Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum



Keith Hanson RVM delivers his talk "TALES FROM THE TOWER"

> Newsletter No.50 July 2025

A Note from the Editor

The museum is well and truly into the 2025 season now and the various activities planned for this season are covered in this issue of our Newsletter.

This Newsletter is the 50th issue in its current form. David Radford, who founded the museum back in 1986 did mention in these pages that a Newsletter had been produced in the early days of the museum but had lapsed. Newsletter No.1 appeared in April 2009 in A4 format and was edited by Matt Tuck. Matt was with the RAF at Digby and I believe was recruited to produce the Newsletter by Paddy O'Neill. It was soon decided to produce future editions as an A5 booklet as it is now. I took over with Issue No.11 which also happened to be the 25th Anniversary of the



Museum. Matt had been posted by the RAF to pastures new, so I volunteered to carry on his good work and here I am at Issue 50, still doing the job!

Many notable events have taken place and been reported in these pages over the years. Probably the most far reaching was the amazing achievement of being awarded a Heritage Lottery Fund Grant, which enabled the museum to fully renovate the old Boulton and Paul building, once the home of the Wield family, replace the fire damaged outbuildings with the Community Room, Store Rooms and Office area and to rejuvenate all the displays. As the renovation progressed it was, of course, fully covered in text and photographs through the pages of the Newsletter.

The day to day work of the museum continues and this month we look back at a successful Spring Talk and look forward to all the various events planned for this season, which include the 40s Saturday on July 12th. and the Music in the Garden season through August. Hope to see you at some of these events.

Philip Groves

Front Cover Story

Over 60 people attended the Spring Talk "Tales from the Tower" given by former Yeoman Warder Keith Hanson RVM. It was a truly fascinating talk and is written up in more detail on page 3.

In this Issue				
Page 3	Tales from the Tower	Page 12	Axle Cooling	
	Museum Needs More Trustees	Page 16	Bertha, July 1925	
Page 4	Appreciation of Paddy O'Neill			
Page 5	Music in the Garden Preview		Loki's Page	
	200 Club Results	Page 20	The Friends' Page	
Page 8	From the Collection		What's On Guide	
Page 9	From the Collection continued			
The Newsletter				
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"Tales from the Tower" - The Spring Talk

The much awaited Spring Talk entitled "Tales from the Tower" presented by former Yeoman Warder Keith Hanson RVM did not disappoint and was a really fascinating afternoon packed with facts, stories and personal experiences. Keith and his family lived in The Tower for 20 years.

We were taken on a tour of all the main areas of the Tower, illustrated by stories of their history, sometimes fascinating, sometimes quite horrific. The afternoon was full of information which held the audience spellbound. He talked about the story of the two young Princes who were incarcerated in the Tower and were eventually killed there and whose remains were found in a wooden box many years later. He talked about the nightly ceremony of the Keys, The Crown Jewels (for which he was personally responsible for many years). He told us about the Ravens and how The Tower is allowed to fire 62 round Royal Salutes, rather than the 41 permitted in the Royal Parks. He covered such a broad spectrum of subjects that it is impossible to mention them all in this short write up.

It was a truly brilliant talk, which was well attended and prompted a lively question and answer session at the end of the afternoon.



Keith Hanson in his Yeoman of the Guard uniform

Philip Groves

The Museum Needs More Trustees

Do you have an interest in heritage and preserving the history of Woodhall Spa and the skills to be a trustee? If so, you could be joining an established team to help develop the future for our friendly Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum.

We're looking for people with skills, enthusiasm and commitment to help us achieve our vision to make the Museum relevant for the digital age whilst preserving its unique history and heritage. We would welcome applications from people with experience in, but not restricted to, one of the following:-

Finance, Facilities management including IT & multi-media, Heritage management, Marketing, Fundraising, Working with families and groups or Organisational leadership.

Would you like to join our Trustee team?

To discuss any of these roles please email info@cottagemuseum.co.uk with your contact details and we will be happy to get back to you and anwer your questions.

Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

An Appreciation of Paddy O'Neill

<u>River's Run</u>

A poem written by Paddy O'Neill

Feelings of foaming fury fill my mind As your shimmering course falls freely past, Searching nature's weakest way, so to find Untramelled progress, whether slow or fast.

Through gorges grim and dark, deep mossy glades Unkissed by midday's sun's strong, streaming rays, And roaring on, not slowed as daylight fades, Tumbling torrents, fresh filled on rainy days Fight furiously in tumultuous sound. Your watery way, fast-flowing, diving, spewing, slippery slide over boulders round, Powerfully pounding, downward driving, headlong in hot pursuit of open sea. Fulfilling, fretful, hand-earned destiny.



Paddy O'Neill

Peter John O'Neil was nicknamed 'Paddy' by a classmate in his schooldays, and the name stuck. To us he was always 'Paddy', a wonderful addition to our Museum Volunteers.

Paddy had a distinguished career with the Immigration Service working across the UK and later was responsible for training new immigration officers. This involved extensive travel around much of Europe, educating and training police, airline officials and government staff. He also happily married Toni in 1964 and together they raised their family.

By 1997, sadly, Paddy was diagnosed as suffering from multiple sclerosis, and he took early retirement at the age of 54. Toni and Paddy moved to Woodhall Spa, Toni being a Boston girl, so retirement to Lincolnshire seemed the obvious choice. It was not long before Paddy became a volunteer at the Museum, and by 1999 he took on the responsibility of organising the Museum Meeters and Greeters, serving on the Friends Committee and chairing the Newsletter Committee.

When the Museum became a Limited Company in 2005, Paddy was one of the first Directors, and he continued in this role until 2017. By then his MS was making it increasingly difficult for him to attend meetings, and to carry out his commitment to the work.

Paddy died on the 23rd February 2025 and we said our farewells at his funeral on the 31st March 2025. It was at this time that we learnt that among his many talents, Paddy was a poet. One of his poems is included in this tribute and I can well empathise with his sentiments. Many is the time that I have sat on a river bank watching the ever-changing patterns as the water rushed by. It brings to mind the words of our great Lincolnshire poet, Alfred Lord Tennyson in his poem the Brook. That 'Men may come and Men may go, but I go on for ever'. Paddy, you happily came to give great service to the Woodhall Spa Cottage museum, and sadly are gone, but the service that you gave and the traditions that you created, will go on forever.

Thank you Paddy and Godspeed.

Music in the Garden Preview

This year there are 5 "Music in the Garden" concerts. They will all run from 2pm to approximately 4.00pm with an interval at around 3pm when drinks and cake can be purchased from the Patio Café. on each Sunday of August. There is no entry fee, but donations would be very much appreciated.

Sunday 3rd August - Silver Lions Ukulele Band

Silver Lions Ukulele Band are small group of local people who love playing the Ukulele. Ukulele groups are always popular at our "Music in the Garden" concerts and will get the series off to a rousing start.

Sunday 10th August - Sing It Loud

"Sing It Loud" are a fun and friendly singing group from Woodhall Spa. They sing a wide range of songs and everyone is welcome! With a life-long passion for singing and working in communities, Liz McIntosh leads the singers with warmth, humour and enthusiasm and believes that singing with others is a fundamental community building activity and that singing is for everyone

Sunday 17th August - The Acoustic Itch

The group was formed from the disbanded "Between the Lines" group following the retirement of John Blanks. Phil Biggs wife Kim joined on vocals and Accordion to form "The Acoustic Itch."

200 Club Winners			
February 2025			
	Jo Evison		
£20 [192] £15 [31]	Mary Goy Cassandra Hewson		
March 2025			
£20 [78]	Ruth Paul Steve Berry Tina Delaney		
April 2025			
£25[148] £20 [48] £15[142]	George Lilley		
<u>May 2025</u>			
£25[120] £20 [175] £15 [45]			
<u>June 2025</u>			
£25 [40] £20 [98] £15 [185]	Jean Mair Keith Baguley Robert Lake		

Sunday 24th August -The Outdoor Cats

New for this year are John and Mia -"The Outdoor Cats". They are a "Uke" Based Duo and perform an eclectric mix of covers and songs dating back from middle of the last century to the middle of last week! Mia also sings and they wear hats!

<u>Sunday 31st August -</u> <u>Al Brown</u>

Al Brown has appeared at the last two year's concerts and was enormously popular. He sings songs from the 50s, 60s, 70s and 80s and has a tremendous rapport with the audience. This concert will be a fantastic climax to the whole series of concerts.







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From the Collection - TWO LOCAL EDWARDIAN PHOTOGRAPHERS

The Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum has a vast number of photographs/postcards in its Collection. They were taken by photographers from all over the country. The photographer intimately connected with the museum, is of course, its former occupier, John Wield (1877-1965). There were about six photographers connected with Woodhall Spa and are represented in the Collection. This article will concentrate on two, whose output was prolific and cast their nets not only locally but nationally. They are Thomas Harry Harrison (1871-1928) and Edwin Horace Neale (1872-1934). They signed their work with just their surnames. It has recently come to light that these gentlemen did not work independently but probably as a partnership.

THOMAS HARRY HARRISON (1871-1928)

Thomas was the youngest child of Joseph and Bessie Harrison. He was born near Hardingstone near Northampton and was baptised on August 27th 1871. He remained at home but by 21 years of age decided to become a photographer. In October of 1882, he married Alice Carver from Long Eaton. It looks as though she retained her maiden name becoming known as Alice Carver Harrison and passing on the name to her son Arthur (b.1906). The couple also had two daughters. By the time the family was complete they had moved to New Clee adjacent to Cleethorpes, Lincolnshire, purchasing a small terraced house in 1906 which they retained for their married life. Thomas set himself up as a professional photographer, initially at New Clee but in order to attract affluent customers, he purchased a shop in Lincoln and in 1909, a shop and studio in Woodhall Spa.

ERNEST HORACE NEALE (1872-1934)

Ernest Neale's family hailed from Suffolk. However, he was born to Horace and Margaret Neale in 1872 at Burton-on-Trent. He had a sister Annie b.1873. His father was a cheese factor (ie a trader). Unfortunately, his mother died at the early age of 28 in September 1876 leaving his father to bring up the young family. Father persuaded his sister, a spinster, Fanny Neale, to become a factotum and 'mother'.

By 1901, Ernest became one of two assistants to chemist, William Smith, at Chard in Somerset. As is so often the case with chemists, he may have learnt the rudiments of photography from his employer. Two years later he married Alice Hallam (b.1880) at Burton. A daughter Mary came along in 1909.



Continued from previous page...

By the time of the 1911 census, Ernest was a professional photographer and was in Lincolnshire. He remained in the county for the rest of his life, producing many local views for printing and selling as postcards.

THE HARRISON-NEALE CONNECTION

Two places in Lincolnshire are intimately connected with both of these gentlemen. They are 168, High Street Lincoln and The Vale on Tor-o-Moor Road in Woodhall Spa. It is recorded that Harrison also had a shop on Station Road. Determining which of them lived or worked where was challenging, as not only are both associated with both addresses, but that association extends to both noted at the same address at the same time! No.168 was a shop and a point of contact between the public and clients. It probably also sold photographic equipment and accessories. There may have been some rooms above the shop for accommodation or storage. The Station Road premises fulfilled the same purpose but appears short-lived. The Vale on Tor-o-Moor does still exist, now as a private dwelling and b&b. The studio building also still exists but in a sad condition. The photograph below, which Harrison used as an advert, shows it in its heyday c.1906 as a very imposing building. It is in a delightful spot with a small lake, the house and studio border it. The studio was probably used to take portraits and probably also included a dark -room for developing and printing exposures.



Neale probably appeared on the scene about 1909 and may have gone into partnership or an informal arrangement with Harrison as the formers address was The Vale. I think that Harrison was living in the house and Neale was using the Vale studio solely as a business address for in 1911 he recorded the census address for him and his family at the Lincoln shop. In the 1926 Kellys directory, we have Neale at the Vale. It might be possible that Harrison may have semi-retired, living at Clee, retaining 168, High St as a business address and that Neale was living at the Vale as well as conducting business there. Harrison died in 1928 and his son, Arthur Harrison, took over responsibility at Clee, together

with his mother. Neale probably remained living at the Vale until his death in 1934.

Nicholas Duke-Cox

Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

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Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

Axle Cooling — Came's Mall

After "Mellow Observer," who came to Woodhall Spa in 1890, had been to the Baths and the Victoria Hotel and explored that part of the village, he looked a little further afield to the newer area, from the station to the crossroads. His short resumé gives us a " commenced delightful picture:my saunterings with the more central congestions of the pretty Woodhall Colony. There is a picturesque group of some 25 shops and dwelling rooms arranged in the form of a Bazaar, with a crystal covered promenade around the interior of the quadrangular formation. Within it all is an open space laid ornamental garden. It is out as an appropriately called the Mall and has been



Came's plan shows The Mall bottom Right with Station Road in foreground and Tattershall Road running diagonally on the right.

laid out by Mr. R.A. Came, a London architect and the designer of many pretty villas dotted about "

In his booklet there are advertisements for a wide range of shops. One wonders about "central congestions" in 1890, compared with today! Marjorie Sargeant

Student Volunteering

The Cottage Museum has been delighted to accept some volunteering support from a Lincoln University Student recommended by our current Museum Mentor, Andrea Martin, who works as the Exhibitions and Interpretation Manager at the Lincoln Museum and Usher Gallery.

Layla Ashberry first made contact with the Museum in January and visited in early February to be introduced to the museum's collections. She has visited regularly, been a quick learner, and learned how to consult and add to the databases that give descriptions of items and their sources of donations under the guidance of Patricia Duke-Cox.

Her regular visits have given her the opportunity to experience the museum environment and contribute to the acquisition of recent

Layla Ashberry donations which continue to be made to the museum. Her understanding of taking suitable photographs and adding good descriptions is excellent and her attention to detail in recording the necessary notes about donors cannot be faulted.

She recently informed us that she has been accepted for a Master's Degree and believes that demonstrating her current volunteering with the museum helped convince the panel interviewing her of her commitment and involvement in the world of museums and galleries. We wish her well and welcome her input.

Patricia Duke-Cox

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 .













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Bertha, July 1925

Dear Readers,

July 2025

After concern that the Spa Baths would have to close, fortunately we are enjoying a successful Season.

As well as the indoor healing Baths our visitors needed an outdoor swimming pool - it has been so hot! Near the beginning of June, they say even in shadier parts of the village the heat reached 85 degrees.

Luckily, it was not this temperature when the annual Skegness to Horncastle Walking Match took place. I wondered if Perce might be interested - it costs only one shilling - but he said it was for younger men (and less corpulent, I thought.)



The Kinema

There have been changes at the cinema. It is now called the Kinema! Everyone was astonished! Apparently, it is from a Greek word referring to motion. Perce and his pals think Capt. Allport wants something different to put us on the map. Now wireless apparatus has been installed and customers can listen in for half an hour before the performance starts. Also, there is an advertisement in the Horncastle News to entice people to go, with descriptions of films and the chief actors, such as Mary Pickford, whom they call "stars." Buster Keaton was another. He was in "Sherlock Junior" and it was described as, "the Greatest Comedy of the Year." In May, they started a 5 p.m. performance for schoolchildren and those who do not like to be out late. The film was, "Dancer of the Nile" about the life of Tut Ankh Amen, an ancient Egyptian king.

We had a wonderful Lily season this summer and bottles of our Lilies of the Valley perfume, priced from 2/9 to 8/6, have been selling well. It is made by Collin's, the chemist (formerly Carlton's) Tel. number 5. Visitors say the scent reminds them of Woodhall Spa.

Bertha July 1925

Marjorie Sargeant







LOKI'S PAGE Well here we are with the Summer Holidays nearly upon us. There are lots of different activities and events to look forward to including the Summer Trail, Family Events and do try the Word Search. Maybe you will be going to some of the "Music in the Garden" concerts. If you do you I might well see me there as well. I'll look forward to seeing you. Enjoy yourselves! Bye for now LOKI

Summer Activities

We will be running family fun days from 10:00 - 12:00 on the 6th and 20th August More details will follow in Wapentake and Facebook Tina Delaney



How many words with three letters or more can you make using the letters above? You can use the letters in any order. Can you find the hidden 9 letter word as well? ANSWER ON PAGE 9

The Summer Trail in the Museum is THE GREAT OBJECT HUNT which starts on Tuesday 1st July 2025. Explore the Museum to find 10 objects. You will be given clues about what you are looking for. Good luck. Jane Hodgson



Membership Secretary:

The Friends of the Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

Committee:

Annette Southcott

Kelly Jestin (Hours of work Wednesday - Friday 9.00-4.00pm Email: friends@cottagemuseum.co.uk)

Dear Friends,

As Annette is out of touch with the Friends activities while she is at home recovering from illness, she has asked me to write this page on her behalf.

The Spring Talk, which was organized by Annette, was a great success and is fully reported on page 3. The talk attracted a good attendance and with the ticket money and proceeds of the raffle, contributed some much needed funds to the museum. Keith Hanson RVM was a brilliant speaker and had the full attention of the audience throughout the afternoon.

On Saturday July 12th the Friends are staging another 40s Event, similar to the one we did last year. Rachel Bea, the hugely popular Vintage Singer, will be performing all the 40s classic songs on the museum lawn. The Courtyard Café will be open and we do need volunteers to man the café and as important to bake cakes etc. beforehand. If you can assist please let the museum know if you haven't done so already.

The Music in the Garden events will take place on every Sunday afternoon through August starting on 3rd August. We have a great line up of performers booked. Again, we will need your help with baking cakes and serving teas to the performers and the audience at the intervals. As well as being a good opportunity to meet and socialise, these activities make a significant contribution to the Museum funds and are a crucial part of our income, so we are very grateful to our Friends and volunteers who make these happen.

We have put together a Visitor Feedback Form which we hope will help

to guide the museum in its future development and provide the sort of experience our visitors are looking for in a small museum like ours. Do please ensure you all take part in this feedback and have your say!

Coffee mornings are now open to volunteers and held on the second Wednesday of the month, with a couple of exceptions which are notified in advance. We look forward to welcoming you and our thanks for your continued support.

Best Wishes

Phil Groves pp Annette Southcott

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.

The next event is planned for Wednesday 9th July from 10.30am. until 12 noon.

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



What's On Guide

40s Event Saturday July 12th Rachel Bea sings Songs from the 40s on the Museum front lawn. Refreshments available from The Courtyard Café -0-

Music in the Garden 2025 Season

All concerts from 2pm to 4pm Refreshments available

Sunday August 3rd Silver Lions Ukulele Band Local Ukulele Group

> Sunday August 10th Sing It Loud Local Choir

Sunday August 17th The Acoustic Itch Lincolnshire Folk Group

Sunday August 24th New for this year The Outdoor Cats Uke based duo

Sunday August 31st Al Brown Hugely popular Singer from Lincolnshire -0-For the latest information visit www.cottagemuseum.co.uk

