



# Newsletter

Summer 2024

## CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE: MUSEUM LATES, AGM & UPCOMING TALKS

Summer is with us once more, ushered in by the commencement of the Museum Lates initiative which Nikki and her team roll out between June and September. Why not take the opportunity to enjoy live music and refreshments in the lovely museum garden whilst taking advantage of the extended opening hours to view the galleries and exhibitions more thoroughly. Maybe some of you visited the Collyers pop-up shop which was in situ during Spring. The quality and creativity of the merchandise artwork to celebrate Horsham and the Museum was astonishing, and we congratulate all the students that participated. Also well worth a visit is the Museum's refurbished and streamlined library area. It's now far more informal, and highlighting authors with local connections is a welcome touch. Our old friend, Robert Blatchford, is amply represented; even more so his contemporary Hilaire Belloc who will be the subject of a speaker event next year.

Nikki, George and Helen are doing a fantastic job in developing a dynamic museum that never stands still and which continues to encourage visitors old and new. There always seems to be something fresh to look forward to, and it really is a credit to the town. Sadly though, we must say goodbye to Helen who leaves shortly to rejoin her family in Dorset. Always a friendly and helpful presence, we wish her well in whatever the future brings.

Thanks to those who attended our recent A.G.M. All passed smoothly, and one constitutional change was adopted; the slight reduction in A.G.M. quorum numbers. All Committee members were re-elected, with both Ann Rattray and Brian Frogley shedding their "acting" status for the Secretary and Treasurer roles respectively. We also welcome Sean Hannan as our new Membership Secretary and he is now busy developing the role handed over by Jenny Cheal. Sean and Pam French have spent a lot of time revising and updating the FHMAG membership application form, and publication will occur soon. It will be DL sized and rackable so can appear in far more external outlets. We would like to expand our membership which has been steady at 150-ish for some time.



Collyers pop-up shop artwork

Regrettably we had to cancel our Ramster coach trip on Wednesday 8th May. Numbers dropped to the extent that it became uneconomic to run, but we press on nonetheless with the Woolbeding outing on Thursday 5th September. As this will be free entry to National Trust members, the cost impact is more favourable. We have in mind rather a different outing in 2025 - no coaches involved.

We look forward to former Curator Jeremy Knight visiting us on Wednesday 17th July. I know that he's put a lot of effort into his unique presentation which illuminates some unusual key instances of Horsham's history. He's looking forward to meeting many old friends so do come and support him if you can. After that, our next speaker will be Sarah Nathaniel from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission at 14.00 on Wednesday 9th October. I must also thank Roger Myall from Horsham Library who spoke after the A.G.M. I'm a big Library fan and Roger's advice about some of the many new in-house activities and opportunities was very informative. I endorse the use of the e-magazines facility - you'll never have to loiter in the magazine aisle of W.H. Smith ever again.

The forthcoming list of guest speakers in 2025 is very diverse - I wonder what nuggets we will learn from them.

Till next time.

Paul French

## MUSEUM NEWS

The summer season is always a bit of a whirlwind at the museum as we have our late evening openings each month and our family activities on weekdays during the summer holidays. Our very first museum late is now behind us and it was brilliant to see so many people enjoying an evening at the museum. We will be welcoming Steel Tribe as the entertainment on Friday 19 July, Choro Bandido for Friday 16 August and HotPot for Friday 13 September. If you have not attended one before then the museum is open until 8pm, with music and a licensed bar in the garden from 6pm. Entry is free as always, so there really is no better way to spend a summer evening in Horsham.

Our research room opened at the end of May, which features displays about Horsham district's residents of literary note and gives access to many of the research books on the local area which were previously in store. There are now some desks in the space too, so if you are interested in local history and want a pleasant, peaceful space to do some research, it is the perfect spot for it.

We have said goodbye to our brilliant Visitor Services Officer, Helen Leary in June who is moving West. In addition to many other elements, she has been the driving force behind our family events programme and most of the imaginative craft activities have been her ideas. I will be stepping in to manage this whilst we find a replacement, and we have a fantastic volunteer team who will also pool their ideas. We are currently looking for some extra family activity volunteers so if you

are interested in volunteering to help run these craft sessions then do get in touch with us at the museum.

Our iconic Horshamosaurus has gone on loan to the Novium Museum for their exhibition, Dinosaurs: Hungry Hatchlings. You can find an article on our website's blog page, which gives all of the details of how we prepared the dinosaur bones for the loan. Serendipitously days after we had waved goodbye to the dinosaur, we were contacted with a donation offer of another piece of the Horshamosaurus. The donor's relative was working at the Rudgwick quarry when the bones were discovered and took a piece of the dinosaur home in their lunchbox. It has remained a treasured item ever since, but now they have kindly donated it to the museum to join the other surviving pieces of its skeleton. We are in contact with a dinosaur expert to identify which part of the dinosaur it is and once identified we will put it on display. I recommend that if you are in Chichester that you pay a visit to the Novium Museum to see their dinosaur exhibition. It is open until 9 November.

I am sure that myself and the team here will welcome many of you to the museum over the summer - you will likely find me cutting and sticking in the craft zone, and if you are looking for a handy reminder of our summer events, then they are listed on free bookmarks available at the museum.

*Nikki Caxton*



Research room display



Museum Lates



## 2024 COACH TRIP: WOOLBEDING GARDENS



### **Woolbeding Gardens** *Thursday 5th September*

A wonderful 30-acre themed National Trust garden near Midhurst which operates within a limited opening period.

A return visit has been requested by many, and it's an opportunity for those who missed out on a very successful visit last time round. Equally, those in our original party may now enjoy the seasonal changes that will occur as a result of a later visit.

Departure will be at 12.30pm from Horsham Hop Oast with a return from Woolbeding at 4.15pm.

Fare will be around £20, plus approx. £10 for non-NT members.

We can only run these trips if enough support is indicated beforehand so if you would like to join us, then contact [fhmag1893@gmail.com](mailto:fhmag1893@gmail.com) ASAP.

*Paul French*

## COMING SOON: JEREMY KNIGHT - ILLUMINATING THE PAST: DISCOVERING HORSHAM'S HIDDEN STORIES

Come and join us on Wednesday 17th July 2024 at 19.30 in the Wesley Hall at London Road Chapel and meet Jeremy Knight, former Curator of Horsham Museum, for an evening of discovery and interpretation.

Jeremy will be focusing on two main themes, starting with his reading of the Sarah Hurst diaries during the Covid period, followed by an illuminating talk about several of the ornate manuscripts held in the museum archives.

Jeremy is an old friend and a noted Horsham authority so I hope that members will show their support and enjoy the content of this unusual evening.

**Members and Guests:** admission £5 cash only



Jeremy Knight

*Paul French*

## NEW FHM MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome new members: Professor Andrew & Mrs Gardner, Mr Rod Cuming, Ms Patricia Barrett and Dr David Skipp. Ms Nikki Caxton, the Museum curator, has been made an Honorary member.



# HISTORIC ENTRIES IN THE WEST SUSSEX COUNTY TIMES

*Researched and transcribed by Julie Mitchell*

## WSCT Friday, July 21st 1959 HE ESTABLISHED FOUR BUSINESSES Death of Mr. John Wakefield

Mr. John Wakefield, the son of a railway worker and a dressmaker, who came to Horsham in the 1880's and established a small West-street sweet shop, died at his home, 72 Worthing-road Horsham, on Tuesday, at the age of 86.

Right to the end of his life he was thinking about administrative details of the four extraordinarily successful businesses - the jewellers, the cafe, the china shop and the tailors - which he had built up from his first sweet-shop venture started over 60 years ago.

Born in Wiltshire, Mr. Wakefield was only 25 when he opened his first shop, the sweet-shop which was on the site of what is now the ladies' dress section of the tailors.

He married Miss Sarah Jane Shaw, of Horsham, the same year and they made their first home over the

sweet-shop. They had a family of seven children, three daughters and four sons. Each of the sons is now manager of one of the four shops which Mr Wakefield established gradually over a period of nearly 30 years.

The jewellers was the first of the four shops which Horsham knows today. It opened in 1911. It was not until after the first World War that the cafe was opened in 1919, when rationing was still in force. The china shop followed and finally the tailors, which was established in 1928.

Although Mr. Wakefield retired nearly 30 years ago, he still took an active interest in the shops. He attended business meetings frequently after his retirement and his concern for the company made up his whole life. He took no time for starting hobbies or other interests in his retirement.

Mr. Wakefield, who lost his wife in 1953, is survived by all his children. The funeral takes place on Monday at the Downs Crematorium, Brighton.

## WSCT Friday, June 11th 1948 "A MAN OF GREAT PUBLIC SPIRIT" Mr E E Lawrence Dies at Horsham

Horsham has lost one of its leading residents by the death on Sunday of Mr Ernest Edward Lawrence, Strathmore House, Brighton Road. Aged 74, he had been closely associated with almost every organisation in the town, and was still an active public worker at the time of his death.

A native of Watton in Norfolk, Mr Lawrence came to Horsham and founded the firm of Chart & Lawrence over half a century ago. It celebrated its 50th anniversary last February.

A Justice of the Peace, he had been a Magistrate at Horsham for over 30 years and was chairman of the Bench until last year. He also served as Chairman of Horsham Juvenile Court and was a member of the Visiting committee of Lewes Prison. Since 1921 he had been a trustee of the Horsham Parochial Charities.

For 25 years, he was a member of Horsham Urban District Council, being their chairman on several occasions. During the 1939-45 war he was co-opted on the West Sussex County Council.

When the Horsham Food Control Committee came into being Mr Lawrence was elected as its chairman - an office he continued to hold until his death.



Postcard of West Street in 1948

Among the many other appointments he held were those of a member of the Horsham School managers and a Governor of Collyer's School. He was a prominent member of the March and Darnley Lodge of Freemasons, and was President of the Horsham Rotary Club on three occasions.

A keen Methodist, he was a member of the London-road Methodist Church, where a memorial service was held yesterday (Thursday) afternoon.

Mr Lawrence is survived by his second wife, two sons and three daughters.



## WEBSITE UPDATE

As we are several months into the Friends' website (it went live in March 2023) it's a good chance to assess what are its strengths and what doesn't quite fit the bill.

It seems something is working as, at the time of writing, the site averages 419 views a month. The figure for 2023 was 339, so a rather good improvement!

We are picking up subscribers, but I would encourage you all to hit the 'subscribe' button that comes up! That way you'll be sent the regular blogs we create each week.

They are a mixture of general museum and Friends news and some fascinating local historical snippets!

A good way to assess how you are doing with a website is to do a Google search and see where your site appears!

Just searching for 'Horsham Museum' sees the Friends' website pop up after the Museum's own site (no surprise) and behind big-hitters such as TripAdvisor and Wikipedia as well as VisitHorsham which has a big web presence.

However, if you do a search on 'Horsham Museum Friends' then we appear second behind the Museum itself which is absolutely perfect!

We have added some sections that may not seem important but tick boxes as far as keeping us transparent in what we do. These include 'brand



Jeremy Knight's Horsham Histories are part of the website.

guidelines' and 'social media policy'.

These and the other sections you'll find at the bottom of the site aren't vital but are there to clarify any questions that may arise in the future.

Another change was, of course, with the Adopt an Object page. The new objects are all in place and the links all work (it was fun changing those!).

Our ongoing commitment to add all of former Curator Jeremy Knight's Horsham Histories online continues apace. I'm currently working on Volume 5, the final book!

It's been an interesting project and I hope will be a vital help for anyone interested in local history.

*Steve Payne*

## ADOPT AN ARTEFACT

A quick reminder of two of the fascinating objects available for adoption, a old favourite and a brand new item. Find out how to take part at [friendsofhorshammuseum.co.uk/adopt-an-object](https://friendsofhorshammuseum.co.uk/adopt-an-object).

### Desiccated Cat

The dried cat seen in the Cabinet of Curiosities was found walled up in a local building. In folklore it was believed that cats had a sixth sense and so once the family cat died, it was placed inside the walls of a home to continue hunting and warding off evil spirits.

### **\*NEW\*** Push-along dog toy

This push along dog was made by the British toy company, Lines Brothers Ltd in the early 20th century. Formed in the Victorian era, by 1947 they claimed to be the largest toy manufacturer in the world. Lines were less well-known for their soft toys, like this dog, which they sold under the name Pedigree Soft Toys, as many of their toys were model cars or railways.



## GARDEN UPDATE

It's a good year for the roses.

Greetings from one of Horsham's hidden treasures, the beautiful museum garden. I've lost count of the times I have posted pictures on my social media page for followers to respond 'wow, it's beautiful, I never realised the museum had such a lovely garden!'

It's late spring and an exciting time of transition in the garden. There's so much colour here, in particular the roses.

I'm Carole, I've been called the 'Ruthless Rose Pruner' because I'm a devil with my secateurs. It works, just look at these beauties!

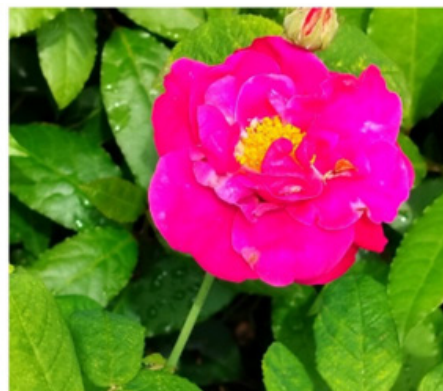
We meet every Monday and as keen experienced gardeners, we just fall into whatever needs doing. It's a busy time of year especially deadheading, weeding, pruning and watering, despite the rain.

We've had a couple of Bank Holidays recently where the museum is open for the whole weekend. We volunteers have a break so the visiting public don't have to climb over us, our prunings and our implements!

We try to be eco-friendly, using zero chemicals, by collecting and using rainwater from the water butt and making use of the compost from our compost area. The compost area is in the process of being rebuilt and is looking great. Mark has done a brilliant job replacing the old rotten compost area using recycled posts and decking.

It's a great time to visit the museum, we'd love it to be a bit more than one of Horsham's hidden treasures.

*Carole Leonard*





# THE FRIENDS OF HORSHAM MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY HISTORY

The Friends of Horsham Museum exists to promote the museum and raise funds. They think everyone should visit the Museum and enjoy its delightful garden.

The Horsham Museum that was founded in 1893 was a very different organisation from the current one. The Free Christian Church (now the Unitarian Church) started a Museum Society in 1893 which collected objects of educational and general interest which they stored in the church and brought out a few times a year. The objects included geological specimens, birds' eggs and less educational photographs of strange potatoes and a hairless horse, which are still in the collection. By the late 1920s the collection had grown too big for the Church and, thanks to Stan Parsons's lobbying, in 1930 HUDC gave the Museum the use of the kitchen at Park House which they staffed with volunteers from the Society. In 1941 the council needed the space at Park House and offered the Society in exchange two rooms in Causeway House, still run by volunteer staff. Over the years the Museum expanded into the whole house. In the yard at the back a barn was acquired and an archive store, the bicycle gallery and a meeting room were built with the help of lottery money. Volunteers have laid out the sheltered garden.

Originally the collection belonged to the Museum Society but in 1974 after protracted negotiations the Council took over the running of the Museum and all new objects acquired after 1966 belong to them. The Museum Society agreed to a permanent loan of their objects and that is the situation still today. The Council appointed professional curators and in 1988 Jeremy Knight came to Horsham.

Now there are three fulltime members of staff. The curator is Nikki Caxton who came to Horsham after working as an Exhibition Manager at the V&A in London. George Graham is the assistant curator with a back ground in collections conservation and helps the volunteers. Helen Leary is the Visitors Service Officer who organises the popular children's activities. She studied in Liverpool and took a master's degree in Exhibition Studies.

Over the years the Museum was lucky to have the support of many local people including Sir Cecil Hurst and William Albery with his collection of horse harness and many documents. At the Denne Park Sale in the 1940s Stan Parsons persuaded the council to buy the splendid Eversfield double portrait which now hangs on the stairs.

On my first visit to the Museum in the early 60s the Albery Collection of horse bits took a whole wall in



Portrait is of Charles Eversfield (1683-1749) and his first wife Mary.

one room and the museum curator (honorary) was a museum exhibit in himself.

As you can see the legal position at the Museum is a little complicated. A charity can claim Gift Aid and other financial benefits but the Museum Society was unable to claim charity status because they owned part of the collection. In 2010 the Committee decided to form a separate Friends of Horsham Museum which could be a Charity. The sole purpose of the Museum Society now is safeguarding the artefacts in the pre1966 collection. Members of the Friends are automatically members of Horsham Museum Society as well and Trustees for both organisations are elected from the members.

What do the Friends do? Firstly the Friends try to support the professional staff in any way they can.

Perhaps when Nikki wants to buy something and funds are low the Friends can help. Recently the Friends supported the successful Godman Exhibition financially and purchased two posie rings from the 16th or 17th Century which were found by detectorists locally. [A posie ring is often gold and inscribed with a motto or saying to communicate secret messages of love.]



Posie ring

Some Friends volunteer in the Museum or help with the popular children's holiday activities. There is a programme of talks: Lesley Ward who used to run the cheese shop in the Carfax, came to talk about her collection of old recipe books and ginger bread moulds while at Christmas we heard the history of pantomime from an actor who had appeared professionally many times as a dame or an ugly sister. In the summer there is usually a trip perhaps to a garden - last year the Friends went to

Woolbeding Gardens near Midhurst.

Three times a year the Friends publish a newsletter which includes details of exhibitions and the activities of both the Museum and the Friends.

If you have not been to the Museum for years it is well worth a visit and it is free!

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*Liz Vaughan*

## HORSHAM LIBRARY: WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU?

Did you know your local library provides a free homebound service to supply books to those people unable to get out and about?

No? Well, it's not surprising as this is one of Horsham library's least used services and one which library manager Roger Myall is very keen to promote!

This was just one of the revelations Roger, who is also manager of the Southwater branch, revealed to those attending his talk in April, entitled 'What Can We Do For You?'.

His talk followed the AGM and he told us that there are 36 libraries across West Sussex, which includes seven in the Horsham district.

Roger said that one of the things that still amazes him is that many people don't realise it's still free to join the library and to borrow books!

The least known services, along with helping the homebound, include reminiscence packs that can stimulate people with memory problems, such as dementia.

There are also educational toys that can be borrowed, again for free, for children with learning difficulties.

Anyone who has visited Horsham library recently will realise that several events are held each week for youngsters.

However, more mature visitors can also join in with board games sessions, readers groups (like a book club) and a 'knit and natter' get-together which helps folk meet new people.

A new idea that should prove popular is Melody for the Mind, which involves enjoying a good sing-song,



Roger Myall, Manager of Horsham Southwater Libraries

helping those struggling with memory loss.

Information Technology (IT) is another area where the library can help, with its free wifi, use of computers and photocopiers and even digital support, thanks to library volunteers.

Those who are a bit more tech savvy can get involved with the E-library and, through various apps, read newspapers and magazines online and even order books from the catalogue.

If local history is an interest (and as a Friend we probably all are!) then there are resources available, such as local newspapers on microfilm and databases to sift through.

So, if you haven't visited the library in a while then it's not just about borrowing books!

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*Steve Payne*



## NEW COMMITTEE MEMBER PROFILE: SEAN HANNAN

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I'm looking forward to meeting you all in my role as a Trustee and Membership Secretary of the Friends of Horsham museum, whether that be at one of our regular events or at the welcome desk at the museum, where I also volunteer.

I've been in Horsham on and off since 1966, when my family moved here. I went to school in Clarence Road, then Chesworth (when it was next to Millais), and Collyers where I first developed a liking for History, going on to the University of Kent at Canterbury to study it along with Politics.

My working life began with Sun Alliance on the early 80's, where a role in the Overseas Company meant that I worked overseas with my wife and subsequently, two children - as we spent around 12 years in Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, and Malaysia. That experience included merging the Royal and Sun Alliance in both Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur. Returning

home to find the UK business still suffering from its own merger experience, I left and managed a second and third career working initially in insurance but finally in clinical trials.

During this time, I also volunteered as a governor and Chair of the governors at Holbrook School during the noughties, where my kids went to school before also following me through a very different version of Collyers. In the meantime, my wife, who also volunteers at the museum, worked at Trafalgar School for many years before moving on to Cottesmore School, where she still works part-time.

Retiring just before Covid, I have recently taken on volunteering roles at Amberley museum as well as Horsham museum. This fits in well with my interest in local history and will make use of my skillset and I look forward to supporting the museum in this way.



## SIR PETER HORDERN OBITUARY

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You have probably seen notices in the national and local press about the death of Sir Peter Horder, former MP for Horsham and Crawley.

Sir Peter was a member of Horsham Museum Society and the Friends and chaired our AGM's for many years. He became our President until the Friends became a charity, but he continued as a member.

## FORTHCOMING EXHIBITIONS & EVENTS

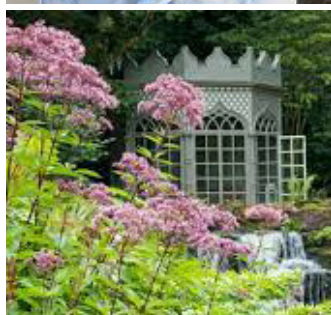


### Exhibition | Summer collection

Saturday 14 June - Saturday 7 September | The Gallery at Horsham Museum

### Friends events | Jeremy Knight - Illuminating the Past; discovering Horsham's hidden stories

Wednesday 17 July | 7.30pm | Wesley Hall, London Road Chapel  
Members & Guests: £5 cash only



### Events | Friday Museum Lates programme

Museum Open: 10am - 8pm

Refreshments and entertainment from 6pm

Friday 19 July: Steel band, Steel Tribe

Friday 16 August: Brazilian folk band, Choro Bandido

Friday 13 September: Acoustic folk band, HotPot

### Events | A summer of history: Craft activities for children

10.30am - 3pm

Every Tuesday - Friday from 25 July - Friday 1 September 2023

Please note there are no activities 8-11 August



### Friends events | Woolbeding Gardens Coach Trip - Book now!

Thursday 5th September | Leaving Horsham Hop Oast 12.30pm, returning 4.15pm | Tickets will be approx. £20 plus £10 for non-NT members

Book via [fhmag1893@gmail.com](mailto:fhmag1893@gmail.com) - see page 3 for details.

### Friends events | Sarah Nathaniel. Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Wednesday 9th October | 2.30pm | Wesley Hall, London Road Chapel  
Members & Guests: £5 cash only



### Friends events | Christmas Tea Party hosted by harpist Margaret Watson

Wednesday 4th December | 4pm | The Lounge, London Road Chapel  
Members & Guests: £5 cash only

## FHM COMMITTEE

Chairman: Paul French | Secretary: Ann Rattray | Treasurer: Brian Frogley

Pam French, Audrey Coventry, Steve Payne, Sean Hannan, Patricia Barrett, Maureen Radbourne

Newsletter Editor: Gail Chapman

Contact email: [fhmag1893@gmail.com](mailto:fhmag1893@gmail.com) | Friends website: [www.friendsofhorshammuseum.co.uk](http://www.friendsofhorshammuseum.co.uk)

Contact address: Horsham Museum, 9 Causeway, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 1HE

You can support Horsham Museum & Art Gallery by making cash or card donations, Adopting an Object, joining the Horsham District Council lottery, registering with [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) to do your shopping or by leaving a gift in your will

[www.horshammuseum.org](http://www.horshammuseum.org)

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