



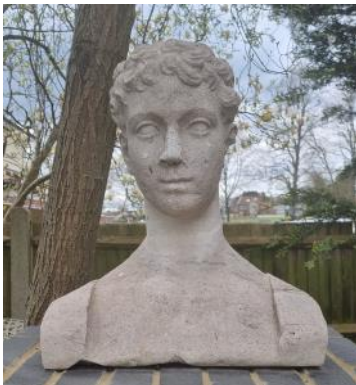
REDBOURN VILLAGE MUSEUM

Friends of the Museum Newsletter

**Autumn 2023
Issue 142**

A Mystery Solved?

My u3a Footpaths Walking Group met at the museum to start a walk and one of the group was looking at our busts in the secret garden and said that one of them was The Duke of Cumberland. What do you think?



Perhaps that just leaves us with the mystery of the identity of the second bust in the secret garden?

New Trustee

We are delighted to announce that we have of a new trustee on our management committee.

Mark Webb is the son of our greatly missed trustee, Geoff Webb.

Many of you will be acquainted with the name of Geoff as he is the author of the wonderful Geoff Webb books about Redbourn and who also set up the website with 1000's of photos of old Redbourn and the families who lived here.

Mark is carrying on the tradition of custodian of Geoff's records and, like Geoff, has joined our gardening team.

Welcome Mark!

Email: redbournmuseum@gmail.com

Website: www.redbournmuseum.org

Museum Registration No: 2106 Company Registration No: 03652790 Charity No: 1072828

Redbourn Parish Magazine - August 1948 - Edition 500

Thanks go to Museum Friend and Voluntary Assistant Daphne Fisher for donating this copy of the magazine to me. More from it in future newsletters.

Supplement

HISTORIC REDBOURN

Redbourn, meaning in Early English the Reed Stream, is a village of ancient historical interest situated on the Roman Watling Street. Evidence of Pre-Roman occupation can be seen in the earthworks of a Celtic camp at the Aubreys to the west of the Church. The Manor was given to St. Albans Abbey in the reign of Edward the Confessor by Aethelwine Niger or "le Swart" and Wynfreda, his wife, and remained part of the Abbey's possessions until the Dissolution of the Monasteries. The ancient Manor House was at Redbourn Bury on the St. Albans Road and here, in the reign of Stephen (1135-54), Thurston, Archbishop of York, was entertained and had an interview with Christian, the successor to the Hermit Roger of Markyate, which led to the establishment of a Nunnery at Markyate Cell. In 1178 the remains of St. Amphibalus, who converted St. Alban and was himself subsequently martyred, were discovered at Redbourn. They were ceremoniously removed to St. Albans Abbey, where remains of the shrine can still be seen; and a priory, attached to St. Albans Abbey, was founded in Redbourn near the site of the discovery. No remains of the priory can be seen, but a house known as the Priory on the Watling Street can be said to mark the approximate site.

The village, situated on one of the main routes to the North from London, became a busy centre for travellers, especially with the development of the stage coach. There are many good examples of Georgian architecture in the village, especially on the Watling Street; the large Georgian house at the East end of the Common was built in 1745 and is known as Cumberland House, having been built, it is said, by William, Duke of Cumberland, the victor of Culloden, as a hunting box.

Queen Elizabeth, while Princess, spent a night in the village in 1554, being "guarded all night." Elizabeth was at the time staying at Ashridge near Berkhamsted, had been arrested and was being sent to London on a charge of being implicated in the rebellion of Sir Thomas Wyatt.

Thomas Rudborne, a native of this place, was Chancellor of Oxford in 1420 and afterwards Bishop of St. Davids. He was a skilful mathematician, wrote a Chronicle of England and was a benefactor to Merton College, Oxford.

New Signage

We've got some new signs at the museum!



Here's the sad old Assembly Point sign (23 years old) and the new Assembly Point sign which looks a bit better. Also, as we don't have a designated pedestrian entrance, we have a new sign on the gatepost warning about vehicle movements within the museum grounds.

Friendship Club

Using a district council grant we ran a Friendship Club over several weekends and welcomed groups from the Dementia Hub, Woollams Almshouses and St. Matthews Care Home to come and see some old films from 1948 - 1953, explore our Discovery Boxes and enjoy a cup of tea and some cake. All the groups enjoyed their visits and it was great fun entertaining them all ably assisted by our facilitator Annie Manning.

The group from St. Matthews were especially entertaining. Their carer was great and as they were leaving we had one of the patients sitting in the stocks looking very happy. The carer told them to look miserable as they were in the stocks, at which point another one of the patients burst into fits of laughter prompting the carer to say, "Don't laugh to much, you'll wet yourself". The response was, "Too late!" followed by a lot more laughter.

A great afternoon.

St. Albans Rotary Club Visit - Tuesday 30th May

This was the largest group visit that we have hosted. We were told to expect up to 30 people but only 20 came to see us in the end. As it was such a big group we decided to split them in two with one half being led on a short guided walk around the village while the others were shown around the museum before the groups swapped over.

We are very fortunate that two of our voluntary assistants, Mario Violentano and Sue Bullen, are experienced guides and we were very grateful that they kindly agreed to give up their time and conduct the walks for us.

There was very positive feedback from everyone and they appreciated the trouble we had gone to in order to make their visit a success. Many said they needed more time to see everything and would be making a return visit - and hopefully recommend us to friends and family. We received a generous donation.

Thanks again to Mario and Sue.

Accessibility Grant

You may remember from last time that we have acquired a grant to purchase a wheelchair ramp for the front door and a tablet computer that we could use to show people the upstairs gallery if they could not manage the stairs.

We are very grateful to Museum Friend Harriet Macintosh who has donated a very suitable ramp for the front door, and to Museum Friend and I.T. advisor Tom Finnis for setting up the tablet for us.

We have not had a problem with wheelchair access for the past 23 years but on the first weekend that we had the new ramp, a lady was able to come into the museum in her wheelchair and see the two downstairs galleries. Also, the tablet was used for the first time and we think the lady was impressed with what we had achieved.

Building Works

Halsey's builders are continuing with their work at the museum and have removed the roof tiles from the kitchen extension, cured a leak, and have re-roofed the extension.

The 'plinths' around the base of the walls have also been removed and replaced with new lime render.

They have kindly ensured that the scaffolding has been removed before our Redbourn in Steam and Redbourn Classics events take place.



John, you've chosen to give a **£2 bonus donation** from your completed Stamp card!

You can see your reward in your account now!



There's a new incentive at easyfundraising. When five of your donations have been tracked you receive a £2 reward (!) which you can either use to get a free cup of coffee from Caffe Nero or make a £2 donation to your chosen cause. As you can see, I opted to give my £2 to our museum



This QR code takes to the easyfundraising site where you can sign up to raise money, at no cost to you, for our museum.

I know I keep mentioning this scheme, but we still have only 9 Friends signed up. Between us, we have already raised £99.42 for Redbourn Village Museum.

Imagine how much we could raise if everyone signed up!

Please consider using the code and clicking on "Sign up and support this cause" - Redbourn Village Museum.

Grant From Hertfordshire Museums

We have applied for a grant from Hertfordshire Museums to replace our roller blinds throughout the museum. The total cost was £1000 and we have been awarded £400. This, along with money donated to us by Palmers Garage for displaying electric cars in the museum grounds during Redbourn Classics day has enabled us to go ahead with the project.

It's a shame that the new roller blinds will not impress visitors much, as they are raised when the museum is open, but their installation will help to protect our precious collection from the sunlight at other times.

Mudlarking on the River Thames - April 2023

I have always wanted to hunt for treasure washed up by the tide and for a recent significant birthday my daughter booked a trip mudlarking on the River Thames for me and three friends. We arrived at Blackfriars - and walked towards the Millennium Bridge where we met our guide who took us down the shore on some fairly steep wooden steps - with no handrail. Not for the faint hearted! But what a location, with views of the Tate Modern and The Globe across the river and the Millennium Bridge above our heads - it really made us feel like we were connected to all the history around us and those who had walked there before us.

A bit about 'Mudlarks' - so called because the poor would search the foreshore for anything useful or valuable - darting around like mudlark birds. The first known description of Mudlarking appears in 1796 but of course people are bound to have scoured the foreshore at low tide long prior to this date. The River Thames is apparently one third of its original width and at low tide the debris of 2000 years of occupation can resurface. As the Thames is tidal it can drop by as much as twenty feet twice a day, exposing small fragments of history - Roman, Medieval, Tudor and Victorian.

There are a few rules to follow down on the foreshore... and Mudlarkers should really only go accompanied by experienced guides. No digging, only picking up - and no taking away! Wearing gloves and washing hands after leaving/touching any items is particularly important.

Within a couple of minutes of looking my daughter found a small fragment of Tudor pottery with an earthy brown glaze. She went on to collect tiny fragments of green-glazed ceramics which would be Medieval in origin. There's lots and lots of pieces of Victorian clay pipe though sadly we found no bowls attached to them this time. Our guide found some brown and white glazed pieces - known as Metropolitan ware dating from the sixteenth century. We didn't find anything Roman sadly... but two hours gave us quite a collection of most other more recent eras. Still impressive!

Towards the end of our trip our guide took us along to the shore, pointing out the threads of black coal washed up from the days when Bankside Power Station (now the Tate Modern) shipped in coal from the North-East of England. We then walked a few short steps towards the edge of Queenhithe, which was a thriving Saxon dock and is the only surviving example of its kind along the waterfront today. This is a 'no-go' zone without permission of the Port of London - and so we looked on and listened intently as our guide continued to tell us that in around AD 886 the Roman city was reoccupied by King Alfred the Great who, seeking some protection from the Viking raids, established the first harbour here at 'Ethelred's Hythe'.

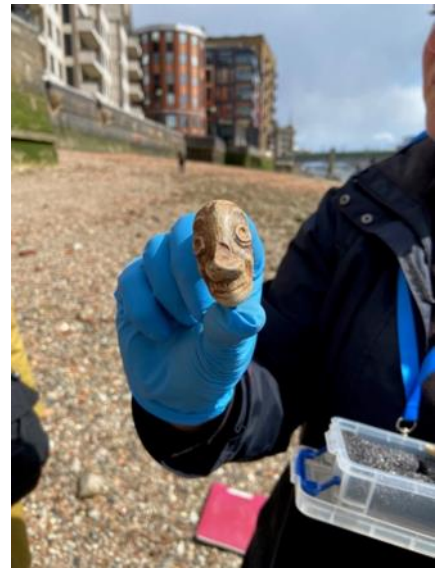
Born a Londoner, this was an unforgettable experience that connected me -and all of our group - to London's rich and fascinating past.

For more information on the tour we went on - contact info@thames-explorer.co.uk, 020 8742 0057 or take a look at www.thames-explorer.co.uk

Linda Owen, Museum Friend & Events Committee member.

Some of Linda's photos are on the following page.

Mudlarking Photos



Early Dance Group Picnic - Wednesday 12th July

Following the success of last year's picnic in the museum grounds, Helen Stamp (Museum Friend and Events Committee member) brought her dance group to the museum once again.



The weather wasn't kind and trustees James Millers, Pauline Ridgwell and myself erected three gazebos for shelter ably assisted by Helen herself. Actually, there was a downpour as the guests arrived but things improved after that and a good afternoon was had by all.

We received a generous donation from the group and hope to welcome them back next year.

My thanks once again to Museum Friend Samantha Statham for sending me the following:

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Thursday 17th August 2023

Trip to Whitchurch Working Silk Mill and the Museum of English Rural Life at the University Of Reading

We had an extremely successful outing with the weather being very kind to us although things didn't start off particularly well as our coach driver chose to go north on the M1 rather than south in the direction of Winchester.

This was soon corrected and we did arrive at Whitchurch Silk Mill 10 minutes before our expected arrival time. The entrance to the car park was very tight and luckily one of our guides came out to assist the driver with getting to the car park.

We began with tea/coffee and biscuits served very efficiently before being split in to two groups for our guided tours. Both guides were excellent and the tours took just over an hour.

Our tea/coffee, sandwich/cake lunch was very good indeed, again served efficiently which gave everyone time to have a stroll around the grounds and visit the shop.

Negotiating the car park again proved difficult and despite our driver trying various different angles to turn the coach around, he ended up reversing expertly back down the very narrow driveway.

We left at 1:30 pm and arrived at The Museum of English Rural Life in Reading about ten minutes later than planned which was no problem at all. MORE tea/coffee and cake awaited us.

After a short introduction by our two guides we all set off to explore the museum at our own pace but were accompanied by the guides who were on hand to point things out and answer any questions we had.

Most of us commented that we'd never been in a museum with so many exhibits, even those in storage were displayed so that we could see them! Apparently there were lots more stored off site.

We had comments varying from "We could have spent the whole day here" through "We need two days to see it all" to "I need a fortnight here".

One of our guides, who had been there many many years, said that it was pleasure to see us and that we were the most receptive group that she had ever shown around the museum - well done everyone.

There are some photos of our day on the next page.

Please see page 11 for details of our next outing...

Whitchurch Silk Mill and Museum of English Rural Life



Our Next Outing - Wednesday 4th October 2023



W & H Peacocks Auction Centre

Do you enjoy Bargain Hunt?

If so, this outing is for you!

We travel by coach to the modern auction house near Bedford. Arriving at 11.30, we have tea and coffee in the auction gallery area. After a short introductory talk about the history of the company by one of the auctioneers, we tour the saleroom, taking part in a short valuation and view lots for the forthcoming auction.

Finally we head upstairs where the team serve your pre-ordered choice of lunch in the Auction Centre's own restaurant. (A lift is available) The visit will finish around 2.30 pm.

£45 Friends, £50 guests (Maximum 30 in the group)

Email: redbournmuseum@gmail.com for a booking form or Tel: (01582) 626055

New Exhibition

Our Curator Diane, and Assistant Curator Susan have been beavering away compiling a new exhibition about WW1 & WW2.

At present they are trying to find a way to display a flying suit using a mannequin which we have at the museum, but are puzzling how to display the flying suit's legs. Good luck!



National Visitor Survey - Visit Britain

Take a look at our increase in visitor numbers compared with the national average:

Section One - Visitor Number Benchmarks

Percentage change in visitor numbers (paid and free) in the 2022 calendar year compared with 2021.

Redbourn Village Museum +248%

All Attractions +42%

All Museum and/or Art Gallery +114%

All attractions in the East of England +19%

All Free attractions +79%

The massive increase for us was a bounce-back from Covid, which impacted us severely.

Chicken Of The Woods



Every year we have Chicken of the Woods fungi appearing on this particular tree stump on the right side of the museum's driveway.

Very cleverly it grows on the side of the stump hidden from our nice neighbours at The Cricketers.

Inevitably, the fungi is spotted by one of the little customers and is immediately destroyed.

Such is life, and death.

Redbourn In Steam - Saturday 26th August

A thoroughly successful day, despite a thunderstorm! We had over 100 paying visitors who enjoyed a terrific turnout of steam engines and other vintage vehicles. Out thanks go to Sandy Ross who coordinated the whole thing with his friends from the steam world.



We gratefully acknowledge the generous support received from the following:

Redbourn Parish Council



Ashtons Estate Agents



Austin Trueman Associates



Aylett Nurseries



Changing Views



Halsey (Builders) Ltd

Hertfordshire County Show



J.G. Bryson (Printer)



R.S. Harding Ltd



Redbournbury Mill



Redbourn Electrical Contractors

Redbourn Porsche Owners Club



The Cricketers Public House



The Miller Group of Companies



Tring Brewery



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The cost is £30 per year

Please contact redbournmuseum@gmail.com

**Redbourn Village Museum
Silk Mill House
The Common
Redbourn, Herts. AL3 7NB**



Museum Location:
[oasis.royal.shared](https://www.oasis.royal.shared)

Patron: Sir Simon Bowes Lyon

**Museum open February to November
Saturday & Sunday 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm**

Last admission 4:30pm

Tel: 01582 793397

Email: redbournmuseum@gmail.com

Visit us on the web at:
www.redbournmuseum.org

Museum Trustees:

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Colin O'Donovan: Parish Council Liaison
Tom Finnis: I.T. Advisor

