

Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum



Lorna Almonds-Windmill presents the Annual Memorial Talk at the Golf Hotel to a full house

Newsletter No. 46
March 2024

Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

A Note from the Editor

The Christmas and New Year Celebrations are over and we look forward to the new season at the museum which begins at Easter. The museum opens on Tuesday 26th March from 10.30am until 4pm. Last admissions at 3.30pm. It will be open every Tuesday to Saturday until the end of October. As usual there will be a Temporary Exhibition which will be changed several times during the season. The opening exhibition will be devoted to local hero from Stixwoud, Gentleman Jim Almonds, one of the 12 founding members of the SAS. Tom Johnson expands more on the main exhibits for this year in his article on page 5.



Attracting more volunteers to help at the museum is becoming a big priority for us. The range of skills required to keep the museum up and running is enormous, so anyone thinking they might like to help is almost certain to find something they are interested in is required and needed. The Friends and Volunteers have a monthly coffee morning to allow volunteers to meet and on Wednesday April 8th at 10.30am we would like to invite anyone who might be interested in volunteering to come along and meet in an informal atmosphere with some of our current volunteers. There are no set hours, so you can be as flexible as you like. The museum is a very friendly environment and offers an enormous variety of opportunities for Volunteers to be involved, be it meeting people, using practical skills or office and computer knowledge. The Coffee Morning is held in the Community Room, which is in a separate building at the back of the museum. We look forward to seeing you.

The first major event of the season will be the Spring Lecture which takes place at The Golf Hotel on Saturday April 13th. More details are on page 12.

Hope to see you at this or other events that are planned for this season.

Philip Groves

Front Cover Story

The Annual Memorial Talk in November was presented by Lorna Almonds-Windmill, daughter of SAS founder member Major "Gentleman Jim" Almonds, who was born and brought up in Stixwoud. A full report can be found on the Friends Page on page 20.

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Reg. Charity: 1114268 Reg. Museum:1929

An Appreciation of Paul Everitt

At the museum we were all saddened by the unexpected death of Paul Everitt. The husband of our treasurer, Judy, he was always willing to volunteer in practical ways and worked quietly behind the scenes painting and decorating when visitors and other volunteers were not around to observe his efforts. All areas of the museum and stores received the benefit of his practical experience, including the boundary fences. He always did a thorough job and he will be sorely missed.

He would also be seen at public events, such as Music in the Garden in August, helping erect awnings, setting up tables and moving chairs and then returning all to the stores after an event.

He showed great patience when Judy had “just one more word” to tell other volunteers what was happening, although sometimes he waited in the car or even went home and then returned to collect her.

Patricia Duke-Cox



Paul Everitt

An Appreciation of Ivan Lilley

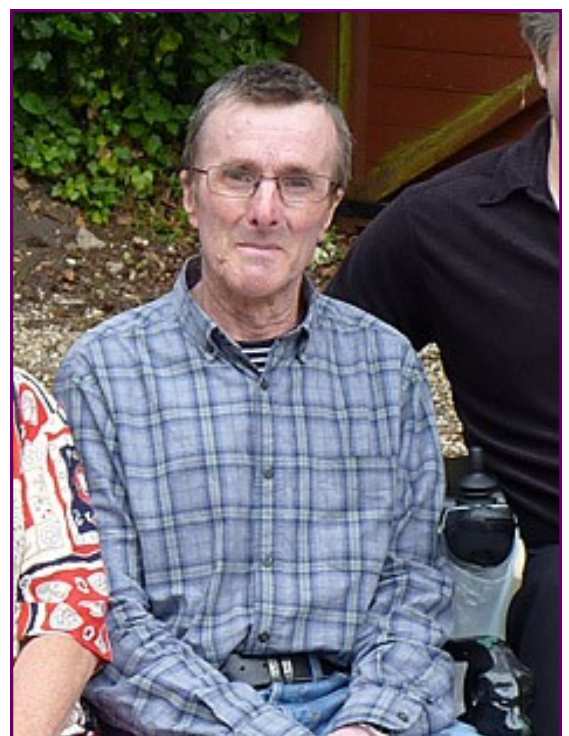
Again, the museum trustees and volunteers were saddened by the unexpected death of Ivan Lilley in hospital before Christmas. He had been in and out three times, but a fall at home proved to be the cause of death.

Ivan became a volunteer and worked alongside others in many capacities. As a volunteer, meeting and greeting in the museum he was able to talk to visitors as a local man and recall history of families some of us do not have.

He joined the Collections teams, first with the visual assets of photographs and glass plate negatives and then, in addition, joined the collections care team and helped with cleaning, packaging and adding items for display purposes. The photo of his mother as a nurse at Alexandra Hospital is one we will cherish.

He was a willing volunteer and would do anything asked of him. This could be cleaning, moving furniture or helping with special events held at the museum.

He once told us that he never expected to be involved with a place like the museum, but admitted he thoroughly enjoyed his volunteering with us. His legacy to the museum was the project completed for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee when he photographed all commercial outlets in Woodhall Spa.



Ivan Lilley

Patricia Duke-Cox

Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

Meet the Directors - Tina Delaney

My husband and I moved to Woodhall Spa 2 years ago from Bedford, we have 3 children, a son and 2 daughters.

We came to Woodhall Spa on holiday 4 years ago and fell in love with the friendliness and amazing facilities of the village.

We wanted to get involved and support the community, joining the Jubilee Park fitness centre, Jubilee Park Bowls club, and Spa singers, but I still felt I needed something else to fully feel integrated into village life and that's when I saw an advert for volunteers at the Cottage Museum in the Woodhall Spa Wapentake.

I was invited to a Friends and volunteers coffee morning to meet other volunteers and find out what opportunities there were for volunteering. I was met with a warm welcome and once I told them I had an educational background I was then invited to the next Education meeting!

With a background of 13 years in banking, 10 years in schools, and 7 years as a Director with my husband of our own Financial Training company, I feel privileged to have been asked to be a Director of the Museum.

The Cottage museum has taught me so much about the history of the Village and the museum itself. It has given me a sense of community and belonging and I have made so many new friends along the way. I would recommend anyone to come along to the museum, have a look around, find out more about our lovely village and maybe see if there is anything that you could do to help make it an even better place.



Tina Delaney

Tina Delaney

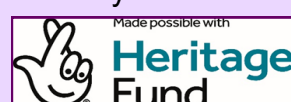
New Stories New Audiences Grant

The Cottage Museum, Woodhall Spa has been awarded a grant from the Association of Independent Museums (AIM), in the latest allocation of AIM's New Stories New Audiences grant. These grants are supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund with thanks to National Lottery Players across the UK.

The Cottage Museum, Woodhall Spa has been successful in obtaining a grant to help support their exhibition and events programme in 2024. The museum wants to be more inclusive and relevant for the future. Thanks to a New Stories New Audiences grant, the Cottage Museum is going to work with new local younger audiences (7-11 years) and families through partnerships with local primary schools, scouts and brownie groups. This project will focus on two new ways of working: The first new focus is on co-curation: where local young people are invited to create their own exhibition. The second focus will be towards additional events and hands on activities that will become part of a visit to the museum towards the end of the year.

"This grant will allow us to work with local communities and give the opportunity to tell stories from objects currently not on display. We are excited to be able to work with local groups and schools creating together over the next year." David Hill – Chair, The Cottage Museum, Woodhall Spa.

The New Stories New Audiences grant will help create six additional events at the museum for young people and their families throughout 2024, an exhibition produced by the local community, costume for visitors to try on and support volunteers in developing their skills.



Museum Exhibits for 2024 Season

The museum's Collections Team have now cleared the displays featuring the Monarchy and the 75th anniversary of the NHS. They are delving into the archives for items to use in this year's displays. Their searching has produced clothing accessories and related memorabilia which would have been worn by Woodhall Spa residents stretching as far back as the Edwardian period. In addition, metal gardening implements used during those times will also be on show.



*Part of "Gentleman" Jim Almonds
Temporary display*

The room devoted to the second world war is also getting refreshed, using artefacts currently kept in store. When going to the museum don't forget to visit the Wield's photographic dark room where all the objects have been given an in depth clean during the closed season.

The temporary exhibition room will have displayed, during the first two months of the museum opening, an exhibition featuring "Gentleman Jim" who was one of the founding members of the SAS and lived in Stixwold. Following that the museum is formulating an exhibition featuring prominent Lincolnshire women. Further information about later displays will be provided in due course.

Tom Johnson

Museum Collaboration with Lincoln University

The museum may be closed over the winter period but nevertheless there is plenty going on. In particular the Collections Team are preparing the exhibits for the coming season. This winter they have been working with third year students from Lincoln University. Last year on November 9th 18 students visited to look at the museum and its holdings and on 10th and 11th January members of the Collection Team visited the University to



*Left to Right 3 of the 3rd
Year University Students,
with Christine Audis &
Patricia Duke-Cox*

learn from third year students about collections care and management. They learned from four teams of students of their suggestions and advice on emergency planning, light levels for artefacts, temperature and humidity controls and preventative pest controls and how to prepare the necessary materials to monitor all aspects of care. What a superb example of collaboration with a local University.

Patricia Duke-Cox

200 Club Winners

October 2023

£25 [106]	David Moore
£20 [138]	Sam Evison
£15 [13]	David Leyland
£10 [27]	Andy Hibberd

November 2023

£25 [101]	Barbara Williams
£20 [134]	Tom Johnson
£15 [105]	Nicola Moore
£10 [41]	Michael Midgley

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£75 [114]	Peter Needham
£50 [13]	Andy Hibberd
£25 [166]	John Barter

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From the Collection -

A WOODHALL SPA MYSTERY SOLVED

There were two pairs of Victorian sisters who gave substantial service to the village in the first decades of the 20th century. All four remained single throughout their lives. The Lunn sisters ran a school on the Broadway and the Williams sisters were the original tenants of the Tea House in the Woods. This article will discuss the latter; the former will wait for a future newsletter.

The accepted 'facts' regarding the sisters are, a photo of one and that her first initial was G plus they hailed from London and that Dr Cyril Williams, the medical superintendent at the Baths, was their brother. In December 2022 the Head of Collections discovered the initials (F.E.) of the other sister. Even then their identities proved elusive but after pain-staking research, the real story can now be told.

Florence Elsie (1877-1973) and Gladys Dorothy (1888-1971) Williams were the daughters of William Henry Williams (1834-1916) and Susan nee Peckover (1842-1929). This couple married in 1862, produced no less than ten offspring, eight daughters and two sons, raising their children in London. Their father was the son of a tailor and became a merchant tailor himself. If he was a member of that illustrious livery company is unknown but he was successful. The family home was at 139, Adelaide Road, Hampstead and remained so for many years.

In about 1903, the sisters became the first tenants of the Tea House in the Woods, no doubt erected by the 'Syndicate' who extended the Bath House and facilities. They were 'in-house' during the season. They resided, whilst in Woodhall, in a boarding house, returning to London for the winter. In 1921 they were boarding with Mrs. Shercliffe on Tattershall Road. They not only provided refreshments to patients and visitors but also sold Fancy Goods and operated a Library service. The charm of the Tea House led it to being frequently photographed which no doubt added to its popularity. In 1913 the sisters purchased the building even though they were still stated as leaseholders in the 1921 sale of the estate. The 1929 Woodhall Spa rate book has them still paying rates on the Tea House. With upheaval surrounding the Baths in the 1920s, the sisters sold the business and retired. However, in the same year, they remained active, embarking on a cruise, as first-class passengers, to Java!

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With the death of their mother, also in 1929, Florence and Gladys together with two of their unmarried sisters and a widowed brother decamped to 18, Primrose Hill, Hampstead. Neither of the family homes exist now, replaced with tower blocks and low-rise monotonous housing. The brother died in 1945. The other sisters, Helen and Susan died in 1944 and 1960 respectively. So, Florence and Gladys soldiered on, Gladys died in 1971 aged 83 and Florence survived until 1973, aged 95.

What of the other apocryphal association, with Dr Cyril John Williams? The evidence concludes it was just that. They share the same name but were not in any way related. The sisters' two brothers were Ernest and Henry. Dr Williams had no sisters. So, the association that had been suggested and entered into folklore as fact can now be discounted.



Gladys



Florence

Nicholas Duke-Cox

Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

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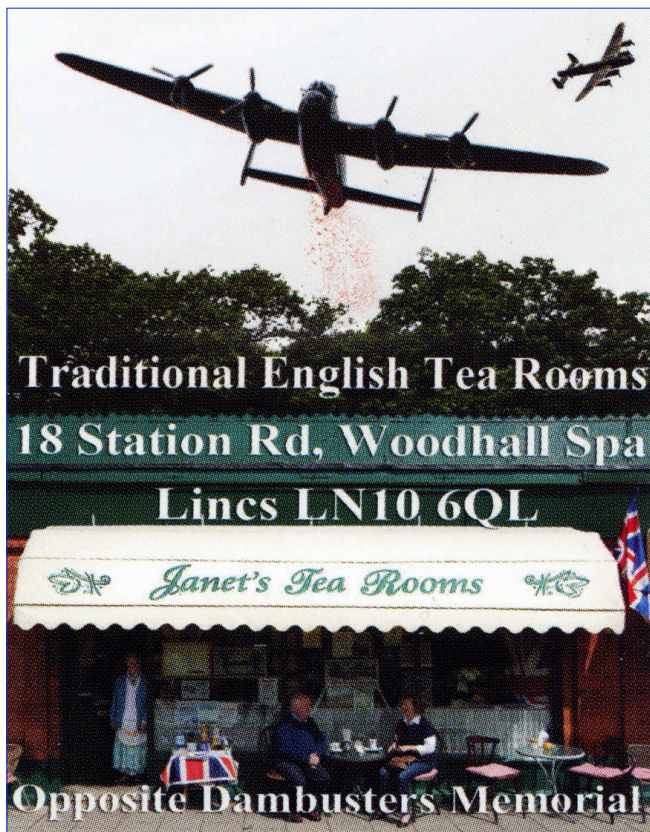
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Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

The Christmas Past Event

The Christmas Past Event was held on Saturday 24th November. Following a similar format to the previous year there was community Carol Singing on the lawn to music provided by the Woodhall Spa Community Band. Two sessions were held; one in the morning and the other after lunch.

Inside the museum the Wield Room had been decorated in the style of a Victorian Christmas and there were various Christmas related exhibits throughout the rest of the building. Refreshments were served in the Temporary Exhibition Room and did a brisk trade!

In the Community Room the Learning Group had set up various craft projects for the younger visitors to attempt. There was lots of interest in these craft projects and never a dull moment throughout the day.

In the Courtyard tables were set out and a wide variety of Festive items were available to purchase together with refreshments.

The day attracted a steady stream of visitors and was a great success.



The Community Band plays for carol singing



Annette serves refreshments

Philip Groves



Christmas crafts in the Community Room



Patzy chats to visitors

Come and Join Us

The backbone of the Cottage Museum is our volunteers and some of them are putting a lot of hours in and could really do with a hand. Can you help? Do you have a few hours to spare in the month? It does not have to be a massive commitment. There are numerous opportunities to suit most interests. If you would like to find out more without committing yourself then please call us on **01526 352456** or come along to an OPEN Coffee morning on April 10th at 10.30am in the Community Room and find out more.



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Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

Bertha, March 1924

Dear Readers,

Perce says I should begin by saying we have a new cemetery. "Lawks," I said, "that's not a cheerful way to bring in the year of our Lord 1924." Never mind cheerful," he said. "Folks need to know there'll be a resting place for them and bodies are just about bursting out of the graveyard by the church at the crossroads." I sometimes think he is rather coarse. Captain Hotchkin found a site just out of the village on Kirkby Lane.

The other day when I was walking down the Broadway I saw a group of girls, wearing the uniform of Girl Guides. Then I remembered that Miss Lunn at Hartington House High School for Girls has formed a troop there. She is very enterprising. Every summer there is a grand prize-giving at the school and last year Sir Archibald and Lady Weigall were presenting the prizes. She may have inspired the idea of Girl Guides because she said that when they were in Australia she was Chief Guide. She also said "how happy she was to meet such a lot of brilliant girls and they could always count on her as a friend!" Well, she says things like that. Sir Archibald said "England owes its greatness not to material wealth or possessions but to its fine spirit and character, carried all over the world." Well, he says things like that.



Hartington House High School for Girls in the Broadway



*Harry Vardon drives from 3rd Tee at Woodhall Spa
Photo by kind permission of The English Golf Union*

Perce says that Harry Vardon had a round of golf here in the Autumn. He was staying at Skegness – I don't know why, we have plenty of accommodation here. He was keen to witness the Golf Links, as they used to call them, which he designed twenty years ago. He kindly said they were much improved since their opening in 1905. So that was nice!

Bertha
March 1924

Marjorie Sargeant

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LOKI'S PAGE

Well here we are again at the beginning of a new season. I hope you all had a lovely Christmas and Happy New Year. I did with lots of visitors over the Christmas holiday. This time we have information on The Spring Trail which begins in the museum on 27th March. As a change from a puzzle or Wordsearch we have an Easter activity with details of how to make Pace Eggs which has been prepared by Gill Noble. Hope you have lots of fun making these, but do ask Mum and Dad first!

Bye for now



THE SPRING TRAIL starts on Tuesday 26th March

The Spring Trail in the Museum this year is the Pest Patrol. We need your help to find the tiny invertebrate adult pests in the Museum. It is Spring and the adults will lay eggs from which larvae will hatch out. The larvae can munch their way through the building. We need to find the adults before they lay their eggs.

An Easter Activity for you. MAKING PACE EGGS

Have fun this Easter and make some pace eggs. Pace egging is an ancient tradition which originated in Lancashire but is still carried out in parts of England.

You will need some eggs and some loose outer skins from onions, any colour will work but red skinned onions give a better result. Wrap the onion skins round the eggs and secure them using bits of old tights knotted at each end to make a pouch.

Hard boil the eggs and leave them to cool. Unwrap the eggs, they should be beautifully mottled, and brush them with a tiny amount of cooking oil to make them shine.

Place the decorated eggs in a basket or bowl and give them pride of place on the table during the Easter festival.

Gill Noble



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The Friends of the Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

Committee: Annette Southcott

Membership Secretary: Kelly Jestin
(Hours of work Tuesday - Thursday 9.00-4.00pm
Email: friends@cottagemuseum.co.uk)

Dear Friends,

Spring will soon be with us and the Museum is busy preparing for re-opening on 26th March. Although we close to the public for the winter, the work behind the scenes continues and this year is no exception.

The exhibition of SAS founder, Major 'Gentleman Jim' Almonds of Stixwould will be back on display during the months of April and May. For those of you who missed the exhibition during October, this will be another chance to look at the early life of this local hero, who had the most incredible wartime experiences which have been depicted in the television series *SAS Rogue Heroes*.

We were fortunate to have his daughter and biographer Lorna Almonds-Windmill as our guest speaker at the Annual Memorial Talk in November at the Golf Hotel. Speaking to a capacity crowd of over a hundred, she was able to paint a vivid picture of this unassuming man who was one of the twelve 'originals' that formed the first SAS regiment under the command of the legendary David Stirling and 'Paddy' Mayne. Major Almonds was born and went to school in the village of Stixwould until the age of fourteen and came back to live there in 1960 until his death in 2005. His post-war career is another amazing story which we hope will be the subject of our November talk.

Currently, we are planning the spring talk which will take place at the Golf Hotel on Saturday 13th April at 2.30pm. The speaker will be Ken Argent who will be talking about his experiences as an evacuee during World War 2 and how these changed his life. Tickets priced £7 will be on sale via the Museum website from mid March, so check for details. They will also be available at the Museum during opening hours.

As you will no doubt have heard, the 1940s weekend is no longer going ahead in Woodhall Spa, but the Museum has decided to do a themed event on Saturday 13th July when the courtyard cafe will be open from 11am-3pm with entertainment sessions provided by Rachel Bea a popular regular singer at previous 1940s events.

We hope you will be able to attend this and our regular Music in the Garden events every Sunday in August plus an additional session the last Sunday in July. Look forward to seeing you at the coffee mornings on the second Wednesday of the month at 10.30am.

Friends and Volunteers Coffee Mornings

A coffee morning is normally held on the second Wednesday of the month, to enable volunteers from the various teams to meet each other and to meet some of the Directors.

It affords a great opportunity to exchange ideas and make suggestions, or just have a general chinwag! The next event is planned for Wednesday 13th March from 10.30am until 12 noon.

Please check our website, or social media for the latest information.



What's On Guide

Spring Lecture World War 2 Evacuees

A Talk by Ken Argent
Sat 13th April
2.30pm start
Doors open 2pm
Golf Hotel
Admission £7
From the website or
Reception during opening
hours.

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Woodhall Country Show

The New Showfield, Green
Lane, Woodhall Spa,
Sunday May 24th 2024
Museum stand in the
Heritage Tent
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For the latest information visit
www.cottagemuseum.co.uk

Best Wishes

Annette Southcott

