

THE BYZANT



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF
THE SHAFTESBURY & DISTRICT
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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A C T I N G C H A I R M A N ' S C H A T

Ian Kellett

I am very pleased to announce that this will be my last Acting Chairman's Chat. Unfortunately this does not mean that Terry Atkins will be able to return. We received formal notification in February of Terry's enforced retirement from the role of Chairman through ill health. Terry remains a staunch supporter of The S & DHS and we are grateful for his service in a variety of roles, as Secretary, Vice-Chairman, Chairman and co-editor of the Newsletter, and for the many hours that he and Anita gave to stewarding at the Museum.



Terry and Anita Atkins

Rather better news is that our former Treasurer, David Silverside, has been persuaded to return as a Trustee. In February the Committee were pleased to co-opt David and to invite him to take over as Chairman. By the time you receive this Newsletter, David will have chaired an EGM on 05 April at which [we hope] the requisite number of members will have supported a slight but necessary change to the wording of the Society's Object. With the CIO constitution duly amended, we can hope to retain Accredited Museum status.

Standing for re-election as Trustees at the July AGM, together with David Silverside, will be Elaine Barratt and Ian Kellett. Both are happy to continue in their main roles as Steward Co-ordinator / Shop Manager and Secretary / Gardener, but they would be delighted to be joined by new Trustees. Perhaps among the new members who joined in January and February there are people with Museums experience or who could pick up the portfolios mentioned in the Secretary's electoral article? They can be assured that life is never dull at Gold Hill Museum.

We began the main season on 19 March with several splendid new displays, the product of much effort during the winter closure by our volunteers and described in the following pages. We can also anticipate the highest quality from our visiting exhibitors in the Anna McDowell Garden Room: Shaftesbury Camera Club 30 April - 06 May and Tibetan monks of the Tashi Lhunpo Monastery 27 June - 04 July.

That we were able to open at all on 19 March was largely due to the efficiency of Wessex Fire and Security, as described by the Treasurer and John Parker, and of course the untiring commitment of our volunteer stewards.

I make no apology for recording once again my unstinted thanks and admiration for the work of our volunteers, and my hope that others will join them.



David Silverside with the Mayor and Mayoress of Shaftesbury, Cllrs Karen and Richard Tippins, during the Civic Visit on Sunday 21 February.

Over 30 Dorset mayors and their consorts were greeted by our new Chairman and our President, Jo Rutter

ELECTION OF TRUSTEES 2016

Ian Kellett, Secretary

As of 27 March, 2016 there are nine Trustees active in the management of The Shaftesbury & District Historical Society. In addition there are two ex officio Trustees, the President, Jo Rutter, and the Dorset Museums Adviser, Vicky de Wit. Twelve full committee meetings have been held since April 2015. The responsibilities, years of election and attendance records of the managing Trustees since April 2015 are as follows:

Trustee	Responsibilities	Elected	Attendances
Terry Atkins	Chairman <i>[Resigned Feb. '16]</i>	2014	02
Elaine Barratt	Stewards, Shop	2014	12
Lavender Buckland	Lectures, Members' Visits <i>[co-opted 13/5/15]</i>	2015	06 <i>[poss. 10]</i>
Alan Carter	<i>[Retired as trustee July 2015]</i>	2014	02 <i>[poss. 4]</i>
Sheena Commons	Collection Care	2014	11
Ian Kellett	Secretary, Acting Chair, Garden	2014	12
Marjory Kellett	Treasurer	2015	12
John Parker	Buildings	2014	08
Claire Ryley	Education <i>[co-opted 11/3/15]</i>	2015	08
David Silverside	Chairman <i>[co-opted 10/2/16]</i>	2016	02 <i>[poss. 02]</i>
Ray Simpson	Archive, Library	2014	11

Each year a third of the Trustees must retire in rotation, as required by the CIO constitution, though they may stand for re-election. Terry Atkins has had to stand down through ill health. Co-opted Trustees, such as our new Chairman, must also retire at the AGM next following their appointment and seek election if they wish to continue. David Silverside intends to stand for election as a Trustee in July.

This means that two of the Trustees first elected in 2014 must also retire and offer themselves for re-election. Elaine Barratt and Ian Kellett have agreed to do so.

In theory, three more Trustees [i.e. a total of six] could also be elected in July, up to a maximum of 12. **Anyone with professional experience in the historical and museums worlds would be most welcome.** However, it is the ethos of The S&DHS that all our Trustees take responsibility for particular portfolios and are actively involved in the management of the Society and Gold Hill Museum.

We have identified the need for support and possible **new Trustee appointments** in the following areas:

Display – A creative thinker and practitioner to work with the Head of Collections and the Librarian /Archivist in the planning and preparation of new and temporary exhibitions.

Publicity, Marketing and Fundraising – These roles could be separated. The profiles of the Society and Museum need to be maintained in the local media, while another regular task is to generate and place posters for exhibitions and lectures. South West Federation of Museums' training and mentoring may be available for someone willing to take on the role of fundraiser.

Information Technology Manager – Our computers and digital display screens all need updating, and fellow Trustees would benefit from training in their use.

If you think that you can offer an interest and expertise in these areas, or are prepared to learn on the job, please complete the **Application Form** enclosed with this Newsletter. It should be forwarded to the Secretary at Gold Hill Museum, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 8JW by no later than **Friday 27 May 2016.**

Check List of essentials:

A candidate for Trustee must be

- a paid-up member of The S&DHS

- nominated by two paid-up members

- contactable by email

- available for monthly committee meetings

- willing to be active in the management of the Society and Museum

- willing to sum up their candidature in no more than 250 words

TREASURER'S REPORT

Marjory Kellett

I am pleased to report that the financial year ending on 31st March 2016 has been another successful one for the Society. The number of visitors has been similar to that of the previous year and their donations and purchases from the shop have contributed in the region of £20,000 to our funds. In addition to the donations from visitors we have received donations from friends of Miss Leonore Schafarik for the purchase of a garden bench in her memory, from members and from groups using the Anna McDowell Garden Room. I have at last been able to claim Gift Aid on some of the donations. After next year I would hope to be able also to claim on a proportion of the change which is put anonymously in our donation box under the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme.

The Trustees have made planned and unplanned changes to the Museum infrastructure this year. We agreed to upgrade the CCTV system to improve our security. We have invested over £3,000 in sufficient HD cameras to cover all of the Museum and two HD monitors which give very clear pictures. In the past we have experienced in unmonitored areas of the Museum occasional incidents of vandalism which have caused the Society unnecessary expense. We hope to deter this type of behaviour. Even with this payment we appear to have a cash flow surplus of about £7,000. This surplus does not include the legacy left by Miss Schafarik for the repair and maintenance of the building.

The unplanned change was the replacing of the fire alarm system. Three days before opening for the new season, a fault in the control panel caused the system to be completely inoperative with implications for our insurance and our ability to open the Museum to visitors. The Trustees are grateful to Wessex Fire & Security for fitting the replacement system at short notice so that we were able to open the Museum as planned on 19th March. The £2,500 cost for this has still to be paid.

I am confident that the state of the Society's finances will allow us to continue our work even if we have further unexpected expenditure.

A CONTINUING SUCCESS STORY

Elaine Barratt, Steward/Shop Manager

As we embark on another season we can reflect on the success of the last one during which we opened every day, as advertised, sometimes against the odds and always with at least two stewards on duty thanks to the continuing dedication of our volunteers.

Only seven of the forty-two weekly shifts remain unfilled at present and, with the help of our relief stewards and some of the keener regulars as well as an ongoing recruitment programme, the future is looking brighter.

We again opened for Christmas late night shopping, offering mulled wine and mince pies and joining in with the town's Dickensian theme, but decided against the mid-December Festival which attracted very few visitors to the Museum in the previous year. The Snowdrop Festival week, coinciding with the February half-term, once again attracted many visitors and was well worth opening for.



*Elaine Barratt and Ken Howe
meeting King Alfred during
late night Christmas shopping*

The shop continues to thrive with an increasing stock of locally sourced items. Local herbalist Kate Scott produced the Shaston salve, exclusive to Gold Hill Museum, along with other herbal delights, complemented by her monthly herbal walks and workshops. She is planning more varied ventures this year so look out for information leaflets. Dorset button products are always popular. However the snowdrop-themed items, stocked for the first time during the Snowdrop Festival, met with limited success; we'll continue to stock them on a sale or return basis. Several new books by local authors have graced our shelves and have generally sold well and the Gold Hill jigsaw puzzle, exclusive to us and produced just five miles away, remains a bestseller. I am delighted to report that we again have quality copies of the Upjohn map for sale and a new poster detailing "The Language of the Fan" has been produced to coincide with this season's Fan Exhibition. The extensive range of greetings cards, all produced by various local artists, continues to expand.

This season, for the first time, we have been invited to join Shaftesbury School's work experience programme and will be welcoming three Year 12 students, undertaking a "Travel & Tourism" course, for a week each as stewards.

The Visitors' Book provides evidence of a happy, helpful and knowledgeable workforce; we are privileged to work in a delightful environment for which the vast majority of visitors express appreciation.

COLLECTION CARE

Sheena Commons

Reaccreditation is still ongoing as, although we completed and forwarded the application form in January 2015, it was not until September that we heard anything and were assigned an assessor to go through our application. Following this we found we had more work to do and that we would also have to amend our CIO Object. Currently we are in the process of completing the additional requirements and hope that we will then have everything in place to satisfy the Accreditation Board. This has been a long and difficult process and I (and all the rest of the Trustees) would hope that we are nearly at the end of it.

During the closed season a small team of volunteers helped me with the delayed and, much needed, audit of the artefacts in the storeroom. We met every Tuesday morning and worked our way through boxes and shelves. It was very interesting work and we found some really interesting and unusual objects but it has to be said that we also found many that made us wonder why they had been accepted into the collection in the first place.



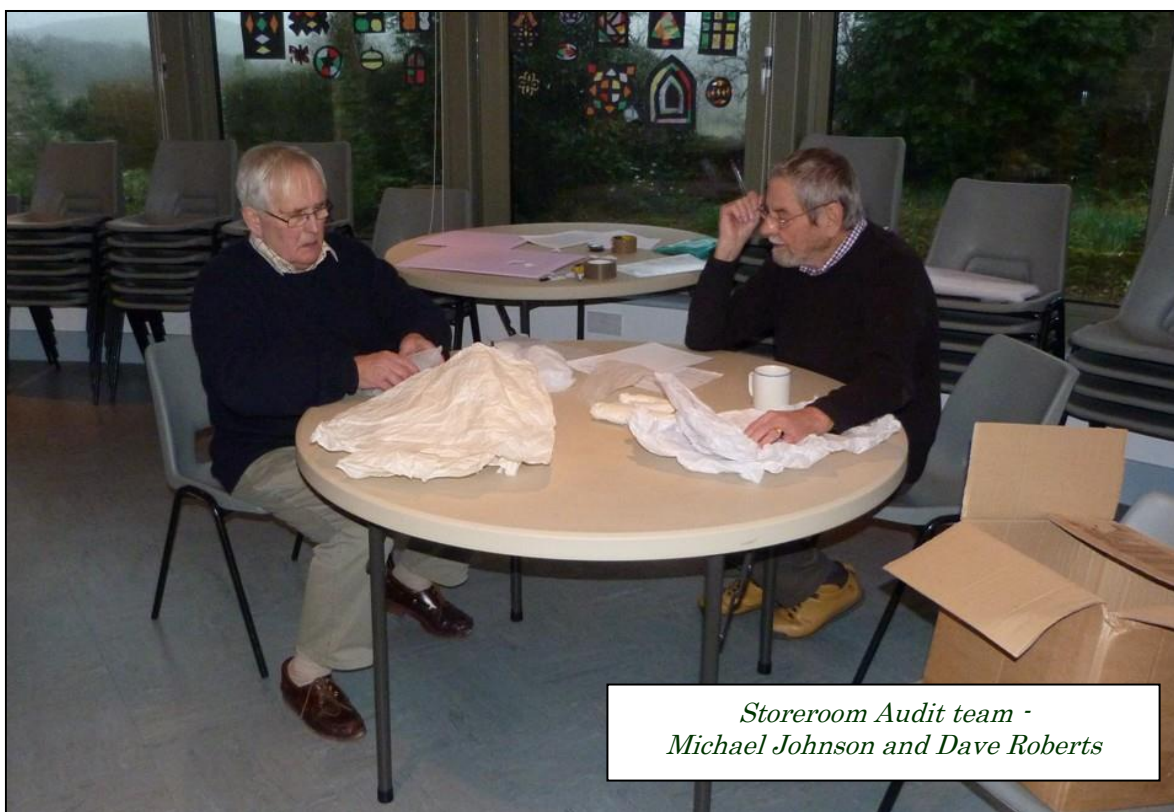
*Storeroom Audit team -
Gordon Ewart-Dean and Anne Kaile*

As with any audit, it threw up questions and anomalies and the work of sorting these out and inputting the location of the artefacts on to the database, will keep me busy for a while.

My small team were brilliant, enthusiastic, hardworking, and took care to record everything properly so many thanks to them.

During the next closed season I hope to undertake the same exercise with the items on display as, although I know pretty much where most of the on-display items are located, this information has not been recorded on the database.

We continue to receive offers of donations to the museum collection, for which we are very grateful, but have had to become more discriminating in what we accept as we have limited storage and display space.



The Collections team has just completed, in the nick of time, one of the temporary displays for this year's summer season, an exhibition of fans, to showcase some of the beautiful items we have in the storeroom which are rarely seen on display. All, apart from two, which belong to a member of the team, belong to the museum as we particularly wanted to show our own but thank you to the many kind people who offered to lend us fans for the exhibition. Two of the fans on display went away for conservation work earlier in the year and are now quite valuable.



During the planning stages of the display some members of the team visited the Fan Museum in Greenwich where they received a lot of help and advice. The Fan Museum also helped with the conservation of the fans.



If you get a chance to see this display I hope you enjoy it. The fans are stunning and it is nice to see them out of their boxes for a short time. Thanks to the small team who worked so hard to make it happen.

A small display, to celebrate the millennium of Cnut's accession to the English throne in 1016 as he had connections to Shaftesbury, is also being prepared and should be completed soon.

ARCHIVE / LIBRARY REPORT

Ray Simpson

An interesting collection of documents has been donated to the Society since the last newsletter. Michael Johnson has donated deeds, letters, Shaftesbury High School memorabilia and estate sale catalogues, not only another 1919 Sale of Shaftesbury but also a 1909 catalogue for Alcester, Motcombe, Semley and Sedgely. These catalogues are extensively annotated with prices for which individual lots were sold. He also donated the Upjohn book, *A Study in Ancestry* by Richard U. Light; this provides a second copy for the library. Anna McDowell has donated Semley Girl Guide material.

A new display in the lift lobby outside the library has been put up with random stories from the Shaftesbury and Tisbury workhouses.

CHURCH MATTERS

In 1880 the priest in charge of Tollard Royal went to the church to hold the service of which he had given notice of viz. The evensong at 11, to be followed by a midnight celebration of holy communion. Soon after the bells commenced, about 20 or 30 men, in a state of intoxication, entered the church, and rushed to the belfry, some jumping on to the top of the organ. Unfortunately there is no policeman in Tollard. The priest ordered the men to stop ringing, but they refused to do so, and commenced to utter most obscene and profane language; and they were, too, actually smoking in the church with their hats on.

When ordered by the priest to leave the church, they refused, and whilst the priest went to fetch the churchwarden (who is also constable, parish clerk, sexton, bell-ringer etc.) they insulted two ladies who were in the church.

When the priest returned, they called him a liar, because he said he had not locked the door, and when a lady stated that she saw a young man lock the door, they called her also a liar. One man, the ringleader, incited the others to profane God's house, and himself jumped through the window, in doing which he broke the frame. Another went to the altar rails and kept jumping up and down saying "can you come this dodge?"



EXHIBITION:

LIFE IN SHAFTESBURY AND TISBURY WORKHOUSES

A new exhibition for 2016 created by Librarian and Archivist Ray Simpson tells the story of two local workhouses. In 1834 Parliament was keen to cut the welfare bill and the Poor Law Amendment Act abolished the practice of giving outdoor relief to the able-bodied poor. Recipients of welfare now had to enter the workhouse, where conditions were made deliberately unpleasant to discourage claimants.

Ray's fascinating exhibition couples extracts from letters and documents detailing the foundation of the new workhouses in Shaftesbury and Tisbury with episodes in the lives of unfortunate inmates: Martha Street and Eliza Tucker, jailed in 1869 for "fighting, quarrelling and making use of most obscene and profane language"; the Tisbury vagrant punished in 1907 for refusing to break stones for fear of losing his one good eye. This display is outside the Museum Library on the first floor and will run until October.



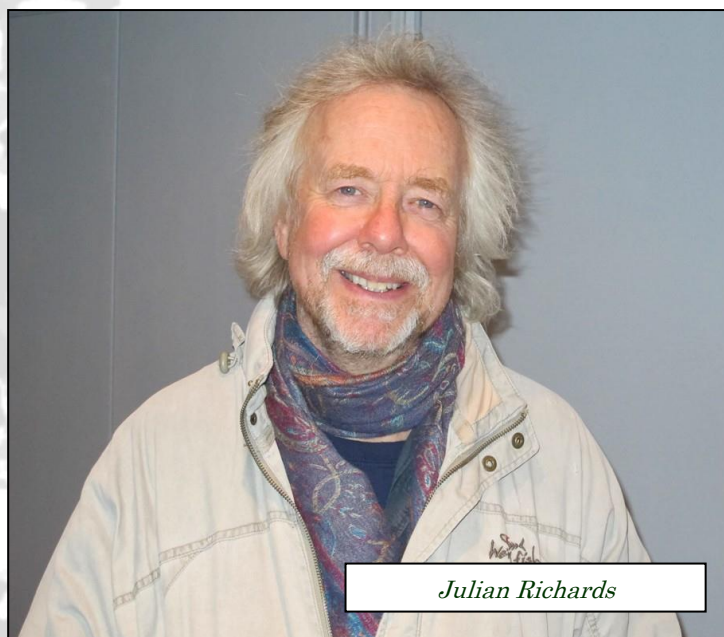
LECTURE PROGRAMME

Lavender Buckland

This winter's Talks have been wonderfully varied and interesting – attracting record numbers of members and non-members alike.

The year started well with Julian Richards's illustrated Talk on "Operation Warhorse", the excavation of a temporary horse hospital at Larkhill, which shed light on the enormous undertaking to equip the British Army with remount horses, at the start of the First World War.

We came closer to home with Jane Ellis-Schon, from Salisbury Museum who gave an excellent presentation on the Pitt-Rivers Project, of which she is the Curator. Our Summer Outing is on 14 June, when Jane will give us a guided tour of the exhibition in the beautiful new Wessex Gallery which she also curated. We shall then have a privileged view of Salisbury Museum's exciting Special Exhibition "The Egyptians", followed by tea. Full details and booking forms will be sent to members in May.



Julian Richards

Our final Talk for the winter was from Commander David Childs, RN, who spoke eloquently on the 'Heirs to Achilles'...the forces who, in 1915, landed on the Dardanelles (with its echoes of the Trojan War) to fight the Turkish Army - with such disastrous consequences that the word "Gallipoli" sends a chill down the spine.

In thanking the speaker, the Lecture Coordinator told of visiting a small town in New Zealand last year, where the local library had devoted all its space to the commemoration of Gallipoli - several walls of photos of entire families queuing to enlist in the ANZAC Forces (leaving sheep stations without any men under 70); and a wall reporting comments from descendants who had made a recent trip to the Gallipoli battlefields..."I took a book" wrote one woman, "I'd heard too much, and didn't want to go...but I never read a single page. Instead, I spent my whole visit in tears..."

For those of us lucky enough to hear David Childs, there were those close to tears at the waste, the courage, the endurance...and perhaps awe at a generation of such brave loyalty that crossed the world to fight, and be killed, in a European war.

Our winter programme ended with Members' recent Researches, and a delicious tea.

EDUCATION AND EVENTS

Claire Ryley

EDUCATION AND ALL AGE EVENTS

Since the New Year we have been busy both with schools and events. St Mary's School visited the Abbey in February to learn about Saxon Shaftesbury, and Janet Swiss and I visited The Abbey School in St James for an Iron Age afternoon, which included a roundhouse 'dig', and pottery and bread-making. The teacher was inspired to walk up Hod Hill and the children responded enthusiastically to our visit. We have been asked to return, as Romans and then Saxons (in costume) next term, and we look forward to it.

We have removed the backpacks from the entrance to the museum, and have replaced them with baskets of activities in the galleries, one in the Rural Life room (hats and aprons, etc.) and one by the child's desk upstairs.

We ran three craft workshops in the Garden Room as part of the Snowdrop Festival, and they were almost all fully booked. We held two clay workshops and one box-decorating and other paper crafts. Due to popular demand, we have added another workshop to the autumn programme.

On Good Friday we held our annual Pilgrim's Trail based at the Abbey, which turned out to be very pleasant and well-supported, possibly due to the lovely weather. I think it is very fitting that we hold this event on Good Friday, as a reminder of the Christian calendar, and the significance of the Abbey as a place of pilgrimage for hundreds of years.

These events could not take place without my excellent team, so thank you very much to all of them.

SHAFTESBURY REMEMBERS :

THE HLF GREAT WAR PROJECT

The project is proceeding well, and the website is almost completely built. We now need to input the large amount of information we have collected. Anyone who would like to help us with this would be very welcome.

We are putting up a temporary exhibition in the museum, updating the project and sharing some of the fascinating new material people have kindly shared with us. Project volunteers have also been researching different aspects of Shaftesbury and the surrounding area during the first quarter of the 20th century.

We are currently looking for any stories, and in particular photos, of Shaftesbury taken between 1900 to 1925, to give local background to the personal stories we have been collecting. Please let us know if you have any which you are happy for us to scan, or bring them to the reminiscence sessions or the museum.

We have held Reminiscence Afternoon sessions in Shaftesbury Library in January and February, and the March session, focussing on Prisoners of War, was on March 29th. The sessions are held monthly and are informal and friendly, with tea and cakes. All are welcome, whether you have stories to share or would just like to hear what others have to tell us.



Reminiscence Afternoon - photo by Ken Howe

FAMILY HISTORY

Our Ancestry Afternoons have also proved to be very popular and our April session is fully booked already.

Thank you to our experts for helping members of the public with the website and for all the follow up research they have been carrying out on their behalf.



Ancestry Afternoon - photo by Ken Howe

FINDING PITT-RIVERS

February's Lecture Reviewed by Ian Kellett

Jane Ellis-Schon brought a tiny sample of the 15,000 objects in Salisbury Museum's Pitt-Rivers Collection to her compelling and comprehensive February lecture at Gold Hill Museum. In 1880 Augustus Henry Lane-Fox inherited the Pitt-Rivers title and 27,000 acres of Wiltshire estates from his great-uncle. Already a serving soldier in the Grenadier Guards, Pitt-Rivers applied his military surveying skills to recording the largely untouched archaeology of Cranborne Chase, preserved by centuries of hunting rather than farming. When Rushmore House overflowed with artefacts, he built a museum at Farnham; Jane's photographs showed glass cases from floor to ceiling and serried ranks of ancient animal bones.



Jane Ellis-Schon

Pitt-Rivers opened what became the Larmer Tree Pleasure Gardens for the benefit of his estate workers, who were often employed on archaeological digs in the winter months. A lodge was pulled apart in 1889 to confirm its mediaeval origins, and rebuilt as an art gallery named, on no great authority, as King John's House. Pitt-Rivers pursued a fairly destructive style of archaeology but understood the need for the preservation of historic sites, to which he contributed as the first Inspector of Ancient Monuments, appointed in 1882, and kept detailed records and copious specimens. Jane's aim in the "Finding Pitt-Rivers" Project is to connect the objects with the records, and to build up a searchable on-line database. Members are promised an intriguing privilege visit in June to see Jane's curatorial work in the new Wessex Gallery at Salisbury Museum.

The Pitt-Rivers Museum at Farnham, now a private house, was re-founded in 1934 by George Pitt-Rivers, grandson of Augustus. The welcome for visitors was idiosyncratic, and of its time, as revealed by Jane's slide:

NOTICE TO ALL VISITORS

Professors, Pedlars, Politicians and Poultry-Keepers
PLEASE SIGN THE VISITORS' BOOK AND READ THIS NOTICE

Why have you come here and what do you expect to see?

PLEASE ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS.

(AS ALL ANTHROPOLOGISTS HAVE ASKED THEMSELVES)

What are you? (By race, by descent, by nationality)

Are you civilized?

Are you educated?

What do you mean by civilization?

What is the purpose of education?

Please think.

WE ASK YOU TO READ THE LABELS AND FORM YOUR
OWN OPINION ON THE EVIDENCE THAT YOU WILL SEE.

George Pitt-Rivers was interned during the Second World War and on his death in 1966 the contents of the Farnham Museum were sold and dispersed.

BUILDING CARES

John Parker

Things are brightening up in the Garden Room. The lights there have always been on the dim side, even when the dimmer was turned right up, but we couldn't fit bigger bulbs in case the dimming system overheated. Now, as technology moves on, we have installed some new dimmable LED bulbs that make it all a good deal lighter. Thanks to the advice and help from, Q J Hull Ltd, our ever-willing electricians, we have also fitted the special type of dimmer that was needed. We will even be saving on the electricity as well.

Meanwhile the flat roof above hasn't been coping with the extremes of wind and rain of the past few months and there have been some sizeable puddles on the kitchen floor, and even in the foyer over Easter. Thank you to everyone who has had to do the mopping up but, fortunately, the roof is under guarantee and the company is very good about coming back. However, finding the right little fault is rather difficult.

So far, they have done a little bit of patching, but we don't seem to have found the true culprit yet.

We had more excitement just before Easter when the fire alarm system nearly caught fire! Apparently a back up battery started overheating so that the whole system had to be replaced, because the particular model is now obsolete. An expensive event but well done Wessex Fire and Security for such a prompt response.

In early May we will be restarting the repairs and decorating of the outside woodwork and windows and there will have to be some scaffolding over the main entrance porch, so that the painters can get to the windows above. Hopefully this won't cause too much inconvenience.

One final piece of good news. The "Shaftesbury" locomotive name-plate has now been loaned from the Town Hall and is firmly in place and on display on the wall opposite to the old fire engine. Also, there is a display board giving some history of the original steam engine and a detailed scale model of the locomotive in a specially made case *[below]*.



The plate was donated to the Town Council in 1964, when the steam trains were being phased out, but this latest change of venue, came about through a real community effort. So, thanks to the Mayoress and Town Clerk who started off the process, thanks to Bill Sherriff who donated the model engine and some splendid books about the history of the locomotives, and thanks to Ian Kellett who researched and produced the display board.

Thanks to Peter Campbell-Orde, the picture framer, who pondered and experimented with various designs to make the display case for the model engine, all at a very reasonable price. Then, last of all, thanks to Ray Humphries and Tom Whiteford */below/* who did all the heavy professional work of carrying the solid brass plate out of the Town Hall and fixing it to the, very uneven, masonry wall. In the big scheme of things, this operation was a fairly minor event, but it is a wonderful example of what we often achieve in Shaftesbury, when volunteers, and others, all work together.



Shaftesbury Camera Club

Photographic Exhibition



Saturday 30th April to Friday 6th May

10.30 am - 4.30 pm

The Garden Room, Gold Hill Museum, Shaftesbury



Entry is via the museum and is free

shaftesburycameraclub.org.uk