



# THE MILDENHALL POST

## MILDENHALL MUSEUM SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2024

EDITOR: KAY.FINNIS

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### News from the Trustees

Since reopening in March our visitor figures and sales have been very encouraging. The Air Race memorabilia and book have proved popular.

The plans for the Air Race display are progressing well and there will be activities during the school holidays. There has been some good publicity in the local press and media outlets re the air race. A very interesting e-mail was received from the Royal Flying Service Victoria asking if anything was happening about it here. They are based in a suburb of Melbourne and had arranged a Gala dinner with a talk about the Air Race. Having seen on our website a photo of the map of the race they asked if we could send an image to them. Lloyd arranged this and also sent them a copy of the book.

I laid a wreath on behalf of the Museum at the Beacon on D Day. The wreaths have been transferred to the War memorial.

We are sorry to learn of the death of Charlie Peachey. His involvement with the museum goes back many years and he volunteered until recently. We send our love and sympathy to his family.

Stephanie Palmer

### News from the Society

Some members of the Museum Society, Trustees and Volunteers have during the past year attended regular meetings with local representatives from Parish Councils, Town Council, The Mildenhall Register, Mildenhall and District Flower Club, Mildenhall Library and personnel from RAF Mildenhall to plan events to commemorate the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Great Air Race as well as RAF Mildenhall 90<sup>th</sup> celebrations. Various events have been successfully held with lots more to come. It has been encouraging to see the Town come together to plan these events and so far, all have been well attended and praise has been directed at the organisers of these events.

Stephanie Palmer and I attended back in March a Societies' Day in Elmswell, I had never been to anything like this before and wasn't sure what to expect. So early on this Saturday morning packed lunch prepared we headed to Elmswell. Local history societies, their members and individual members were warmly invited. We were able to display some merchandise our first chance to show off our 90<sup>th</sup> Air Race memorabilia and promote our society programme. A varied programme was arranged from Daddy, what is television? Preserving the past: looking to the future. Suffolk Brickworks – A's and B's which was much more interesting than it sounds!!! to finally a talk from Worlingworth Local History Society – A fire engine, a church steeple and the BBC. I can't give much away about this but if you like watching The Repair Shop look out for an item about this – it was fascinating to find out how this programme is made. The event concluded with tea and cake very nice.

Kay Finnis

## MUSEUM SOCIETY PROGRAMME 2024

Talks start at 7.30 pm – Members £2 non-members £4

Annual Membership £10

4<sup>th</sup> July                      My journey to the Olympics                      Nigel Wallace

August – No meeting

5<sup>th</sup> September            1934, That was the year that was, why was 1934 such an  
important year for the town.                      Stephanie Palmer

3<sup>rd</sup> October                Oludah    Donna Martin

7<sup>th</sup> November            Welcome Lord Christmas                          Sarah Doig

December – no meeting

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**As Margery Frappe is no longer able to be the Local History Recorder for Mildenhall, there is the opportunity for someone else to take over the reins. As Recorder you would keep a note of any changes in the town and any special events, writing a report at the end of the year which is forwarded to the Recorder Co-ordinator and then sent to be kept in the Suffolk Archives. The role is to record the present for the future. If you - or someone you know - might be interested, please contact Pam Dowson who can give you more information. [pmdwsn41@gmail.com](mailto:pmdwsn41@gmail.com), or at the Museum on Tuesday mornings. Or go to <https://slhc.org.uk/recorders/> for a full explanation.**

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Answers from February newsletter quiz.

1. Museum of Modern Art – New York City.
2. The Ashmolean, Oxford.
3. Guernica, Pablo Picasso.
4. Victoria and Albert.
5. The Hermitage Museum.
6. Tate Liverpool and Tate St. Ives.
7. Slate Museum

**LIMITED EDITION AIR RACE MEMORABILIA STILL AVAILABLE FROM THE MUSEUM DON'T LEAVE IT TOO LATE TO PURCHASE YOURS.**





## **90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Great Air Race Mildenhall to Melbourne 1934 - 2024**

### **TIMELINE OF EVENTS**

July 9<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> July – Marketplace Creative presents The National Gallery Mobile Art Studio. Poster/details attached to this newsletter with booking information.

July 14<sup>th</sup> – Douglas Park Community Fun Day

July/August – Young Aviators Mildenhall to Melbourne Air Race activity – Mildenhall Museum.

August 24<sup>th</sup> – Lark in the Park.

August 24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> Geocache activity using What3words – Museum/Library

September – December – Mildenhall Museum exhibition of Air Race 1934.

September 5<sup>th</sup> – Museum Society Talk – 1934, That was the year that was, why was 1934 such an important year for the town - Stephanie Palmer

October – Air Race Talk at Library (date tbc)

October 16<sup>th</sup> – RAF Mildenhall commemorating 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Event

October 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> Mildenhall Flower Club Flower Festival.

October 19<sup>th</sup> Band Concert – Mildenhall Town Council.

October Half Term – Art Trail in Mildenhall Town with audio tour guide.

Mildenhall Town Window Plane Spotting competition. Children's craft and Paper Plane competition at the Library.

90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the  
Mildenhall to Melbourne Air  
Race

Alongside this event, The Museum  
will be open at the same times to  
encourage visitors to both events.

Our exhibition will be open from  
September to December.

Please put these dates in your diary  
and enjoy a few hours in  
Mildenhall. You are assured a  
warm welcome at both.



To Celebrate the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
of the  
Mildenhall to Melbourne Air Race  
and  
The opening of Mildenhall Air Base



**MILDENHALL FLOWER  
CLUB**

Are holding a  
**FLOWER FESTIVAL**

18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2024

Friday and Sat 11.00am to 4.00pm  
Sunday 12.00pm to 4.00pm

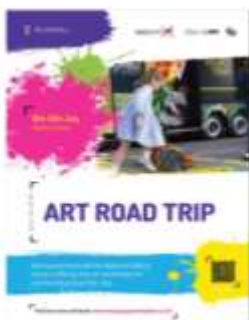
In The  
Methodist Church Mildenhall  
IP28 7EJ

**REFRESHMENTS**

Free Entry (Donations to Church and Club Funds welcome)



**Calling All  
Volunteers!**  
Saturday 13th July



The National Gallery Art Road  
Trip is coming to Mildenhall  
from 9th-13th July working with  
various community groups  
including the Museum.  
The mobile studio will be sited  
in Mildenhall marketplace on  
Saturday 13th July and we need  
volunteers to keep the museum  
open from 10.30am until  
4.00pm.

*Any help will be appreciated even if you  
can only spare an hour to ensure the  
museum can remain open for this  
important event.  
Please contact Val Clarke to let her know  
when you can help.*

*Thankyou*

The History Hub @ 

**Olympics & Paralympics  
Puzzle**



for mini sports  
fans



from 16 July to 31 August

£1 for each puzzle

## **William Gill**

### **Assistant Overseer of Mildenhall and Clerk of the Savings Bank.**

Whilst volunteering at the Museum I was handed a page from a ledger containing entries from 1821-1835. The ledger belonged to Charles Leonard a wheelwright and carpenter living in Aspal Lane, Beck Row. Charles Leonard was making notes of the world in which he lived as well as keeping his business accounts.

He would make you a 2-foot-long pig's trough for 5s 6d or a new wheel for your barrow for 6s 6d. He made a note that the winter of 1835 was 'very snowey' at the same time as entering payments of sixpence a week for the 'Foren and Britesh' Bible Society.

The entry which particularly caught my eye was in 1824, 'Settled with Mr Gill for the rates July 27<sup>th</sup>. Left due to Mr Gill 7s 0d.' This entry was followed by 'Mr Gill was overseer and was condemned to be transported for 14 years in August 1825 for defrauding the parish of Mildenhall'. Researching Mr Gill I found the following article in the Bury and Norwich

**TWENTY POUNDS REWARD.**

**ABSCONDED,**

**WILLIAM GILL**, late Assistant Overseer of Mildenhall, in Suffolk, and Clerk of the Savings Bank at that place. He stands charged with having obtained under false pretences, and having embezzled, large Sums of Money.

The said William Gill is about five feet six inches high, very stoutly made, and fat; dark olive complexion, very dark eyes and hair. He wore when he absconded a drab-coloured great coat over a black coat, drab breeches, and long gaiters. He carried a small bundle tied in a silk handkerchief. He went by the Bury Coach to London on Tuesday the 19<sup>th</sup> of April, and carries on a frequent correspondence with his relations at Mildenhall.

Whoever will apprehend the aforesaid William Gill, and lodge him in any of his Majesty's Jails, shall receive the above Reward, upon application to Mr. Orridge, Keeper of the Prison at Bury St. Edmund's.

*Mildenhall, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1825.*

Post, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1825.

At his trial, when asked if he had anything to say in his defence, he admitted that he had been 'imprudently extravagant and had contracted debts he was unable to discharge.'

In March, the previous year, William Gill married Rebecca Bailey in Mildenhall Church, both parties being 'of this parish'. The following year their daughter Sophia was born.

On September 7<sup>th</sup>, 1825, Gill was taken from Bury Gaol to be placed in chains aboard the Leviathan Prison Hulk lying in Portsmouth Harbour. He sailed aboard the convict ship Earl St Vincent with 165 other prisoners on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1826, to Van Dieman's Land. They were at sea for 115 days and reached Hobart on August 12<sup>th</sup>, 1826, his daughter Sophia's first birthday.

By November 1826 he was working as a clerk in the Police Office. He was charged with neglect of duty by omitting offences from the records, but it was decided that there was no proof that Gill had made the alterations!! There was a recommendation that his conduct in helping to apprehend two runaway convicts from Richmond Gaol 'would be remembered when he was eligible for further indulgence.'

William Gill was granted a Conditional Pardon on February 29<sup>th</sup>, 1836. He died in Hobart General Hospital of 'ascetis' aged sixty-six on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1858. His occupation was still being described as 'clerk.'

The wife and child he left behind moved to London and Rebecca married again in 1847 [legally or illegally] to Uriah White, a porter in a silk warehouse, she died in 1879 aged seventy-three. William Gill's daughter, Sophia, never married and in the 1881 census was living in a Boarding House in Bermondsey, working as a secretary.

In Mildenhall, meanwhile, the scandal of the Mildenhall Savings Bank continued for several years. A Letter to the Editor of the Bury and Norwich Post in January 1837 criticised the trustees and managers of the bank for appointing William Gill as clerk and regretted that no settlements had, as yet, been made.

Many thanks to Susan Cook for this article.