



Emsworth Maritime & Historical Trust NEWSLETTER

President: The Rt Hon. Lord Willetts of Havant
Reg. Charity No. 294965

Emsworth Museum

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May 2023

Brick Making Exhibition Opens the 2023 Season

Saturday, 1st April, was the opening day of the 2023 season in Emsworth Museum and brick making was the first exhibition in the David Rudkin Room. Curated by chairman, Trevor Davies, the exhibition ran from 1st to 16th April. The Arts Trail followed over the next two weekends with the brick making exhibition starting again on Coronation Day, 6th May. It is still running at weekends until 21st May.

Before the widespread use of the internal combustion engine, brick making was a localised activity. Seams of clay suitable for making bricks run through Emsworth, Rowlands Castle and Hayling Island and they have been exploited since the Roman period. Often brick making was seasonal and incorporated into the annual farming cycle.



Emsworth Museum is housed in a building dating from 1900 and the bricks almost certainly came from Rowlands Castle. The advantage of using a smaller, local brickworks is that they could make specialised bricks. One of the highlights of the exhibition is to be found in a cabinet showing a brick with a curve at one end. Looking outside the window by the cabinet you can see the shaped brick moulding as it was used to frame a window.

This exhibition explains the traditional brick making process using photographs donated by the Noel Pycroft brick making business on Hayling Island which closed in 1992. Further research was done by the Bursledon Brickworks Museum and the Rowlands Castle History Group.

Shortly after it opened, Ian Pycroft (Noel's younger son) visited the exhibition. He has made a number of constructive suggestions, and will visit the Museum to show us a video of the brick making process filmed in the 1970s.



Diary Dates

Walks £5.00 per person. Walks + Museum visit outside opening hours £6.00 per person.

May 6th – 21st	continuation of Exhibition “Brickmaking in Emsworth and the Local Area”
May 27th – July 2nd	Exhibition “Coastal Archaeology (Archaeology on the Coastal Plain)” by Ann Davies
Wed., June 7th	Summer Evening Walk led by Nigel Brown
Wed., June 21st	Treasure Hunt around Emsworth
Wed., July 5th	Summer Evening Walk led by Nigel Brown
July 8th – 23rd	Exhibition “Extreme Weather (1963 and 1987)” by Bernie Gudge
July 29th and 30th	Rope Making Demonstrations
August 4th – 20th	continuation of Exhibition “Extreme Weather (1963 and 1987)”
Wed., August 9th	Summer Evening Walk led by Nigel Brown
August 25th – September 3rd	Exhibition “Visual Marks” by Elizabeth Saunders and friends. Includes Bank Holiday Monday, 28th August
September 9th – October 29th	Exhibition “Ripping Yarns and the Tale of the Forgotten Author – The story of Percy F Westerman” by Nigel Gossop
October 29th	Museum Closes

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Preview of Exhibitions in the David Rudkin Room

Coastal Archaeology (Archaeology on the Coastal Plain)



The increasingly extreme weather is eroding our coastline revealing features of historic interest which are then swept away. Chichester and District Archaeology Society (CDAS) runs regular monitoring programmes to record these changes.

This exhibition looks at some of the revealed features (Bronze Age to Tudor) as well as outcomes from projects that CDAS has undertaken on the coastal plain.

Left: Wooden structure, possibly a fish trap, exposed at Medmerry

Extreme Weather (1963 and 1987)

Photographs from the Museum collection and also from Bernie Gudge’s own albums show the effects of the 1963 long cold winter that started on New Year’s Eve in 1962 and lasted until the following March with rivers, ponds and the harbour frozen.

Also on display will be pictures of the devastation and damage caused by the great storm in 1987.

Right: Beached yachts at Emsworth following the great storm in 1987



48th Annual General Meeting

The 48th Annual General Meeting of the Emsworth Maritime & Historical Trust was held on 9th March in the Community Centre. Among the speakers was curator, Phil Magrath who spoke about the Outreach programme in which both he and Shelagh Standen, the membership secretary, have been involved. Hewitts Café in South Street is a centre where young people with Special Needs can express themselves through art – both paintings and artwork/designs which are used to make items such as cushions and tea towels to sell. Phil and Shelagh have been several times with different objects, and a visit with clay pipes in particular produced some very interesting artwork.

Following the resignation from the committee of Mrs Christine Bury, Dr Ben Timmis (LRPS) has been elected to the committee. Ben is responsible for many of the photographs in this issue of the Newsletter.

Subjects discussed during the evening were the implementation of a new constitution and the raising of subscriptions. These topics and others are covered overleaf in the Chairman's Report.



Above: Curator, Phil Magrath

Above Left: Membership Secretary, Shelagh Standen

Left: Treasurer, James Melrose and Minute Secretary, Sue Soames



Summer Walks on Wednesday Evenings 7th June, 5th July and 9th August £5 per person

Meet guide, Nigel Brown, at Emsworth Museum in North Street by 6.15pm. Walks must be booked in advance but can be paid for on the evening. Please email walks@emsworthmuseum.org.uk to book a place. Numbers are limited to 12 so that stories can be shared more easily.

From the Chairman



Charitable Incorporated Organisation

I am very pleased by the unanimous support given at the AGM to the proposal that we change the Emsworth Maritime & Historical Trust into a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. The level of participation in person on the day and voting by post beforehand totalled 86 and was a high level of involvement. This demonstrates solid support for a major constitutional change. It is also good for the governance of the Trust.

The proposal to increase the subscription by more than the amount recommended by the committee has raised some issues. The proposal has been overwhelmingly supported both at the meeting and in the subsequent email poll of our members. However, we do have the curious situation of those attending the meeting voting for one increase and those voting by post voting for another. We will resolve this conundrum in a proper fashion before the end of the year.

Stewards Training

I am grateful to all those who participated in the Stewards' Training programme during March – trainers, trainees and in particular Christine Bury who masterminded it all. This year we have trained a number of new stewards, and others have returned post Covid, so I am looking forward to another successful season.

Building

During the winter Havant Borough Council (HBC) have repaired the broken window sash cords and in doing so have discovered that the wooden frame of one window is very rotten – so we will not be able to open that until it has been repaired. HBC are also going to replace the front door with a composite version which will survive the weather better. Tony Stimson is liaising with HBC on this project and has chosen a door that is as similar to the present door as possible.

If you visit the Museum, you will see the result of the work in the Main Room. We have moved the Warblington cabinet to replace the Black Rod cabinet (the Black Rod uniform is having a temporary rest). The effect has been to open up the eastern end of the room to give the impression of more space.

Off-site Storage

As you know, the Museum has always struggled for storage space. In recent years we have rented a secure store at Safestore in Portsmouth but the costs have risen sharply. So, I am deeply grateful to Geoffrey Marsh of Marsh Plant for allowing us to use part of his secure warehouse. This benefit in kind will have a substantial impact in reducing the Museum's costs.

Lecture Programme

Our thanks are due to Nigel Gossop who has produced a series of varied lectures over the winter. He is now working on next winter's programme and would welcome suggestions for speakers.

History of Emsworth in 20 Objects

A casual remark by Trevor Smith has resulted in the very rapid implementation of this project. There is now a tour of the Museum guided by QR codes that can be scanned by smartphones. Visitors are guided to some of the most iconic stories of Emsworth. The selection of the 20 objects was the subject of considerable debate – in part based on a survey carried out in 2022. We have to acknowledge that we plagiarised the idea from the British Museum.

Outreach

I am pleased to say that in the last few months, the outreach programme has gathered momentum.

Phil Magrath and Shelagh Standen have been working with the Art Group at Hewitts and inspiring them with some of the Museum's objects and stories, with impressive results.

We have run an off-site rope making demonstration and will, of course, be running another in the Museum on 29th/30th July. Keep the date in mind to entertain children and grandchildren. There is a touch of magic when the rope begins to form.

Offsite lectures have been delivered to U3A and other groups.

EM&HT were invited to take a stand at the History Festival in the Spring, Havant. The stand was manned by Christine Bury and myself with panels on the themes of 'People; Places: Projects' to describe the Trust's activities. It was an excellent opportunity to network with other local history groups – many of the other stands were also staffed by EM&HT members.

In summary, my message is that the Trust is making solid progress towards its goals. Thank you all for your support.

Trevor Davies

History of Emsworth in 20 Objects

If you have a mobile phone with QR Code capability, why not follow the on-line information that goes with 20 key objects held in the Museum.

The Emsworth Museum collection includes items ranging from the Stone Age until the present. The key objects provide a taste of that range including a 13th century Edward 1st silver penny, letters from P G Wodehouse to Lillian Barnett and pub signs from Emsworth pubs that have closed. Take the tour in the Museum and learn about the objects.



Visitor Peter Hall, left, with Trevor Davies at The Spring Heritage Festival in Havant on Saturday, 25th February

Photo: Jasmine Aurora, photographer and artist based in Midhurst, West Sussex

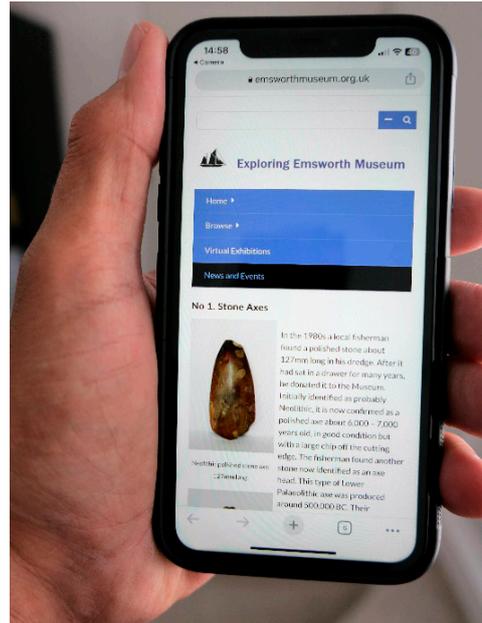
Rope Making Demonstration: 29th/30th July

Rope making was a thriving industry in Emsworth for more than 200 years. Christopher Day is recorded as having a rope making business here in 1714. The manufacture of cordage was a profitable concern in the days of wooden ships and sail but sadly no industrial rope making exists in the town today. The industry dwindled in the period between the two world wars.

Before he died, Bob Lewis, son of John Lewis of Carter Sons and Lewis, gifted a rope making jack to the Museum and over the winter of 2021/2022 Trevor Davies, helped by the staff at Bridport Museum, designed a small rope making walk for Emsworth Museum. Although on a very small scale it is an indication of how the 200 metres Emsworth rope walk that ran parallel to the Slipper Millpond from the Sussex Brewery pub to the Slipper Mill would have looked.



Rope making jack



Above: Reading about the prehistoric axe head



Left: Object 17 is Margaret Tatchell's Edwardian wedding dress

Below: Object 4 is the Lewmar winch



David Hazle and the Emsworth Post War Property Market

Retired estate agent, David Hazle gave a fascinating insight into the mid to late 20th century property market in Emsworth in his talk on 2nd February. He spoke to a packed audience of local residents who had gathered in the Community Centre for the first of the 2023 talks.

David worked in the heart of the Emsworth property market for more than 60 years. He started at Butler & Cooke in 1957 and sold his first house in Main Road, Southbourne for £1,950 in 1958. Boston House was a detached Edwardian property divided into two flats in a 1/16th acre of garden. David went on to establish what became one of Emsworth's longest serving estate agents when he started Hazle & Co. in 1964. The award-winning firm had premises in South Street serving both sellers, buyers and renters in Hampshire and West Sussex.

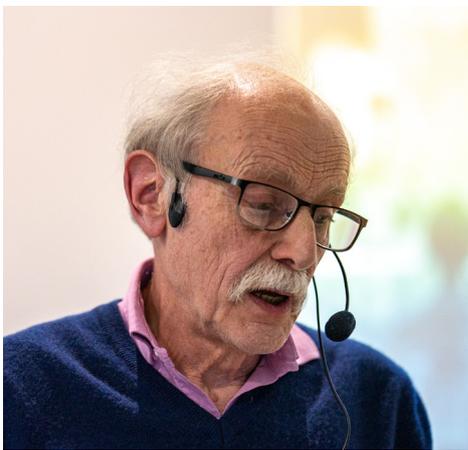
David built up a strong team with a wealth of knowledge and experience who, while making use of the latest technology, offered good old-fashioned customer service. David paid tribute to that loyalty



in his talk in February and fascinated his audience with tales of properties and property owners whom he had met during his long career. His phenomenal memory meant that he could recall both owners and buyers, their families and even house details. In turn, various members of the audience recalled that he had sold them their house.

The evening ended with the drawing of the raffle and with David meeting audience members to recall their joint memories.

Richard Brooks on Fred T Jane



Fred T Jane was an eccentric visionary concluded Richard Brooks in his evening talk at the Emsworth Community Centre on Thursday, 2nd March. It is 107 years since Jane, one of naval history's more unusual characters, died in 1916 but his legacy continues. Fred T Jane is best known as the founding editor of the world's most prestigious and longest lived naval reference works, (*All the World's Fighting Ships* and its offshoot the Jane Naval Wargame. What is less well known is that he was an accomplished monochrome artist, a novelist, a pioneer motorist, a political activist, a newspaper columnist and a practical joker.

Richard Brooks bought out all these aspects in his illustrated talk. Jane was born in 1865 and moved to London aged 20 as a monochrome artist. He already had a widespread interest in naval matters and his picture *Night Action off Belfast* was printed in the *Illustrated London News* in 1892. The picture was typical of his work in that the emphasis was on small flotilla craft with dramatic use of both light and shadow. Two years later Jane made the front page with a picture of the last Royal Navy ships to leave Portsmouth under sail.

As a novelist, Jane wrote mainly imaginary war and sci fi stories. In 1894 in *Guesses at Futurity* he predicted teleprinters, shopping malls, solar panels and space travel. Richard Brooks' favourite story is *To Venus in 5 Seconds* published in 1896 where the hero is kidnapped in a space ship disguised as a summer house and taken to Venus for medical experiments.

Fred T Jane began assembling his warship directory in 1898. The book detailed 1000 ships with 500 sketches engraved on wood blocks and cost 10/6d. Ships' data were standardised and ships' silhouettes, as seen on the horizon by bridge personnel, were grouped by the number of masts

and funnels. Sketches were replaced by photographs in subsequent editions. He then pioneered the Jane Naval Wargame as a serious way for peacetime naval officers to try different layouts of guns and armour. *All the World's Airships* followed in 1912.

Jane married twice and with his family moved to Portsmouth in 1910. With the outbreak of war in 1914, Jane became an interpreter of the naval war. He defended the Royal Navy's apparent inactivity

and cast doubts on the Dardanelles expedition before it started. He died on 8th March 1916.

Jane was a complex, paradoxical figure throughout his life. He was never central to the naval establishment but nevertheless his name is still associated with the original purpose of his greatest book; the provision of accurate technical information to governments, armed services and the public.

A lively discussion followed the talk.

Michelle Magorian and *Goodnight Mister Tom*

Goodnight Mister Tom (but Which Version?) was the subject of author, Michelle Magorian's talk on Thursday evening, 6th April. Michelle wrote the award-winning children's book in her twenties and the novel was published in 1981. It has since been translated into more than eleven languages and been adapted for stage, radio and television. The acclaimed book is still in print.

Michelle is also an accomplished actress and delighted her audience in the Emsworth Community Centre with readings from the book. She introduced the main characters, the WW2 frightened and neglected evacuee Willie Beech and grumpy widower Tom Oakley who lives in the village of Little Weirwold. Michelle then explored how the characters developed and commented on such diverse themes as painting, slums, reading, religion, Shakespeare, distress and death.

Even at the age of eleven, Michelle knew that she wanted to be both an actress and a writer and she used to write between acting jobs. At first, *Goodnight Mister Tom* was only intended to be a short story about the couple's first day together but Michelle became intrigued by how they would interact as the days and months progressed and finally wrote a full length novel.

This novel has since been turned into a musical, a radio play, an audio book and is fondly remembered by millions of viewers following the classic television adaptation that starred the late John Thaw.

Michelle also wrote lyrics for the musical version and read some of them. Her son, George, masterminded the playing of tunes from the musical to an entranced audience. A refrain from that first night sung by Willie encapsulated the duo's future life

*Like this bed, Like the light,
Goodnight Mister Tom, Goodnight,
Like to stay, Feels all right.*

Michelle, who lives in Petersfield, has written the book and lyrics for three more musicals and eight other novels. Among her other accolades she was awarded an honorary doctorate by Portsmouth University in 2005.

The evening ended with a question and answer session and the drawing of the raffle.



Michelle Magorian with talks' organiser, Nigel Gossop



Above and left are photographs taken of the audiences at the talks. More photos will appear in November's Emsworth Echo

Treasure Hunt

After a break of several years, due principally to the pandemic, the annual Treasure Hunt will return on Wednesday 21st June 2023, starting around 7.00pm. Teams of 1-4 pedestrians will follow a route round Emsworth, guided by written instructions. There will be a number of questions to be answered on the way. The winning team will be awarded with a modest prize and asked to compile the route and questions for next year (but not obligatory). Open to all families, groups, couples and individuals (who must have a unique team name!)

Gordon Braddock

New greetings cards for sale in the Museum and at Bookends of Emsworth, £3 each



Images of scenes at Emsworth harbour and Nore Barn wood donated by Ben Timmis

Wings for Victory

National Savings Campaign

Eighty years ago, in May 1943, the residents of Havant and Waterlooville were motivated to donate metallic items in their possession for the war effort. Pots, pans and other objects containing aluminium were desperately needed to manufacture aircraft for the Royal Air Force. On Saturday 22nd May 1943 began the initiative named "Wings for Victory" with a target of £190,000. Remarkably, similar objectives called "War Weapons" and "Warship Weeks" had raised similar sums earlier in World War 2. The slogan for the week was 'For the Third Time £190,000'.

The emergency call for materials received an 'immediate and tremendous response'. Messrs Seward's garage (then at 33 East Street) was made a receiving depot to which items were brought to 'build a Spitfire'. The ever increasing mountain of saucepans could be viewed through the garage windows. Emsworth contributed to the £192,851 achieved which was claimed to represent the cost of two Spitfires, a Hurricane, both a Lancaster and a Wellington bomber, and six other airplanes.

(Information was gleaned from *Saucepans for Spitfires – Brass for Britain in The Making of Havant Vol 5 (of 5)* and in one edition of A J C Reger's *A Short History of Emsworth and Warblington*.)

Also in 1943 bombs were dropped on Emsworth. One fell on Bath Road, destroyed houses (but did not explode!). Residents were evacuated to Washington Road School until they could be rehoused.

Gordon Braddock

Visitor Book comment

It is fascinating to read comments written in the Visitors' Book at the Museum. It is always worthwhile to have a look. One comment recently, written in Cyrillic script, intrigued the stewards and the chairman who had it translated. It read **"Very interesting and very touching. The memory of the past is lovingly safeguarded"**.

The views expressed by contributors to this Newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of the General Committee. All rights are reserved. Please contact the editor for permission to use any material.

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