



The Mildenhall Post

Mildenhall Museum Society Newsletter

Summer 2026

www.mildenhallmuseum.co.uk

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News from the Trustees

It is with great pleasure that I bring my first *news from the trustees* since taking up my post as Chair of Mildenhall Museum Trustees, taking over from Steph Palmer after many years. I am looking forward to the challenge although with some fear and trepidation, but also pleasure to ensure the future of our wonderful jewel in the heart of Mildenhall. I would like to thank Pam Dowson for taking over the issue of the Society newsletter. I for one am looking forward to receiving it instead of producing it.

This year has been busy with the 75th Anniversary celebrations starting with the publication of *The Mildenhall Treasure* by Roald Dahl and its companion *A Guide to the Mildenhall Treasure*. We were most grateful to our MP Nick Timothy for his input in ensuring we obtained permission to be able to do this. In May a group of pupils from St. Mary's School visited the Museum along with staff to hear Mr. Timothy read an extract from the book. BBC Radio Suffolk were also present interviewing both myself, Mr. Timothy and pupils from the school.

A week of celebrations was held, starting with an afternoon tea on a very hot day, with 40 guests including volunteers past and present. Cameron Reid, a journalist from the local newspaper, was present to conduct interviews and a very good article highlighting our 75 years was published both in print and online. The week concluded with an evening buffet with 45 guests including our MP Nick Timothy, Diana Briscoe - Lady Briscoe's grand-daughter and local dignitaries, along with past Trustees and representatives from RAF Mildenhall.

The wall on our building, that was damaged by a bin lorry, was successfully repaired by a jolly bunch of builders from Birmingham. We are grateful that the repair was completed before our celebrations and did not prevent us from opening.

To conclude our year of 75th Anniversary celebrations The Trustees and volunteers are planning an Activity Day during school half term on Friday 30th October. More details

to follow, we hope this event will be well attended as lots of fun activities are organised.

Kay Finnis

Chair of Trustees

Stephanie Palmer's Memories

As Steph steps down after her long service as Chair of Trustees, she shares with us some of the highlights of her trusteeship.

Looking back over 50 years of active involvement in the Museum it amazes me that we have evolved from two rooms of hotch potch "stuff" [a good Museum word] to the professionally designed tardis that we now occupy. The original exhibition had been "temporary" for the Festival of Britain in 1951 organised by the Archaeological and Natural History Society.

We have always been well supported by local councillors who negotiated the lease of the building and have grant aided us on many occasions.

The improvements have been incremental. After opening in the current site we worked hard to achieve Registered Museum status guided by Dr Colin Dring.. Once we were officially a Museum we gained access to professional advice and could up our game yet again.

The Friends of the Museum was set up as a fundraiser and eventually merged with the Archaeological and Natural History Society to become the Museum Society.

We applied for Charity Status after drawing up a Trust Deed, another milestone achieved.

We were given a tatty wall hanging found under many layers of sugar paper and wallpaper which was very fragile. We got grants for its stabilisation and repair and we took it to the National Trust textile conservation unit at Blickling Hall. We had it framed and it was unveiled by Graham Greene who was Chairman of the local brewery but also of the British Museum.

Our Millenium project was to get replicas of the Mildenhall Treasure and within a year we had sponsorship for all items and the Duke of Gloucester came to open the Gallery.

Another highlight was when Dame Vera Lynn came to open the Stirling Society material we had been asked to display.

Lord Iveagh agreed to become our Patron as we sought to raise enough money to go for Heritage Lottery Funding [HLF]. Over the years many talented local residents have helped us with different projects.

Joe Moore and Peter Merrick and I spent some years preparing a HLF application which comes in two parts the first to help us gather all the data needed for the second stage and after a nail biting two years we got the funding and could appoint an architect [local man Mike Croughton] and Designer Neil Richardson from London. We all worked well together with numerous other advisors to achieve this our first-class museum.

The next problem was getting all our artifacts in store while the building took place. Thanks to local firms RPV, Bussens and Parkin and friends who had attic space, we packed and relocated everything, properly documented so we knew where everything was. It was a mammoth task but went very smoothly.

We were closed from December 2012 to a slow opening in June 2013 and official opening by Lord Iveagh in October 2013.

We have continued to try new ideas and during the school holidays Trustee Kathryn Thompson organises an activity for children called the History Hub.

I would like to name more people but that would be invidious.

However I make an exception by mentioning Lloyd Hughes who has been treasurer for over 20 years. As running costs increase, income doesn't follow suit which is a constant concern.

If you are interested in more of the story of our museum Pam Dowson wrote a book - Mildenhall Museum the first 75 years which is on sale for £5 alongside our other publications.

I wish Kay Finnis the new Chairman all the best in her new role.

Stephanie Palmer



Mildenhall and District Museum

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History museum



mildenhallmuseum.co.uk
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Help us to increase awareness of our wonderful museum by liking, commenting and sharing our posts.

News from the Society

Dear Society Members

These past six months have been very busy with the Society's continuing support for the Museum. As previously reported, we are in the process of furthering the Virtual Reality project which will enable visitors to 'virtually' dig up pieces of the treasure from a field together with an audio commentary explaining the story of the actual discovery as you proceed with the dig. This has been made possible with the two thousand pound donation the Society has given to the project, which also enabled us to successfully apply for a twenty thousand pound grant from Suffolk County Council. 2027 should see this in the Museum.

The damage to the wall, which happened in February has been repaired, at last.

Last week the Society ran a quiz in the museum's community room featuring the smart screen for questions and answers. Tickets were on sale within the museum for over three weeks with a maximum of 35 places, due to space available, and we only had about 3 spare on the night. We are very grateful to Brian Soper for arranging this, with Stephanie making sure all went smoothly. It turned out to be a light hearted fun event with prizes of Smarties for the winners. Several teams came very close to winning, unfortunately yours truly was on the team which pipped the others at the post. I was told this wouldn't be allowed to happen when we have the next quiz! It raised approximately £150 for the Museum and was enjoyed by everyone.

The Thursday talks are continuing to attract new members and we are continually grateful to David and Stephanie for their hard work in contacting speakers for us.

We are in the process of updating the membership list. Most members pay by direct debit, which is the easiest way, although we do accept cash if DD is not possible. We do not accept cheques any more however as banking these has become more and more difficult with changing banking rules and charges. We do our best to keep records up to date but would be grateful if you tell us of any change to your mail address as this will make sure this News Letter arrives as it should.

Lloyd Soc Chair

Susan's Research - The Time Traveller



We recently had a query from a Mr Glover in Canada asking for information about Fuller Eagle, a clockmaker in Mildenhall, during the period 1844-46. Assuming it was a family tree question I researched that Fuller Ashford Eagle was baptised in St Mary's church Mildenhall in 1815, the son of Susan Eagle but no mention of a father's name. He married Sally Langton in 1834 and in the 1841 census was living in Pound Street, Mildenhall, working as a watch and clock maker. Sally and Fuller had a baby son, Fuller John Eagle, born in 1841, but In April 2026, the museum received an enquiry from William Glover in Winnipeg, sadly the baby died in 1842 and was buried in Mildenhall churchyard. Fuller Eagle died in 1849 aged thirty-six and is also buried in the churchyard .

On Monday, the 9th inst., at Mildenhall, in the 36th year of his age, Mr. Fuller Eagle, watchmaker, and parish clerk ; generally respected and deeply lamented.

I sent the information I had found to Mr Glover and he answered, 'I have a bracket clock that needs repair, it belonged to my grandfather. He lived in Cambridge from 1901 when he became a fellow of St. John's College. He had graduated from the

University in 1896. Presumably, he bought the clock on the second-hand market. My father brought the clock to Canada in 1956 after my grandmother died. The enamel on the clock face has a chip, so it reads 'F Eagle, ..ldenhall'. While looking for someone to mend the clock I was trying to find out more about it hence, I ended up corresponding with you. Bill Glover'. What a lovely thought, a clock, made in Mildenhall in the early 1840's, is still ticking away in Canada.

Susan Cook

Spread the news about this summer's History Hub activity!

Another great activity from Trustee Kathryn Thompson.

The treasure hunt is based on the app "What 3 words". Each clue contains 3 words that will lead the child to one of the museum's treasures. At the end, the child will receive a medal. Information and instructions will be at the desk for those on duty.

The History Hub @



What 3 Words Treasure Hunt

Fun starts here





Phone not needed

Find lost treasure



from 28 July-23 August

£1 entry

Museum Society Talks

All talks are on Thursday evenings at the Museum. Doors open 7pm for a 7.30 start. £2 for members, £4 for non-members. Annual Society Membership is £10.

The final talks for the year are:

6 th August	Norfolk Artists	Lloyd Hughes
3 rd September	History of Jewellery	Jason Middleton
1 st October	History of Waterway Transport in the Fens	Alan Denny
5 th November	From Fig Leaves to Feather Boas	Fran Saltmarsh