

THE BYZANT



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF
THE SHAFTESBURY & DISTRICT
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Christine Simpson

In early October the Shaftesbury & District Historical Society lost a popular and much-respected member and volunteer with the death of Christine Simpson.

Christine was born a Museum person. Her working life was with the Bank of England where she quickly found herself working in the Bank's private museum. In the 1980's the Bank decided to build a new museum to which the public would have complete access. Christine was one of a small team who contributed to establishing it as a major museum, culminating in its opening by the Queen in 1988.

Sometime after settling in the Donheads she became a volunteer steward at Gold Hill Museum and soon found herself in the role of Head of Collections. The transformation of the Museum was a demanding time for her, having to organise the packing and despatch of the entire Collection to store in Gillingham whilst the rebuilding was done. She continued her museum duties from temporary quarters above Woolley & Wallis in the Commons where on one occasion she and husband Ray were locked in with alarms going off and the police called out. Communication was conducted by holding messages on paper up at the window.

The return of the Collection was equally demanding and she applied the same methodical attention to detail as before. Her cheerfulness and ability to establish a good relationship with the removal team ensured it all went smoothly.

Deteriorating health forced Christine to give up her Collections role but she continued to assist Ray researching in the Museum's library, preparing temporary exhibitions, and delivering illustrated lectures on aspects of local history.



A Personal Message from Ray Simpson

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all those who sent me their condolences upon the passing of Christine, my wife. It is a tribute to her that so many associated with the Society and Museum thought so much of her, and that she was liked by so many. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

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ACTING CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Ian Kellett

Hibernation: to pass the winter in a dormant state; to be inactive



Gold Hill Museum closed to the public on 01 November. Thanks to the improvisational skills of Elaine Barratt and the dedication of our volunteer stewards, many of whom selflessly offered to do extra shifts, the Museum opened every day between 28 March and 01 November 2015. The 20,267 visitors who came through our doors generally liked what they saw, especially our two temporary exhibitions, and their donations and shop purchases enable the Society to pay its bills.

The Museum will re-open for the Shaftesbury Snowdrop Festival between Saturday 13 and Sunday 21 February 2016. There will be family-oriented activities in the Anna McDowell Garden Room, co-ordinated by Claire Ryley, and a civic visit by Dorset Mayors and their consorts on the last Sunday.

And in the intervening period, a well-earned rest for everyone? "If only" would be the response of the Society's hard-working Trustees and volunteers.

The Arts Council for England [ACE] finally found [most of] our application for re-registration as an Accredited Museum, after the better part of a year, and responded with a blizzard of queries and demands. Sheena Commons and Claire Ryley have been nobly battling with updating the hundreds of pages of plans and policies, well supported by our helpful County Museums Adviser, Vicky de Wit. Sheena, Ray Simpson, and a band of volunteers have been re-organising the Object Store in anticipation of a site visit from ACE. At some stage the Collections Team will also find time to prepare a new temporary exhibition for 2016, making use of normally unseen parts of the Museum Collection.

The Heritage Lottery Funded Great War Project, directed by Claire and Ann Symons, continues to meet weekly in the Museum, as well as Shaftesbury Public Library and other parts of the district. It is not only attracting new information for our archives

and donations of artefacts, but helping the Society to fulfil its educational Object in the wider community.

We may, incidentally, have to call on the support of our members to add further details to our Object as stated in the CIO constitution, to meet the requirements of ACE.

As part of our effort to promote the activities of the Society we have been re-developing the Gold Hill Museum website, with the technical support of Rob Frost. Lavender Buckland has dragged some of us, reluctantly, into the social media world of Facebook and Twitter. The Secretary has entered the blogosphere. All this means is that if you log onto www.goldhillmuseum.org.uk you will find up-to-date news about current S&DHS events and achievements.

All that remains is to wish The Shaftesbury & District Historical Society extended family of Trustees, members and volunteers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. You will find a fascinating historical anthology of local Christmas benevolence in Ray Simpson's article, for which we are particularly indebted.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Marjory Kellett

The Museum has had another successful open season between 28th March and 1st November with over 20,000 visitors who have donated over £12,000 and spent over £7,000 in the shop. Some visitors have gift aided their donations and I am pleased to say that HMRC has finally recognised the Society as a charity (back-dated to our registration by the Charity Commission in March 2014). So we will now be able to claim some Gift Aid from HMRC.

I would like to thank members of the Society who have already renewed their annual membership. You should have received a membership card which is valid until August 2016. Thank you also to those members who have included a donation. I would encourage those who have not yet renewed to do so as soon as possible.

Our finances are healthy and we will be able to pay the bills over the next three or four months when our only source of income is the rent from the Beadster.

COLLECTION CARE

Sheena Commons

Some of you may recall from previous Newsletters that Gold Hill Museum has been going through the process of working towards re-accreditation. Accreditation makes us part of a wider community of museums and allows us to apply for various grants that would not otherwise be open to us and although it is not vital that we are an accredited museum it is greatly to our advantage.

We started going through this process some time ago and finally forwarded our application to ACE – the Arts Council for England – who have taken over the responsibility for museums, early in January this year. Having heard nothing for some time we made enquiries through our museum mentor and finally had an email from the lady who would be progressing our application, Olivia Basterfield at the beginning of September, acknowledging our application and apologising for the delay.

Following this first email we then received another from Olivia, with a list of queries arising from our application and a request for certain documents in hard copy. Currently we are working our way through this list which is involving several Trustees in quite a lot of extra work.

On 11 December we shall also have a site visit from Olivia when she will look round the Museum at the displays, in the storeroom, in the library and at the database.

We have received a lot of help during this process from our museum mentor and also from the curator and collections manager at the Priests House Museum in Wimborne who have recently been re-accredited and let us look through their documentation and borrow some of their ideas.

If things go as planned our application will go in front of the Board in January and then we shall have to wait and see.

Thanks to volunteers from among our stewards we have finally managed to start on the audit of the items in the storeroom and a little team gathers on Tuesday mornings in the Garden Room to go through the boxes and free-standing items on the shelves. This has proved to be really interesting and we have turned up some very strange things! With a bit of luck and if we keep up the momentum we should have completed the job by the time the Museum opens for the new season. This help is really appreciated and everybody is doing a great job.

This audit will also help with accreditation as it is an important part of any museum's documentation to know where your artefacts are and to have them recorded digitally or on paper.

EDUCATION AND EVENTS NEWS

Claire Ryley, Ann Symons

SCHOOLS AND ALL-AGE EVENTS

Since September we have delivered a 'Toys' workshop at Abbey School. This involved looking at toys from our collections, followed by a hands-on investigation of old toys, (either mine, or donated for use in schools), and then the children all made peg dolls. The session was lively and fun, and some very good dolls emerged from girls and boys alike.

Claire has given illustrated talks to Motcombe WI and the residents of St Denis Lodge on 'The History of Shaftesbury in 50 Objects'.

We held a craft workshop during the October half-term, with a good team of volunteers, making amongst other things, "stained-glass" window decorations. Our final hands-on fun event was our Christmas extravaganza on Sunday December 6th, with stories, hand-bell ringing, craft activities and lots of fun.

This is becoming a regular and popular feature of our events calendar, so please come along in 2016 if you would like to join in ... it's not just for children!

HLF GREAT WAR PROJECT

The project is progressing well, and having completed all the formal training of volunteers, we are now researching and recording stories from contributors and archival material. We have found some very interesting photos and documents to help tell the story of early 20th century life in Shaftesbury, so we can give a context for the individual stories of families and those who served in the forces. We have been sharing our ideas with outside groups, including Gillingham Museum and the Sunshine Hour group in Bell Street.

Ann and I are happy to give illustrated talks about what we are doing, as it is a good way to connect with our



local community, and often people come forward with new information or objects and documents to share with us.

We have recently bought a portable digital projector and screen, so we can go out to different venues ... much safer than relying on organisations to provide us with equipment, and we hope to be able to use them for years to come.

We are holding regular weekly meetings in the Museum Library, and also at Shaftesbury Public Library which is kindly hosting computer research sessions, with free access to ancestry.com, and reminiscence sessions.



Above - photos of Bell Street Sunshine Hour taken by Ken Howe

STEWARDS SECURE SPARKFORD SHOWCASE

Ian Kellett

Haynes International Motor Museum are reorganising the ground floor of their Resource Centre.

Surplus to requirements was a traditional glass display case in excellent condition. A visitor to Gold Hill Museum in early September mentioned this to one of our stewards, who carefully recorded a contact telephone number in the Day Book. A reconnaissance by the Secretary and the Treasurer established that the showcase would be ideal for our needs.



Following an appeal to our members and volunteers in late October, Ray Humphries offered the use of his van, more frequently used for transporting the instruments of the Town Silver Band.

The loading process assisted here by Elaine Barratt and Marjory Kellett, confirmed that the Secretary's measurements of the cabinet were correct.



It was whisked back to Gold Hill Museum where it fitted comfortably into the lift.

Negotiating its passage into the Large Temporary Exhibition Room, which has an inconveniently narrow doorway, will however involve some dismantling and reassembly.

We are grateful to the trustees of the Haynes International Motor Museum for generously agreeing to give the showcase to Gold Hill Museum, and to Matt, Caroline and Darius of the Haynes staff for their invaluable help. Without the key parts played by our own volunteer stewards, we would not have known about the cabinet or been able to collect it.

ARCHIVE / LIBRARY REPORT

Ray Simpson

Three books have been added to the Library since the last newsletter:- Tisbury Landholdings Given to Shaftesbury Abbey; Westward Expansion of Wessex; and Collecting Fans. Research enquiries from the public continue including an interesting one of a Shaftesbury clock with faded wording on the face which we thought might be Lear who was a jeweller in Shaftesbury in the 19th century who probably sold but did not make it.

As it is the festive season I thought a few news articles depicting Christmas in bygone Shaftesbury and the surrounding villages might be worth a look..



CHRISTMAS NEWS ROUND UP

1812, Donhead St. Andrew

The Rev. Mr. Fletcher, Rector, on Monday prior to Christmas, invited the Poor of his parish to his house, and distributed among them a fine fat bullock, at the same time regaling each of them with a horn of excellent beer.

1865, Tisbury Workhouse

Christmas Day at the Union – On Christmas Day, Mr. Alfred Morrison, Fonthill Park, very generously supplied the inmates of the Union, with a first class dinner, of roast beef, and plum pudding, with a liberal supply of beer, tobacco, snuff, and fruit etc. The Inmates seemed thoroughly to enjoy themselves and were not slow in acknowledging the kindness of their benefactor. The children had tea and cake with toys and other presents to usher in the New Year.

1869, Shaftesbury

The children belonging to the National Schools of the parishes of Holy Trinity and St. Peter's were provided with a great treat at the Town-hall. For some time preparations for a Christmas tree had been in progress and the result was more than anticipated. A fine tree, kindly given by the Marquis of Westminster was literally laden with costly gifts. At six o'clock 150 children were marched to the Town-hall and 20 special prizes were given to the boys and girls. The little ones were then allowed to walk round the tree, six at a time, and select whatever please their fancy and it was nearly ten o'clock when the "National Anthem" was sung.

1870, Donhead St. Andrew

Mr. James L. Jeffery, of Berry-court Farm, in accordance with his usual custom, had several sheep killed, which he gave away to his labourers, also to the carpenters, masons, etc. on the farm estate. Mr. Talbot, bailiff to Mr. T.F. Grove M.P. Of Ferne House, had a good fat ox killed, of which part was given away.

1881, Shaftesbury

Coffee Rooms, Parsons Pool – Superior Mince Pies for Christmas, from one penny. Good Currant Cakes, iced over, sixpence and one shilling each.

Mr. J. Bourne presents his compliments to the gentleman who, stole the Notice Board that was attached to the wall of the house in Bleek Street, and requests them if they intend to remove other Boards, to do so during the hours that sneaks and thieves prowl about and not to select the time when honest and sober men are not ashamed to be seen; or perchance they may get into trouble.

1883, Shaftesbury

Christmas Delicacies – W.R. Smith, Bell Street, wishes to call attention to the following:- Mince Meat. Pastry made daily, Currant and Seed Cake at various prices. Plum Puddings from 8d.

1900, Iwerne Minster

House Party - A large house party is being entertained by Lord and Lady Wolverton at Iwerne House.

Seasonal Gifts – Lord Wolverton, with his usual kindness, gave presents of beef to the parishioners on Christmas Eve, and on Wednesday rabbits were distributed to all comers.

1934, Shaftesbury

A Carnival dinner and dance at the Grosvenor Hotel on Boxing-night was a successful and enjoyable function. A company of about seventy dined in attractive surroundings, and afterwards they adjourned to the ball-room, which had been transformed into a Viennese beer garden with delightful effect. Many more people joined in the dancing to music by the Blue Bohemian Band from Amesbury.

1940, Newtown Tisbury

A Christmas Party – By the kindness of Mrs. Benett-Stanford the Christmas tree and party for the children of Newtown and Hatch was held at Pythouse. About 40 were present, and also mothers and babies. After tea in the spacious kitchen the party adjourned to a large play room where a Christmas tree awaited them adorned with presents and confections. After much fun with crackers, Colonel Benett-Stanford presented the toys to the children. Games were played under the management of Colonel Benett-Stanford. The guests thanked the donor, and each received a bag of sweets before departing for home.

1950, Shaftesbury

Because of the continued water shortage, Shaftesbury residents got no extra water during the Christmas period, although the Town Council had hoped to be in a position to allow a 24-hour supply for three days at Christmas.

And finally the following for the ladies in 1936:-


HAVE A MACDONALD PERM FOR CHRISTMAS.

IN RESPONSE TO MANY ENQUIRIES WE HAVE INSTALLED A MACDONALD PERMANENT WAVING DEPARTMENT UNDER A FULLY EXPERIENCED LONDON-TRAINED OPERATOR.

You can be certain of satisfaction, for we have one of the best equipped and staffed saloons in the South of England. We do not believe in economy at the expense of your hair.

MACDONALD PERMING	30/-
EUGENE PERMING	25/-
OTHER SYSTEMS	15/6

SWAINES, of SHAFTESBURY. are at Your Service. TEL. 161.



LECTURE PROGRAMME

Lavender Buckland

The sheer variety of interesting talks on our programme for this season is a reason for excitement!

After a rousing start, courtesy of Professor Peter Clarke, and the subsequent talks on “The Cerne Abbas Giant” and “Dorset Clay Pipes”, we look forward to the Spring when the variety is undiminished. Julian Richards’ January 5th talk on “Operation Warhorse”, based on the archaeological investigation of a veterinary hospital on Salisbury Plain, will shed light on the use of an enormous number of horses during the Great War. The World War I theme continues with David Childs’ Gallipoli talk “Heirs to Achilles” in March, an illustrated account of how twentieth century warriors sent to the land of the Trojans failed to achieve the desired breakthrough.

By way of contrast in February, the Salisbury Museum Project Curator, Jane Ellis-Schön, will be giving us her account of “Finding Pitt-Rivers”. Jane is the Curator of a fascinating new project, and her talk will consist of an introduction to General Augustus Pitt-Rivers and what he was doing before he inherited the Pitt-Rivers title and Rushmore estate in 1880, including an in-depth look at the work he undertook on Cranborne Chase; this is followed by details of the Project itself. He was an extraordinary character, “the father of modern archaeology” as his meticulous methods set a standard never before attempted in excavations.

It is a rewarding challenge, finding such a variety of different topics to interest our members and their guests, and to stimulate discussion. In April we hope to hear a variety of short presentations from S&DHS members on the outcomes of their explorations of historical by-ways. Please get in touch with Lavender Buckland if you would be prepared to talk for 20 minutes or so on a favourite historical subject.

THE 2015 TEULON PORTER MEMORIAL LECTURE

Reviewed by Ian Kellett

The 2015 Teulon Porter Memorial Lecturer was Peter Clarke, Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the University of Southampton. The President of the Society, Jo Rutter, prefaced the Lecture, given in Shaftesbury Town Hall on the evening of 06 October, with some amusing recollections of Noel Teulon Porter in the 1950s.

In his lecture “Sin in Salisbury Diocese: the Records of the Papal Penitentiary 1410-1503”, Professor Clarke set the Papal Penitentiary, the highest church office concerned with the forgiveness of sins, in the context of medieval religious belief and practice.

The function of the Penitentiary was to receive petitions from lay people and clerics who sought absolution for serious public sins or dispensations which could only be granted at the highest level. The petitions were generally drafted and presented by legal representatives or proctors; those which were successful were copied into the Penitentiary's registers.

The records of the Penitentiary have been accessible in the Vatican only since 1983. 4085 petitions from England and Wales survive for the years 1410-11, 1438-43, and 1448-1510. Professor Clarke has found and translated 100 petitions from individuals in the Salisbury diocese, 18 of whom were seeking dispensations to marry otherwise disqualified relatives, and 17 dispensations to overcome defects in their qualifications for ordination as clergy, such as extreme youth or illegitimacy. The nuns of Shaftesbury petitioned the Pope for the use of a portable altar, presumably to carry to the outlying granges of the Abbey estates. A frail Bishop of Salisbury begged that he be excused Lenten fasts, and lived for a further 15 years.

Perhaps the most famous case, at the height of the Wars of the Roses in 1470, involved dispensations to permit the marriage of Anne Neville, daughter of Warwick "the Kingmaker", and Edward Prince of Wales, son of the deposed Henry VI. The scheme to restore Henry VI fell through in 1471 when Warwick and Edward were defeated and killed by the forces of Edward IV at the battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury respectively.

The audience of about 40 were appreciative of Professor Clarke's lucid analysis and presentation, and asked a number of interesting questions before he had to catch the last train from Gillingham in time for his next morning's teaching. Depending on future funding, Professor Clarke hopes to examine the Penitentiary registers dating from 1503 to 1569, when members of The S&DHS may be able to help with identifying petitioners and sources relating to them.



Jo Rutter and Peter Clarke

1925 NEWSPAPER REPORT

Supplied by Jo Rutter

RIGHTS ON SEMLEY COMMON

TISBURY JUSTICES AND A POACHING CASE

LABOURER'S APPEAL AGAINST CONVICTION

MAGISTRATES' DECISION OVERRULED

A case of considerable importance to Commoners was heard in the Divisional Court in London on Wednesday week, when a Semley labourer, named Henry Mark Lucas, of Gutch Common, appealed against a conviction by the Tisbury magistrates. Lucas was charged with shooting and taking a rabbit from Semley Common, under the Poaching Prevention Act of 1862. The magistrates who heard the case were Sir Walter Grove, Lord Arundell, Mr W. Shaw-Stewart, and Lieut. Colonel J. Bennett-Stanford.

The Common is owned by Lady Arundell of Wardour, and defendant set up a claim of right to shoot and take rabbits from the Common, a right, which it was contended, had been exercised by himself and other persons in Semley parish for many years.

The Justices, however, overruled the objection. They convicted defendant, and fined him 5s.

The Justices were then asked to state a case for the opinion of the High Court of Justice, King's Bench Division. The case aroused great interest in Semley, and a fund was raised in the village to prosecute the appeal.

The case cited by the magistrates was heard before the Divisional Court, consisting of the Lord Chief Justice, and Justices Sankey and Talbot, on Wednesday last week. The respondents (the Justices) were not represented, but Mr G. D. Roberts (instructed by Messrs Rutter & Rutter, of Shaftesbury) appeared for the petitioner.

After hearing the arguments, the Court allowed the appeal, with costs, and quashed the conviction, on the ground that a bonafide claim of right had been set up by the defendant, that such right was a right which could exist in law, and that in the circumstances the Justices had no right to take upon themselves to decide whether the right was proved or not. They should have declined jurisdiction, and refrained from making a conviction.

G A R D E N U P D A T E

Ian & Marjory Kellett

At the "Shaftesbury in Bloom" annual awards evening on 02 November we were surprised and delighted to be given the accolade of Best Garden in the Public Buildings category for 2015.



As the Museum will be open for the Shaftesbury Snowdrop Festival from Saturday 13 to Sunday 21 February 2016, we were pleased on 15 October to welcome the doyenne of such events, Lady Catherine Erskine of Cambo Estate in Fife. Cambo hosts the Scottish National Snowdrop Festival and supplies rare snowdrops to buyers from all over the world.

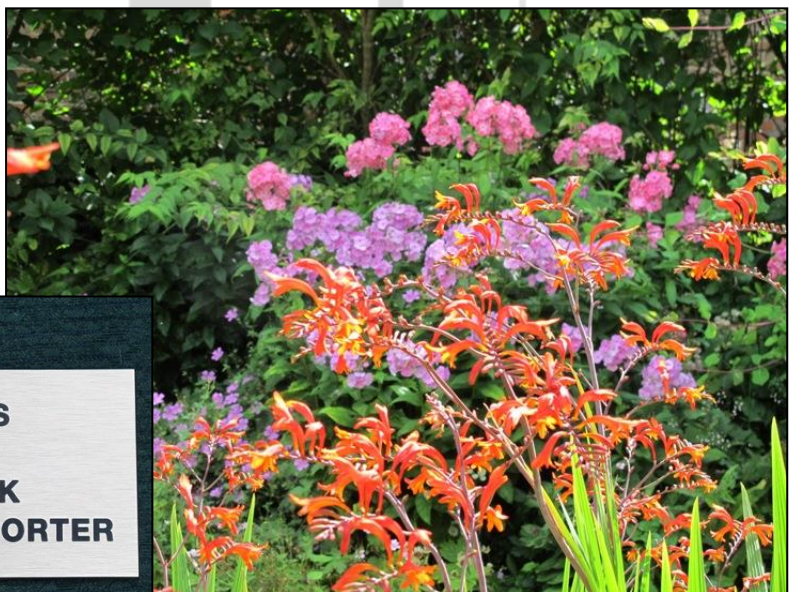
Catherine, accompanied by her cousin Anna McDowell and Pam Cruickshank, kindly planted some snowdrops in the long bed outside the Garden Room.



As reported in the September Byzant, friends of the late Leonore Schafarik have donated a brand new, three-seater garden bench which was soon being used by appreciative French visitors.



The bench adds to the sustainability credentials of Gold Hill Museum by being made of recycled plastic, and should require no maintenance.





G R E A T W A R

H O R S E A R T I L L E R Y G U N N E R

Ian Kellett

We are grateful to Ann Symons for providing the photograph used by Lavender Buckland in our poster for Julian Richards's lecture on Tuesday 05 January.

The man on the horse is Ann's grandfather, Harold Edwards [1897-1985], from Street in Somerset. Harold worked in the cutting room at Clark's shoe factory and learned to play the clarinet in Street Band prior to joining the Royal Horse Artillery as a gunner in 1914. During training at Taunton and Colchester he was made to ride every day, until the insides of his legs became red raw. In 1916 his battery, consisting of six 13-pounder field guns, 5 officers, 200 men, and 228 horses, was embarked at Southampton for service in Egypt and Palestine.

While in Palestine Harold contracted a skin disease known as "Desert Sores" which left him with no feeling in his limbs. After treatment including experimental skin grafts to his arms, Harold recovered sufficiently to be transferred to the Staff Band at Alexandria where he remained until the end of the War. He recalled seeing General Allenby at a dinner together with a man in Arab dress who, he realised later, might have been Lawrence of Arabia. He returned to Clark's in 1919, married Lilian Dyer in 1922, and played the saxophone with local bands and as a session musician.

It is fair to say that Harold had no particular affection for horses, and the photograph, taken before he left for the Middle East, was staged with an officer's mount.

This family story is one of many dozens that have been collected and archived as part of the Heritage Lottery Funded Great War Project. If you would like to participate in the Project, please contact Ann or Claire Ryley at Gold Hill Museum.

You can email them directly via education@goldhillmuseum.org.uk

Shaftesbury
Gold Hill Museum



THE SHAFTESBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY



“OPERATION WARHORSE”
JULIAN RICHARDS

TUESDAY 5TH JANUARY AT 2.30

THE GARDEN ROOM, GOLD HILL MUSEUM

Tickets at the door £3.00.

Free to members.

Registered Charity 1156273

Further information: <http://goldhillmuseum.org.uk>