

**JANUARY 2017**



**THE  
BYZANT**

The Shaftesbury & District  
Historical Society

Gold Hill Museum, Gold Hill, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 8JW

## Marjory Kellett

1947–2016

It is with much regret that we announce the death of Marjory on 28 December 2016 in Salisbury District Hospital. Ian, her husband of 43 years, was at her bedside when she quietly passed away.

Marjory was a Trustee, our Treasurer, a steward and a friend. In partnership with Ian she helped win Shaftesbury in Bloom prizes for the Museum garden. A graduate of Glasgow University, she was a well-qualified Mathematician and, from 1988, taught at Lord Digby's Girls' Grammar and, from 1992, The Gryphon School in Sherborne, where she was also Examinations Officer. On taking early retirement in 2003, Marjory taught short contracts to cover for maternity leave and invigilated exams at Shaftesbury School until prevented by ill health in the autumn of 2016. An accomplished musician, she sang with several local choirs, played piano accompaniments for Arts Centre pantomimes and became the organist at Bell Street United Church, where she played a full part in Church affairs.

Always sport-minded she bore the scars from youthful forays for Hamilton Academy Former Pupils, Carlisle Ladies and Cumberland Ladies Hockey teams. On moving to Dorset in 1988 she transferred her allegiance from Carlisle United to AFC Bournemouth, and saw them play in all four Divisions of the Football League. In the summer she followed County Cricket at Taunton,



where she was a founder member of the 1875 Club when Somerset opened their new Pavilion and Media Centre in 2016. Marjory made a point of supporting women's sport, attending Women's football and cricket international matches and sponsoring one of Yeovil Town Ladies' best players. Marjory always strengthened any quiz team of which she was a member and enjoyed working on her Italian conversational skills.

She joined the Museum in 2008, initially in the garden with Ian. When the Museum had been renovated in July 2011, she volunteered as a steward and frequently volunteered to fill additional shifts. She became our Treasurer in March 2014 which suited her quiet personality, competence and accuracy with figures and policies.

We shall all miss Marjory greatly. May she rest in peace.

## Chairman's Chat

David Silverside

A lot of water has passed under the bridge since August when I last wrote in *The Byzant*. As you can see from the obituary, Marjory passed a short while ago and we are all feeling very sad about that. Our thoughts are with Ian at this difficult time. I assumed her role as Hon Treasurer in mid-August – a logical step which was taken quickly; I was the outgoing Treasurer and knew the ropes. Ian, understandably, has not been too well either and Lavender has resigned her role as lecture coordinator, all of which leaves a lot of work to be done and not too many people around to do it. I now understand, at first hand, Elaine's recruitment difficulties. As ever, anyone with a pair of 'willing hands' would be most welcome to help ease the load. Please see any trustee for information.

My mother, aged 97 and 8 months, often asks (chastises) me why the museum takes up so much of my time. I tell her we do the same job as the British Museum except that GHM is on a smaller scale.

We are closed for the winter now but we don't stop. There are exhibitions to be taken down and new ones to be made ready for the spring. The rest of the cabinets/cases will have new locks, floorboards will be mended, equipment bought, artefacts assessed and accessioned, to name but a few. All this necessary 'behind the scenes stuff' goes towards entertaining our public while helping us fulfil the object of our constitution of informing the public about the history of Shaftesbury and the outlying villages. I suspect many of you have not been around the museum lately so please come visit, with your relatives, friends and neighbours to see the new exhibits when we open again next year.

One of the first exhibitions, already mounted, for the new season is the North Dorset Museums' *Cabinet of Curiosities* publicity campaign. Pride of place on the front page of

the campaign leaflet goes to Gold Hill Museum's medieval carved alabaster panel showing the entombment of St Catherine – or is it Edward the Martyr? This art treasure was discovered in the 1920s concealed in the wall of a house in Shaftesbury High Street. St Edward features in Shaftesbury Abbey's display, while Blandford Museum, Sturminster Newton Museum and Sturminster Newton Mill also contribute to the Cabinet of Curiosities. As the leaflet proclaims: visit them all, and 'collect them all'! Further details at [www.visit-dorset.com](http://www.visit-dorset.com). A second exhibition will explore the importance of wood in the area.

A quick rundown of our other news

- We were open every day and every shift throughout the season; well done volunteer stewards and Elaine, their manager
- The number of visitors and the income from donations was about the same as last year
- We were awarded the Shaftesbury in Bloom first prize for our garden in the public buildings category; well done Ian and Marjory
- Chris Stupples, our researcher in the Great War project was honoured as one of the Dorset Museums' Volunteers of the Year; well done Chris
- Our computer programs have been upgraded and are now networked.

At the AGM there was a call for a change in the structure of the quarterly newsletter, *The Byzant*, this document. Members wanted more local historical content and less about the trustee workload. An invitation was sent to all members asking for interesting historical articles to be included in this edition but the response was disappointing. We need your input! As you may be aware, we have an excellent library and up-to-date computers for members to conduct research, under supervision if required. You are all welcome!

And finally..... I thank all members and volunteers for their tireless efforts in keeping The S&DHS interesting and viable

## Lecture Programme

### Extract from Ian Kellett's blog†

This year's Teulon Porter Memorial Lecture was given to a packed Town Hall by Professor Caroline Dakers. Her engaging and informative lecture ranged over the builders and owners of six mansions in the Fonthill area, from the late 16th to the 21st centuries. Not all were as eccentric or ambitious as William Beckford, ruined by a collapse in the price of sugar. Many were movers and shakers and at least two were beheaded. John Bradshaw, who presided over the trial of Charles I in a bullet-proof hat, lost his head posthumously. The question was posed as to why such a small area of Wiltshire should attract so many repeated displays of built wealth. Professor Dakers plans to answer many other questions about Fonthill in a book to be published within a year or so.

During the second lecture of the season, parliamentary and constitutional consultant Barry Winetrobe told of Langport's most famous son Walter Bagehot. One of the early editors of *The Economist*, Bagehot stressed the importance of the central bank as a bank of last resort in the event of a financial crisis but is probably better known for his classic political commentary on *The English Constitution*.

Although written in the 1860s and '70s, Bagehot's works contain insights no less relevant today. As Chair of the Bagehot Memorial Fund, the speaker has been instrumental in reviving interest in Bagehot, who had an asteroid named after him before being rediscovered by his home town at the heart of the Somerset Levels.

The third lecture of the season was a lively presentation to a full house from Dr Wayne Bartlett on *Cnut the Great – a Shaftesbury Perspective*. The English crowning of the conceivably twenty-one-year-old Cnut took place at Christmas 1016 and by 1027 he was a major figure at the coronation of the Holy Roman Emperor in Rome and styling himself 'King of all England and Denmark and the Norwegians and of some of the Swedes'. Though as ruthless as any Viking, Cnut was a generous supporter of the Christian Church and received a positive press from contemporary monastic chroniclers. The story of his failure to command the tide dates from a century after his death at Shaftesbury in 1035 and was intended to highlight his humility rather than his vanity.

The next lecture will be given on Tuesday 7 February 2017 at  
2.30 pm in the GHM Garden Room.

Philip Browne will tell us about the unfortunate Captain  
Peirce and the wreck of the Halsewell

† Blog = abbreviation for weblog – brief and concise notes written on the society's website [www.goldhillmusuem.org.uk](http://www.goldhillmusuem.org.uk)

## Commemoration of the Great War

### Extract from Ian Kellett's blog

A moving commemorative event organised for Saturday 12 November by volunteers of the Gold Hill Museum 'Shaftesbury and the Great War' Community Project attracted over 130 people to St James' Church. Against a background of images recorded during the Heritage Lottery Funded Project, relatives of Great War participants, Shaftesbury School students, and the Community Choir contributed readings and choral items, with music played by Heather Blake. Researcher Chris Stupples, at the lectern, presented a roll of honour, held aloft by Project leaders Ann Symons and Claire Ryley, listing the histories of every individual on the St James' War Memorial. The two-minute silence was concluded with a rendition of the Last Post and Reveille played by Sharon Hawkes, followed by afternoon tea.



*Roll of honour held by Claire Ryley and Ann Symons with Chris Stupples at the lectern*

A retiring collection raised £380 to be shared between St James Church Refurbishment Fund and The Royal British Legion

## From Ray Simpson

### A Christmas Wedding Present

From: *Western Gazette*, 9 February 1883



Extraordinary Scene at a Wedding, Wardour Chapel, 1883

On Saturday morning last, a couple of young people hailing from a neighbouring village, drove up to the door of the Roman Catholic Chapel to present themselves at the altar for the purpose of being joined together in the bonds of matrimony. On reaching the door, they were confronted by a young woman bearing in her arms an infant, which she at once presented to the bridegroom, who

indignantly refused to receive such a wedding present. She then demanded 30s., which she said was due to her, under a threat, in the event of his failing to pay of interrupting the service in the chapel. But the gentleman was not to be cajoled or talked over, and the party forced their way into the chapel and up to the altar rails, followed by the woman and her blessed baby, she taking up her position by the

side of the bridegroom. The intruder was rebuked by the officiating priest and ordered to leave the church. After some hesitation she reluctantly complied, and the rite was duly administered. But on returning to the fly, the couple were again met by the disconsolate and irate mother, who renewed the attack, and, whilst they were being packed into the conveyance, she climbed, cat like, with her baby up to the driver's box and there took her seat, declaring that where they went she would go also. Entreaties failed; remonstrance was in vain; she would not stir an inch; and presently the driver moved on. But before the park gates were reached, the situation

became much too hot to be endurable to the newly wedded wife, and she lustily shouted for the driver to stop. The couple then left the fly, and walked away, leaving the intruders the sole occupants. On being told she would be charged with the cost of the conveyance, the woman at last gave up the game. The wedding party were soon overtaken, and conveyed to the Tisbury Railway Station. The mother and baby were thus out-distanced. But for this, it is not unlikely that the former might have insisted on hanging on to the engine which conveyed the newly-wedded couple away.

## Fire Pump

Janet Swiss

The Fire Pump was state of the art in 1744. It may seem small but would have been welcomed if all you had was a bucket to fight the blaze. Fire protection was one of the earliest forms of insurance, and the Firemen would come only if you had an insurance shield on your house – there is one in the case under the stairs.

Three lots of Firemen have visited and enthusiastically explained how our fire pump was used. It has leather buckets and hose, and probably a ladder held on by the now broken strap. The front axle is gimbaled, so it can turn corners. (A good question for small boys is to ask what the buckets and hose are made of!

The Firemen would have brought long-handled fire hooks to pull down burning thatch. They would have organised a chain of people to collect water from any nearby source of water, in buckets, to fill the body of the vehicle and got four bystanders to pump the two horizontal bars on either side. (If they worked hard, the firemen could give them a leather token, worth a pint of beer from any local pub, and paid for by the insurance company. One of our visitors' grandfather was a fireman, and has some tokens still.)

The pumping action, via the two pistons, forced the water into the white reservoir and, under increasing pressure, through the leather hose and brass 'branch' – the simple modern brass nozzle is still called a branch, apparently. Ours has been mended three times – once patched, once welded and once brazed.)

An engineer got very involved about the screw on the hose which has a special thread diameter, and the diameter and length of the hose which is relative to the pumping pressure. I am afraid he lost me there!

## SNIPPETS

From Ken Howe

Comments & queries etc. from visitors to our museum

- FIRE PUMP– An ex fireman told us that the long 'Lance' which delivered the water was called a 'branch' as they were originally made from hollowed out tree branches.

The length(s) of leather hose was limited to 60 feet due to loss of pressure from friction. Hoses today are still 60 ft (50 ft on internet). Also, this allows the hoses to be drained by hanging in the tower.

*Continued overleaf*

- DOLLS – A doll's house collector says of 'china' dolls, earlier models have fixed eyes – not 'sleeping' – so ours is early.
- UPJOHN – A Canadian family, direct descendants of William Upjohn the mapmaker, were very interested in our maps. Also, asked about Gear's Mill where another ancestor lived.
- BUTTONY – John Moore of Poole wore a hat with many buttons, also showed his box of kit and samples; some very tiny.
- THREE CORNERED HAT – The single point was worn at the front with cockade at the back, as in the photo. The points pushed the water away from head and shoulders.  
Pleased to say our very own PIRATE on Carnival day wore her hat correctly!!
- CAT – A man being told about our dead cat rushed back upstairs. On return informed us he had a dead rat at home.
- HOPPUS TAPE – A man who worked in timber/forestry informed us of the hoppus tape which measures the girth in quarter-girth inches; this makes calculating the useable volume easier.
- PENCILS – A pencil collector asked if we knew why a carpenter's pencil is oval not round. This prevents the pencil rolling away, is easier to hold and the lead is made better for marking rough surfaces.
- FREEDOM – The leader of a far eastern group queried the 'Freedom' of Father Jeanneau. Had he been a hostage or in prison? Managed to explain it is given as an honour from the town.
- GUYS MARSH – A man visiting from Southampton with his family told us he had been an inmate of the prison and was indebted to them for changing his life around.

## From Ray Simpson

A quiet period for researchers requesting our help but there was one I found somewhat unusual. A member of the public asked for our help in tracing a Second World War German POW at Motcombe Park Camp. He has a collection of Nissen huts which came from the camp and on the inside of one of them are 10 or more painted panels done by a prisoner with the initials 'EG'. The paintings depict scenes from his homeland. The present owner is seeking help in tracing any descendants of the POW so that he might offer them these panels. I have asked the owner if the museum might have photographs of the panels to add to the archive.

### Please note

We are open for the Snowdrop Festival (half term) from 11–19  
February 2017

We are open for the season from 1 April until 31 October 2017



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Gold Hill Museum, Gold Hill, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 8JW

Tel: 01747 852157  
[www.goldhillmuseum.org.uk](http://www.goldhillmuseum.org.uk)

Email enquiries@goldhillmuseum.org.uk  
Registered Charity No. 1156273

