

Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum



The museum stand in the Heritage Tent
at the Woodhall Show in May

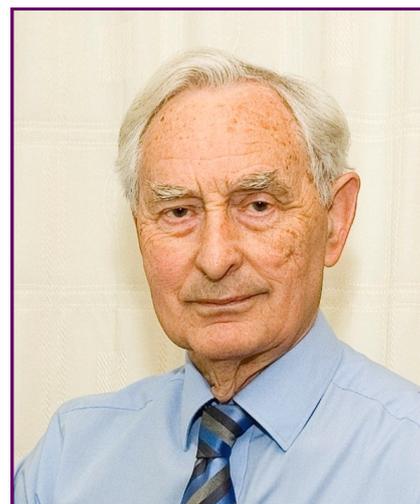
Newsletter No. 44
July 2023

Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

A Note from the Editor

We will be well into the 2023 season when you read this. The year has got off to a great start with the Spring Lecture attracting a large audience. Straight after that came the Coronation and we had a stand at the Jubilee Park Event which was well attended and the crafts went down particularly well with the youngsters.

Regrettably Gill Noble has had to retire from the Board of Directors due to personal commitments. She will be sadly missed as her contribution to the Education Team cannot be over stated, not to mention her gardening expertise. She is also a past and highly successful Chairman of the museum. A full appreciation of her enormous contribution to the museum appears on the opposite page.



The new windows have now been fitted to the museum building, just in time for the opening in April. This has been a very expensive exercise for the museum, but I am sure you will agree the specialist company who manufactured the bespoke window frames and fitted them have done a superb job.

The main summer fund raising events are now upon us, with the 40s weekend over the second weekend in July and the season of "Music in the Garden" events on each Sunday afternoon throughout August.

Unfortunately the cost of living crisis is hitting our magazine, with printing costs now greater than the income from our advertisers. At present the shortfall is being met from museum funds, but is something we will have to address, either by increasing advertising costs, or perhaps from the Friends membership fee. Nothing has been decided yet, so watch this space!

I hope you enjoy reading this issue and look forward to meeting some of you at the various events over the summer months.

Philip Groves

Front Cover Story

The museum was represented at The Woodhall Country Show at the end of May as our front cover picture shows. The weather was good so there were plenty of people around and the volunteers running the stand were kept good and busy. A very successful day!

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The Newsletter Committee

Chairman - Paddy O'Neill Editor - Philip Groves Marjorie Sargeant

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or email philanddeliagroves@gmail.com

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Gill Noble - An Appreciation

It was with sadness that trustees recently learned of the resignation of Gill Noble as a director, due to family commitments which were preventing her attendance at meetings and events. She will be sorely missed. On Sunday June 11th a presentation of Garden Vouchers was made to Gill by David Hill, museum Chairman, as a token of the directors, staff and volunteers appreciation. Gill also received Lifetime Membership of the Friends and a bouquet of flowers from the Education Team.

Gill Noble has been an active trustee since she first became involved in volunteering at the Museum, especially for her role on the Education team and then taking over the reins as chairman in 2014 after the previous two Chairmen had served for so many years. At her election to the chairmanship, it was agreed that the role should not normally be for more than three years to ensure a varied succession of ideas from trustees would be followed. As Chairman she steered the museum through the difficult period of losing staffing, when the ELDC withdrew support of the Tourist Information Centre.

Gill has always been a keen gardener and worked very hard with her gardening team to keep the museum garden looking its very best. She inspired the removal of the central pathway across the lawn, enabling events to be held with gazebos and chairs more easily. After experimenting with "Jazz in the Garden" in 2015 Gill's introduction of "Music in the Garden" on five Sunday afternoons in July and August 2016 was very well received and most enterprising. Capitalising on the increased visitors, the Courtyard Café, which was introduced in preparation for the 40s weekend, has also been a great asset in increasing funding.

Gill was also a key figure in the planning and implementation of the event aptly named "A Bit of a Do" in 2017 to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the museum. The evening was very well supported, especially the raffle, which raised £820 and a grand total of approximately £1300 was raised for Museum funds.

One of the key members of the Education Team, Jane Hodgson, recently said "It was a pleasure to work with Gill. Her leadership, support, commitment and hardworking produced a very successful and award winning Education Team for The Museum."

Patricia Duke-Cox, David Hill & Philip Groves



David Hill presents Gill with Garden Vouchers as a token of appreciation

What Our Visitors Think - Results of 2022 Survey

Recently the results of the museum visitor survey forms given out last year were published and they make for fascinating reading.

91% of the visitors surveyed were visiting for the first time, while the remaining 9% were return visits. 98% rated their experience very good or excellent and none rated their visit as average or poor. Nearly half the visitors were over 65 years of age while 3% were under the age of 12 (excluding activities and schools engagement). Very interesting was what visitors most enjoyed when they visited. Local History came top of the list, closely followed by the photographic exhibits and meeting and talking with our volunteers. Close behind these came the Slideshow, the Wield family and childhood memories. At the bottom of the list came the exhibitions, the building, WW2 exhibits and the audio reminiscences. A fascinating set of results and a big vote of thanks to our volunteers for clearly engaging so positively with the visitors.

It is interesting to note that it is very unusual in a survey of this type to have no people rating their visit as average or poor.

Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

Music in the Garden

Once again on every Sunday afternoon in August the garden of the museum will resonate to delightful music, performed by a variety of local groups and players.

The Music in the Garden concerts will take place on each of the four Sunday afternoons of August starting at 2pm to approximately 4pm with an interval for Tea, Coffee and homemade cakes at around 3pm.

As usual admission is free, but you are very welcome to make a donation.



Interval Time at "Music in the Garden"

The line up of performers for this year is as follows:-

Sunday August 6th - Woodhall Spa Community Band

Formed in February 2022 and led by former military musicians, the band was formed to bring together a community band to not only entertain the local residents but also to bond through a combined passion. The band is open to musicians of all standards and rehearsals are currently held weekly on Monday evenings within the local football club: Abbey Lane - Woodhall Spa LN10 6RA beginning at 7pm. The band performed at the museum's Christmas event last year accompanying carol singing and were very well received.



The Woodhall Spa Community Band

Sunday August 13th - Al Brown - Vocalist

Al Brown is a local vocalist who specialises in singing popular songs from the 1960s-1990s period. His brand of music should resonate very well with our audiences.

Sunday August 20th - Silver Lions Ukulele Band

"New for 2023 " The 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 this concert should be great fun.

Sunday August 27th - "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

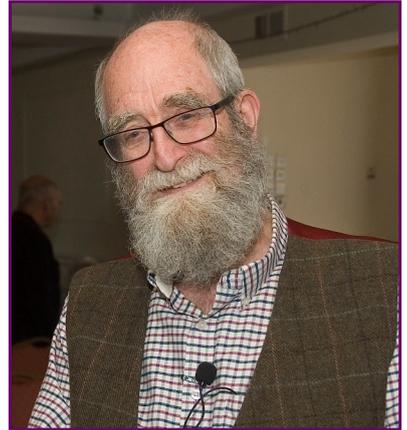


Sing It Loud at a previous appearance

The Spring Lecture



Saturday April 22nd saw the first major museum event of 2023, with the presentation of the Spring Lecture. This year the lecture was presented by local Archaeologist David Start. David joined the Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire in 1988, where he was director until his retirement in 2013. His subject



David Start

was Kirkstead Abbey. He has a great interest in medieval monasticism - particularly the lesser known Premonstratensians ... who are particularly numerous in Lincolnshire. Kirkstead Abbey, near Woodhall Spa, was a Cistercian monastery founded by Hugh the Breton in 1139. His talk, ably delivered and mainly without notes, was extremely interesting and greatly appreciated by the large audience of 66 people. David was introduced by Annette Southcott, Friends Chairman and the final vote of thanks was given by museum chairman David Hill. A raffle was held at the interval as the attendees availed themselves of tea/coffee and biscuits. Proceeds of the raffle and attendance tickets will go towards the running costs of the museum.

The Museum at the Coronation Event in Jubilee Park

On Sunday 7th May the museum participated in the Coronation Event at Jubilee Park. We had an open tent and displayed information on volunteering opportunities at the museum. There were various craft activities for young people to do, including crown making, colouring sheets, badge making and consequence game making. About 40 youngsters tried their hand during the day. A vintage Ford car was a big hit, with people commenting on the unique smell, how much they liked it etc. All in all an enjoyable and fun day for all concerned.

200 Club Winners

February 2023

£25 [177] Mervyn Casey
 £20 [89] Janet Thorpe
 £15 [3] Helen Brass
 £10 [125] Steve Berry

March 2023

£25 [177] Mervyn Casey
 £20 [75] Joyce Hyde
 £15 [181] Pete Wright
 £10 [56] Anne Taylor

April 2023

£25 [162] David Spratt
 £20 [40] Keith Davis
 £15 [72] Keith Sargeant
 £10 [118] Ron Bixby

May 2023

£25 [10] Judith Haddock
 £20 [198] Brenda Lilley
 £15 [146] Chrissie Lake
 £10 [121] Nigel Webb



Museum Tent



The Vintage Ford



Peter Bewick tries his hand at crafts

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Toni O'Neill

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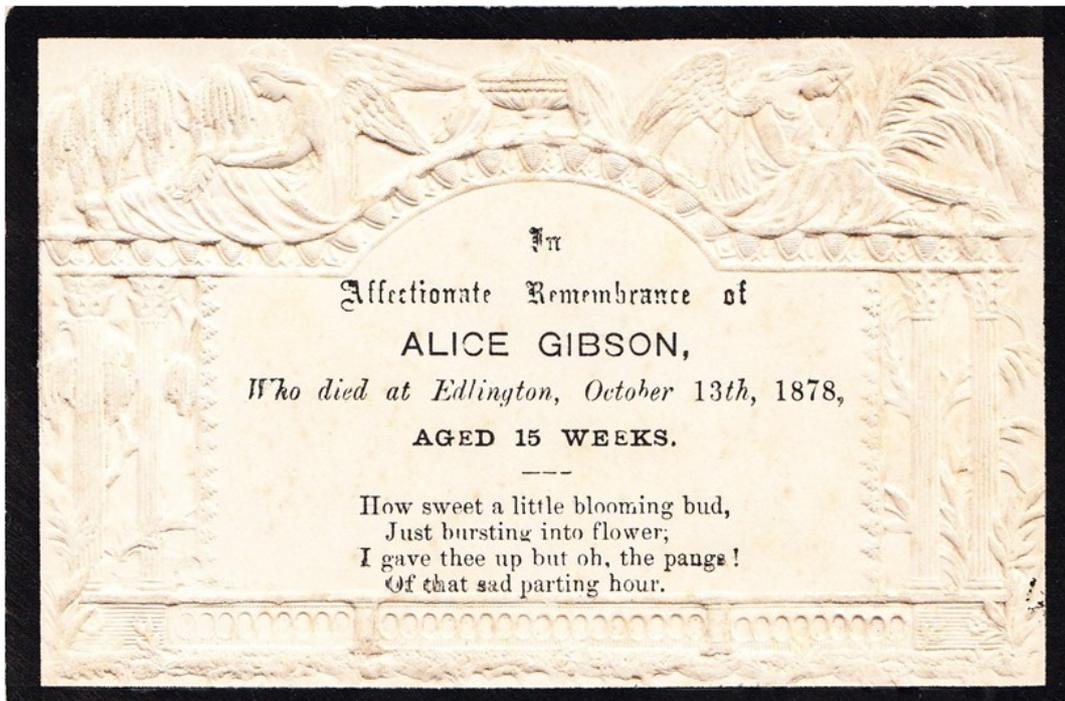
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From the Collection - THE SAD STORY OF THE GIBSON FAMILY

For this newsletter, I have raided the Collections rather than the Visual Assets archive of the Museum i.e., artifacts and objects rather than photographs. Before embarking on the story behind the above title, background information is required.

In the Collections archive are a series of personal cards; the majority are 'memorial' or funeral cards. There are 37 in total all sent to the Wield family at the Bungalow. These cards were a popular means of communicating the loss of a friend or family member, especially to those who could not attend a funeral in a far-off area of the country. We must remember that in the Victorian/Edwardian period one could not jump into a car and be transported to the opposite end of the kingdom within a few hours. The majority are plain cards with a customary black border; however, some are works of art being embossed and having pierced decoration. One example of the latter is illustrated below and thus we commence our story.



This is a delightful card for a young child, Alice Gibson who died in 1878 at Edlington. The cause is unknown but can be surmised as we shall see. She was the fourth child born to Joseph and Mary Ann Gibson. Joseph, like thousands of others was a humble agricultural labourer.

Continued on next page

Community Room for Hire

At the Cottage Museum

Very reasonable rates:

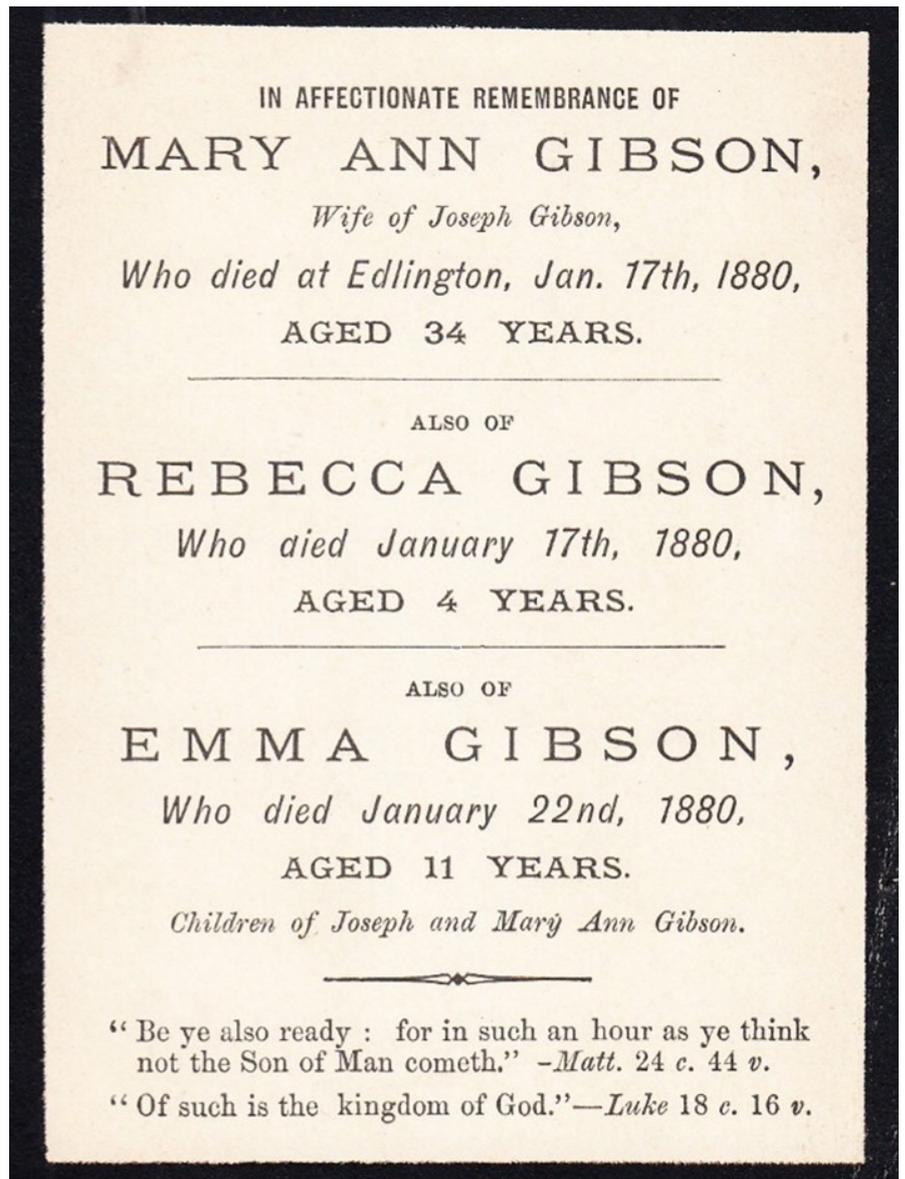
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In 1880, catastrophe struck this working family as can be seen when the card, right, is examined. It is devoted to three people Recorded here are the deaths, only 3 years later, of three more members of the family, the mother, Mary Ann and Alice's two elder sisters, Rebecca, who died on the same day as her mother and Emma dying 5 days days later. What caused this tragedy came from John Wield who was born in Edlington and related to his son that when he was 3 years old a family of three in the village died of diphtheria in one week. This must be the Gibson's. Thus, Joseph was left with his one remaining child, his son, George. He had to work, so George was fostered to his grandparents for at least 10 years. His story is unknown but Joseph, however, went to work for William Shaw, a Horsington farmer. Eventually happiness came to Joseph for he became a partner in a farm at Newball near Langworth. With increasing prosperity, before WWI, the partners also obtained a farm at Branston.



Nicholas Duke-Cox

Museum Helps Local School

A few months ago the museum loaned St. Andrew's School in Woodhall Spa school admission books and log books, dating back to the early 1900s, along with the old punishment book. We recently heard from the school that they were put to good use. Mr Blair and Mrs Weaver, teachers who set up the History Club, were able to track 13 boys from St. Andrew's who fought and died in the First World War. A service was held a month or two ago in school, where the History Club members were able to present details of the servicemen. The school have created a memorial garden in remembrance of the former pupils.



The Memorial Garden at St. Andrew's School

Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

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Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

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When spa water was first discovered here many people flocked to the Spa. Alas, the only hostelry was “a beer house with sanded floors, wooden benches, a reeking atmosphere and small beer.”

Decades later, our “Mellow Observer” of 1890, found a very different welcome at the Victoria Hotel. This fine building adjoined the Spa grounds and had attractive flower-gardens, lawns, walks

and tennis courts, stretching down to Stixwold Road.

Inside, Mellow Observer found “a spacious entrance hall and a grand suite of richly furnished rooms on the ground floor, including a fine dining room.” There was accommodation for eighty five guests. “The Hotel is substantially equipped in every particular. Food is prepared with variations on the culinary art but with no intemperate fantasies while luscious wines are conspicuous in the grape element.

The Hotel epitomises the poetry of comfort.” Perhaps the “luscious wines” contributed to his mellowness.

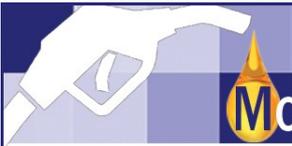
An advertisement of the time claimed that the Victoria Hotel, “surrounded and protected by pine woods, is unrivalled for the salubrity of the air and the health giving qualities of the neighbourhood.”

For the next thirty years the Victoria Hotel, Woodhall Spa, maintained its high standards and so well-known did it become that aristocracy, foreign dignitaries, admirals and generals, judges, bishops and surgeons all stayed there. It was said that people would return home boasting that they had stayed at the Victoria Hotel, Woodhall Spa.

Marjorie Sargeant

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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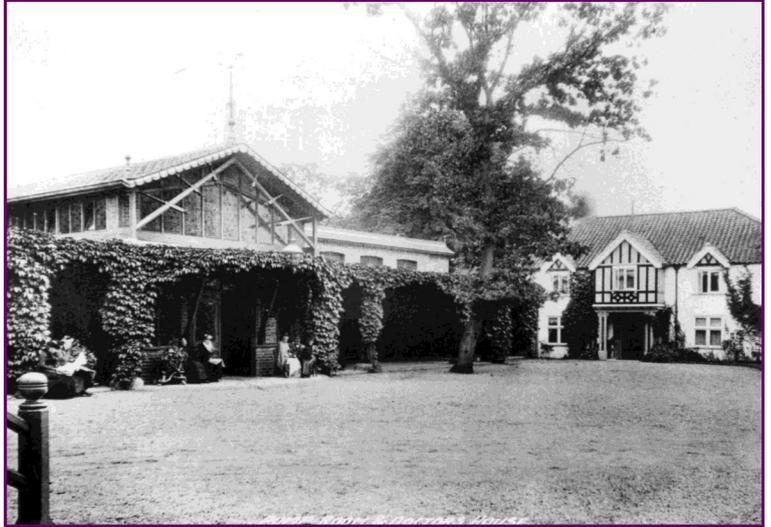
Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

Bertha, July 1923

Dear Readers,

Five years after the end of the dreadful hostilities, this village is still not receiving the flocks of visitors who came in heady Edwardian days.

We are told that fewer gentry go to spas now because of all the suffering ordinary people endured. Perce says never mind such sensibilities, the fact is that people have less money. Also, the conflagration and destruction of our esteemed Victoria Hotel makes this spa less attractive than it was. So, the Baths are in financial trouble and in March Perce came in with the news that the Councillors had voted seven votes to two to purchase the well and Baths. He said, "mark my words Bertha, this will cost everybody money." I said that if we did not have visitors to the Baths staying with us we would not have any money but he just grunted. He expects me to show respect by agreeing with him.



The Spa Baths

Also in the Spring, the Pavilion Cinema announced it would have to close if attendances did not increase. This was only four months after its grand opening. I was astonished but I suppose full attendances are needed to meet expenses and folk did not always want to trek through the woods to it in winter months. Perce said that Lady Weigall, who graciously gave us it, is unaware that ordinary folk have little cash for such frivolities.

Fortunately, it kept going and we have been to see "The Sheik." Oh, it was exciting and the piano music was so dramatic, I felt I was there! Fancy being alone in the desert, dressed as a man...and Rudolph Valentino was so handsome... it made my life in Woodall Spa seem very tame... but I suppose I am safe with my Perce.



Rudolph Valentino

Bertha
July 1923

Marjorie Sargeant

Answers to Puzzle on page 18

CROWN, CORONATION, CARRIAGE, ORB, SWORD, RING, KING, CROSS

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POPPY'S PAGE

presented by LOKI

We are well into the new season and lots of summer activities are planned and shown on this page. I am looking forward to lots of walks in the woods. I'm allowed off the lead to run and explore as I like, it's absolutely super! Hope to see you in August at "Music in the Garden". I like music and go to concerts and dances run by my owners. Bye for now, Loki



Events and Activities in Summer 2023

Wednesday 5th July to Saturday 9th September

Sensational Summer Senses

A Sensory Challenge.

Use your senses to look, listen, smell, taste and feel your way around The Cottage Museum.

Free to accompanied children.

Wednesday 2nd August

10.00 am to 12.00 noon

Family Fun Day - CREATIVE CLAY. See what you can create.

Free, no booking necessary. Children under 16 years of age must be accompanied by an adult.

Wednesday 16th August

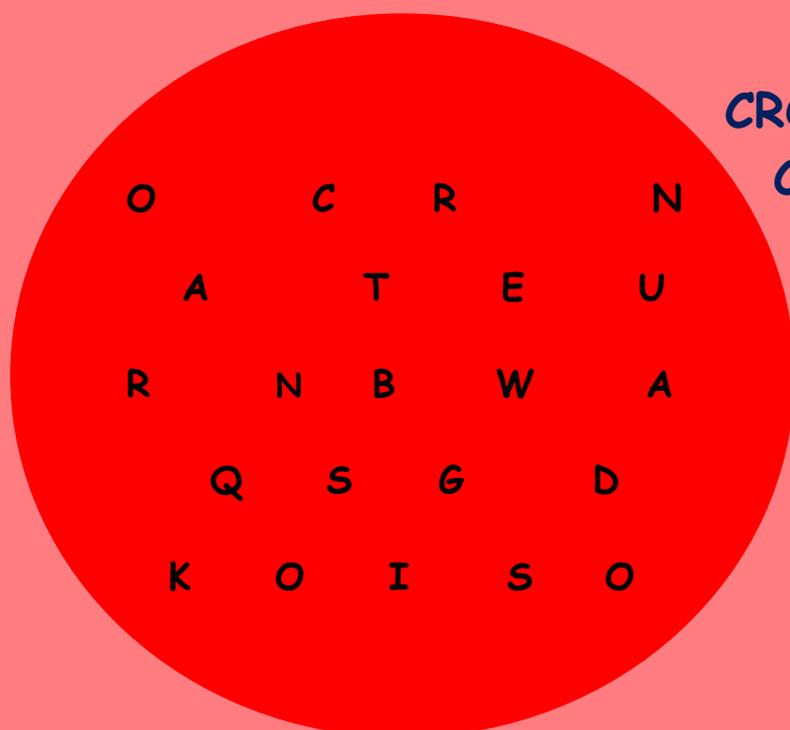
10.00 am to 12.00 noon

Family Fun Day - MASKS. Use your imagination and create.

Free, no booking necessary. Children under 16 years of age must be accompanied by an adult.

CORONATION PUZZLE WHEEL

In the Coronation Puzzle Wheel you will find the letters for 8 of these words. How many can you find?



**CROWN, CORONATION,
CARRIAGE, ORB,
SWORD RING
ABBAY, KING
QUEEN, GLOVE,
THRONE, CROSS.**

Jane Hodgson

Answers on Page 16



WILLOW HOLT

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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

It's hard to believe we are almost half way through the year already and plans for the summer activities at the Museum are well underway.

Our annual Spring Lecture was held on Saturday 21st April in the Golf Hotel, a fascinating talk by David Start about monasteries and abbeys in the Witham Valley and specifically Kirkstead Abbey. We had an audience of over sixty people for this event and everyone was most appreciative of David's extensive knowledge and witty delivery.

This year, Friends have helped out at the Museum's stall in Jubilee Park on 7th May to celebrate the Coronation, and also at the information stall at the Woodhall Spa Country Show on 21st May. We were extremely lucky with the weather for both of these events and it was a great opportunity to meet and talk to lots of visitors about our work at the Museum.

We are now busy planning for the 1940's weekend on 8th/9th July when Friends and volunteers will once again be running the cafe from 10am-4pm. As always, we rely on our team of helpers to bake cakes in advance and to serve in the cafe or Tombola stall, so if you haven't already volunteered and would like to help in any way please get in touch with the Museum and let us know.

The Music in the Garden events will take place every Sunday in August and 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, so are a crucial part of our income.

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

Annette Southcott

Friends and Volunteer 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 July 12th from 10.30am until 12 noon.

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



What's On Guide

40s Weekend 8/9th July

Tombola, Crafts,
Entertainment in the garden
Refreshments at Patio Café
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Music in the Garden

Every Sunday afternoon
through August 2- 4pm

6th Aug - Woodhall Community
Band

13th Aug - Al Brown - Vocalist

20th Aug - Silver Lions Ukulele
Band

27th Aug - Sing It Loud - Choir

Admission FREE

Refreshments on sale
at the Interval

DONATIONS WELCOME

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For the latest information visit
www.cottagemuseum.co.uk



*Annette Southcott (left)
presents Gill Noble with a
lifetime membership of
the Friends on her
retirement as a Director*

