

Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

Newsletter No.4



“Station Road”

Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

A Message from the Editor

A fourth issue! They've let me loose again! Dig the vanity front cover—that's me and Storm, that is, crossing the road Beatles style with Martin (Charity worker and Social Drinker) and Karen (Museum Director). Obviously we're simply duplicating the iconic Abbey Road LP cover from 1969 but despite what Martin and Karen will have you think, having dragged them out of bed at 7am on a Saturday morning, I have a point to my madness!

OK so you're all looking at the picture thinking, firstly, "What do they think they look like?" but then hopefully your minds have wandered first to the Beatles, then perhaps to the music of the 60's and on to the sixties themselves and then probably to how things have changed since then. I may be wrong, you may have just looked at it and thought "I must buy a new pair of shoes" or "why didn't they wash poor old Storm before they put him on public display?" but hopefully, if nothing else, it will have made you just ponder for a second about things gone by.

Strange things do that for me and it often catches me off guard. Sometimes its just catching the scent of something I knew long ago: a deodorant, a woman's perfume, smoke from a wood fire drifting across gardens on a spring morning. Sometimes its something as obvious as an old TV show or magazine or perhaps even a display in the museum: Either way suddenly I'm back there for that split second feeling things that I felt a long, long time ago, and more often than not it feels good. Not sad. Not morbid, but warm and friendly. And in a strange way, safe.



The Woodhall Beatles (l to r):

Martin Yeldham as George Harrison,
Karen Shanahan as Paul McCartney,
Mat Tuck as Ringo Starr and
Storm the Dog as John Lennon.

But I digress. Another grand opening of the museum approaches and with it signals that spring is on its way. Please take a while to soak up the news and views of the accompanying pages and feel free to pass comment on whatever takes your fancy. As the editor, I am always open to any praise or criticisms and while I may initially stamp my foot a bit and throw the toys out of the pram, all comments are welcome!

So with that said I will step out of your way and let you get on with the newsletter. A happy and productive year to all of you and I sincerely hope our cover at least brought a small smile to your lips or a memory into your heart.

Mat Tuck

Newsletter No.4

A Message from the Chairman:

Many congratulations are in order to all those whose efforts contributed to the Cottage Museum's successful first stage application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

It goes without saying that all the work that goes on behind the scenes is of a very high standard!

It takes hours of dedicated, daily, voluntary commitment to achieve the grants, displays and the site's well-being, which then enables the Cottage Museum to conserve and share its treasures with future generations.

The result is that your Cottage Museum and its work to preserve the heritage of Woodhall Spa is respected and admired throughout the Midlands and the wider professional museum community.

Just look at the awards for proof of that!

My congratulations and thanks go to all involved, particularly on a very regular basis and also to those who are 'active friends' or 'silent partners' in our community, all of whom are making this possible.

Thank you so much.

David Radford

David Hill, Sarah Clurow (HLF), David Radford and Rodger Pickavance view the model of the redeveloped Cottage Museum



Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

Meet the Directors: David Hill



Born on a small Lincolnshire Farm on Christmas Day 1934 David was the second and youngest of the family who were struggling with the agricultural depression on a rented farm.

Not quite 5 years old when the Second World War started, David had to learn to cycle to school, carrying his gasmask, and woe betide anyone who arrived without it! It was 2 miles morning and night, and later, when he transferred to Skegness Grammar School, it was still the same cycle ride to catch the bus. Good exercise indeed!

For the war years, a farm was a good place to be. Plenty of eggs, chickens for the pot, pigs killed in exchange for the bacon ration gave huge quantities of bacon, sausage, pork pies, ham and, with the exchange of the traditional 'Pigs fry' between neighbours, there was fresh meat in abundance throughout the winter months.

Although he was always disappointed to be less than top of the class in maths, David rejected the requests (or demands!) that he stayed on to consider a University Degree Course, and left at the age of 16 years to work on the farm. In 1951, workers were scarce and sought after. No job shortage then.

Having lived through the east coast floods of January 31st 1953, the farm escaping with only minor damage, he joined the Young Farmers Club, which at that time served as youth club, education club and social club. David was made chairman after his first year and was constantly involved at local level in Alford, and also in the county administration, and subsequently for the 'County' of Lindsey.

The YFC was always known as the best rural marriage bureau, and not surprisingly, David met Jean in 1959 at the YFC Ball, the best thing ever to have happened to him! In 1962 they were married.

Also in 1962 David left the farm. A small farm could no longer support his parents, his brother's family and himself, and with the wide experience that he had accumulated through the YFC he was well versed in running organisations, and in dealing with people. He was appointed to run the local branch of the National Farmers Union at Alford. A few years later, in 1970, he was asked to take on the adjoining branch at Spilsby as well, which he did with great success. In 1980 he was appointed to take charge of the Lincolnshire County Branch of the NFU and this brought him to Woodhall Spa.

By this time the family had grown. Two daughters were brought up whilst living at Alford, and in 1978 another daughter and in 1980 a son were born, giving the family of four that they had always wanted.

Woodhall Spa
Cottage Museum

Reg. Charity:
1114268

Reg. Museum:
1929

The Bungalow,
Iddesleigh Road,
LN106SH

Newsletter No.4

David worked for the NFU for 33 years, finishing as the senior political advisor for the East Midlands and retiring in 1994. In May 1995, he fought the election for the District Council and served Woodhall Spa for 12 years on East Lindsey, holding the position of Deputy Leader of the Council for the last four years.

His pastimes include Bridge and fishing for trout and salmon. He is currently a Parish Councillor, involved with the Coronation Hall, plans for the future of Jubilee Park, and many other interests around Lincolnshire, so there is no shortage of things to do.

Just before retirement David was asked if he would become the 3rd Treasurer of the Cottage Museum. He took the job on, his predecessor having retired to the south-west, and was Treasurer until the end of 2009. In that time the Cottage Museum has built up a strong financial position which provides the opportunity to pursue the major development project. Latterly he has also become the 'Company Secretary', responsible for the proper administration of the Company which now runs the Cottage Museum.

As a 'young' 75 year old, David hopes to see the current plans develop and the refurbishment of the museum fulfilled over the next few years.



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The museum is blessed with a veritable treasure trove of photographs and articles left to us by John Wield and his family. Arguably the most significant artefact is the building itself, a Boulton and Paul timber built and corrugated iron bungalow and within it the photographic studios and developing rooms used by John Wield, the entrepreneurial Woodhall Spa resident, in pursuing his life-long hobby.

John Wield was a highly talented, multi-skilled individual, who lived and conducted his various businesses from the bungalow. Several items made by him give an insight into how life was in the nineteenth century. They include scientific instruments, diaries, plans and notes. There is also a violin made by his father, Thomas. He also provided many people in the village with their spectacles and monocles, made on the premises. The village was a popular spa in Victorian and Edwardian times and the Wield family manufactured and serviced donkey-drawn Bath chairs. They also ferried visitors from the station to the hotels and then to the Spa Baths. The museum is fortunate to have a Bath chair of the period.

The museum, to date, has catalogued over 1,900 artefacts and well over 5,000 images. In addition to the images owned by the museum, in the form of glass plates, photographs, postcards, etc. other historical records in the archives include papers relating to the Spa Baths Syndicate. They also include papers relating to the activities of organizations that have existed over the years, amongst others the primary school PTA, the Hockey club, village plans considered by the parish and local councils and, more recently, papers relating to the Woodhall Spa Festival.

Souvenirs of Woodhall Spa form another collection in the museum and include commemorative china, glass, bottles, tins and items relating to the Baths and the treatments available. Ephemeral items have been collected from several sources relating to the local agricultural show, local churches, chapels, schools and the hospital. Members of the public continue to deposit items of interest and this is much appreciated. The museum is now fully accredited and must abide by its acquisition policy, which requires items to have a connection with the geographical area of Woodhall Spa, Kirkstead, Martin Dales or Roughton.

The museum displays have changed and developed over the years. This coming season will see one room devoted to Woodhall's part in Operation Market Garden (Arnhem 1944). Also featured will be the First and Second World Wars, Country Life and A Visit to Woodhall Spa a century ago and an Interest Corner. The Dam Busters display is a favourite of many visitors and will be featured again. Please call in and experience and enjoy the memories of yesteryear !

Patricia Duke-Cox
Ann Houlton

Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum



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A MASSIVE

Thank-you!



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1st VISCOUNT ALVERSTONE (1842-1915) RICHARD EVERARD WEBSTER



Dipping into the past can be so rewarding yet in many cases equally frustrating! There is so much to discover as was the case in our notes on Henry Chaplin. However the urge to find out more about our community's heritage and past is ever present! As always, any contributions from our newsletter's readers, wherever you may reside, will be eagerly received!

Firstly a question.....does anyone know why Alverston Avenue, dropped the 'e' upon being named after the 1st Viscount Alverstone? Are there any stories or tittle-tattle you may have heard in family chats concerning those august personalities who gave their names to our much-loved avenues?

Richard Webster or 'Dick' as he was known to many of his contemporaries, was a barrister, politician and judge who served in many of the high, judicial offices of the kingdom. Attorney-General, Master of the Rolls and Lord Chief Justice plus the title of Baron Alverstone numbered amongst them. Called upon to adjudicate in several high-level international disputes of the age, his was the casting vote in the Alaskan boundary dispute. This came to a head in 1903 when he gave his support to the USA, being one of several leading politicians to share ranks with this great world power in succeeding generations!!

Klondike gold had attracted as many as 100,000 fortune seekers to the area which had been sold by Russia to America in 1867 for \$7,200,000. The treaty's difficult wording and interpretation resonates when we consider today's dispute over the Falkland islands between the United Kingdom and Argentina!

Space sadly precludes us from considering Dick's sporting exploits which were outstanding for his time. Then there is the trial of the infamous murderer Dr Crippen over which our Lord Chief Justice presided. He found time to be President of the Marylebone Cricket Club, to enjoy singing ditties from Gilbert and Sullivan's 'Ruddigore' to fellow members of The Savage Club and to perform various duties incumbent upon his rank but above all to be a member of our Spa's founding syndicate!

What a man! I look forward to sharing more with you in our next issue.

Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

16 Year olds perspective of the Woodhall Spa Museum

Having found myself with, effectively, a gap year from school due to recovering from glandular fever – I thought I might fill some of my spare time with voluntary work in my local area. The Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum initially appealed to me out of curiosity as I had heard of it, knew where it was, but never ventured in.

I think it's always interesting to know a little bit about the local history of where you live and how events have helped shape the various elements that make up the village of Woodhall Spa, its identity, culture and style.

The very name itself conjures up an image of Edwardian Britain when spa towns were the 'in thing', the latest thing in promoting health and fitness. The introduction of the railway helped promote Woodhall Spa as a holiday destination which in turn, increased tourism, hotel building and our very own unique Kinema in the Woods.

The word museum can make most teenagers eyes glaze over and when it comes to things to do on a Saturday afternoon – a visit to the local museum will not feature very high on the list, if at all!

However, having made the effort to help out at the museum, I have found that I have learnt a lot more about Woodhall Spa and become more aware of its past, particularly from photographs showing such things as the old railway station, the main street, the lack of cars, the dress-code. This in turn has made me take more interest in looking at other aspects of Woodhall. For instance the Kinema in the Woods is a museum in itself, but a working one. The walls of the foyer show postcards and photos of a by-gone era, displaying the Spa Baths and hotel that no longer exists, Petwood Hotel which started off as a private house, a gift from a father to his daughter, and how it transformed into a hotel, becoming the quarters for the most famous squadron in the world 'The Dam Busters'

Helping out at the museum has enabled me to appreciate other historic aspects in our village. I hope I can make a positive contribution to the museum, by promoting awareness to both local people and tourists of all age groups. My ambitions are to go on to University and maybe a career in journalism, which fortunately, volunteering with the Cottage Museum, will contribute in some part to my career goal, through interacting with the locals, attending meetings, writing up reports, newsletters, featured articles and helping with promotional schemes.

Sarah Richards

Remnant

The gnarled trunk of the ancient wisteria,
Dried grey and tough as an elephant's hide,
Rheumatically, twists out of cracked tarmac
With branches stretching to flaking wood.

But above is a dream of layers of blossom,
Mauve blue bubbles dancing down,
As if a bony old woman still possessed
A luxurious profusion of tumbling curls.

How many fashionably strolling gentry
Looked down on the wall-clinging, fledgling shrub?
How many infirm, pulled by plodding donkeys,
Were cheered by the eye-level, tentative sprays?

How many found hope in Spring's renewal
As they hurried past, to the siren's wail?
Did residents note its constancy
When changes came to the village they knew?

For the plant has outlived the Spa of its childhood
When stylish dresses swept past its bloom,
A lone reminder of a distant age,
Still clinging to a decaying wall.

Poets Corner:

This issue:

Remnant

by

Marjorie Sargeant

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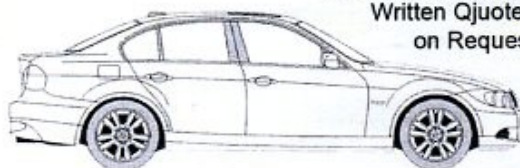
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Cottage Museum Meeters and Greeters

The Museum opens on Good Friday 2 April 2010 preceded by an afternoon get together on Sunday 28 March 2010, 2pm to 4pm. Please come along if you can. New and seasoned greeters are most welcome. Anyone who would like to give a couple of hours of their time occasionally to welcome visitors to the museum should contact Paddy O'Neill on 01526 354982 for more information. It is not an onerous task and provides an opportunity to meet lots of interesting people. You will not be alone at any time as there is always a Tourist Information lady in attendance. The hours of opening are 10am—4pm 7 days a week.

Please note that when two meeters are scheduled to attend on the same day they should liaise with one another and arrange between themselves their hours of attendance. The Tourist Information ladies would find it helpful if you could let them know the hours each of you will attend (tel. 01526 353775). Otherwise please do the hours that suit you. If you have no preference 1—3pm or 2—4pm are favoured by the Tourist Information ladies. As in previous years I shall do a schedule from Good Friday until the end of October. Any new meeters can be added to the schedule held on the Tourist Information Desk.

As well as welcoming visitors to the museum, meeters should take temperature and humidity readings in each of the four rooms during their tour of duty and record them in the book provided. A table and chair will be provided in the middle room. If a meeter is unable to attend on a particular day and cannot arrange a swap, Tourist Information should be informed.

Tourist Information Service is unavailable after the end of October, but the museum will remain open until Armistice Sunday. Meeters and greeters will be required to cover the hours of opening which will be from 10am to 4pm. The duties to be scheduled will be in two hour shifts viz. 10am—noon, noon—2pm, 2pm—4pm and there will be two meeters on duty on each shift. In addition a director will be on duty at all times and will be responsible for opening and closing the museum. Anyone wishing to volunteer for any of these duties should get in touch with Paddy O'Neill now or nearer the time.

Meeters and greeters have rendered valuable assistance to the Cottage Museum over the years and their contribution is greatly appreciated.

Paddy O'Neill.

Newsletter No.4

The Friends of the Woodhall Spa Museum

Committee Members

Chairman	Pam Cowlshaw	01526 352112
	Ann Houlton	01526 352323
	Paddy O'Neill	01526 354982
	Isabel Swift	01526 352546

Here we are at the beginning of what we think is another exciting season of events for The Friends of Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum. Over the winter the committee has been investigating various venues for trips and activities that we hope will be of interest to you. The first event on the calendar is the Annual Dinner to be held at the Abbey Lodge Inn, on 23rd April. The guest speaker will be Mr James Green, the owner of the Kinema in the Woods. The cost for the 3 course buffet dinner is £16.50 per head. On the 13th May we have organised a relaxing day trip to The Queen's home at Sandringham. The cost of the trip will be similar to that to Holkham Hall last year at £25, to include coach and entry to the house, gardens and museum. This is followed by our attendance at the Woodhall Show on 23rd May. We will be organising a tombola table, games and selling museum books and DVDs. On 6th June we will be manning a drinking station on the Woodhall Spa Half Marathon. On 18th June we will be holding a cheese and wine evening in the museum garden. There will be games, quizzes and hopefully the weather will be kind to us. The cost of the evening will be £4 for members and £5 for guests to include a glass of wine and a plate of food. There will be a much welcomed return visit of Kate Witney to tell us about the history of Lincolnshire as depicted in song. I am sure that the Lincolnshire Poacher will feature somewhere. She will be entertaining us at 7.30pm on 2nd July in the Roman Catholic Church Hall, Cromwell Avenue. Entrance of £4 for members and £5 for guests will include a glass of wine and nibbles. Then comes the 40's weekend at Tattershall Thorpe Camp on 10th and 11th July. We will be manning a tombola table, organising games and selling books etc. We are also hoping to have a tombola stall at the Conservative Club Family Day on August Bank Holiday. The Friends AGM will be at 2.30 pm on 27th August in the Roman Catholic Church Hall, Cromwell Avenue. Following on from the success of having a speaker at the AGM last year we hope to repeat it this year. Watch out for details. Norwich is the destination for our autumn trip on 18th October. The cost will be about £15 for the coach. Once there you will be free to entertain yourselves as you choose; early Christmas shopping perhaps or you could take in the Cathedral or the Museum. Finally, the pre Christmas Coffee morning will be held at St Peters Hall on 26th November. Please contact me if you would like to know more about the Friends, how to join, to book a seat or to offer to help at any of the above events.

Pam Cowlshaw



Woodhall Spa
Forthcoming Attrac-
tions of an Historic
Nature:
April—June 2010

www.woodhallspa.org

23rd April: Museum An-
nual Dinner

13th May: Sandringham
visit

23rd May: Woodhall Show

6th June: Woodhall Spa
Half Marathon (the editor
attempts to break 50 min-
utes!)

18th June: Cheese and
Wine evening in the mu-
seum garden