

Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum



Zoe Macdonald demonstrates her spinning and weaving skills at Heritage Open Day

Newsletter No. 45
November 2023

Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

A Note from the Editor

Well here we are at the end of another season. It has not been a bad year for the museum, with plenty of visitors coming through the doors. The season's events are not quite over as we have the Memorial Talk on November 11th to be given by Lorna Almonds-Windmill, daughter of Major "Gentleman Jim" Almonds. This promises to be a fascinating talk, so do make sure you have your tickets for the afternoon! Full details on page 3. Then on Saturday November 25th is the "Christmas Past". This will follow the same pattern as last year's successful event. See page 3 for more details.



The museum held a Cheese and Wine Reception for all the Friends and Volunteers, which also saw the opening of the special exhibition on the early life of Jim Almonds. The event was very well attended and full details are available on page 8. Special thanks go to Annette who has worked incredibly hard to put the special exhibition together.

Earlier in the year the 40s Weekend, was successful despite very variable weather and "Music in the Garden" was an outstanding success. Both these events depend heavily on the "Courtyard Cafe" to swell the funds and the museum owes a big debt of gratitude to both the helpers on the day and the army of volunteers who bake the cakes etc. You all do a really splendid job and we mustn't forget all those who rig and take down the Gazebos at each of these events - Thank you all.

Early October saw the new museum website go live. This has been a big project and Nigel Webb or Kelly Jestin are very keen to have your feedback on your experiences using the new site.

As this is the last Newsletter before Christmas, may I wish you all a Very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

Philip Groves

Front Cover Story

Our picture shows Zoe Macdonald, a local crafts person, who gave demonstrations of spinning and weaving throughout the day at the Heritage Open Day Event on Saturday September 7th. Nearly a 100 people visited between 10.30am and 4pm.

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Annual Memorial Talk - Life of Major "Gentleman" Jim Almonds

This year's annual memorial talk on 11th November at the Golf Hotel will be delivered by Lorna Almonds-Windmill, daughter and biographer of Major 'Gentleman Jim' Almonds of Stixwoud, a founder member of the SAS.

Lorna will be giving an insight into the incredible life of her father during WW2 behind enemy lines in North Africa and in the forests of France working with the Maquis, and his equally incredible escapades in the years after the war. There will be a book signing by the author after the talk and copies of her books, 'Gentleman Jim' and 'Escaping the Ordinary' having been on sale at the Cottage Museum over the last few weeks.

During October, there was a small exhibition in the Cottage Museum which looked at the early life of this boy from Stixwoud, who became a decorated war hero and returned to live in Stixwoud after his retirement until he died here in 2005. He is played by actor Corin Silva in the BBC drama 'SAS Rogue Heroes', the second series of which is due in early 2024.

This exhibition was produced by a group from Stixwoud Village Hall, which was once the village school attended by Almonds until the age of fourteen. We are grateful to the Almonds family for their help in lending us photographs and artefacts from their personal collection, many of which have never been shown before. The exhibition will also be open at the beginning of next season in April 2024.



*Major "Gentleman"
Jim Almonds*



It was made possible with a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund as part of a wider project to preserve and renovate Stixwoud Village Hall and its heritage so thanks to all of you who play the National Lottery and contribute to this work.

Admission by ticket only is £8.50 including refreshments. There will be a raffle and doors open at 2pm with the Talk starting at 2.30pm. Tickets are available via the website or from the Museum Office, Tuesdays to Thursdays between 10am and

4pm.

Annette Southcott

"Christmas Past" Event

The Cottage Museum would like to invite you to come and celebrate 'Christmas Past' with us on Saturday 25th November 2023 from 10:00 till 4:00pm.

The format will be the same as last year with the Museum being decorated for Christmas and family craft activities for all ages including mini wreaths, Teasel hedgehogs, decoupage 3D Christmas cards, and ribbon Christmas tree decorations, along with a Christmas Pudding trail for our younger visitors.

There will also be Carol singing, a Craft stall, music from The Woodhall Spa Community Band and refreshments to complement the festivities.

This event is free, however any donations you would like to make will be very much appreciated.



*Woodhall Spa Community
Band at last year's event*

Tina Delaney

Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

Music in the Garden

This year's series of concerts were a great success, but were not without their problems. We started the season expecting to hear the Woodhall Community Band, but they cancelled at the last minute and we were very lucky to secure the services of Paul Murrell, a very talented Saxophone and Clarinet player. He plays in the Steve Walker Big Band and he also plays in a Jazz quartet. He brought along his colleague Cindy Orme, who is a very accomplished Saxophonist. They had never played as a duet before, but were absolutely fantastic and gave us a tremendously enjoyable concert. The weather was kind and we had a large audience. In fact extra seating had to be brought out!



Paul Murrell & Cindy Orme

The following week, 13th August, we were entertained by Al Brown - again to a capacity audience! He was also new to us. He sings songs from the 70s to 90s to a recorded backing and was very popular with the audience, as can be seen from the couple who were moved to dance to his music!



Al Brown



Inspired by the music!

As always the home made cakes and Tea and Coffee at the interval was very popular and combined with the donations received made for a very successful afternoon all round.

On August 20th and "New for 2023" were The Silver Lions Ukulele Band, a small group of local people who love playing the Ukulele. Ukulele groups are always popular at these concerts and this this group was no exception and there was a big audience to hear them. As with the other concerts every available chair was commandeered to seat everyone who had come along.



Silver Lions Ukulele Band



Liz McIntosh



Sing It Loud in St. Peter's Church

The final concert in the series on August 27th with local choir "Sing It Loud", was going to be cancelled due to heavy rain, until St. Peter's Church offered their premises, which saved the day. By interval time the rain had eased sufficiently for the audience to walk over to the museum patio for a drink and homemade cakes, before returning to the church for the second half. The concert itself was very enjoyable and as always Liz McIntosh brought out the very best from her choir members, who cannot fail to be inspired by her sheer enthusiasm and enjoyment. The whole series of concerts were a huge success both artistically and financially for the museum funds. Roll on next year!

Philip Groves

Arnhem Commemoration

On Saturday September 9th members of the local Branch of the Royal British Legion gathered for their annual Service of Commemoration around the Arnhem Memorial in the museum garden, to remember the soldiers of the Parachute Regiments stationed in Woodhall Spa, who took part in Operation Market Garden in September 1944. Of the 2320 men who left the camps around Woodhall Spa only 435 returned, the rest being killed or missing.



Sheila Mullenger right foreground leads the service

The Service was led by Sheila Mullenger and wreaths were laid by John Eggleton for the British Legion, Museum Chairman, David Hill, for the Cottage Museum and Stewart Adams on behalf of the Staffordshire Regiment. Jade Hurst gave a short reading and David Mullenger, President of the local branch of the Royal British Legion, gave the homage.

Philip Groves

Heritage Open Day

Saturday September 9th was Heritage Open Day and the Cottage Museum was open for this national event. Heritage Open Day is a once-a-year chance to discover some of Lincolnshire's rarely seen historic treasures, with exciting experiences that bring local history and culture to life. The festival celebrates England's architecture and culture by allowing visitors free access to interesting



properties that are not usually publicly accessible or would normally charge a fee. To help attract visitors into the museum local craft-person Zoe Macdonald set up her spinning and weaving machines under an open awning in the museum garden and gave spinning and weaving demonstrations throughout the day. Zoe took up the pastime after purchasing a second-hand spinning machine from a craft shop. At that time she had no experience of spinning or weaving, but it soon became an all consuming interest for her. The museum was quite busy with nearly 100 people visiting during the day. Admission to the museum was free, but visitors were invited to make a donation.

<u>200 Club Winners</u>	
June 2023	
£25 [106]	David Moore
£20 [138]	Sam Evison
£15 [13]	David Leyland
£10 [27]	Andy Hibberd
July 2023	
£25 [101]	Barbara Williams
£20 [134]	Tom Johnson
£15 [105]	Nicola Moore
£10 [41]	Michael Midgley
August 2023	
£25 [25]	Delia Groves
£20 [23]	Kelly Jestin
£15 [35]	Jayne Starling
£10 [113]	Jamie Roberts
September 2023	
£25 [138]	Sam Evison
£20 [95]	David Hill
£15 [13]	Andy Hibberd
£10 [69]	Keith Baguley

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Museum End of Season Event

A cheese and wine party was held at the museum as a thank you to all the Friends and Volunteers who have worked so hard during the current season. It was also timed to coincide with the opening of the temporary supporting exhibition to the Memorial Talk on Major "Gentleman Jim" Almonds MM & Bar, Croix de Guerre, a founder member of the SAS, who was born and brought up in Stixwould. His daughter Gloria, who has kindly lent memorabilia of her father for this exhibition, was a guest for the evening. Chairman David Hill said a few words of welcome and was followed by Annette Southcott, who introduced the exhibition and invited all present to look around the exhibits.



Cheese & Wine in full swing



David Hill addressing the gathering



Friends & Volunteers view the exhibits

Gloria Almonds then said a few words of welcome saying how proud her father would have been to see what had been done to recognise his life and achievements.

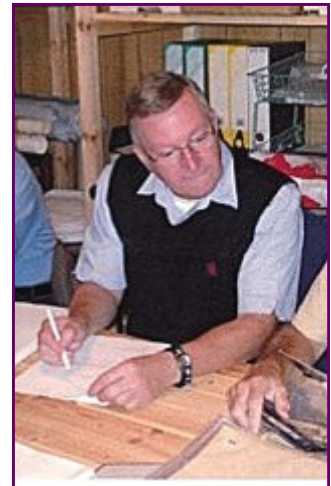
The exhibition ran for the rest of October, giving a lot of additional information for the talk which takes place at The Golf Hotel on the 11th November. In case you missed it, the exhibition will still be in place at the start of next season.

Keith Davis Retires

Long term volunteer Keith Davis has retired from his roles at the Museum. Recruited before the fire that led to the new look museum he worked in a small room at the rear of the bungalow, in very cramped conditions, sifting and sorting the visual assets of photographs, postcards and negatives. Over the last 15 years he has contributed very constructively with descriptions of the images which sometimes takes some time to research in order to be accurate.

In addition to the above role, Keith has joined the teams that put up, and take down, the gazebos for the Music in the Garden Sundays and other community events, plus arranging chairs for the public.

His quiet manner and willingness to help have been much appreciated and we wish him well when he has moved to Devon.



Keith Davis

Patricia Duke-Cox

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From the Collection - A New Acquisition

Thanks to the generosity of two benefactors, in May of this year, the Museum was able to acquire a very rare object. Namely, a Wall clock (or strictly a timepiece as it does not strike but for the purposes of this article, I will call it a clock). What makes it exceptional is that it is signed by a maker from Woodhall Spa. I have never seen a clock with the village as a dedication. It is has a mahogany case with what is known as a fusee movement, always a sign of quality. Its flat enamel dial has the name F.LOCK and beneath the winding hole, the all important WOODHALL SPA. The clock runs for 8 days requiring winding on the 8th. The clock can be dated fairly accurately to the last decade of the 19th century.



The question is, who is F. Lock?

Frank Lock was born in Margate, Kent in 1865. When he was 16 he was apprenticed to a watchmaker. 10 years later he had set up in the 'clocking business' on his own account, in Broadstairs, Kent.

By 1892 he appeared in Woodhall Spa with his wife, Clara and their son, William. What made them come to Woodhall is unknown apart from the fact

that the village was at its zenith as an inland spa. Frank may have seen a business opportunity. He traded from a shop in the Mall complex and probably lived in an apartment above it. He probably did not 'make' the clock but brought in the various parts and assembled it, adding his name and the village where he retailed it.

Frank did not stay in Woodhall for more than 8-9 years as by 1901 he was back in Kent as a bus driver! He may still have delved into clock and watchmaking but obviously needed another source of income. In 1920, he still described himself, on his sons marriage certificate, as a watchmaker. Frank died in 1926 at Gravesend in Kent.

Only one other watchmaker is known who set up business in Woodhall Spa at this time. That was William Jarvis whose 'base' was in Horncastle but rented one of the shops in the newly-built Jubilee Building on Witham Road, also taking advantage of the influx of visitors who hopefully would become customers.

Updates

Newsletter No.41 concerned the Pell family I am grateful to Mr Tony Pell for kindly providing further information on his family, some of which I stated was incorrect. I have no further information on the whereabouts of the Pell Cup.

I must also thank Mr Ian McDonald for his much appreciated contribution to the sad story of the Gibson family, printed in Newsletter No.44.

It is encouraging that readers take an interest in the stories and for keeping the Newsletter informed of the correct facts.

Nicholas Duke-Cox

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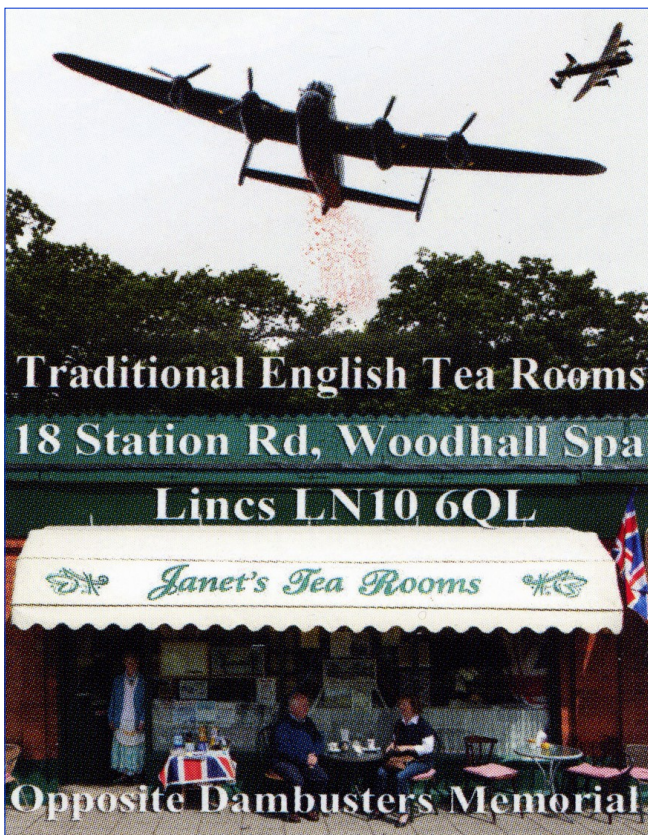
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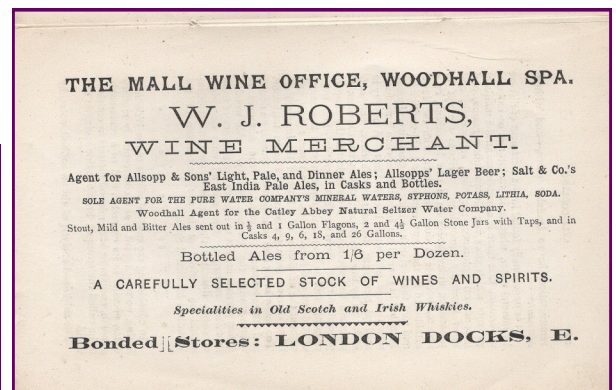
Axle Cooling - The Mall



Grounds of The Victoria Hotel

In 1890, when “Mellow Observer” visited Woodhall Spa, the grand Victoria Hotel, with its beautiful grounds was managed by a Mr. Roberts. An advertisement stated that the hotel was “under the personal supervision of the proprietor, Mr. W. J. Roberts (Late of the St. James` Restaurant, Piccadilly)”.

Mr. Roberts was also responsible for the Mall, which still stands on Station Road today. Sometimes it was described as the Mall Tavern but as the advertisement shows, in 1890 it was the much more dignified, “Mall Wine Office.”



*Above
Advertisement for
“The Wine Office” in 1890 edition
of “Axle Cooling”*

*Left: The Mall with the reference
To W.J.Roberts highlighted*

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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Bertha, November 1923

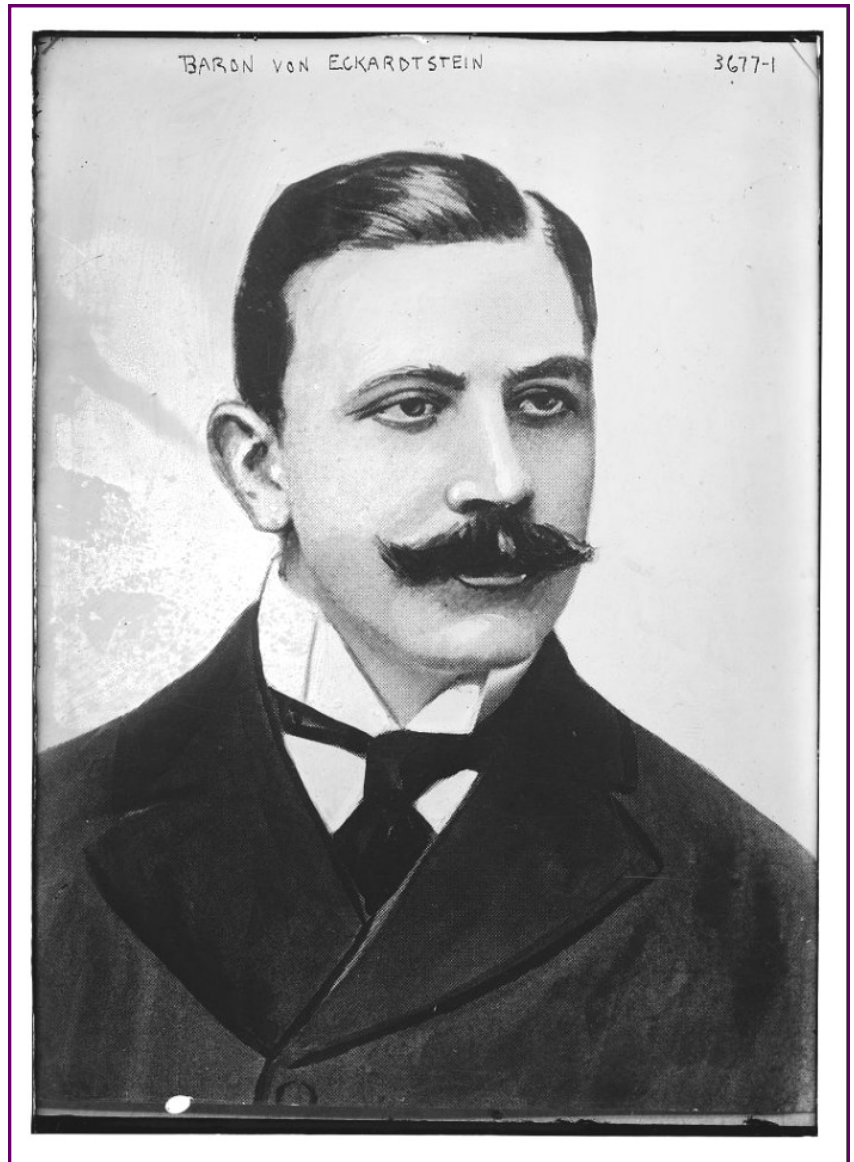
Dear Readers,

This summer, a gentleman from our village travelled to London town and on his return he fascinated us all because he had seen the Baron von Eckhardtstein! If you are a newcomer to the Spa you will not have heard of him but he was the first husband of Lady Grace Weigall. They often came here, staying at the Victoria Hotel, of course but they say it was because her marriage was foundering that she wanted a place of her own and had Petwood built.

The high society divorce case, with the Baroness and her lady friends smartly dressed in the latest fashions, was sixteen years ago. It was reported in all the important London newspapers and here we were agog at the scandal. Apparently, he, er... visited... other ladies and owed both Grace and her father huge sums of money.

One newspaper said that in his days of glory at the German Embassy in London, he was a "great giant Prussian guardsman in his white uniform and shining helmet surmounted by a silver eagle." After his marriage ended he returned to his native country and became Count Bernstorff but at the beginning of the hostilities in 1914, he spoke well of the British and so was locked up by the Kaiser!

Our village observer said he scarcely recognised him now, because he was grey haired, bearded and stooped in his bearing. But they say he is still doggedly determined in his opinions. We shan't see him here, of course. Lady Weigall seems very happy with Sir Archibald and they do so much good in the village that all of Woodhall Spa is happy with them! This information quite took our minds off ordinary, mundane happenings, as the Season ended in Woodhall Spa.



Baron von Eckhardtstein

Bertha
November 1923

Marjorie Sargeant

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POPPY'S PAGE

presented by LOKI

I enjoyed seeing some of you at the first two "Music in the Garden Events. There is a great Wordsearch puzzle for you to do in this issue. Hope you will be coming to the "Christmas Past" event on November 25th. Lots to do from hands on crafts to the Christmas pudding trail. Wishing you all a Happy Christmas and New Year.

Bye for now Loki



Christmas Pudding Wordsearch

The next children's trail in the museum will be 'The Christmas Pudding Trail' on Saturday 25th November, so here is a pudding ingredients word search for you to do.

Can you find the hidden words? They are horizontal, vertical, diagonal and sometimes backwards.

FLOUR, BREADCRUMBS, CINNAMON, NUTMEG, SUET, SUGAR, APPLE, CARROT, CURRANT, RAISIN, SULTANA, EGG, ALE, ORANGE, LEMON, ALMOND

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D	B	R	E	A	D	C	R	U	M	B	S
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C	H	A	T	F	O	N	U	N	A	C	L
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Newsletter 45 - November 2023

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,

Summer seems to have flown past this year. Maybe it's an age thing, but it doesn't seem five minutes since we were planning the 1940s weekend.

That's now a distant memory, but a very good one in which the Museum played an active part, hosting some of the entertainers and running the courtyard cafe on Saturday and Sunday. Despite the weather being a bit unpredictable, we made around £1500 for the Museum's funds from the sales of refreshments and cake and made lots of new friends from all over the country who enjoyed our hospitality.

Talking of which, a massive thank you once again to our star bakers for supplying enough delicious cakes to keep us going throughout the weekend, and our Sunday Music in the Garden events in August. You are all worthy of a place on Bake Off!

This year, in addition to our regular performers, we had some new faces and all entertainers were much appreciated by the enthusiastic audiences.

The final Sunday's event was almost cancelled due to the torrential rain, but St. Peter's Church came to the rescue so that "Sing It Loud" could test out their acoustics. Suffice to say they sounded magnificent.

You will have seen in the newsletter the information on the Annual Talk about Major "Gentleman" Jim Almonds, MM and Bar and Croix de Guerre, who was born and educated in Stixwold and lived there after his retirement until he died in 2005. This will be given by his daughter and biographer Lorna Almonds-Windmill on 11 November at the Golf Hotel. For those of you who can't make that date, she will be doing the same talk at the International Bomber

Command Centre in Lincoln on the evening of 10 November, so if you have friends in Lincoln please let them know. During October there was a special exhibition in the museum which contained many photographs and artefacts, courtesy of the Almonds family, that have never been on public display before. The exhibition and talk are a rare opportunity to hear about the setting up of the SAS in WW11 and the role that Almonds played in the incredible story.

The Christmas Past event, on 25 November, will be led by the Education Team supported by the Friends Group. The Museum will be decorated for Christmas, and refreshments, crafts and home made cakes will be on sale. It will also be open for merchandise sales, so the ideal opportunity to start your Christmas shopping, while supporting the Museum at the same time.

As always, our grateful thanks to you all who help to support the Museum in whatever capacity. We literally could not do what we do without you.

Hope to see you at the events above, and hope you have a joyful Christmas whatever you have planned.

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 8th November from 10.30am until 12 noon.

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



What's On Guide

Annual Memorial Talk

**"Life of Major "Gentleman"
Jim Almonds"**

by Lorna Almonds-Windmill

Saturday 11th November

At The Golf Hotel

The Broadway Woodhall Spa
2.30pm - doors open 2.00pm

Admission by Ticket

which is available from the
museum website or museum
office Tuesday - Thursday

9am - 4pm .

Ticket price £8.50

inc refreshments

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"Christmas Past" at the museum

Saturday 25th November

10am to 4pm

Family Craft Activities

Craft Stalls, Carol Singing

Refreshments

Christmas Pudding Trail

Admission free - Donations
welcome

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

Best Wishes

Annette Southcott

