

September/October 2016

Athelstan Post

Volunteer Newsletter of the Athelstan
Museum

Dear Volunteers,

In the last Newsletter I was able to report that the Moravian church has been purchased for the Museum. In this edition I'm able to report the very exciting news that the Museum has been awarded a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of over £47,000 to pay for the conservation and display of the Roman coin hoard. This is fantastic news and is the result of extremely hard work by a group of volunteers, led by Maria Marsh assisted by Dave Heiland, Deborah Clogg and others. HLF grants are not easy to obtain and competition for money is fierce which makes the success of the grant application even more amazing. More information and how you can get involved in this exciting project is detailed below.

The Museum hosted 2 open days at the Moravian Church last week when over 200 people came to see the inside of the church. There seemed to be overwhelming agreement that it is a beautiful, light space and will be a great addition to the Museum, Malmesbury and the community.

Malmesbury Coin Hoard

Back to the coin hoard! Firstly, I can report that the green charity tokens at Waitrose netted the coin hoard fund over £500. A fantastic result so thank you to all those shoppers who popped their green tokens in the coin hoard slot. Although we have the grant, the Museum still needs to raise a certain amount as a contribution to the project and so there will be several fund raising events in the next few years.

Maria and Dave have produced a leaflet on the coin hoard, you will find it in the Museum, and it includes a Gift Aid declaration if any visitors want to make a donation to the fund. We are also looking for volunteers to help with this exciting project, jobs such as recording and preparing the coins for display. If you are interested please contact Maria or myself.

Coin Hoard Open Morning

Come and see some of the coins and learn more about them and the project at this open morning. To be held on Saturday, 17th September from 10am to 12:30am in Malmesbury Library. Open to all.

Capability Brown Fund Raising Event

Celebrating the 300th anniversary of the birth of the landscape architect, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, the Museum is hosting a fund raising event in the Town Hall on Thursday, 29th September. Described as England's greatest gardener, Capability Brown was responsible for the landscaping of many great gardens in the country and many in the area. The talk will be given by Professor Timothy Mowl. Tickets, purchased in the Museum, are £14 and include a drink. Come and learn more about this fascinating man and support the Museum!

Malmesbury Voices

‘Capturing the voices of the Malmesbury area’

There will be a launch of Bill Reed’s collection of recordings at a free event, held in the Assembly Rooms in the Town Hall on Wednesday, 5th October at 6pm.

The project has spent the last 12 months collecting voices from Malmesbury and the surrounding area and constitutes a unique collection of over 50 items contributing to the audio history of the town. It is hoped that the collection will be extended so any comments or suggestions are welcome. Come along and enjoy this free event.

Lull – Malmesbury’s Missionary Monk

The exhibition on Lull is downstairs in the Museum. Including many interesting items kindly loaned from the Museum of Bad Hersfeld, the exhibition explains the relationship between this 8th century Malmesbury Monk and the town of Bad Hersfeld. The exhibition includes a beautiful 16th century painting of Lull after he became an archbishop. A new book about the life of Lull on sale in the Museum.

Wessex Week

As part of Wessex Week (17th-21st October), to be held at Abbey House, the Museum will be running 2 workshops for local primary school children. The focus of the week is the Anglo Saxons and King Athelstan. The children will be making and dressing up in Anglo Saxon clothes, making crowns and pendants and writing with quill pens. This will be happening on Wednesday, 19th and Thursday, 20th October. Janet will be holding a preparation day on Monday 17th October in the Museum. If anyone can help Janet Casselden on this day, please send her an email at janet@pendaron.net . Any help would be greatly appreciated.

The Museum will also be selling tickets for Wessex week.

Lace Making

Malmesbury lace maker, Gill Bright, has joined Janet to run lace making sessions in the Museum. The next date is during half term holiday on Thursday, October 27th.

Volunteer Training Day

A date for your diary – 2pm 26th October. A training day will be held open to all volunteers. More information on this event will be sent out shortly.

Volunteer Brochures

If you have not got a copy of the volunteer handbook, please let me know and I will endeavour to have more printed.

Email Address

If visitors want to contact the Museum or have an enquiry please give them the Museum email address at info@athelstanmuseum.org.uk Thank you.

Volunteer Needed – Christmas Raffle

We are still in need of a volunteer who would like to run the Christmas raffle this year. The license is already purchased and so it just involves finding a few more prizes (we have a few already) and getting the tickets printed. If anyone can help us out with this task then please let me know. Thank you.

FOAM Membership

We are keen to increase the membership of FOAM so if you are not already a member and would like to join then either fill in a form in the Museum or contact the FOAM membership secretary, Sue Winlow at membership@athelstanmuseum.org.uk Its £20 a year for a couple or £12 for single membership and for that you get discounts in several shops in the town, access to talks and events and you're helping support the history and heritage of the town and surrounding area.

Gift Aid

Small cash donations (less than £20), received via the donation boxes in the Museum, do not require a gift aid form to be completed under the Small Donation Gift Aid Scheme. Under this Scheme the Museum can collect the gift aid on small cash donations without one.

Free Museum Visits

The Athelstan Museum is a member of the South West Federation of Museums and Art Galleries and one of the perks of this membership is that our volunteers can access free entry into various museums and galleries. Information on how to use the offer, the membership card and which museums and galleries are included in the scheme please go to the SW Fed plastic folder in the magazine slot in the Museum. If you use the card then you need to complete a form in the folder. We want as many volunteers to use the card as possible so please take and return the card as near as possible to your planned visit. This is a trial to see if this is a valuable service for volunteers so any feedback is very welcome.

This is a similar scheme to the one offered by Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society scheme (see details below) that offers free access to Salisbury and Devizes Museums.

Free Entry to Devizes Museum

The Athelstan Museum is a member of Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society (WANHS) and one of the perks of this is our volunteers can have 1 free entry to the Wiltshire Museum in Devizes. It also includes free entry into Salisbury Museum and the Dorset County Museum.

How to use this offer:

The Membership Card is in the plastic envelope No. 19 for WANHS located in the magazine rack near the desk. Please record on the log:

- Your name
- The date you borrowed the Membership Card
- Expected date of return
- Actual date of return
- Your telephone number

We want as many volunteers as possible to use the card so please take and return it as near as possible to your planned visit. This is a trial to see if this is a valuable service for volunteers so any feedback is welcome.

Opening times: Monday to Saturday – 10:00am to 5pm (last admission 4:30pm) Sundays noon to 4pm (last

admission 3:30). Closed on Mondays from 4th January until 14 March inclusive. Bank Holiday opening times may vary. Admission costs £5.50 Adults, Concessions £4.50, Children under 16 Free. More details can be found in the Museum.

Cotswold Archaeology

If you would like to download free archaeological reports from the Cotswold Archaeology website please visit: <http://www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk> The site includes information about a few sites around Malmesbury.

Malmesbury Historical Society

This new society is now up and running and may appeal to anyone interested in recording, researching or publishing information about the history of Malmesbury and the surrounding area. If you would like to join or would like further information, please email malmesburyhistorysociety@gmail.com

Family History

We get quite a few requests for help or information from visitors investigating their family tree. We hold very little information on families and don't really have the facilities to help unless you know the family personally. We can, however point people in the direction of the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre in Chippenham. They hold the census returns, Church of England parish registers, wills, personal name indexes and much more in their archives. The Centre is very user friendly and has some fantastic information on Wiltshire history. Leaflets about the Centre are available in the Museum. Alternatively, family genealogy can be researched, free of charge, at Malmesbury Library.

Housekeeping

A couple of housekeeping items:

- When recording 'groups' in the day book it is easier for those counting up the numbers if it is written as follows: If one group of 15 visits then write as 1 X 15 in the 'group' column. Do not then add these numbers to the 'adult' column as this would be duplication
- If you action an item in the volunteer book can you please tick and initial so we know its been done
- Please wash all coffee and teacups in warm, soapy water - it's the only way to get them clean
- If boiling the kettle in the office please leave the door open as the steam can be damaging to the collection
- Please take paper coffee cups home or put them in the bin outside

Contact Details

As part of the Museum's accreditation with Arts Council England, the Museum is required to have at hand emergency contact details for its volunteers. I've had a few but still missing most! If you could please email me these details or write them down and leave them in the Museum, I would be very grateful. The details we require include: emergency contact name, relationship to you, their telephone or other emergency contact details. This will enable us to keep a list in the Museum. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Locking Up

Please can I remind volunteers to lock the till at the end of the day. The key lives in the drawer and has a yellow tab. The monitor and lights need to be turned off and the outer doors need to be locked. I know its very tricky unlocking and locking these doors as you almost have to kneel on the pavement but they have to be locked. In addition it has been pointed out to me that the alarm does not always make a noise when opening up. If you have any queries about opening or closing please don't hesitate to contact me.

If you have anything of interest you would like to share with our volunteers and want it to be included in the next newsletter, please send it to me. Thank you.

Bridget