

Chairman's Letter

The hands of the clock seemed to go slower as 9 o'clock drew closer. I was as wound up as the clock I was watching. Goodness knows the state of mind of David Ellis with his fingers hovering over the computer waiting to put in the winning bid for the Norman Hirst painting. At 9.15 pm David rang to say he made the successful bid. With 24 seconds to go to 9 pm, the closure of the auction, David made his bid; 5 seconds later a new bidder out of the blue struck his keyboard, but his bid was marginally lower. Hallelujah! Thanks to David Ellis, our Friend in Bedford, the Friends had bought the painting.

Auctions are nerve racking at the best of times but EBay auctions must be the most stressful. David, ever vigilant for items of interest to Bushey Museum, spotted when the painting was put online by the Jubilee Galleries, a week before the auction. The starting bid was £9.99, a definite come and buy me price. At this time 8 people registered interest. During the week David put in an exploratory bid which tested who was a serious bidder – there were 76 watchers. Just before 9 pm 12 people were left. The winning technique is to keep checking the rising bids and then strike with your final bid as close to 9 pm as possible. It's a real cat and mouse game. Needless to say, the winning bid was considerably more than £9.99.

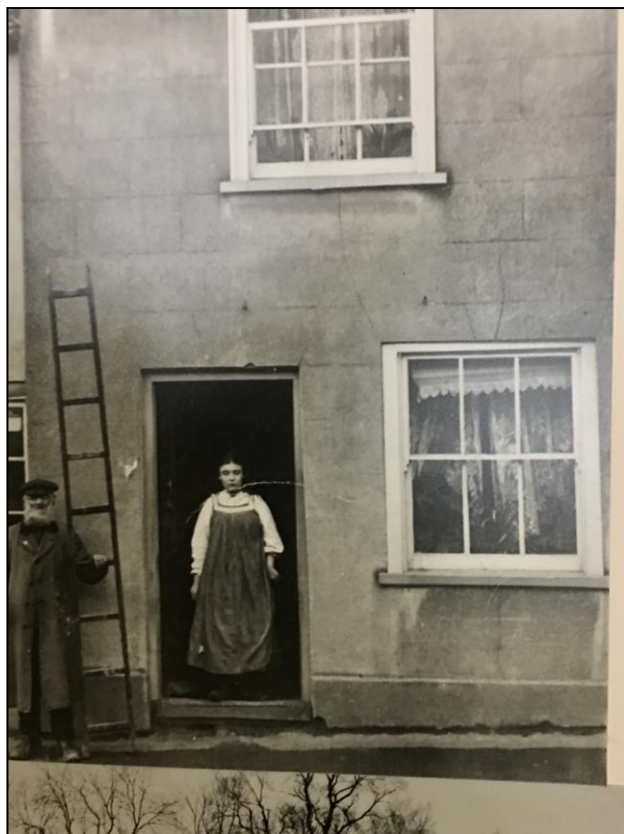
I know you will be asking why did the Friends buy the painting? It is a self portrait by Norman Hirst, a large oil on canvas dated 1937. Hirst was a student at the Herkomer School of Art in the 1880s, a good painter, but his forte was as a mezzo tinter. He worked at printers H.T. Cox in Rudolph Road. We have examples of his work in the Museum collection and this is a fine addition. Many thanks to our Friend David Ellis for his eagle eye and steady fingers.

I am sure you will be pleased to know we plan to re-open the Museum on Thursday 17th September. We hope to have enough stewards to open on our usual days, Thursday to Sunday, or if there not enough, on fewer days. We look forward to welcoming your once more.

Rita Castle, Chairman FoBM

Ladders, Lamps and Leather

Megan Scott and Danny Firth, a couple who are relative newcomers to Bushey, have recently moved into number 12 The High Street, one of the row of old cottages opposite the village pond and St. James' parish church. While exploring the Museum last winter, they noticed an old photograph of their house on display in the Small Local History Room. This photo shows the then occupants of the house probably in the earliest years of the twentieth century, in other words probably something over 100 years ago. The photo shows silver-bearded Mr. Alfred Grimshaw with his lamplighter's ladder. The lamplighter was a civic employee whose job was to turn the gas street lamps off in the early morning and back on again at dusk. Alfred was also a



cordwainer, another name for a shoemaker. The word, pronounced cordener, derives from cordovan leather from Cordoba, Andalucia, prized for shoemaking in the middle ages. We are not clear about the identity of the young woman, whether she was wife, daughter, sister, aunt or assistant we know not.

Megan and Danny's neighbouring houses were occupied back in the day by some of Bushey's most illustrious residents. A few doors down lived June and Bryen Wood. They were founder members of the Museum and Bryen was its first director. A few doors up, in the house called Kingsley, lived the horse artist, Lucy Kemp-Welch, star pupil of Sir Hubert von Herkomer. Her work brought her much fame world-wide. Many believe that her paintings of horses are among the finest ever produced.

Megan and Danny went home and took a photo of themselves in very similar poses, ladder and all, to the Grimshaw photo and have very kindly given it to the Museum. We aim to have the pictures on display side by side in the Museum when we are able to gain full access after lockdown. We would like to wish Megan and Danny many happy years living at No. 12 and many happy visits to the Museum, too.

John Gerry



Outings and Holidays

Have you been thinking about ideas for next year?

I have had 3 people interested in visiting Landsberg am Lech next year. Now I have received Airedale's brochure 2021 for holidays and the thought has come to me that instead of the Friends planning their own itinerary, why not take one of their 'tailor made' holidays? There would be a reduction in cost, which I feel might be welcome, and we can always add in something special. Towards this end I will arrange for spare copies of the brochure to be left on the counter at the Museum when it re-opens again. We need 10 members to be a viable group.

Where the outings are concerned, we could concentrate on National Trust properties and I do think Southill Park, the home of the Whitbread Family for many years, would be very interesting.

Looking forward to your thoughts and ideas.

Diana Spencer

Rudolph Road News

We're still here! – not much further forward, but then that goes for so many people and so many organisations, BUT we do have a re-opening date!

Despite the government saying we could re-open in early July, it was felt by wiser heads that July was far too early, and a suggested date of mid- August still met with a few shudders, so we have decided that we will open the Museum to the public on **Thursday 17th September**, in the hope that that there will be no government "guidance" to the contrary. Nonetheless, there will still be precautions taken to protect our staff and visitors – hand sanitisers, masks, a screen in the shop, and social distancing will still be in place.

While we are closed, however, there will still be some work going on behind the scenes.

We will be switching over the Herkomer Gallery and the Anne Blessley galleries, so as to be able to show more Herkomer artefacts, including his ornately- carved bed and ottoman, with his specially woven textile cover, and a recently-acquired Herkomer portrait.

A while ago a collection of Bushey Heath pottery was donated to the Museum by the Leighton House Museum in London, which adds to our own collection, and we have also been given a grant enabling us to show them off in a purpose-built display cabinet. Bushey Museum probably now holds the largest collection of these beautiful items. There are more details elsewhere in this newsletter about this.

For the entire period of lockdown there has been a new page on the Bushey Museum Facebook every day, on a wide range of topics, which has been a boon for so many who have been unable to visit the Museum, and much appreciated. Our website has also been much visited, particularly the panoramic videos of the current exhibitions, and the "Artist of the Month" feature.

And now we are counting down the days to when we re-open our doors again.

In the meantime – stay safe.

Carey Keates

Nostalgia ain't wot it used to be

After my last ramble about nothing in particular in the June newsletter, I was inundated by many responses. Well- a few responses. OK, *one* response along the lines of 'Woss'e on abaht?' Tell the truth, I can't remember. Blimey, I don't know where my glasses are. However, under orders from Field Marshal Castle to get on with it, here goes.

As you read this your Trustees will be into their umpteenth week of 'When should we open? September? Bonfire Night? Christmas Eve? Who will come back? How do we operate a one way system – up in the lift, down by stairs? Do we sell from the shop? Can we cope with the soon-to-be-introduced card payment system? Can we all stop driving Gareth bonkers?'

As I started writing this it was the end of June which, as they sing in 'Carousel' was '...bustin' out all over.' Then the real British summer returned – cooler, showery, windy, as we expect British summers to be.

Staying home has been, and as I write – early July - it's currently 16 weeks in, so far a bearable burden. We're mostly the lucky ones with houses, gardens to accommodate family – even if hugging a grandchild is still a moveable feast. Plus Attenborough Fields and other parks to trog round. [A wander round St. James Churchyard is interesting – lots of people in permanent lockdown!] Pity poor people in tower blocks.

We've continued to Zoom. Lectures: a super one by London tour guide Rachel Kolsky on the Clubs of St. James's. Another by an expert on Bletchley. [At M&S I had a manufacturer, a self effacing modest man who chaired Charnos Hosiery Company. Some of you will have worn their tights or nightdresses, presumably mainly the women! Decades later he popped up in a documentary on Bletchley when it became public. He was one of the geniuses there, but of course never said a word.]

Singing with my Tonic Choir even if we can't all hear each other but staying in touch. Sabbath services, led from home by our groovy young rabbi— to me 50 IS young! — including guitar accompaniment.

Telly? All the old stuff is coming out to fill schedules and much of it is sooo much better than present offers. It's a decade or three since the pleasures of Friday night on Channel 4 with 'Father Ted,' 'The IT Crowd,' 'Green Wing' and 'Black Books.' All madly off the wall hilarious if you have a semi deranged sense of humour like wot I got.

Radio Four Extra gives us the brilliantly written and performed 'Gloomsbury,' a spoof on the Bloomsbury set, and you need to know about their upper class twittishness and their er.. sexual proclivities. Then the witty Dickens spoof 'Bleak Expectations.' But very best of all is 'Cabin Pressure' about a failing one plane airline on the brink of going belly up, with Benedict Cumberbatch and Roger Allam. Allam's dulcet tones are a joy to listen to, from classical drama to 'Sarah and Duck,' but you'd need 4 year olds to watch that with! 'Cabin Pressure' is available as a box set and not to be missed.

Two other great diversions? 'The Repair Shop' which, if you believe in miracles, performs them. And for me, descended from a father, grandfathers and uncles, all tailors, but who cannot myself sew on a button, 'The Great British Sewing Bee,' from the talented competitors, to the outrageously camp Joe Lycett.

So, you've read, watched, listened to as much as you can stand? Fed up with walkies? You married him/her 'for better or for worse,' but not for lunch? So what do you mean you're bored? Write a poem.

*In Bushey we've got a Museum.
The paintings are great – you should see 'em.
We've stuff old and new
Which you really should view.
We're right up there with Rome's Colosseum.*

The Newsletter awaits your contribution.

Barry Hyman

Aspiring Poet/ Shop Manager [closed for now, but watch this space, and meanwhile order your Voices from the Past booklets of Bushey nostalgia]

Education Report

The cancellation of a number of education sessions due to the lockdown was very disappointing. The education figures for 2019-20 tell you just how busy the team have been.

Number of pupils taught = 951

Number of accompanying adults = 159

Adults attending Memory Way Cafe talks = 68

Volunteer hours = 508

It is dispiriting that we are unlikely to be able to resume any time soon. Out of school visits were always the icing on the cake. The government's message to schools to help pupils "catch up", never mind the issue of social distancing, are major obstacles to restarting. So I decided that the education team, like the rest of the world, needed to be online. But with what?

Although it is pleasing that the Victorian Experience continues to be hugely popular, with visits from local schools like St. Hilda's and Merry Hill, and ones from further afield such as Mill Hill, Hatfield, Watford and Barnet, the more modest uptake for local history is something I hope to improve on. With this in mind and inspired by a phone call from a parent seeking advice for her son's local history/ geography project I came up with a number of possible activities. My first idea I have called "What's in a Name?" which looks at the origin of place names in Bushey. If you haven't already visited this activity on the website please do. Carried away I decided the activity should open with a short video clip introducing the subject. Thanks to John Ramsden, who filmed and edited it, I made my first video and learnt how difficult it is to do a piece to camera. Although aimed at primary aged children anyone can do the activities.

Attempting to guide a party of 30 pupils around the village trail is a challenge. The narrow pavements, busy with other people and, worst of all, the sheer volume of traffic noise has meant there have been few takers. Was there an alternative way of doing it? Well I thought we could video it in bitesize chunks and do a voice over so schools can do the trail section by section. "We" is bound to include quite a number of other people. Look out for this on the website in the autumn.

Wandering round the Reveley Lodge garden I admired Puddledum the scarecrow. I thought, "I hope he's good at keeping secrets as he must see and hear some interesting things". So was born the Bushey Museum and Reveley Lodge Story Writing Competition for Children. Of course, I couldn't leave out the rocket, built by the Taylor Brothers. Competitors can choose between them for the theme of their story. Please see the website.

Now completely carried away I wanted something for those who prefer to draw. An art competition! Theme? Design a new stained glass window for St. James's Church to represent Bushey during 2020. The vicar kindly gave his consent. So check out the website.

I need to thank a few more people. Nick Overhead for taking my ideas, text and images and working his magic with them and coping with my idiosyncrasies. Likewise Andrew Gunton whose work we see all the time on the website and often take for granted. Thanks to Katharine Whitaker for her suggestions and support and for persuading Richard DeBois to produce the map of Bushey in 1086. Thanks to the Friends for providing the prize money for the story competition. Thanks to Granville Taylor who got on his bike and cycled round the village taking photographs of road signs as well as giving technical support. Also to Elizabeth and John Ramsden for additional images.



Thanks to Jane Parker for mentioning the activities on Facebook and Lesley Powell for doing the same on the Reveley website and for her lovely image of Puddledum. Lastly my thanks to a local school who will be asking their pupils to have a go at them.

"Mr.DeMille, I am ready for my close up".

Adele Taylor
Education Officer

200 Club Draw

June Winners:

£20 no 24 Miss M. Gee
£15 no 31 Mr C. Pearce

July Winners:

£20 no 10 Mrs J. Carr
£15 no 150 Mrs J.M. Smith

What's happening at Reveley

Looking at my emails, the last newsletter I wrote was in mid May, so what's happened at Reveley over the intervening two months?

The VE Day anniversary exhibition that we put up in the conservatory and that I referred to in the last newsletter seemed to have been well received and some Friends included that as part of their daily exercise, trudging up the hill, looking at the garden and then the exhibition. We have continued to have a much greater footfall as part of the lock-down and it has been a great joy to have children and families enjoying the space.

Over the lock-down period, we have had improvements made to the first floor of the Stable block, now renamed the Hayloft Gallery. There are smoke alarms, emergency lights, re-wired lighting, the walls have been painted, as have the stairs that now have stair treads. In July and August, David Mullett who many of you might know, is holding a selling exhibition in the Stable and Hayloft galleries with 50% of the sale price going to Reveley. I hope that many of you will be able to come along and snap up a bargain. Following complaints that the facilities were tired if not downright grubby, the toilet in the Stable block has been refitted, and has been repainted in best National Trust style.



The garden volunteers restarted on Monday 8th June, and we introduced new ways of working to minimise the chance of cross infection e.g. smaller teams with volunteers over two days not one, bring your own tools, bring your own refreshments, sanitiser readily available, social distancing etc. Because of the lock-down and the absence of volunteers for several weeks, some flowerbeds in the

garden have been left fallow, and we have focused on garden produce that is of benefit to the community, all guarded by the latest addition to the garden, the scarecrow Puddledum. We have had a bumper crop of garlic that is now drying in one of the sheds, and we did very well in terms of rhubarb and asparagus. Leeks, potatoes, courgettes, blackcurrants, sweetcorn, tomatoes and beans are under cultivation, with pumpkins for the autumn. A recent garden activity introduced for the children is a nature trail. All the information is available to download on both Reveley's and the Museum's websites, Mums & Dads and grandparents can take part too. We lost three out of our four beehives in the winter, but KC Sham, beekeeper, has repopulated two of them.



The biggest change at Reveley has been the introduction of the pop-up café, operating out of the heritage kitchen and again starting on 8th June. This was the brainchild of Sara Dryburgh who set it up and has operated it for most of its time. It has proved quite popular. At the time of writing we have also operated it for a week with volunteers. We intend to keep it running until the end of August, and it's open 10:00 – 12:00 and 14:00 – 16:00 Monday – Saturday. If any Friends are interested in volunteering for a morning or afternoon session please let me know.

On 4th July, we held our Art Challenge in the garden, with around a dozen artists. It was a fairly cloudy day but luckily the rain held off. John Gerry judged the event and the winner was Rafael with a striking view of the terrace.



Sadly, earlier this year Hugh Lewis decided to step down as a Trustee after many years service. He and Joan have been great supporters of Reveley for which we have been very grateful. I'm delighted to announce that we now have a new Trustee, Lisa Brown, who has been an enthusiastic garden volunteer for the last year. She has a business background and will be a great asset to Reveley.

Whilst we haven't been able to use the house very much, Jim Whitaker has still managed to re-seal the pond in the conservatory, which has kept it cooler. The garden is looking lovely and reflects the hard work of Rory, Lesley and the volunteers. Please come and visit it, and have a cup of coffee and a piece of cake to reward yourself!

Granville Taylor
Liz Ramsden

Yoga in the Garden

DESERT ISLAND DISCS UPDATE

Devotees of *Desert Island Discs*, the long-running Radio 4 programme, may know that it originated in Bushey. Roy Plomley, who devised the format and was the first presenter, was renting a property in Bushey when he "had the inspiration" as he put it. The property in question was a small cottage in Little Bushey Lane, and for many years its place in broadcasting history was commemorated by a blue plaque.

A few years ago, the cottage underwent a substantial makeover and was revamped and extended so as to be unrecognisable from its earlier appearance.

The plaque disappeared in the course of the building work and was thought to have been lost forever. However, the present owner has unearthed it and restored it to its rightful place at the front of the house.

Meanwhile, a new road is being built just behind the house. The developers suggested it should be called Fern Place, but happily more imaginative counsel has prevailed and instead it is to be known as Plomley Place.

Audrey Adams

