



The Mildenhall Post

Mildenhall Museum Society Newsletter

June 2022



Editor: kay.finnis@yahoo.co.uk

News from the Trustees

We are very grateful to the team who have been reorganising the filing cabinets in the downstairs store. All is now clearly labelled and it is easier to access information.

They are now tackling the backlog of photos that has built up. One big problem is that donors don't think to label them which creates a problem especially with unnamed groups. We have decided that later in the year we will put the photos out on tables and invite, via social media, folk to come and see they can identify them. If not there is little point in us keeping them. Watch this space.

The display of recent acquisitions has been taken down and we have put Coronation memorabilia in the Community Space. This will remain until September. Do pop in and see it.

We have started to get interest from groups that want to visit and it feels we are getting back to normal at last.

Stephanie Palmer

Society News

Well, we are halfway through the year and hopefully the spectre of Covid is behind, or nearly behind us now. The numbers attending the Thursday Talks are increasing and we no longer need to limit the numbers to 25 as we had to a few months ago.

David Palmer is doing a splendid job in getting speakers for us, providing a huge variety of subjects, from The Kings of Mildenhall to the archaeology of the Hub site and Keeping the Peace in Medieval Suffolk.

The last meeting was held at the Khaki Devils' Organisation in Hawstead where Taff Gillingham has founded and runs a superb museum of buildings and artefacts, mainly from WW1, together with recreations of the trenches, which a lot of members attending decided to venture into. These are built as near as possible to the originals and as you walk through them the design changes to show how they developed during the war years.

Khaki Devils also hold a magnificent number of costumes and uniforms which are regularly used by film and theatre companies. Episodes of a yet to be seen series of All Creatures Great and Small were filmed there shortly before our visit. They are open to the public so, if you are interested but were unable to join the members on that visit, you will find their opening times on their internet site khakidevil.co.uk

The warm weather helped make the visit a most enjoyable evening.

The programme for the rest of 2022 is in this Newsletter. I hope that now people are once again feeling more comfortable about coming to the Museum we will see attendance rising. The charges for meetings remain as £2 per person for members and £4 for visitors. And, speaking of money – something I often do ! – if there are any members who have still to pay 2022 subscriptions please note that you can leave the cash at the Museum during any opening hours or arrange a Direct Debit through your bank. £10 per annum.

On your behalf I want to give the Society Committee a big thankyou for the work and support they have given to the Museum during the less easy times we've been through and, I'm sure, making 2022 a success.

Lloyd Hughes

Soc Chair

Peter Merrick

We are very sad to learn of the death of Peter Merrick. He had been involved with the museum for many years.

I have looked through the minutes and find that in 1992 he was appointed Clerk of Works to the conversion of the Victorian cottages that are the core of the Museum.

In 1993 the Friends of the Museum was formed and together with Colin Dring he kick started the fund raising side of things. Their powers of persuasion were impressive as they sold tickets for raffles, dinner dances and rural rustics in Haylock's barn in Holywell Row. The Friends eventually merged with the Natural History and Archaeological Society to become the Museum Society and Peter was made Chairman, a role which he fulfilled until ill health forced him to retire and he was made President. The Society has raised many thousands of pounds over the years with annual supper talks, quiz nights, garden parties, hog roasts and also provided a programme of talks and visits.

He was made a Trustee of the Museum in 1994 and was always a "doer". He was a very practical man and helped with several projects. The most time consuming of which was the recent redevelopment. Peter together with Joe Moore and myself were nominated to deal with the application to HLF for grant aid. Again his powers of persuasion came into force and he gained us a volunteer project manager and project treasurer from his large circle of acquaintances.

Another of his strengths was his enthusiasm for communicating with young people. When we had school groups he was always there and could engage the interest of even the most truculent teenage boy in something.

An all-rounder with an infectious laugh and zest for life, he will be sorely missed.

Stephanie Palmer

Articles for The Mildenhall Post

If you have an item you would like to include in the next issue of The Mildenhall Post please send to kay.finnis@yahoo.co.uk.

IF YOU HAVE RECEIVED YOUR EDITION OF THE MILDENHALL POST BY POST OR HAND DELIVERED WHY NOT RECEIVE IT IN THE FUTURE BY EMAIL PLEASE LET ME KNOW YOUR ADDRESS kay.finnis@yahoo.co.uk

Thank you.

Society Meetings

2nd June – Queen’s Jubilee - no meeting

7th July - Exploration of Antarctica – talk by Ellen Bazeley – White

August – No meeting

8th September – Peggy Cole MBE – Journalist, Gardener and Suffolk Countrywoman - Talk by Dave Steward

6th October – The Blue Plaque Scheme in Bury – talk by Martin Taylor

3rd November – A talk about recycling – Sarah Clarke

1st December – no meeting – Merry Mildenhall

Meetings start at 7.30 p.m. Members £2 and non - members £4 - Refreshments

The importance of accurate accessioning

When an item is donated to the museum it is important that the Entry Form is filled in correctly, with as much information about the donor and item as possible. This information gives the object meaning and a better understanding of its history and relevance to the donor and family. Once this form has been signed, it transfers legal ownership to the museum.

The item is then catalogued on the museum’s computer, with its own unique number, recording all the information from the Entry Form.

A couple of situations recently have shown the importance of correct paperwork and cataloguing.

- A donor asked what had happened to an item they had gifted to the museum. This person had their copy of the Entry Form and very quickly we were able to see that the item had been catalogued and where it is stored.
- Another time, someone wanted back an item that had been gifted to the museum by another family member. Again the paperwork was checked, and it clearly showed that the item had been gifted to the museum.

GROUP VISITS

Newmarket History Society visited the Museum one evening in May. It was some years since their previous visit and some members had not been before. While they partook of a hot drink and biscuits they were given a brief introduction . They were impressed by our set-up and very much wish there was a museum in Newmarket that dealt with the history of the town, apart from horse racing.

Group visits in or out of normal hours are very welcome .Having a lift and also a wheel-chair available means all areas are accessible to anyone.. If you know of a club that might be interested in a visit please ask the organiser to make contact.

Thank you to the band of Museum volunteers

Mildenhall Museum is open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays during the afternoon, Friday morning and afternoon and Saturday afternoons. For the Museum to be open and welcome visitors requires an army of 14 volunteers per week organised by Val Clarke. Val organises around 30 volunteers but could do with a few more. If you would like to find out more about becoming a Museum volunteer please contact val.ferry@googlemail.com or myself kay.finnis@yahoo.co.uk. We would love to hear from you.

Thank you to all the volunteers that fill their regular slots and often fill in at the last minute it is most appreciated by the Museum Trustees.



Stop press news

I am sad to report the death of Lyn Palmer one of our volunteers. She helped us for many years and will be sadly missed.

Harry Porter 1880- 1958

Volunteer work at the Museum

I have always enjoyed detective stories so when I came across a photograph in the Museum with just one word written on the reverse I decided to try and find the story behind it. It was a photograph of seven men, in out-dated police uniforms, and the word was PORTER. The central figure, in ceremonial uniform, was holding a helmet with The Imperial Crown on the insignia. This crown was used on police helmets during the reign of George V from 1910-1936. I used a family research site and turned to the 1921 census. I decided that the men in the photograph were aged from twenty-five years to fifty so, making a guess, I entered Porter, born 1880, and Mildenhall. Immediately the result was Harry Porter, Police Constable, aged forty-one, living in the Police Station, Worlington with his wife Minnie, a School Board Teacher, whom he married in 1910.

Looking back through the census returns Harry was born in Harkstead, Suffolk in 1880 and was one of ten children. His father was a groom working at 'Old Hall' Harkstead. In 1901 Harry Porter was an Asylum Attendant at the Borough Asylum, Foxhall Road, Ipswich, before joining the Police Force in 1904. In 1911 he was stationed at Dalham, Newmarket, living in the Police Station there with wife Minnie and stepson Cyril. According to the Newmarket Journal of the time, he was occupied with attending inquests, arresting drunk and disorderly people in Newmarket and summoning drivers for not having a carriage licence.

Harry and Minnie had twin sons born at Worlington in 1920, making a family of four sons, but sadly Minnie passed away in 1930 aged forty-seven. Following Minnie's death Harry retired, aged fifty-one, after 27 years and 212 days service in the Police Force. In the 1939 Register he had retired to Cook's Road, Elmswell. Harry died at the West Suffolk Hospital in 1958. Probate was granted to his son Cyril whose occupation was listed as Mental Health Hospital Attendant.

Browsing through the Newspapers Online I found that Harry Porter, in 1924, had been a Pall Bearer at the Mildenhall funeral of Mr Charles Heigham, Superintendent and District Chief Constable of West Suffolk Police Force. In 1909 he was awarded an extra ten shillings and sixpence for stopping a runaway horse and tumbrel in Newmarket, at which time, he was described as being 'very plucky.'

Harry never made sergeant so that ruled out three men in the photograph, as he never fought in the First World War that ruled out two with medals, so of the two remaining policemen one of them must be Harry Porter.

Susan Cook

Harry Porter

Born in Harkstead, Suffolk in 1880.

1881 'Cottage' in Harkstead, Samford, Suffolk. [See census return 1]

1891 Old Hall, Harkstead. [one of ten children]

1901 Asylum Attendant Borough Asylum, Foxhall Road, Ipswich. [see census 2]

1904 Joined the Police Force as a Constable.

1910 Married Minnie Richardson. [see census3]

1911 Police Constable at Dalham, Newmarket. [census 4]

1915 on the Electoral Roll for Dalham.

1921 Police Station, Worlington. Wife Minnie and twin sons born in 1920.

Working with him at Worlington were

Oswald L Fisk b. 1888, Eye Suffolk.

Charles Henry Hull, b. 1879, Lancashire.

Robert William Fisk b. 1867 Norfolk.

1930 Wife Minnie died.

1931 Harry retired aged fifty-one after service of 27 years 212 days.

1939 Register. Retired Police Constable. Widowed. 17, Cooks Road, Elmswell.

Died, 31st January, 1958 at West Suffolk Hospital.

Probate granted to his son Cyril Gordon a Mental Health Hospital Attendant.

