



BISHOP'S
WALTHAM
MUSEUM

Newsletter for the Friends of the Museum

July 2015

Did you know that Walther Corf, once lived and worked in the town, he was a trader and was granted 3 new stalls in the Market Square to expand his business? It seems that trade was as good in the High Street in 1415 as it is today.

And did you know about Alice Speyring, a widow from Bursledon, who move to Ashton and married John Lyghtfoot, a labourer? She was fortunate that the Waltham Hundred allows women to inherit land, but had to pay a fine (or fee) of 25 shillings to retain her land.

We have to thank Trish and her Latin class for these and other insights into the life of the people of Bishop's Waltham in 1415.

One of our volunteers, Laura, as part of her Master degree, has created a very interesting exhibition of artefacts that people have left behind, lost or discarded. covering the period from the Mesolithic to today. The objects tell a story about the people who used them. What will the archaeologist of the year 2600 think about what we leave behind?

The Agincourt exhibition opened on the 4th July and had 160 visitors on the first weekend. Tony Kippenberger has done a great job, the panels are informative but easy to read. Bring your children and grand-children, there is a medieval wardrobe to try on, learn why Henry V was always portrayed in profile. There are also other puzzles to solve, a great day out combined with a picnic in the grounds of the palace.

Last but not least, I have been talking about the Art Council Museum accreditation for more than a year now. It is happening: an inspector will visit the museum on 21st August and she will tell us whether we have done progress to become an accredited Museum.

Hope to see you this summer.

Anita

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Making Sense of the Past: new archaeology display at the Bishops Waltham Museum

My fiancé James and I were delighted to move to our new home in Bishops Waltham in September 2014. We had previously resided in Southampton where I am currently completing my MA in maritime archaeology, having previously completed my BA in archaeology in Wales. While attending an evening seminar in town, we had the lovely pleasure of meeting Bruce and Anita Taylor of the Bishops Waltham Museum. The very next day I found myself standing in the museum archive – a room filled with unseen local archaeological treasures.

A large part of the collection at the museum was made up of material recovered during field walks in the 1980s. Everything from prehistoric flints, to post-medieval pottery had been found and stored in the archives. Most of the material lacked context to where and how it was found. Although in certain cases the name of the area where the objects were found had been included. The context concerning an archaeological object is vital for the interpretation of the past. Many objects such as oyster shells, which have been used from prehistory to modern times, are often difficult to date. However, if the shells are found in context with a more datable material, such as a coin, then a potential date can be concluded.

Since most of the material found during the field walks lacked context it became difficult to conclude a concise interpretation of the material. Instead I came up with the idea of selecting a number of items from multiple periods to create an archaeological timeline for Bishops Waltham, with the earliest material dating to the Mesolithic (10 000 – 4000 BC). Although these objects might appear completely random they bring a nice overview of what has been going on in Bishops Waltham for the past 12 000 years! Many of the chosen objects had the location where they were found written on the bag they were stored in. In these cases the locations and approximate dates of the objects were plotted onto a map of Bishops Waltham. This spatial information is very useful when interpreting where anthropogenic activity has been present in the past. This information can be used to narrow down potential habitat sites that could be subjected for archaeological excavation.

I like to see objects as carriers for past memories and events. They may tell us things about people we never knew and clarify their stories

that have become forgotten – this is what makes archaeology so exciting and also vital to our culture and human identity. With this exhibition I wish to bring some of those forgotten people back to life. My hopes are to inspire the visitor to think about the local past and feel the connection to it. Who knows how many prehistoric humans may have hunted in your backyard or how many medieval children have been running down these streets to catch a glimpse of the King who was visiting the Palace?

Finally I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Mrs Anita Taylor and Mr James Hutchinson who have provided invaluable advice on this exhibition.

Laura Johansson

Visit by Accreditation Assessor 21st August 2015

Our application for accreditation has been reviewed by our Assessor, Shabeena Anait, who asked us to send some additional material, and make some minor corrections to that already sent. This work is in hand, but we must complete some outstanding work in particular the Emergency Plan (lead Jon Riches) and the Succession Plan (Georgie Busher and Julian Malec) prior to her visit.

We have agreed with Shabeena that she will visit the Museum on Friday 21st August. (Please note date). Her inspection will last from 1030 until 3-30pm. The "Check-off" list which she will use comprises 12 pages of A4, and while this list evidently applies to both large and small museums, it gives a very clear indication that the review will be extremely thorough.

Nearer the time Georgie and Anita will decide who they will ask to be present on the 21st August, but it will be a demanding period before and on the day.

Julian Malec

John Hare's Bishop's Waltham Palace Booklet

I am very pleased to announce that we have taken delivery from English Heritage of 1,000 copies of a new version of the popular booklet. The information contained is much as before but the diagrams and pictures are now in colour. The Bishop's Waltham Society, who funded the reprint, want to share the profits from the sales with the Museum as part of their ongoing support for our activities. This means we make about 50p on every sale. The price is £3 and it will be on sale at museum from 11th July.

Bishop's Waltham Museum Trust Committee

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You will notice one new name in the list of Committee Members, Dawn Woodsford. For the past few years she has organised the rota for the stewards at the week end, she has now take on a wider role in recruiting and training the stewards and has just organised a guided tour of Winchester to reward the stewards for their efforts.

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