

Friends of Horsham Museum & Art Gallery

Newsletter

Autumn 2025

CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE: SUMMER LATES, DONATIONS & ART

Once again, the Museum Lates initiative has been a architecture generated a disappointing attendance took the opportunity to explore the Museum before they enjoyed the evening's entertainment.

During the Summer, the lower Exhibition room has housed a fascinating display which celebrates the centenary of the Horsham Blue Star Harriers, whilst examples of the club's trophies are being shown in the upstairs gallery. In fact, the shoes of the Club's most famous old boy, athlete Alf Shrubb, are the Although we are a relatively asset-free organisation, most popular item in our Adopt-an-Artefact scheme. As a result of the exhibition, the Harriers donated an unexpected £500 to the Museum via the Friends in appreciation that their contribution to the town's history has been so faithfully recognised.

You may remember that earlier in the year, we received a very generous anonymous donation from an offshore financial institution. Subsequently, the Friends were able to purchase a bronze age hoard of and Flint gallery. We liaise very closely with Curator Nikki to identify items that the Friends can purchase, provide enjoyment for town and community.

Our calendar of events continues apace; in June, a visit from Kathryn Ferry to talk about British seaside Till next time

major success, and whilst the first planned event was but a few weeks later Rick Domas' presentation on cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances, it just the Museum collection of watercolours clearly held seemed to whet the appetite for the three occasions more appeal. As I write, Ian Everest is soon to talk that followed. I hope that some of our newer visitors about the Sussex Women's Land Army in World Wars One and Two, then Chris Hare arrives in November to give a personal view about Hilaire Belloc. We conclude the year in a more light-hearted vein with John Field and the World of Magic. Many thanks to those who attend these gatherings. It's always good to see you there, and to have a chat over refreshments afterwards.

> we have been looking at some purchases to upgrade the logistics of our events. We recently acquired a far more robust, and level, projector stand, and we are also examining the best way to improve the audio in the Wesley Hall at times when our speakers may need assistance with amplification. My thanks especially to Sean Hannan, and to Brian Frogley, who have been carefully assessing the art of the possible.

Finally, although we usually concentrate on the palstaves and loops which almost matched this figure fabric of the Museum, it's also good to visit the Art and will soon be displayed in the Museum's Fossils Gallery just inside the front door where the eyecatching displays are always accessible and of a high standard. None more so than those by Katy Edgington or invest in, to enhance the Museum's collection and of Dreams In Colour, who applies a cheerful and colourful style to scenes from home and abroad. Do





Paul French

St Mary's Dreams In colour By Katy Edgington

Orange Trees Dreams In colour By Katy Edgington

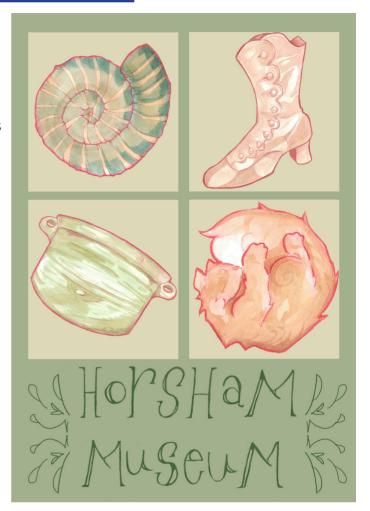
MUSEUM NEWS

We have had a brilliant summer season here, but now we have transitioned into the autumn period which sees us busily focused on several projects which are due to be launched later this year. This afternoon we received the first proofs from Collyer's Art & Design BTEC students for their popup shop which opens on Saturday 11 October. This is the second year of this project where students visit the museum to find inspiration from the collections here, and then create unique merchandise related to the museum and history of Horsham. The popup shop will be in place until the new year so should prove to be a fantastic source for beautiful and unique Christmas gifts.

This year we acquired a fantastic middle to late Bronze Age hoard (1,700-800 BC) which comprises of palstaves (a type of axe), spear heads and an incomplete Sussex loop (a type of armlet). Assistant Curator, George Graham went on a course earlier this year to learn how to make bespoke mounts and he has been working on this craft since. These types of mount will allow us to fix items vertically into the showcase back boards. Although this might not seem particularly exciting, these types of mounts open up a lot of opportunities for displaying artefacts more efficiently in the showcase as we can use all of the height, and not just place things on shelves. The bronze age hoard will be the first to be displayed in this method, and this new display will be in place before the end of the year. The acquisition of these artefacts was purchased by the Friends so thank you for all your support. I am looking forward to being able to share these objects with you as they are some brilliant examples of the district's early history.



Our Collections Assistant, Milo king-Taylor joined the team this summer. Alongside the more public elements of the museum's work, we are also



undertaking a rationalisation project to audit every item in the collection and make sure that its records are up to date and accurate. Milo is the key staff member driving this project, but George and I are also spending a couple of days a week working in the stores in order to to complete this important task.

Another project which is well underway is the planning of our winter exhibition, Cabinets of Curiosity: Museums Past, Present and Beyond. The exhibition will be an opportunity for us to look at the foundation of the museum and to display some of the more obscure items from the museum's collection. There will be a private view where Friends of Horsham Museum will be invited on Friday 30 January and we will send out full details closer to the time.

Nikki Caxton

MUSEUM BREAK IN

A break in occurred at the museum in the early hours of Tuesday 16th September. The incident resulted in damage to the front window, which now requires repair, and the donation box was taken. No artefacts were damaged or stolen in relation to the incident.

Sussex Police have been notified and are actively investigating the matter. We are currently helping with their enquiries.

The museum was able to reopen the afternoon of the 17th, and has now returned to business as usual. Horsham District Council are currently arranging the repair of the front window and we are optimistic that it will be repaired quickly.

George Graham

RICK DOMAS PRESENTS WATERCOLOURS IN THE HORSHAM MUSEUM COLLECTION

There was a familiar face providing the talk to the Friends in July.

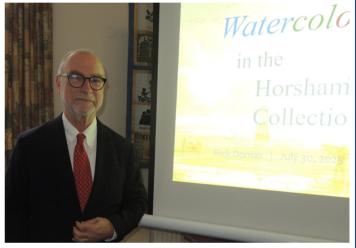
Fellow Friend, Museum volunteer and Director of Kate Gallery in Horsham, Rick Domas delved into the Watercolours of Horsham Museum & Art Gallery.

Rick had spent many hours looking through the collection and his passion for the subject was all too clear.

He divided his selection of watercolours into various topics and, while Rick stated his presentation wasn't going to be an in-depth analysis of the individual artworks, he did provide interesting insights into the artists' style and achievement.

Some of the painters had close links to the Horsham district, such as Dr Geoffrey Sparrow, whose work was recently exhibited in the Museum, and Claude Muncaster, featured in the Tate Britain.

There were others such as Clarkson Frederick Stanfield, whose 'A market boat on the Scheldt', 1826, is a study for the final oil painting now in the V&A Museum collection.



Rick Domas

Others still were by unknown painters, or those of whom little is known, such as Emma Barnett with her two sketchbooks that contain local scenes.

Overall, the variety of watercolours and skills on show were intriguing and provided a very interesting insight into the Museum's archives.

Steve Payne

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

This seems like a good opportunity to remind you that we offer new members joining us from October onwards 15 months membership. So, if you know someone who is thinking about joining, now could be an excellent time for them to do so.

I will be contacting you at the start of December regarding renewal of your membership so please do get in contact with us if you have moved or changed your contact details recently or expect to

do so over the next 3 months.

Finally, we're always happy to hear your views on how we can develop and improve the Friend's offering to members, so do let me know if you have any views on this by emailing me at membership. fhmag1893@gmail.com.

Sean Hannan

COMING SOON:

CHRIS HARE PRESENTS "HILAIRE BELLOC - THE POLITICS OF LIVING"



hris Hare

Our next event is on Wednesday 12th November 2025 at 14.00 in the Lounge at the Cornerstone Methodist Church, London Road, Horsham. Come and meet Chris Hare, a noted Sussex historian and academic who will explain how Hilaire Belloc affected his personal journey through challenging times.

Belloc spent his boyhood in Slinfold, and became one of the most accomplished, yet controversial, authors of the early 20th century. He is now buried at a church in West Grinstead.

Chris says "Belloc's writings have helped me get through difficult periods in my life, as well as helping me to understand historical and political issues in a way that I might never have considered had it not been for his writings. Some people will disagree with



Hillaire Belloo

his views and his interpretations of history, but hopefully all will agree that he was someone unafraid to court controversy or take up unpopular causes. He was, also, a man deeply imbued with Sussex, both in terms of landscape and of people, and that will come through strongly in my talk."

Please join us for this unusual perspective on the works of Belloc.

Admission to all: £7.50, including refreshments.

Paul French

COMING SOON:

JOHN FIELD PRESENTS "THE WORLD OF MAGIC"

This year's Christmas Event will be held on Wednesday 3rd December 2025 at 14.00 in the Wesley Hall at the Cornerstone Methodist Church, London Road, Horsham. On this occasion, we will be entertained by John Field, an Associate Member of the Inner Magic Circle who has been practising the art for over 50 years.

In the "World of Magic", John will be guiding us through the history of this medium whilst highlighting several milestones. You will hear about the oldest magician known to mankind, the oldest trick in magic, scams based on that trick and how to avoid being caught out, the first book written about magic, the dawning of respectability, two famous magicians and the current magic scene. You will also be shown some different styles of magic which will entertain and amuse.

Prepare to be astonished!

Admission to all: £7.50, including refreshments

Paul French



John Field

DR KATHRYN FERRY: SEASIDE ARCHITECTURE

Three hundred years of Seaside Architecture in one hour was quite a target, but Dr Kathryn Ferry managed it at the Friends' June talk!

Kathryn confessed that very few people study seaside architecture as it is not considered a serious enough subject for academics. However, Dr Ferry showed that the topic has enormous variety and interest and that it is an important part of British life.

Trips to the seaside were originally considered by doctors as beneficial for patients suffering from all manner of illnesses. A quick dip in cold seawater was advised, with a drink of the local spa water (and even seawater!) also suggested. As swimming costumes were not fashionable, bathing machines were created to save people's modesty!

Trips to the seaside became more available, thanks to the arrival of trains, and coastal towns saw an increase in flats and houses that gave people a sea view. With the influx of more visitors, hotels were also built to accommodate those arriving. Of course, all these people needed entertaining, so theatres and libraries were created.

Some visitors would arrive by boat or ferry, leading to piers being built as landing points. These were eventually used as bases for more entertainment.

Kathryn pointed out the fascinating architecture of several buildings, not just in Sussex but further afield. She also singled out 19th designer Eugenius Birch, whose promenade piers are still used today.

The 1951 Festival of Britain provided a great influence on seaside design, with several piers being restored after suffering damage in wartime.



Kathryn Ferry

The 60s and 70s saw a growth in one-stop destinations, with shops and entertainment all under one roof and design being influenced by Las Vegas.

Dr Ferry finished off with her belief that there is hope for the future, with some intriguing new designs around, such as the East Beach Cafe in Littlehampton.

A lot to cram in but the talk proved very interesting!

Steve Payne

ARTS SOCIETY - UPCOMING EVENTS

12th November Monopoly

Speaker: Roger Mendham

14th January 2026

Wilde about Oscar: Famous for being Famous and

Infamous (1854-1900) Speaker: Simon Whitehouse

For more information about The Arts Society Horsham please visit the website at: www.theartssociety.org/horsham



MEMORIES OF THE HORSHAM MUSEUM SOCIETY

We are looking for your memories of the Horsham Museum Society!

As many of you will know, in 2010 the Museum Society Committee decided to form a separate Friends of Horsham Museum which could be a charity.

So now the sole purpose of the Museum Society is safeguarding the artefacts in the pre-1966 collection. There are brief details of the Society to be found, including articles by former Curator Jeremy Knight.

However, as one of the Society's Trustees, I am currently working on a far more detailed history of Horsham Museum Society, including its origins, the various groups that sprang from it, the talks and outings, the fascinating artefacts that were collected and much more!

In order to make this history 'come alive', though,

I'd love to hear your memories of the Museum Society. Were you involved with the Society? Did you go on one of the several trips that were organised? Were you part of the Society's history or archaeological groups?

I'd love to hear from you. You can email me at horshammuseumfriends@gmail.com (or use the Friends regular email - fhmag1893@gmail.com - but make it clear it is for Steve Payne).

Alternatively you can write to me and drop it into the Museum as I volunteer there on a regular basis.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Steve Payne



Museum Society 1925

ALFRED GWYNNE VANDERBILT



There is a memorial at Holmwood, Surrey to Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt. It is next to the A24 road to Dorking. It commemorates Alfred Vanderbilt, an American, as a "gallant gentleman and fine sportsman" and was put up by his British coaching friends, after he died

on the Lusitania in 1915. Who was he? What was his connection to Surrey, Sussex and Horsham? It is almost a Mark Twain story, about a plucky Yank in London.

Alfred was the great great grandson of the founder of the New York Vanderbilt dynasty, Cornelius Vanderbilt, who became one of the richest men in America during the Gilded Age of the 1870s. The Vanderbilt family themselves had been part of the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam. The Vanderbilt family expanded through the generations, in some cases so did their wealth. Alfred himself had a privileged upbringing, he attended Yale University and was a member of the infamous Skull & Bones club.

Alfred inherited a large fortune from his father. In contrast to some of his cousins who spent their fortunes, Alfred decided to invest heavily in real estate becoming a property developer. He built the Vanderbilt Hotel on Park Avenue, Manhattan, New York. He invested wisely, amassing an even larger fortune. His wider investments included "railroads" and the Pullman Company. So, he understood transportation too.

His wealth enabled Alfred to pursue expensive pastimes. Alfred was a keen horseman and had become a fan of four-in-hand coach driving. It was an expensive hobby, he was a member of The Coaching Club of New York. These clubs had become popular on both sides of the Atlantic, in part due to nostalgia as railways had replaced mail coaches.

Alfred also had a complicated personal life, and was involved in a messy divorce and scandal. It may have been one of the reasons he brought over twenty six (26) coaching horses from his Oakland Park farm, Rhode Island to compete at the first ever International Horse Show, held at Olympia, London in 1907. By all accounts, Alfred loved his time in England. However, his horses were considered

'coarse' by his English gentry rivals and not of the "standard they were used to". Nevertheless, Alfred and his team of horses won many events through skill and tenacity.

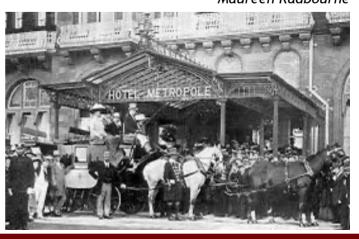
Later, after a lengthy stay in England, he began to amuse his friends in London by driving them in his four-in-hand from London to Brighton using a relay of horses. A classic "exciting" stage coach run. In 1908, he started a regular, but seasonal London to Brighton service using a coach named Venture. It travelled from London to Brighton one day and returned the next day. Alfred is reported to have often driven the coach himself, 'dressed as for Ascot Races', complete with grey top hat.

In late 1908, such was the demand, that journeys to Brighton were routed via Reigate, Box Hill, Dorking, Crawley and The King's Head Hotel in Horsham. On one occasion my grandmother, Emma Parsons, who lived in the Carfax joined the other passengers on their way to Brighton. Many years later my grandmother regaled us with stories of this exciting trip.

In 1911, Alfred met and married American divorcée and heiress Margaret Emerson. They would have two children and be based in London. His son from his first marriage lived in Rhode Island, and would later become governor of the state. Alfred was a regular transatlantic passenger. He had travelled to New York in 1914. In May 1915 he was aboard RMS Lusitania, which had left New York.

Lusitania was hit by a torpedo fired from a German submarine, which sank the ship. Alfred was reported by survivors to have helped other passengers into lifeboats and then given his life jacket to help save a female passenger and her baby. Tragically Alfred Vanderbilt and his valet, Ronald Deringer did not survive. Only 763 survived from the original 1960 passengers. This explains the lovely memorial to Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt on the road to Dorking.

Maureen Radbourne



NEW LAPTOP

Thanks to an initiative by Horsham District Council, the Friends now have a 'new' (retired) laptop!

Every few years the Council 'retires' various IT equipment that is considered not man enough for the job. It could have ended up in landfill or stripped down by a third-party company for parts.

To give HDC credit, a few years ago some of the permanent staff (as opposed to councillors) suggested giving it to charities.

In June I spotted a story on the council's intranet site inviting people to suggest a charity that may benefit from some of this hardware.

I fired off an email and got a swift reply asking for more details. A couple more emails to and fro and the Friends were given the thumbs-up. A few weeks later and a rather nice Lenovo Thinkpad was handed over to me by one of the HDC people behind the project. It has been very useful and this article was written using it!

It'll be used to update the website, write the many blogs we now do, plus research to help with various projects.

Steve Payne



The new Friends laptop

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



GARDEN UPDATE

Heatwave after heatwave after heatwave, and the threat of a hosepipe ban. A bit different from last year when we seemed to have had enough rain to last a lifetime. Such is the lot we have to face as gardeners. We never know what the weather will be throwing at us from one year to the next. It certainly makes life interesting!

The pattern though, is establishing: warmer summers, wetter and milder winters, earlier springs and later autumns.

In the garden we have to do two things. The first is to note the changes and adapt our practices accordingly, and the second, far more noticeable, is to meet the challenges as they arise on a day to day basis.

In this latter case we are supremely well served. Sue has joined the gardening team since the last newsletter so we are now seven strong, and there is more than enough to keep us occupied on a Monday morning. But taking care of the garden is not a one-off two hour session once a week. It is a credit to the team that they take such pride in their work

to keep the garden in tip-top condition that they come in on other days to attend to water-ing the baskets, troughs, planters and pots. Without all this extra effort the garden, this year especially, would quickly deteriorate and would not be such an attractive haven for visitors to come and wander around.

This year is far from done. With autumn looming there is no end of tidying up, tending to those plants which add to the autumn colours and die back gracefully with seed heads and shelter for wildlife, and clearing those which don't. And then we have yet to prepare the garden for winter.

I wonder what's in store for us next year?

Adrian Holmes





HORSHAM BLUE STAR HARRIERS - 100 YEARS

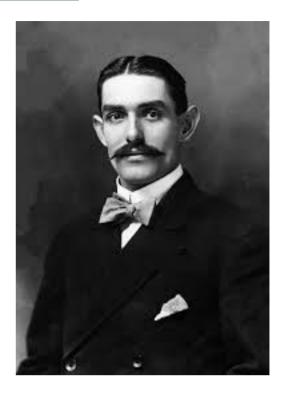
The Museum was delighted to curate an exhibition recognising the centenary of the Horsham Blue Star Harriers and its service to athletics within the town and its environs. The club's story is interwoven with the fabric of the town over the past 100 years and the detail can be read on the club's website via https://www.horshambluestarharriers.org.uk/centenary.

Acknowledging the exhibition, the club kindly donated £500 to the Museum via the Friends, and Chairman Keith May wrote: -

'This year, Horsham Blue Star Harriers celebrates 100 years as an Athletic Club. Although the wellknown Alf Shrubb was a member in the late 1890s and early 1900s, the Harriers disbanded just prior to the First World War and unfortunately no records of this stage of the Club remain. The current Harriers reformed in 1925 and have served the local Horsham community ever since, seeing thousands of youngsters, over the years, coached and competing for the Club. The Harriers are proud to be able to celebrate this momentous achievement, and our grateful thanks go to Horsham Museum for allowing us to hold an exhibition to mark this occasion. The Museum did hold an exhibition in 1985 to celebrate the Club's 60 years, so it seems highly appropriate that the Club is again having an exhibition in the museum in this even more momentous centennial year.'

The Museum and the Friends offer grateful thanks to the Harriers and wish them every success for the next 100 years.







NEW FHM MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome new members: Mrs Sarah Nuttall and Mr Stephen Larbalestier.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir.

I was interested in your feature about Maureen Radbourne, a lady whom I have not met. But I do remember her father, Stan Parsons, who often served me in his newsagents in the Carfax, where "Cuckoo" is now.

When I arrived in Horsham in 1968, Mr Parsons was well known in the town and received the title "Mr Horsham".

A lovely man.

With kind regards, Diane Hellyer

MAUREEN RADBOURNE RETIRES



The Friends recently lost a long serving and hard working member of the committee in the resignation of Maureen Radbourne. She started coming to Museum Society meetings about thirty years ago when Sue Djabri arranged talks and discussions for a small group in the Museum library. Some members did research such as The Big Archive - a survey of Horsham for the Millennium or local topics like the prisoners in the jail

Around 2015 Maureen joined the committee - at a time when it included HDC member, Peter Billington, and later Jonathan England was chairman. He brought members' computer skills up to date introducing exotic things such as 'drop box'. Maureen was part of the team who laid on coffee and biscuits while members chatted after a

the 1980's and probably from the Horshamosaurus and also the story of the whole farm which arrived in Warnham over night by train from Bitton in Gloucestershire.

As well as her work for the Friends, Maureen was for many years a volunteer in the Museum, part of the Thursday group who all have fond memories of elevenses in the museum kitchen with everyone chatting and gossiping.

In her volunteering Maureen spent a lot of time in White Lion Barn and in the attic with groups cataloguing collections of small objects - jewellery, toys and dolls house furniture. As was the way these groups moved from collection to collection as priorities changed.

Maureen particularly enjoyed her time photographing costumes - memorably a samauri costume and a dashing white Hussar's jacket.

When moths were found in the costume and textile collection Maureen, like all the volunteers, helped to examine everything and fold them into the big freezer to kill off the moths.

Of course Maureen's memories of the museum go further back than most people's. Her father, Stan Parsons, was president of the Horsham Museum Society and was involved in obtaining the Evershed picture now on the stairs and he was present in the photograph when Alfred Shrubb raced a horse.

To celebrate Maureen's time with the Friends, a retirement lunch was held on Wednesday 30th April where Maureen was joined by members of the committee to commemorate her significant contribution over the years.

We will miss Maureen and her hard work. We wis her well in her retirement from the Friends of Horsham Museum.

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



ADOPT AN ARTEFACT

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

Cricket Stumps, bat and ball

This unusual design for a shop sign for Attwater's of Horsham illustrates the importance of cricket to the district's heritage. Cricket was played as early as 1719 in Henfield and the village has one of the oldest clubs in the area.

Attwater's sports shop was a popular trader in the town and was situated in a building on the Causeway near to the museum. A fire in the shop in 1927 meant the building was redeveloped into the distinctive 4 story building which can be seen today.



Pam French

FORTHCOMING EXHIBITIONS & EVENTS



Museum family activities | The witches potion: children's trail Tuesday 30 September - Saturday 8 November | Free

Museum family activities | Halloween family crafts Tuesday 28 October - Friday 31 October | £1 per craft



Friends events | Chris Hare: Hilaire Belloc

Wednesday 12 November | 2pm | The Lounge, London Road Chapel

Friends events | John Field: The World of Magic

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



Museum Event | Christmas Museum Late: Entertainment from HAODS Friday 19 December

Museum Event | Private View of Cabinets of Curiosity: Museums Past, Present and Beyond

Friday 30 January

Please note that the museum will be closed from Thursday 25 December - Thursday 1 January (inclusive)

Our list of speaker events for next year is almost concluded, and the calendar is expected to unfold as follows. A bonus event for Autumn is still under discussion, and our Annual Visit will be advised as soon as arrangements have been confirmed.

Friends events | Ian Gledhill: The Story of Crystal Palace
Wednesday 25 Feburary | 2pm | London Road Chapel

Friends events | AGM & George Graham-Payne: The Horshamosaurus Wednesday 15 April | 7.30pm | London Road Chapel

Friends events | Dr. John Hilary: Nymans and the Messel Family
Wednesday 10 June | 7.30pm | London Road Chapel

Friends events | Jeff Thomas: The Story of Daisy (Restoring a 1930's tandem bicycle)

Wednesday 29 July | 2pm | London Road Chapel

Friends events | Dr. Alexandra Loske: Turner and Constable in Sussex Wednesday 23 September | 7.30pm | London Road Chapel

Friends events | Simon Mott: Mantovani - What Makes a Superstar Wednesday 2 December | 2pm | London Road Chapel

FHM COMMITTEE

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

Other Members: Pam French, Audrey Coventry, Steve Payne, Sean Hannan, Patricia Barrett

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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