



CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE: CRETACEOUS HORSHAM, LATES & TOURS



The Friends made a good start to the year by co-sponsoring the Museum's current exhibition, *Cretaceous Horsham*. I hope that some of you were able to accept the invitation for a private viewing on the evening before the formal opening. If so, you will have seen a well-laid out and instructive display carefully constructed and hosted by Assistant Curator George. The Horshamosaurus, an amiable-looking beast, featured heavily, with references also to the Iguanodon, a local emblem of Southwater. On the Friends website, our own Steve Payne has interviewed George about the background behind the exhibition; look under the blog tab for all the inside info. Incidentally, George will be our 2026 post-AGM speaker; subject - the Horshamosaurus.

Following on from the successful Friday lates programme last year, it seems that the Museum will be repeating the initiative in 2025 so we eagerly await details of the forthcoming programme. Always popular with the Friends, plus a good source of material for our Facebook page, it's really commendable that Horsham District Council is so onside with accessing our Museum in this lively and dynamic way. We want the Museum to remain vibrant and appealing for the town and its community but, like many representative local associations, we eye the looming restructuring of the County Council framework into a Unitary Authority, and its potential effect on amenities, with some concern. Rest assured that we will do all that we can to emphasise the Museum's role in the

town if there is a clear need to do so.

This item will be monitored closely at our monthly Committee meetings, a forum which Curator Nikki attends, so she will always be clear about our support. Committee procedure, strategy and output will be reviewed at the A.G.M on Wednesday 16th April, which precedes a talk from local artist Claire Phillips, entitled "Portraits of Struggle and Strength" undoubtedly featuring some stories behind her most evocative works.

Next, we have the Verrio tour at Christ's Hospital on Monday 19th May. Many thanks to those members that expressed an interest so quickly. It was a superb response and more than enough to form a Friends party on the day. We'll be watching the weather forecast anxiously in the hope that the outdoor part of the programme will operate. Rain-drenched memories of last year's outing to Woolbeding Gardens still remain quite fresh.

During Spring I hope that members will take the opportunity to visit the Museum and enjoy the reawakening garden which will now be under new leadership, post Heather Glenny.



The Garden. c. Horsham Museum

Always a peaceful and tranquil spot, I'm sure that Heather's fine work will be continued and enhanced. Do remember to visit the Museum shop and get the benefit of a 10% discount on a range of items dependent on the date of your visit; details are on the rear of your membership card.

Finally, I hope that you are happy with the level of communication that you receive personally from us. We now hear back from many more members than before which is very pleasing. We're always happy to answer or respond to anything that you may wish to share so do get in touch via fhm1893@gmail.com.

Till next time

Paul French

MUSEUM NEWS

Visitors to the museum over the winter will have noticed that, thanks to the museum garden team's care, even in the coldest of months the garden has been looking beautiful. However, in the last couple of weeks we have seen the spring flowers coming through and the garden is currently carpeted with purple crocuses. The garden is a huge asset to the museum and so we will again be holding our museum late events this summer so that everybody has an opportunity to enjoy the gardens on (hopefully sunny) summer evenings. Please see p10 for the upcoming museum late dates.

As well as enjoying the spring blooms we have also had our busiest February half term since our 2021 reopening. During the school break we welcomed just under 1,300 visitors who took part in dinosaur themed crafts, followed the dinosaur trail around the museum and took in the spectacle of the fossilised dinosaur bones on display in our exhibition *Cretaceous Horsham: Discovering Dinosaurs*.



The dinosaur exhibition is curated by the museum's Assistant Curator, George Graham-Payne and has seen an influx of visitors from all ages who have thoroughly enjoy the display. The preparation for the exhibition went very smoothly with representatives from Petworth, the Royal Society and the Natural History Museum coming to the museum to oversee the placement of the objects which they have kindly lent. It is standard practise for museum institutions to send a 'courier' to install artefacts so they can confirm that they are happy with the light, environmental and security arrangements in place. Thankfully George's careful preparations were a success and each item was condition checked, placed and then secured in each showcase with no concerns by the other institutions' guests. Now that the exhibition is open

there has been some great press coverage with George appearing twice on BBC radio Sussex as well as an appearance on local podcast *Sounding Out Horsham*.



Spring is always a busy month here with school holidays and the plethora of bank holiday weekends. The museum stays open 7 days across bank holiday weekends so if you are in town on a bank holiday Sunday or Monday then do take advantage of the extra opening to enjoy the museum's galleries. Our family crafts will take place during school holidays as usual.

Last year we had our inaugural pop-up with Collyer's art and design students who created cards, prints and tote bags with designs relating to Horsham and its history. A new group of students is visiting the museum in March to source inspiration and the final products will be available to buy from early May. We are also working on a project with the Collyer's History Society with more details coming soon.

Nikki Caxton

COMING SOON: AGM & CLAIRE PHILLIPS: PORTRAITS OF STRUGGLE AND STRENGTH

15th Annual General Meeting: The Friends of Horsham Museum & Art Gallery

Wednesday 16th April 2025 at 7.30 p.m.

Members: free | Guests admission: £5

You are invited to attend this event which will be held in the Wesley Hall, Cornerstone Methodist Church, London Road.

Following the AGM, we will be joined by local artist Claire Phillips who will give a talk entitled "Struggle and Strength".

We look forward to welcoming Claire on this key date in our diary, and it is hoped that many members will respond to the human nature of her works.



COMING SOON: KATHRYN FERRY PRESENTS BRITISH SEASIDE ARCHITECTURE AND MORE

Come and join us on Wednesday 11th June 2025 at 19.30 in Wesley Hall at the London Road Chapel and meet Kathryn Ferry, an authority on seaside architecture, design and culture.

Kathryn is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and the Media Officer for the National Piers Society. She is also the author of several books and magazine articles and lectures to a wide range of audiences, often appearing on television and radio broadcasts as a seaside cultural expert.

So if you like Butlins, beach huts or bathing beauties, or the kitsch of the British seaside lifestyle up to the 1970's, then this is the evening for you.

Admission to all: £7.50



THE FRIENDS CHRISTMAS PARTY

From Bach and old Wassail tunes to Glenn Miller and the Rolling Stones, harpist Margaret Watson had something for everyone at the Friends' Christmas Party on December 4.

One of the busiest professional harpists in the South-East, Margaret has played for Royalty, but was equally happy to entertain the Friends. She mixed playing her musical instrument with detailed information about the harp and added anecdotes from her long and fascinating career. She described the harp as a 'piano inside out' and, after beginning with a beautiful German carol, described just how she manhandles her bulky instrument in and out of a car (with the help of drainpipes and a trolley!).

Margaret always wanted to play the harp and began lessons aged 14. One of many interesting facts is that she never uses her little fingers while playing as the two tons of tension require very strong manipulation which these digits don't have. She pointed out that the 47 strings are colour coded, which can create problems if the carpet happens to be tartan!

A further concern is that the varying temperature of various venues means that keeping the instrument in tune is a feat in itself. As composer Shostakovich commented, harpists spend 90 per cent of the time tuning and ten per cent playing out of tune!

The 41 kilos of harp are rested on the knees while playing, and the 1,400 working parts (including a complex group of pedals) are cleverly concealed.



Harpist Margaret Watson

The many tunes Margaret played showed her versatility, including 'Greensleeves' (definitely not written by Henry VIII, although he did play a harp). There was also a different version of 'Ding Dong Merrily On High' as well as 'Silent Night'. However, Margaret was equally at home playing the Glenn Miller classic 'Chatanooga Choo Choo', the Rolling Stones' 'As Tears Go By' and 'Can't Help Falling In Love', famously sung by Elvis Presley.

Despite having another engagement that evening Margaret spent time afterwards chatting to members as they enjoyed the Christmas party food and a raffle.

Steve Payne

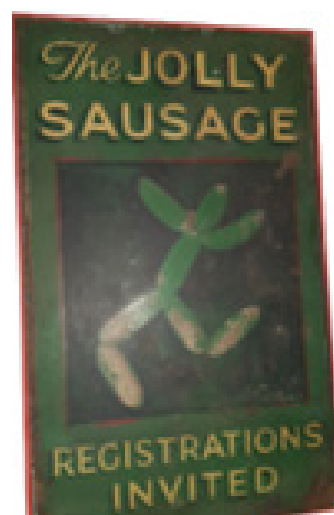
ADOPT AN ARTEFACT

A quick reminder of one of the fascinating brand new objects available for adoption. Find out how to take part at friendsofhorshammuseum.co.uk/adopt-an-object.

The Jolly Sausage Sign

The jolly sausage sign has been part of the museum's collection since 1984, when it was discovered on the premises of a shop which was moving to a new location. Following a newspaper article calling for information it was suggested that the sign hung on a butchers shop in the town, although the exact location is unknown.

Local legend says that it is covered in dents and scratches because troops stationed in the town used it for target practise, as the shape of the 'jolly sausage' resembles a swastika.



THE ARTS SOCIETY



The Arts Society Horsham was started in 1972 (53 years ago) at Christs Hospital. It grew steadily over the years, moving to the Methodist Church in London Road, and then to the Capitol Theatre when it was purchased by Horsham District Council. The Capitol Theatre will undergo some refurbishment during 2025 and beyond, so the Arts Society Horsham will meet at the Brighton Road Baptist Church until further notice.

Traditionally, we hold 10 illustrated lectures a year, excluding August and December. Our speakers are nationally accredited by the Arts Society HQ in London and include TV personalities and well-known academics. Lectures last about an hour.

In addition, we try to arrange several coach or train outings a year to places of cultural and artistic interest, latterly we have been to Eltham Palace, Watts Gallery near Guildford and Windsor Castle, Winchester Cathedral and Farley's Farm House (the home of Lee Miller).

Membership is currently £45 for a year, that equates to £4.50 per lecture plus magazines, newsletters, the opportunity to go on the coach or

train trips, and a range of digital content managed by HQ.

If you are interested in joining The Arts Society Horsham, come along to a lecture as a visitor for £8 on the door, then you will be able to have that money refunded against pro-rata membership if you sign up on the day.

Our next few lectures are:

Wednesday 12th March 2025: The Science of Art at the National Gallery: Aaron Hunter.

Wednesday 9th April 2025: The Architecture of Mughal India: Palaces, Mosques, Gardens and Mausoleums: John Stevens.

Wednesday 14th May 2025: Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc: Art and Apocalypse: Colin Pink.

Wednesday 11th June 2025: From Claridge's Hotel to the London Underground: The Life and Work of Textile Designer Marion Dorn: Pamela Campbell-Johnston

In all cases free tea and coffee is available from 10.00 and the lectures start at 10.45. at the Brighton Road Baptist Church, Horsham.

For more information about The Arts Society Horsham, please visit the website at:

www.theartsociety.org/horsham

The Arts Society, is a national organisation in the United Kingdom and abroad promoting education in the arts and the preservation of artistic heritage.

Museum Discount Scheme

Your 10% discount in the museum shop can be used as follows:-

Gallery Sales - January and August

Greetings cards/postcards - February and July

Food - March and November

Books - April and September

Plants - May and October

Gifts - June and December

Always show your Membership Card

WEBSITE UPDATE

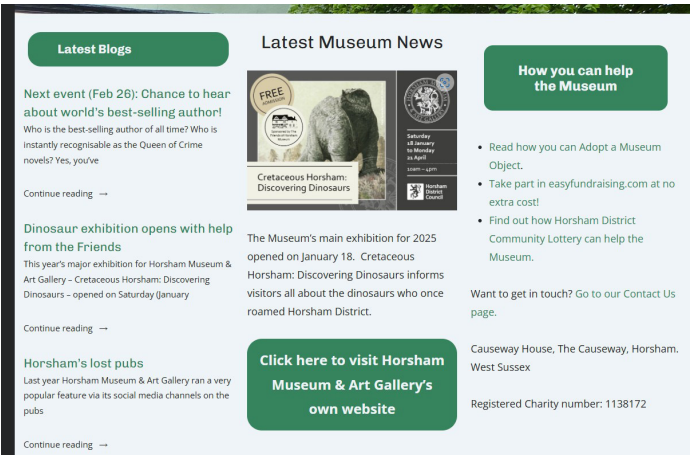
We are firmly into 2025 so it's a good opportunity to look back at how our Friends website has performed over the past 12 months.

In fact we only launched the site in March 2023 so we can't do a specific year on year comparison. However, looking at the figures it's very obvious that we have seen a noticeable increase in views (the number of web pages looked at) and visitors (people who have looked at one or more pages).

In 2023 the total views were 3,393 by 1,421 people for the ten months. Last year the numbers were 5,250 views by 2,537 people - so even with two more months, a substantial improvement!

Of course, the more interesting blogs (stories) posted the more interest we get. We had 56 posts in 2023 and 81 last year. The majority of these were written by me, so I must be doing something right!

The digital world is never stationary, though. After 20 months it's time to analyse our website and see what works, what needs changing and what, if anything, should be set aside. I agree with the old adage that 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it'. However,



there are elements of the website that need looking at.

We have to ask the question 'what is the purpose of the site' and is the message we want to convey clearly set out?

As a result by the time you read this report the website will have a slightly different 'look' to it.

Hopefully, you'll agree it is an improvement!

Steve Payne

LIGHTBOX

One of the Friends' latest acquisitions may not be very old (in fact it's brand new!) but it will be a valuable asset for the Museum.

The light box enables the Museum team to photograph small artefacts in a controlled lighting environment.

What this means is that there are no shadows, no reflections and the pictures are far sharper, so can be enlarged without the image breaking up or pixelating.

The example shows how the key becomes clearer and brighter.

As we are firmly in the digital age, having our artefacts photographed as clearly as possible means our online archive becomes far more accurate and relevant.

In fact we have also bought the paraphernalia for photographing larger items but more on that in the next newsletter.



A key taken with and without using the light box.



The light box set up for use.

Steve Payne

GARDEN UPDATE:

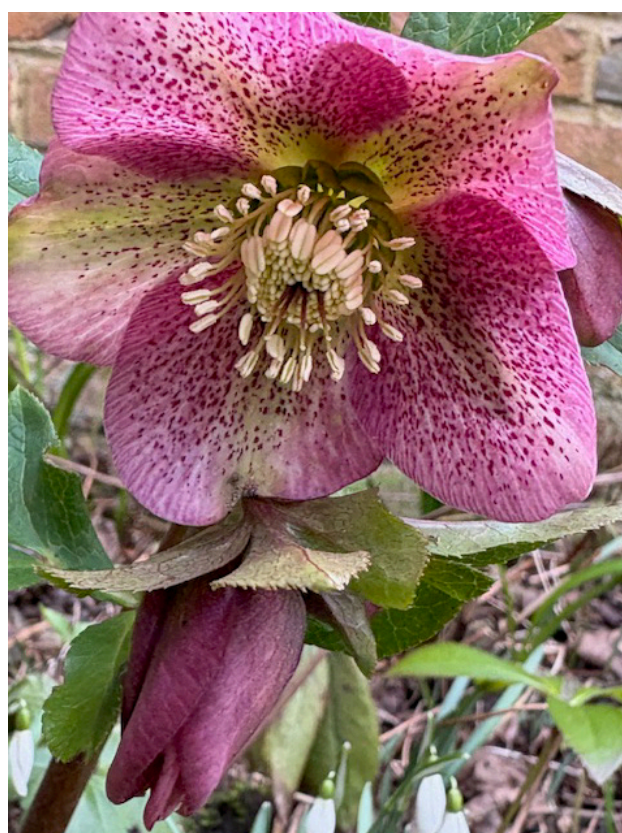
Well, here we are again. The start of a new gardening year at the Museum, and one which has seen changes before we even start. You will know that Heather decided to hang up her trowel at the end of the year. Jackie has also decided not to continue with the garden. So we are looking for a couple of new volunteers to maintain the garden to its highest standards.

February is the month where colour returns to the garden, and coming out of the Museum back door, the crocuses hit you in the eye. They are predominantly *Crocus thomasiianus* with the odd deep orange and purple ones emerging amongst them. And then there are the swathes of snowdrops, mainly the common *Galanthus nivalis*, but if you look more closely, especially along the long wall border, you may find variants with tiny green markings on the flowers which are also more distinctively bell shaped.

But I want to home in on the humble hellebore. Tucked away in shady corners and shadows, its drooping blooms hanging almost as if apologising for being there at all. But it packs a punch well above its weight. The blooms that you see are not petals but sepals which are part of the calyx. They cleverly protect the plant's vitals from what can be the winter's worst weather. The vitals include the actual petals which here are tubular structures that hold the nectar which feed the early stirring bees and other insects emerging from their winter quarters on warm sunny days. Hellebores are generally fairly inconspicuous in their natural settings. But not so the Corsican hellebore (*H. argutifolius*). As you leave the Sylvia Standing garden and emerge through the arch, this plant fairly shouts at you from the Willoth bed. You can't miss its lime green leaves and pale flowers held aloft on sturdy stems reaching up to 80 - 100cms.

February has generally been a grey, chilly and damp month. Temperatures have been consistently below average, and the wind chill factor has knocked up to another 8°C off that! What impact that will have on the plants, insects and wildlife this year has yet to be seen. We'll do our best to help them all along.

Adrian Holmes



HISTORIC ENTRIES IN THE WEST SUSSEX COUNTY TIMES

WSCT Saturday 10th December 1904 DEATH OF MR H. C. ATTWATER

We deeply regret to record the death of Mr. H. C. Attwater, one of Horsham's best known and most esteemed townsmen. The sad event took place with tragic suddenness on Thursday morning, when the deceased was proceeding by rail to London. It seems that Mr. Attwater left Horsham by the 8.58 train and travelled in the same compartment as Mr J. Blount Fry, of the Causeway. He was apparently taken ill and died before Ockley station was reached. Mr. F. A. Jukes (local GP) was, we understand, travelling by the same train. The body was removed to the waiting room and thence to the Red Lion Hotel, Ockley. The Coroner for Surrey (Mr G. F. Roumieu) has been communicated with.

Mr Attwater resided in market-square and followed the business of a plumber, painter, house decorator &c., in which he has in recent years been assisted by his sons. He has not enjoyed good health of late, and it was known that his heart was affected, but as he transacted business and got about as usual, the news of his sudden death created a very painful sensation throughout the town.

Mr Attwater was born in Horsham and was the oldest member of the Parish Church Choir. He was not a member of any local governing bodies, but nevertheless took much interest in town

affairs, and belonged to various societies. He was a director of the Horsham and Crawley Building Society and a member of "Court Holmbush", Ancient Order of Foresters. A lover of music, he was possessed of some ability as a singer and took part years ago in many glees. He was a member of the Horsham Musical Society, and at one time conductor of the Town Band. Mr Attwater was a keen sportsman, and had been a good cricketer, following up his more active participation in the game by umpiring in many matches. He took a deep interest in football and general athletics, and also an active part a few years ago in amateur dramatics.

Much sympathy is expressed with the bereaved widow and family. Mr Attwater, who was 63 years of age, leaves a grown-up family of five sons and two daughters.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Friends,

We are always delighted to hear from our members about any subject that appears in our newsletter, on our website or regarding any matters of general local interest.

Please contact us via fhmag1893@gmail.com.

Paul French



Dear Editor,

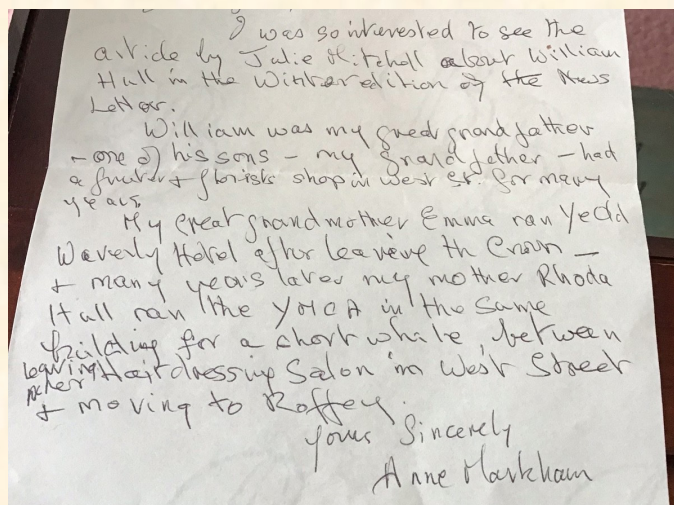
I was so interested to see the article by Julie Mitchell about William Hull in the Winter edition of the Newsletter.

William was my great grandfather and one of his sons, my grandfather, had a fruit and florists shop in West Street for many years.

My great grandmother, Emma ran Ye Old Waverly Hotel after leaving the Crown- and many years later my mother, Rhoda Hull ran the YMCA in the same building for a short while, between leaving her Hairdressing Salon in West Street and moving to Roffey.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Markham



Dear Editor,

Further to the article in the Newsletter re "The Noah's Ark Express" the British Film Institute (BFI) produced a film - Farmer Moves South - in 1952 about a farmer moving from Yorkshire to Sussex by rail.

Regards,

Graham Pike

[Editors note: You can watch the film free online here:

<https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-farmer-moving-south-1952-online>]

FORTHCOMING EXHIBITIONS & EVENTS

We are pleased to share our forthcoming calendar for 2025, and individual events will be publicised in more detail nearer the time. In some cases, the subject matter may be clarified further.

Most events will have an admission fee of £7.50 due to the additional costs involved, but refreshments will still be included. The Cornerstone Methodist Church, London Road, Horsham continues to be our venue, with either the Wesley Hall or the Lounge being used for the event.

There should be something for all tastes, and I hope that you will be able to join us regularly during the course of the year. We have already started compiling our calendar for 2026!



Exhibition | Cretaceous Horsham: Discovering Dinosaurs

Saturday 18 January - 21 April

Family activities | Easter Trails (coming soon)

Tuesday 1 April - Saturday 10 May | Free

Family activities | Easter break crafts

Tuesday 8 April - Friday 18 April | £1 per crafter

Friends events | Claire Phillips talk 'Portraits of Struggle and Strength' (following A.G.M)

Wednesday 16 April | 7.30pm | Wesley Hall, London Road Chapel

Friends events | Verrio tour *SOLD OUT*

Monday 19 May | 12:45pm | Christ's Hospital

Friends events | Kathryn Ferry: Seaside Architecture

Wednesday 11 June | 7:30pm | Wesley Hall, London Road Chapel

Horsham Museum Lates

Friday 13 June | Friday 18 July | Friday 15 August | Friday 12 September

Friends events | Rick Domas: Watercolours in Horsham Museum

Wednesday 30 July | 2pm | The Lounge, London Road Chapel

Friends events | Ian Everest: Women of the Sussex Land Army

Wednesday 24 September | 7.30pm | Wesley Hall, London Road Chapel

Friends events | Chris Hare: Hilaire Belloc

Wednesday 12 November | 2pm | Wesley Hall, London Road Chapel

Friends events | John Field: The World of Magic

Wednesday 3 December | 2pm | Wesley Hall, London Road Chapel



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 | Friends website: 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 to do your shopping or by leaving a gift in your will

www.horshammuseum.org

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