's Honours Lists for 'Voluntary services to the community in Emsworth, Hampshire'. This was a project that was (quietly) handed over to me when I was elected Chairman of the Trust. It has taken ages to come to fruition. Privately, I thought for most of 2021 that our attempt had failed. Naturally, Dorothy is thrilled and appreciates the congratulatory messages many of you have sent her.

I am sure none of us ever expected to be moving towards a third year of Covid. Because Emsworth Museum is supported and run by its volunteer members for the community, we have enjoyed the luxury of sustainable finances even in these difficult times.

Nevertheless, all your committee were saddened by the need to postpone the Stewards' and Helpers' tea party in early December. With rising infection rates, we felt we had no realistic choice, and I really hope that we will be able to run it safely in the next few months.

That said, we are well aware how much our members value the opportunity to attend interesting events with like-minded people. The lectures in October and November were supported by capacity (and socially distanced) audiences. The lecture programme continues in the New Year with the postponed lecture about Commander Crabb. We think this will be a popular lecture, so exceptionally, we are running it twice – on 9th February 7:30 pm and on Saturday 19th February at 2:30 pm. As before, both these lectures will be moderately

socially distanced with reduced capacity in the lecture hall. We will ask everyone to wear masks unless speaking.

We are planning to run a physical AGM on Monday 7th March 2022 in St James' Church Hall. If Covid forces us to delay this meeting, then we will. We believe that Trust members prefer a physical AGM to an online meeting. At a physical meeting, it is much easier for members to ask questions and, as a result, be more directly involved in the governance of the Trust.

In spite of Covid, we have a full winter programme of upgrades planned for the Museum, which are highlighted in another article in this Newsletter. This is only possible because of the continuing generosity of those who donate to the Museum.

One particular example of donor generosity is by Emily and the late George Cassedy, who have changed their loan of the objects from their house in Queen Street to a gift. This means that among other objects, Emsworth Museum is the proud owner of two 18th century tricorne (think Poldark) hats, displayed in the newly lit cabinet. We are very grateful to Emily Cassedy.

I am confident we can complete the winter work planned in the Museum because, if necessary, that can all be done in a socially distanced mode. However, I am not yet fully confident that we will be able to run our planned programme for the early part of 2022 in full, and be able to re-open the Museum as planned on 2nd April 2022. We will have to be alert and adapt our plans appropriately as the situation develops.

Best wishes for 2022.

Trevor Davies, Chairman

Winter Work in the Museum

As you know, the winter is an opportunity to update facilities and re-consider displays in the Museum, and this winter is no exception.

Textile Care. It is good museum practice to take textile items off their display mannequins and pack them away to rest for a while. This winter Phil Magrath and Izzy Sumner have meticulously removed the Free French uniform and the Black Rod uniform and packed them away in purpose made boxes. Ann Davies and Wendy Bright have done the same with Margaret Tatchell's wedding dress. The display cabinets look very odd without them (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1 Unclothed mannequins

Chemists' Display. The chemists' display is being re-curated. We are planning to incorporate the objects from Yoward's Chemists' that Jane and Nick Yoward have generously passed into the Museum's care. Phil and Izzy are busy accessioning the newly acquired items.

This acquisition means that the chemists' display needs a bigger cabinet. To mitigate the Museum's perennial storage problem, we have acquired (from eBay) a second plan chest to act as a base for the display cabinet. Local company Parham Glass have made this cabinet in toughened glass, and we have the specified lighting. The cabinet was assembled early in 2022 (Fig. 2).

Trust member Ben Timmis, a retired medical consultant, is reviewing the objects in the display; re-reading his medical history books and the chemists' recipe books so that we can highlight the stories behind a pharmacist's work in the 1950s and 1960s – so very different from today.



Fig. 2 New chemists' display. Parham Glass made the new display cabinet which stands above the latest plan chest.



Fig. 3 With and without the new lighting. Above, left: The Curiosities cabinet. Above, right: The Peter Blake cabinet.

Cabinet Lights. In the Archive room, we have installed lighting in the two cabinets in an attempt to stop visitors walking straight through the room without pausing to examine some of the unique material on display there, notably the Peter Blake display and the tricorn hats from the Queen Street Cassedy donation to name but two (Fig. 3).

Peter Blake. In a related project, we are thinking of ways to tell the story of Peter Blake and his involvement with Emsworth more fully, twenty years after his murder on the Amazon. What brought him to Emsworth? Why did he establish his base in Emsworth? What is the full story of the red socks? Displaying the full story will be a challenge in the space available, but we will be creative.

Steve Miller is planning to consolidate the descriptions of wartime Emsworth in a new set of swing boards to the right of the Free French cabinet. We will need to be careful that we do not obstruct the fire escape. In the Museum's archives there is some fantastic, detailed research about wartime Emsworth that is not easily accessible. Steve hopes to change that.

Ropemaking. Emsworth used to have certainly one and possibly two ropewalks. The Museum holds a ropemaking jack in its collection (Fig. 4). Research about the techniques of ropemaking is moving towards a design for a mini ropewalk in the Museum. It will explain how rope was made, and with luck, might give us the opportunity to make some Emsworth rope for the first time in many years.

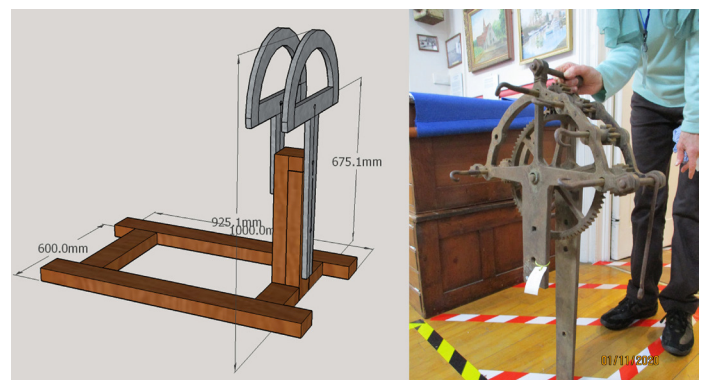


Fig. 4 Proposed design (left) to support the ropemaking jack (right)

Although this winter's work is not as dramatic as the changes we made last winter, they will continue to improve the clarity of the Emsworth story.

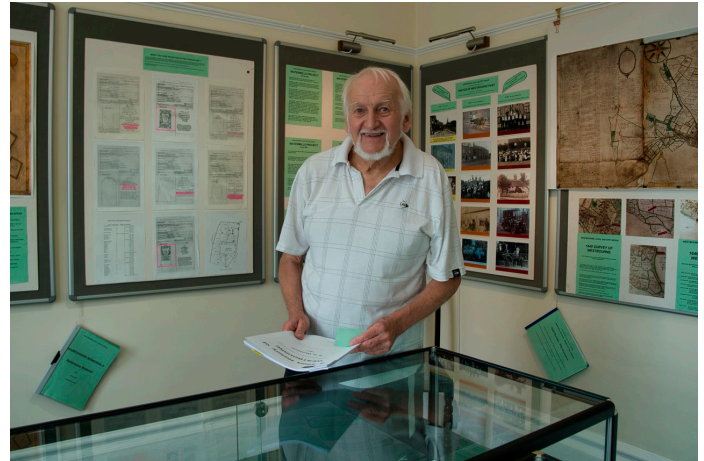
Glimpsing Westbourne's Local History

A glimpse into the history of Westbourne was an apt title for this exhibition held from 17th July to 5th September 2021 in the David Rudkin Room. Curated by Roger Wilding of the Westbourne Local History Group (WLHG), the display included old maps as well as photographs of shops, businesses and water mills that have long disappeared. The exhibition proved very popular with visitors as the mementos on view sparked many other local memories.

One presentation focused on ancestors buried in the St John the Baptist churchyard. Here it was possible to read details of headstone inscriptions such as "In Memory of Benjamin son of Thomas and Jane Pearce whose death was occasioned by an unfortunate blow from a cricket ball on the 4th of July 1791 in the 16th year of his age". Another display was on Westbourne bonfire activities while early maps featured prominently in the exhibition as did sales particulars and extracts from the book *Bourne in the Past* by Rev. Dr J H Mee.

Details of projects undertaken by the group were shown and the WLHG asked for help in identifying people in photographs of businesses and outings. Several of the black and white images were shown on the television screen in the Research Room. In addition, contact forms and reference material were available to help visitors.

More stories and photographs recalling Westbourne's history are needed. Jim Clarke of WLHG would appreciate any help you can give. He can be contacted by telephone on 01243 373788 or by email at jim@clarkeuk.net. The website address is <http://westbournevillage.org/organisations-clubs/history-group>



Roger Wilding welcomes visitors to the exhibition on Westbourne's local history

Andrew Foster's Emsworth Arts Trail

The Emsworth Arts Trail postponed in 2020 took place over the weekends of 11/12 and 18/19 September 2021. Once again, it proved to be a popular pastime for local residents and visitors to tour the town and pop in to the different artist venues and see the work on display.

The David Rudkin Room played host to contemporary artist Andrew Foster. In past years paintings, in oils or watercolour, have featured sculpture, glass and jewellery but this year's focus was on mixed media. Andrew's paintings showed his intensely personal view of life, be it a study in mental health exploring the idea of therapy and meeting your demons to a quirky skull selfie or the beauty of motion and power on land, sea and in the heavens. One of the most talked about exhibits was the 'Ghost Ship' framed by a vintage porthole mirror.



Ghost ship

Andrew explained, "Whilst looking through vintage and antique shops for cool items to use for the more marine-themed pieces I do, I came across this beautiful, aged, original porthole mirror. I decided to use the mirror as part of the painting leaving the sails without paint". This painting was in acrylic and oils, but some other works on display used gouache, gesso, crackle clay, chalk, pastels, resin, even emulsion. Some of the paintings were abstract and unframed while others were more detailed and framed but they all showed some aspect of Andrew's life.

The very informative captions were another feature of the exhibition. For example, “Stumbling upon the Fox Tavern whilst walking in Gosport I was fascinated by its location. It’s like the pub (c. 1791) had been there first and everything else was built around it. So the piece plays on the fact of ‘is it even there’”.

Andrew’s paintings exploring the human condition are exhibited in galleries and paint festivals across the South of England.

Andrew Foster and steward, Patricia Williamson talking about the Ghost Ship exhibit



Girl Guide Centenary Exhibition

Emsworth’s 1st Company of Girl Guides was established in June 1921. 2021’s final exhibition in the David Rudkin Room marked their centenary. Curated by Colin Marley and based on the writings of his aunt Mrs Eunice Sanderson, the exhibition ran from 25th September to 31st October. Mrs Sanderson (Sandy) was appointed First Lieutenant in 1942 and Captain in 1945. She held that position until retirement in 1983.

This exhibition material formed just a small part of Mrs Sanderson’s history of the Company and covered the years from 1950 to 1964. It was heart-warming to see visitors finding names and faces of people they knew. One man even spotted an old girl friend next to his sister in one of the photographs. Photo archivist, Bernie Gudge, supplied many of the black and white prints.

Photographs, badges, campfire songs and commendations showed the popularity of the Girl Guide Association in the mid 20th century. Many of the activities on display were of parades, plays and camping holidays at Hayshott, South Harting Farm and Hinton Ampner.



Colin Marley (left) with Bernie Gudge

Brownies by Washington Road bridge, 1951



Girl Guide Camp B, 1951



Above: Off to camp

Left: Mrs Eunice Sanderson

Forty Sixth AGM held in September 2021

A wet evening in early September 2021, the 8th to be precise, was the date of the first face-to-face meeting of a number of EM&HT members since the March 2020 Covid lockdown. The venue was the Emsworth Community Centre. Some 36 members turned out for a welcoming get together and a chance to hear what the Trust had been doing in 2020 as this evening was the postponed 46th AGM.

Trevor Davies, EM&HT Chairman, guided the business part of the evening. Minutes of the previous online AGM were proposed, seconded and accepted as was the financial report prepared by the Treasurer. The chairman's report was a PowerPoint presentation on the large screen in the Mountford Rooms.

Covid restrictions dominated life in 2020 and the Museum opened at the beginning of August with screens, hygienic precautions and traffic lights on the stairs. The planned schedule of exhibitions for 2020 was largely overtaken by Covid and resulted in just two exhibitions before the Museum closed on 1st November, one of which was Christopher Morrison's stunning exhibition to remember the 850th anniversary of Thomas à Becket's murder. There was a wealth of beautifully presented detail about the man and the church in Warblington that was dedicated to him.

Much work had taken place in revamping the exhibition area in the Main Room during the enforced lockdown and tribute was paid to all those who had contributed their services, both members and non-members to making such a splendid refit.

None of this could have happened without the enthusiastic support of the General Committee. Trevor added this tribute, "in particular, I have valued the support of Dorothy Bone who has been Secretary to the Trust for 37 years. She has kept six Chairmen including myself under control. Dorothy has contributed well beyond the traditional role of Secretary. Sadly, she is now house bound and cannot attend meetings. As a result, the committee has co-opted Sue Soames as Minutes Secretary. Dorothy will remain on the committee and continue her other administrative roles from home." Sue is the younger daughter of former Chairman Strahan Soames.

The Power Point slideshow continued with a report from Museum Curator, Phil Magrath. He spoke warmly about the work of all the volunteers during the winter layover. He signalled out for special



Face to face at last but members wore masks and seating was socially distanced at the 46th AGM

mention, Izzy Sumner and Maya Bakhshov, two young volunteers who had helped him during the winter. Phil mentioned the new cabinets and lighting, the Degris and John Lewis bequests, the PG Wodehouse corner refurbishment and the reworked Self Sufficient Emsworth display about the town's tradespeople.

Voting for new and re-elected members of the General Committee was different from that in previous years. A voting slip was sent out to all members in the August 2021 mailing of the EM&HT newsletter. Many members chose to vote by post rather than on the evening and all voting was completed satisfactorily.

Dr Gordon Braddock was duly elected to the Committee. Mrs Dorothy Bone and Mr Stephen Miller were re-elected. The appointment of Councillor Julie Thain-Smith as the Havant Borough Council representative on the Committee was ratified and Mr Richard MacMillan was re-appointed as Independent Examiner of the accounts.

The evening's events concluded with a free raffle. The usual refreshments were thought to be too risky at the current stage of the pandemic.

47th AGM
7th March, 2022
Emsworth Parish Hall
7 pm for 7.30 pm

Curator's Corner

A rather tattered and torn Stationery Office Book 129 of Foolscap size and dated 1947 was used by Tony and Mary Yoward, the pharmacists and owners of A C & M E Yoward Pharmacy at 22 North Street, Emsworth, between 1952 and 1986 to record their various formulae. In it may be found everything that you might have required to combat both common and not so common complaints.

The following is listed: mixtures, linctuses, solutions or liquores, ointments, suppositories, spirits, powders (internal), dusting powders, colloids, nasal drops, nasal sprays, creams, lotions, gargles, applications, ear drops, capsules, eye lotions, emulsions, eye drops, draughts, liniments, pastes, paints (pigmenta), vapores (inhalations) and miscellaneous. In an age when supermarkets and other outlets selling all manner of pills and potions did not exist such as they do today, the local chemist was your only option.

Flicking through the pages one learns that these concoctions were made up mostly either by grams (g) in weight, millilitres (ml) in volume or a combination of both, occasionally drams or $\frac{1}{8}$ of an ounce or grains equal to 0.065 of a gram. Toothache tincture for example involved 9.7 g of camphor, 2.4 g of menthol, 4.5 g of oil of cajeput (produced by the steam distillation of fresh leaves and bark from the cajeput tree, and incidentally, also an ingredient of Tiger Balm), 5.1 g of oil of caryophyllene which is drawn from the stems and flowers of cloves, 9.7 ml of chloral hydrate which is a sedative and hypnotic, 4.9 ml of phenol which is an antiseptic and 63.7 ml of chloroform.

Judging by the amount of staining present on the pages (see image above, right) detailing the ingredients for the various linctuses, and especially those for children, this may have been one of the pharmacy's most popular product. Children's Black Currant & Ipecacuanha cough syrup – with a bottle sticker recording C G Williams as chemist at 22 North Street – and Yoward's Cherry Linctus seem to have been the favourites.

The miscellaneous section is no less interesting indicating that chemists and pharmacists were not necessarily restricted to making cure alls.

For example, mixtures were available as furniture polish; the grandly named Erasmus Wilson's Hair Wash; after shave lotion and nail varnish remover. One could even purchase a gun 'bluing'



Staining on pages of the prescription book

solution. Bluing or black oxidizing is the process of treating the steel of a shotgun, say, to create a thin protective shell around it. It works by turning rust, into black iron oxide. A mixture for True Indian Curry Powder is noted as is Turkish Delight, Butterscotch, Everton Toffee and Egg Flip.

It all reminds me of a book that fascinated me many years ago and still does to this day entitled *Culpeper's Complete Herbal*. Nicholas Culpeper (1616-1654) was a celebrated astrologer and physician of the early seventeenth century. Following a short apprenticeship to an apothecary in St Helen's, Bishopsgate, he set up his own practice in Red Lion Street, Spitalfields in 1640. During his life he devoted much time to the study of astrology and medicine, and published numerous tracts, which although unorthodox and condemned by the contemporary medical standards of the day, nevertheless enjoyed large sales.

He left as his legacy to future generations a vast collection of herbal remedies which, by virtue of the un-dating nature of their healing properties, are as invaluable today as they were during the physician's lifetime over 350 years ago. Culpeper was married and the father of seven children. During the Civil War he fought on the side of Parliament and was wounded in the chest. Although throughout his life he lived in very straightened circumstances, he was always happy and willing to give free advice to the many poor folk who came to him for help.

Philip A. Magrath, Curator

Portsmouth Hill: A Stroll Through Time

Over 2,500 people sheltered in the Cliffdale chalk tunnels during Portsmouth air raids in WWII.

Four of the five earliest known examples of British coins were found within a ten-mile radius of Portsmouth, two of them recovered on the slopes of Portsmouth Hill.



Talks Organiser, Nigel Gossop

These were just two of the fascinating facts learned during Nigel Gossop's absorbing talk when he took his audience on an audio-visual stroll around Portsmouth Hill. A Covid-restricted audience gathered in the Mountford Rooms of the Emsworth Community Centre for the Trust's first face-to-face talk since February 2020 on a wet and blustery Wednesday evening last October. Nigel Gossop, the Trust's new talks organiser, was welcomed by Trust Chairman, Trevor Davies.

Portsmouth Hill is a seven mile long chalk ridge. The chalk, deposited over 65 million years ago, was originally laid down at the bottom of tropical seas. These layers solidified under pressure and were distorted by the movement of the earth's crust. The resulting iconic chalk cliffs can be seen for miles and were quarried for centuries.

Up until the early 1800s horses, stagecoaches and fully laden wagons and, of course, people struggled in the ascent of the hill and descending brought other problems. The chalk surface in very dry conditions became loose and unstable, and in the wet could be very slippery. Napoleonic prisoners of war lowered the top of the hill at the summit and work was carried out to decrease the rate of incline. By 1824 the height of the summit had been reduced by 40 feet.

Transportation of goods and people improved still further in the early years of the 20th century when the Portsmouth and Horndean Light Railway (PHLR) opened in 1903. By the 1930s PHLR trams had become less fashionable and a trolley bus system was inaugurated.

The tour of the Hill featured tales of pub landlords at hostelries such as The Red Lion, The George and The Churchillian. Notable personalities were recalled such as H G Wells and his local short story about Mr Hoopdriver and the girl he was trying to impress while Fred T Janes, author of *Jane's Fighting Ships*, organised Field Days to sharpen boys' scouting abilities. Many of the younger scouts regarded the whole affair as a glorified beano with Fred Jane as the genial master of ceremonies. The scouts scampered over Portsmouth Hill, facing mechanised invaders played by Jane and his friends, many of them naval officers or ratings who acted as cyclists and signallers. These Field Days eventually involved hundreds of scouts, dozens of cars and cycles, and, on one occasion, six trams.

The original Portsmouth Hill Fair began in 1715 and was held annually up until 1862 when the building of the Portsmouth Hill forts and defences interfered with the holding of the fair. Hundreds of workers employed in the building of the forts lived along the hill in a series of makeshift shanty towns and camps.

Looking back to the late Victorian and Edwardian period the draw of Portsmouth Hill as an attractive recreational area, a place to picnic, take in the spectacular views over Portsea Island and fill your lungs with fresh, country air was so appealing to the population of Portsmouth that tea gardens began to spring up to provide refreshments to the many weekend visitors.

Tunnels abounded in the quarried chalk cliffs and some were used as shelters in the Second World War. Iron bunks were installed in the Cliffdale site and an admission card was required to reserve a place in the shelter. In the 1980s it was decided to seal the entrance in the interest of public safety. The original plans of the layout were probably lost when the Guildhall was destroyed. The local fire brigade used guide ropes to find their way through the maze of tunnels before closing them. Among their finds were a dispatch rider's motorcycle and a huge collection of iron-framed bunk beds.

Nigel concluded his talk by commenting on the long history of human habitation on the Hill. Neolithic, Bronze Age and Anglo Saxon burial remains had been found along with those coins mentioned earlier.

The evening ended with a raffle, audience recollections and questions.

French Prisoners of War, Smugglers and Conspiracies



Speaker, Paul Chamberlain

On Wednesday, 10th November, a sell-out audience in the Community Centre welcomed the evening's speaker, Paul Chamberlain. The theme of his illustrated talk was French Prisoners of War, Smugglers and Conspiracies in the Napoleonic era.

In the 22 years between 1793 and 1815 there were 200,000 prisoners of war of different nationalities resident in the UK. Fortunately, they were not all incarcerated at the same time. Some men were kept on prison hulks, some in land prisons while others, the officers, were allowed parole and many even bought their families to live in our towns and villages. The major battles not only caused numerous deaths but also meant that many prisoners were captured at one time. For instance, some seven and a half thousand men were taken captive at Trafalgar.

A War Prison System was established to oversee the prison population and the bulk of the prisoners were housed in the south of England. A prisoner exchange scheme was set up between Britain and France but it was mainly for the sick and for senior officers. Not surprisingly, many of the more able-bodied men tried to escape.

Smugglers often took advantage of escapees. It was a lucrative pastime aiding these on the run. Napoleon encouraged escapes and even allowed smugglers to establish bases along the French coast. Some 300 smugglers were in Dunkirk for example. Why did Napoleon condone this activity? The answer was trade and intelligence.

Paul Chamberlain peppered his talk with examples. One smuggler was William Chalkling and his associate Thomas Green of Maidstone. They took escaped parole officers to the coast in a covered wagon. Supposedly they were gingerbread sellers.

Local parole towns were Arlesford, Andover, Bishops Waltham and Odiham. The prisoners housed there, like others around the country, were supposed to abide by parole regulations, their movements were restricted and the British Government's allowance for food and shelter for families was one shilling and sixpence a day. This was a constant and welcome source of income to parole towns and villages.

Intelligence and conspiracy was embodied in one man to whom Paul Chamberlain drew the audience's attention. That man was Général Edouard François Simon. In 1810 Simon arrived in Odiham and opened secret communication with the French Government. His spying activities were successful but he came under suspicion and fled from Odiham to London. A reward of £130 was advertised in the press and he was accused of 'treacherous correspondence'.

Bow Street Runners investigated both smugglers and escapees and two Principal Officers, Vickery and Lavender, re-captured Simon. The Général was moved to Dumbarton Castle in Scotland where it was hoped his intelligence activities would cease. No such luck. He was allowed a servant and the servant proved to be as devious as his master. Simon returned to France in 1814 on the abdication of Napoleon.

Mr Chamberlain's fascinating talk led to a vigorous question and answer session and the evening ended with the drawing of the raffle.



Smugglers by John Atkinson

Forthcoming Talks

Wednesday, 9th March, *The Triangle Girls* by Cheryl Jewitt

Cheryl is a volunteer with the Portsmouth Royal Dockyard Historical Trust. Cheryl's talk will look at a specific group of women workers in the Portsmouth Dockyard identified by a distinctive triangular shaped badge bearing the inscription ON WAR SERVICE which they wore with pride. Following the start of male conscription in 1916, women took over the jobs and responsibilities of the Portsmouth Dockyard men in their absence. This introduced them to heavy work and industrial practices often requiring strength of body and character, and giving them a newfound confidence that they had never known before.

Ellen Cole, one of the Triangle Girls. Ellen was born in Emsworth in 1898 and she is Auntie Nellie to EM&HT talks organiser, Nigel Gossop.



Wednesday, 13th April, *The Mary Rose: A Unique 500 Year Story* by Glenn Dunaway

In his talk Glenn, a Marine archaeologist, will explore the history of *The Mary Rose*, the excavation and the raising of this internationally important ship, the development of the award winning Mary Rose Museum and Exhibition that you can visit today in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard and reveal some of the special events planned to commemorate the 40th anniversary year. *The Mary Rose* was raised from its resting place on the seabed of the Solent where it had lain for just over 450 years in 1982. Glenn was one of the team who dived on the wreck between 1975 and 1980.

Both talks will be held in the Emsworth Community Centre in North Street and start at 7.30 pm (doors open at 7 pm). Tickets for all the talks are only available from Bookends, 7 High Street, Emsworth.

Please note that in an effort to reduce the risk of Covid, ticket numbers have been limited to allow better spacing between the seats and, as a condition of purchasing tickets, all buyers agree to mask wearing in the venue and during the presentations.

Stewards Wanted: Join the Team

More volunteers are needed to help welcome visitors to the Museum, help them to find answers to their questions and to make their visit as enjoyable and interesting as possible.

If you would like to join our cheerful band of stewards, then please let **Dorothy Bone** or **Christine Bury** know. Contact details are in the panel below. All stewards attend an information session before the Museum opens and during the opening season there are always two stewards on duty.

Museum Reopening

Saturday, 2nd April 2022

Currently, the Museum is open Saturdays and Bank Holidays 10.30 am to 4.30 pm and Sundays, 2.30 pm to 4.30 pm. Closure this year will be on Sunday, 30th October.

Members are welcome to visit the Museum for research but this will be by appointment only. Please contact **Dorothy Bone** (see panel below) in the first instance.

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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

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

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