

March/April 2016

Athelstan Post

Volunteer Newsletter of the Athelstan
Museum

Dear Volunteers,

On April 1st 2016 the Friends of Athelstan Museum (FOAM) will be 10 years old. Starting life in 1981 as a 'supporters club' for the Museum, it is now responsible for the running of the Museum and looking after the collection. Along with donations and the shop, the Museum relies on the membership fee (£12 individual, £20 couple a year) to pay the Museums running costs. As with the volunteers, the Museum would not exist without FOAM. If you are not already a member and would like to join, please fill a form found in the Museum, download one from the website or contact Sue Winlow at susannwinlow@gmail.com As a member you will enjoy a quarterly newsletter and are invited to preview nights for our exhibitions and lectures.

FOAM are hosting a drinks party on April 1st at 6:30pm in the Museum. As a volunteer you are also invited and if you would like to attend please let Roger Griffin know as soon as possible. His email address is griffinmalmesbury@btinternet.com

Hidden Gems

The new exhibition is now in the cases. If you haven't already taken a look, please have a browse around and look at the lovely artefacts on display. The idea of the exhibition is to display items from the collection that are rarely seen and are particular favourites of some of the volunteers. There is a wide variety of objects including a pair of carved wooden angels, the water buckets from the fire pump, an ECKO radio and the top hat of Harry Jones! In addition, there is a beautiful exhibition of illustrations and paintings of the Market Cross.

Silk Coat

You may have noticed the beautiful silk coat towards the back of the Museum. The collection team are in the process of checking out the history of the coat but it has been suggested that it belonged to the first governor of India, Warren Hastings. The coat is very delicate and so if you could keep an extra eye on it when on duty that would be very helpful. There is a note on it asking people not to touch.

Moravian Church Burial Plots Research

Nigel Pocock from the East Tytherton Heritage Project has been looking at Quaker burial plots. As part of the project he is going to be working on the burial plots in the Moravian Church in Malmesbury. Volunteers from the Museum are welcome to go along. The dates are Monday, 23rd May and Wednesday, 23rd June between 10:30 and 5 (lunch break 1-2). If you are interested please go along and identify yourself as an Athelstan Museum volunteer.

Children's Outreach Programme

The Education team are carrying out a study into the type of childrens activities provided by the Museum, both in term time and during the holidays. If you have children or know any local families could you please ask them to answer the following questions:

1. What activities would you like to see at the Museum for your child/children?
2. How long would you like a session to last?
3. How much would you be willing to pay for these activities?

It's always worth noting that these activities (see below) are run by our volunteers who freely give their time and experience. A parent or responsible adult needs to remain with the child during any activities.

Children's Workshops during Easter

Please note that Janet will be holding 2 children's workshops during the Easter holidays. A lace making workshop on Monday, 4th April from 2pm to 4pm and a Fire Pump workshop on Friday, 8th April at 10:30-12:30.

Help with Catering

If anyone enjoys making canapés and would like to help by making some for the FOAM party on the 1st April then please contact Catherine Doody at catherinecdooddy@gmail.com

Recording Shop Sales

If you sell something in the shop please just record it on the sheets provided by putting a mark against the listed object. There is no requirement to write it in the Day Book, in fact this only confuses things and can lead to sales being counted twice. Thank you.

Quiz evening

The Quiz evening on the 12th March was a great success with almost 70 people taking part. Not only was it fun and good for the brain, it also raised some money for the Museum. Thank you to all those volunteers who helped make the evening such a success.

Radiators

We have been informed by the Town Hall that we are not to touch the radiators in the TIC. There is a set of 3, either side of the window and if we alter the temperature it messes up the system. The Museum can get a little chilly so please come prepared with warm clothes. Hopefully the worst of the winter is now over.

TIC Opening

The TIC will be re-opening on Saturdays for the Summer starting on Easter Saturday. They close at 4:00pm and so the volunteer will still have to lock up, unless it's very quiet.

Musical Evening

FOAM will be hosting a Musical Evening, including performances by the Music Academy and students from Malmesbury School on Saturday, 18th June in the United Reform Church. Please put the date in your diary. Further details to follow.

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.

Swot up on History

If you have a quiet moment in the Museum then it's always a good idea to refresh your memory and read up on the history of the town. If you are asked a question and are unable to answer – we can't be expected to know everything – then take a phone number, find out what they wanted to know and call them back or leave a note in the Day Book and someone will call back. It's a good idea to notify me if you have done this and then I can make sure we don't miss any queries. Thank you.

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

The Witches of Malmesbury by Tony McAleavy

Local historian and author Tony McAleavy's fascinating account of the 17th Century witches of Malmesbury has proved very popular. If visitors to the Museum wish to contact Tony please do it through the Malmesbury History Society email address at malmesburyhistorysociety@gmail.com

Fridge

Please note that the fridge in the office will be removed shortly. If you bring milk in to make a tea or coffee please take it home with you at the end of your session. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Television Slide Show

The television slide show is back on! Please use the remote controller to turn it on and off.

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

FOAM Membership

If any of our volunteers are not members of FOAM and would like to join please contact Sue Winlow at susannwinlow@gmail.com

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