

# Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

## Newsletter No.10



**In the town they're searching for us everywhere  
but we never will be found**

**Band on the run!**



# Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

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## A Note from the Editor

2012, so what's happening this year? The Cottage Museum opens its doors again for its 25th year, there's the Football European Cup, the Olympics are in London and obviously on December 21, 2012 the end of the world! That's the date that the ancient Mayans predicted a final event that included a solar shift, a Venus transit and violent earthquakes.

Modern astronomy also confirms that on the winter solstice in 2012, the sun will be aligned with the centre of the Milky Way for the first time in 26,000 years. This is an event where the sun produces magnetic solar flares that have different effects on earth. The higher the number and intensity of the flares, the worse the effects.

That's probably a very sobering thought if I understood any of it and to be fair if the Mayans want to believe it's the end of the world then good luck to them, live and let live and all that. I'll happily take all that annoying personal wealth and property off them before the fateful day and rent it back to them afterwards! You know what's depressing, some people are actually going to wake up the next day and be upset that they're still alive!

Me? I think that day I might just go out and walk Storm through the lovely Lincolnshire countryside and thank my lucky stars that I'm still capable of feeling the sun on my skin, breathing the fresh crisp morning air, hearing birdsong and smelling the aroma of fresh cut grass and wood smoke. Learn from the past, savour the present, look forward to the future and always take a biscuit along for your dog.

And as for the end of the world? I just might watch the repeats on the BBC the next day.

## Mat Tuck



## Development: HLF Success

Since I last wrote on the development, things have moved on apace. The Heritage Lottery Fund Committee met on the 22 November to consider our Round 2 Application and we were successful! We had decided to make an event of the announcement and I therefore arranged for our Case Officer to ring me at the Cottage Museum at 1200 on the 23 November, when all the volunteers and contractors were invited to attend. As I knew the outcome on the 22 November, it was difficult to keep the result secret, and keep a straight face when I got to the museum. Not sure what we would have done if the result had been negative! We have been awarded a grant of £677,600 and all thanks go to the volunteers who contributed to our successful Round 2 application.

The committee felt that our project was really worthwhile and some of the comments were that it is a well loved and unusual building, which is an excellent tourist attraction. We have an impressive, professional and committed volunteer team and they were particularly impressed by the way the team dealt with the challenges they faced. They praised the plans for volunteer development. They liked the proposed temporary exhibition space and the range of educational activities.

We received 'Permission to Start' on 20 January and are now in the process of appointing contractors and consultants. Prior to receiving 'Permission to Start' we were not permitted to commence work on the project on pain of losing the grant. As you will see later, the outbuildings have now been dismantled and, as of the 16 February, the beech tree behind the bungalow has also been felled. Construction of the new outbuildings should commence in July and be completed at the end of September. The work on the bungalow should commence in October and, hopefully, be completed about the end of January 2013. This will allow the new displays to be set up during February and March 2013, ready for opening at the end of March 2013.

East Lindsey District Council has very kindly agreed to 'bank roll' the project. What this means is that ELDC will initially pay the bills whilst we subsequently claim grant payments from HLF to repay ELDC. We very much appreciate this major contribution from ELDC towards the overall success of the project.

Unfortunately, we are not out of the woods finance-wise. As I stated in Newsletter Number 9, we have had to dip further into our reserves than we would have liked. For example, we have had to use the money to rebuild the bath chair on the main development. We still need to collect an additional £15,000 in sponsorship/donations to put the museum back onto a sound financial footing. We therefore still need your help to raise this sum of money as part of the museum's development appeal.

Rodger Pickavance

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# Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

## And so it begins...

The Round 2 Heritage Lottery Grant is in place and we have permission to start the Project. Enter the volunteers from ITS Squadron, RAF Digby to dismantle the Out-buildings. They arrived on the morning of Tuesday January 24<sup>th</sup>. It was bitterly cold and raining, but this did nothing to deter this happy band of brothers, organised by our editor Mat Tuck.



By coffee time the donkey sheds were no more and well before lunch the workshop/ photographic studio had been carefully dismantled. The wood was separated from metal and put into separate bins. Any undamaged material was kept to one side for possible reuse. However due to the severity of the fire following the arson attack in December 2010, very little wood had escaped the flames. Indeed it emerged many of the timbers holding up the roofs were rotted through at ground level. It was sad to see the buildings go after some 100 years of service, but they really were beyond repair.

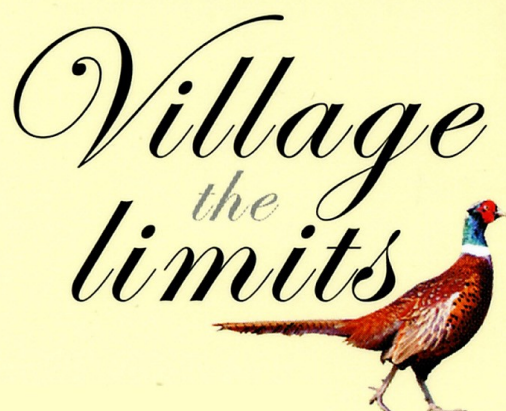
In the afternoon the volunteers focused on the floor bricks which were carefully lifted and stacked for later use on the project. About 2500 bricks were salvaged. Before the work had started the bath chair and railway trolley were removed from the site for storage in a local farmer's barn, for which the Directors are very grateful. All in all it was a very successful day and the Directors would like to thank the Commanding Officer at RAF Digby for allowing his staff to undertake this volunteer work, and also Andrew Riddel Skip Hire for their very generous support.



ITS Squadron with Museum Director Rodger Pickavance and Project Manager John Sutton

**Philip Groves**  
**Director**





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### Events for Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum 2012

Trip to Robin Hood Airport to see the Vulcan 7<sup>th</sup> March 2012  
Pre opening event 18th March 2012  
David Start Lecture 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2012  
Annual dinner 20<sup>rd</sup> April (Speaker Mr Mike Shaw at Abbey Lodge)  
Classic car run 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2012  
Museum birthday 19th May 2012  
Woodhall Show 20<sup>th</sup> May 2012  
Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebration Market Place 2 June 2012  
Half Marathon 10<sup>th</sup> June 2012  
Tattershall Thorpe 40's weekend 7<sup>TH</sup> – 8<sup>TH</sup> July 2012  
Woodhall Spa 40's weekend 21<sup>st</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2012  
Pate & Pimms night 29th June 2012  
Heritage open days 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Sep 2012  
Friends AGM 19<sup>th</sup> September 2012  
Arnhem Day 22nd September 2012  
Friends trip to John Clare Cottage and Stamford (date to be agreed)  
Annual Lecture 10<sup>th</sup> November 2012  
Coffee Morning 16<sup>th</sup> November 2012  
Late night shopping (14<sup>th</sup> December 2012 date to be confirmed)  
Christmas Trip (destination to be agreed)  
Heritage evening (date to be agreed)

If you wish more information, offer assistance or book tickets for any of these events, please get in touch with Pam Cowlshaw on 01526 352112



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# Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

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## WOODHALL SPA COTTAGE MUSEUM - 25 YEARS! CAN IT BE TRUE?

Yes, I have to pinch myself as the twenty fifth anniversary of the Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum opening its doors to a curious public is soon to be upon us.

The 17th May 1987, a rainy, squally day that saw another momentous occasion: the Dambusters' monument, commemorating the brave members of the 617 squadron who lost their lives in those challenging wartime operations, was also unveiled with due ceremony on that date.

Those two occasions mark a moment in time, but more than that, they are a tribute to the selfless devotion of those who made them possible. The members of 617 Squadron sacrificed so much for the generations who followed them; the volunteers of the Cottage Museum have, and I choose my words carefully, given their all to save the heritage of Woodhall Spa with a professionalism that has made this fascinating sylvan spot and its delightful community-run home of a photographer and his environment known throughout the Midlands and beyond.

The occasion in April 1986, when members of the then community of Woodhall Spa came to a public meeting in St. Hugh's School, is etched in my memory.

Stuart Treharne, Amarylis Midgely, Bill Skelton and I, aided by James Green and Sheila Bycroft of the Kinema-in-the -Woods and their carbon-arc projector, introduced the long lost photographic slides of John Wield. These depicted the early days of this young Victorian community and a project, namely the setting up of a museum to the heritage of Woodhall Spa and its environs. The audience acclaimed the presentation with their approval and participation! The show was enjoyed and ready support given with amounts ranging from £5.00 to £100.00 to the Hon Treasurer. A lot of money in those days as compared with now, but we needed a lot as we had been given, in trust, the task we had promised in our initial Aims and Objects and I quote:-

'The Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum Trust is being established in order to represent the life and culture of a spa town unique in character, being a Victorian foundation and illustrating its social structure, arts and crafts which are almost within folk memory, before they disappear out of mind by the present generation!

Towards the end of the Aims another important point is made:-

'The Cottage Museum is intended to encourage awareness of the historical development of the spa town continuing through to the twentieth century.....'

Altogether they sum up the point that there was a large amount of heritage which would be lost to future generations unless something was done with immediacy to avert this catastrophe!

We all know how important the heritage of each and everyone of us is. They, all together, make up the heritage of the community of which we are so proud!

But we did not have a building to house the collection then! The ideal place, the historical Victorian pre-fabricated bungalow, situated almost at the start of the spa trail, the family home of John Wield, the photographer of the initial collection, was soon to be on the market! It was here that he produced those evocative photographs which take us back to those early days in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He and his parents were an integral part of community life with the bath chair business. His hobbies, accurate timekeeping, second only to the railway's, his optical /optician and photographic work, amid a myriad of other interests, they all benefited the community.



## Newsletter 10

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To acquire this building was the next task which faced the Trustees and the newly formed Action Committee!!

A host of like minded supporters volunteered their time and efforts to raise the essential finance which is the backbone of your museum! Formerly it came to be needed for the purchase of the site...and that's another story... and now for maintaining and developing the historical site we have come to own and cherish!



That is why, despite the heritage award, so fiercely contested and deservedly won which will see the arson-destroyed outbuildings, rise like a phoenix from the ashes, we shall always need to fund-raise! They will provide an adequate and long lasting work room, a bespoke storage area and a meeting place for those of all ages interested in researching their family history and the locality's.

The community now has exciting proof of the success of a venture which I feel was meant to be! That success is due to the professionalism of volunteers who have taken on the challenge! No mean feat of hours and hours of dedication on their part!

That, together with the trust of the spa's inhabitants in their efforts, is producing a small independent museum of the community for the community and its many visitors. All part, I must say, of the continuing commercial success of Woodhall Spa in a world dominated by commerce but not forgetful of its heritage!!

So now into the twenty-first century and twenty five years on!

The Trust, now a charitable limited company, is led by another army of like-minded volunteers, who are maintaining and developing those initial targets with exciting plans .....but it all depends on YOU! Please help them in their endeavour, on your behalf, for today's generations and generations to come!

**David Radford (Founding Chairman)**

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### Diamond Jubilee - Changes in Woodhall Spa/Nationally since Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897

Queen Victoria reigned over Britain's "golden age", a time of prosperity, which would see the nation and Woodhall Spa start to revolutionize life in general. The Diamond Jubilee signified a period of expansion for Britain and a restoration of dignity and popularity for the monarchy. Queen Victoria remains the longest-reigning monarch in British history. She saw slavery abolished in the colonies, the Reform Bill passed, the Poor Law reformed, the Corn Laws repealed and constitutions established in Australia and Canada. Women did not have the vote, however; televisions did not exist; the motor car and telephone were yet to make their impact and the aeroplane was a pipe-dream. Woodhall Spa, however, was growing in reputation and popularity as a spa, helped significantly by the expansion of the railway network in the second half of the nineteenth century. Grand hotels were built to accommodate visitors to the spa and the Wield family ran a successful business, ferrying visitors from the railway station to the hotel and, thereafter, to the Spa Baths in their own manufactured donkey carriages.

Moving forward to 2012, we are looking forward to Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee, confident that she will shortly become not only the U.K.'s but also the world's longest reigning monarch. We shall also be hosting the Olympic Games, a get-together of athletes from all over the world, unknown in 1897. To mis-quote Tony Capstick we have lots of things now we didn't have then; family cars, mobile phones, computers, televisions, washing machines et al. not to mention HBombs, tanks and guided missiles. On the other hand, rickets, tuberculosis and polio, for example are now rarely experienced and medicine has advanced enormously. The status of women has improved beyond recognition. We have had a female Prime Minister and women are now prominent in all walks of life.

During the twentieth century, Woodhall Spa's popularity as a spa diminished and the death knell came with the Beeching axe of its railway. It remains a popular holiday destination thanks largely to the National Golf Union making its headquarters here, the development of Jubilee Park and Bainland Park and thanks to a thriving cottage museum, enthusiastically manned by local volunteers.

**Sarah Richards**

### ‘FROM THE COLLECTION’ QUESTION IN NEWSLETTER NO 7

In Newsletter Number 7(?), ‘From the Collection’ asked for suggestions for the location of one of the photographs. Dr Nicholas Duke-Cox carried out extensive research and clearly identified it as being Chapman's Corner, before the front façade of the building was extensively modified. His in depth report is available on the museum's website and we thank Nick for the time and effort that he put in carrying out the investigation.

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## Newsletter 10

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### DONKEYS by John Wield whose family home was the Cottage Museum building for over 80 years.

We have had some four or five donkeys. Each had its own character.

Their bray was individual.

Polly's voice was very clear, it could be heard miles on a still night. She was a willing worker, always eager to go out and rarely to return! No stick for Polly!

Neddy proved too fast for the bath chairs! He would trot for miles, so with regret he was swapped for our No. 1, Jack, who puzzled us for refusing to stand still when left by himself in the stable. At last, we left the stable door open, and much to our delight he came outside and just stood about, never leaving the place!

Then when Polly returned, he always went and rubbed his nose against hers. When drinking, he always let Polly drink first. Our little daughter could play all around his legs! Yes, he was gentle, kind and had a lovely disposition.

Later on, we acquired Nancy. She was also a nice animal, and a No. 2. to Jack who was a fine donkey but so nervous. He must have had a shock some time!

Nevertheless, one Sunday, just before lunch, I saw Nancy and Jack feeding in the field. Five minutes later, by chance, I realised only one was to be seen!

Jack was leaning forward, over the side of the ditch, or grasping something, pulling and nearly falling backwards, then going forward and repeating!

I realised Nancy was in the ditch!

Jack was trying to grip her mane and pull her free!

She was fairly fixed but after some moments,

I was able to get her leg so that she could stand in the ditch.

How Jack so quickly learned to help Nancy will always remain a puzzle to me.

Soon after this, the war became critical. The donkeys were given up.

In 1919 some recovery took place but the destruction by fire of the Victoria Hotel in 1920 severed the old days completely.

**John Wield** (as researched by David Radford)



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# Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

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## Meet the Directors

I was born in Liverpool in 1950 and stayed there until a job move for my father meant that we moved to Menai Bridge, in Anglesey. I took up sea canoeing and became a qualified instructor, working most weekends at an Outdoors Activity Centre. However, a change in the rules meant that you had to be a qualified teacher, as well as a qualified instructor, which put paid to that. I could also be found mountain walking, sea fishing and got involved in stage lighting; the secondary schools on the island were also used for concerts etc. I had been talking about joining the RAF as a pilot and my father persuaded me to join the Air Training Corps to put me off – he failed miserably there! Somehow, I also managed to complete my ‘O’ and ‘A’ levels! My ambitions as a pilot came to an end when it was decided that my eyesight wasn’t good enough.



I joined the RAF as an Engineering Officer in 1969 on a University Cadetship and went to Loughborough University to study Electrical and Electronic Engineering. There then followed 36 years where I enjoyed every job that I had – even a short stint in Engineering Policy. In 1980, I went on an Advanced Training to get my MSc in Aero-Systems Engineering to be followed by 3 years lecturing on Guided Weapon Systems at Cranwell. I worked on a number of what are now ‘historic’ aircraft – Harrier, Hunter, Phantom and Tornado F2/F3. In fact, the Sentry E3-D, plus the odd F3, are the only ones still in service. I also spent a lot of time in the guided weapons/avionics world as a trials engineer, Aberporth and Boscombe Down; an equipment manager; as a lecturer and running an internal technical consultancy to support the aircraft and weapons project teams. Unfortunately, no overseas postings came my way and I retired, as a Wing Commander, in 2005.

Eileen and I got married in 1972; she says that she hoped to see the world as an RAF wife – failed on that score! When we returned to Coningsby for the second time in 1987, we decided that it was time to settle and get into the housing market whilst we still could. We liked Woodhall Spa and bought a house here. When posted out of the area, I became a weekend commuter – not a life I would recommend. We moved to our present house in 1998 when I returned for a tour at RAF Waddington. We have 3 sons and 4 grandchildren, 2 boys and 2 girls.

When I retired, I wondered whether the museum had a photograph of our present house and got sort of sucked in from there. To make matters worse, the museum didn’t have an early picture that showed our house! I took over looking after the museum’s visual assets and, somehow, ended up as the vice Chair of the Directors and Chair of the museum’s Development Committee. What remaining time I have left is spent as Chair of Governors at The Gartree Community School, wood turning and working on my model railway, plus working on the house and garden. When I retire.....

**Rodger Pickavance**





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Chairman	Pam Cowlshaw	01526 352112
	Ann Houlton	01526 352323
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Hello Friends.

It is only a few days now until the museum opens its doors to the general public for the 2012 season. Thank you to all of you who have worked hard to make this happen and we hope to see as many as possible of you at our pre-opening event on 18<sup>th</sup> of March at 2.30pm. The winter has not been a quiet time with the coffee morning in November that raised nearly £400 and the trip to Pennells Garden Centre and Doddington Hall in December. Notification of our success in our Heritage Lottery Fund round 2 was a very welcome pre-Christmas present although it signaled the start of a very busy 3 year period.

Work continued on the review of Friends activities, with the membership numbers creeping ever nearer to the 100 target. Instead of the normal tombola stalls we have a new and exciting range of old-fashioned children's games that can be taken out to places like Woodhall Show and the 40's weekends. Volunteers to man the games and keep scores will be needed when we take them out. Finally, a product list of items that can be purchased for sale in the museum shop or out and about, where ever we have a stall, is near completion.

Our museum holds accreditation status which means that it meets the highest standards for collection care, visitor satisfaction and management procedures as laid down, formally by Museums Libraries and Archives (MLA) and now by Arts Council England. A part of the requirement is for there to be an up-to-date Emergency Plan. We have reviewed ours and the Emergency Management Team has been selected from the directors. For the plan to work volunteers have to be on hand to help with the salvage of our collection in the event of a fire, flood or other emergency. If you would like to train to assist the Management Team with the salvage and safe storage of our artifacts in the event of an emergency please let me know and I will pass your details on to the appropriate director. Safeguarding our collection is an essential part of the proper management of the artifacts that we have entrusted to us and we take the responsibility very seriously indeed.

Finally, the programme of events arranged is detailed on page 7. If you require any more information, want to volunteer to help or to obtain tickets for any of them please let any of the committee listed at the top of this page know. If there is somewhere you would like to go or anything you would like to see that is not on the list please let me know and we will try and fit them in.

We hope to see as many of you as possible enjoying yourselves at the events we have arranged for you.

**Pam Cowlshaw**



Woodhall Spa  
Forthcoming Attractions of a  
Museum orientated  
Nature:  
October 2011

See also  
[www.woodhallspa.org](http://www.woodhallspa.org)

