

Friends of

The Twickenham Museum



Newsletter

December 2014

READ ALL ABOUT IT

Normal service was interrupted on August 4th to announce the news that it was 100 years to the day since Britain declared war on Germany. In this we welcomed Bert, our newspaper vendor, who for the next four years will be looking to keep visitors informed of key stages of the war.

Accuracy is everything in what we do and we must learn from it. For as well as observations surrounding Bert's sartorial authenticity, there was the visitor who went through the old pennies in his hand to discover some post-1914 interlopers, which were immediately despatched to the collection box.

1914 IN MAPS AND IMAGES

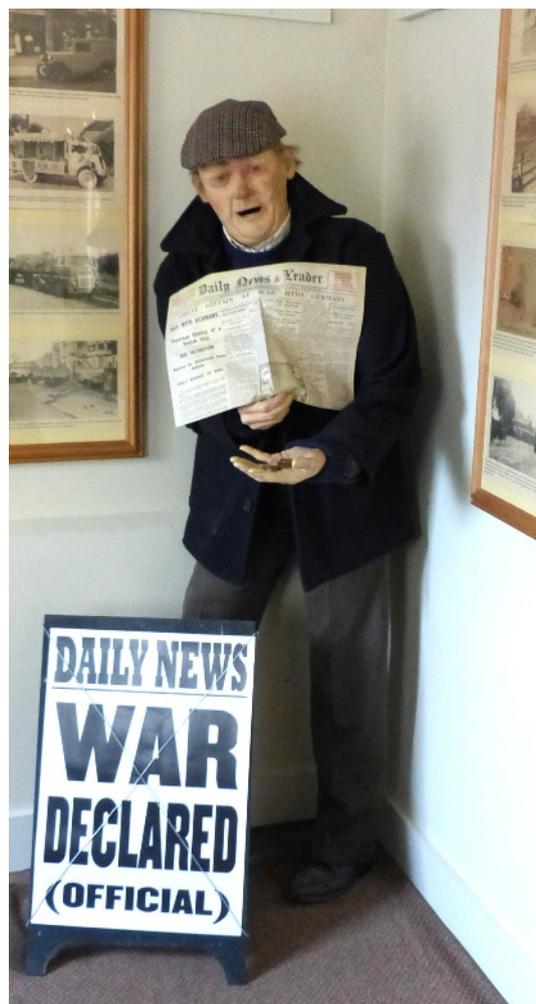
The day-to-day routines of life in Twickenham, Whitton, Teddington and The Hamptons at the outbreak of hostilities in Europe, through to the harsh realities of war on the home front, is the theme of the **New Exhibition** compiled by **John Sheaf** starting 6th December.

Numerous extracts from large scale maps covering the whole of the old borough area are paired with images of the time, including local auxiliary military hospitals and a photo of a bomb 'thrown from an early aircraft', which fortunately did not explode. Some images and display items relate directly to the conflict and some to the home front including silk postcards sent from "somewhere in France".

HLF FUNDING FOR WW1 PROJECT

Following our successful bid as part of the Heritage Lottery Fund's WW1 Then and Now programme, The Museum has launched its **Football at the Front** Project with a 1914 Christmas Truce centennial commemoration in partnership with the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall, seeing British and German schoolchildren lining opposing trenches singing Christmas carols followed by a football match played between serving British and German soldiers. The other elements comprising our WW1 Diary of Events will include two 'action tableaux' featuring Rifleman Frank Edwards at Loos in September 2015 and Captain Billie Nevill on The Somme in July 2016. **The Greater Game** is a new play to be performed next June at the Hampton Hill Playhouse.

It tells the story of the first Big Push of the Great War at Loos that was kicked off with a football.



IT'S FAREWELL ALEX

Next to the Volunteers themselves, our most important asset is the Volunteer Co-ordinator whose job it is not only to ensure that the rota is filled each month, but by the right sort of people who do The Museum proud.



When **Alex Skinner** took over this role from Geoffrey Morgan (a hard act to follow) she made it her own. But the peace and quiet of Devon has proved too appealing, and by the time this tome goes to print Alex should be settled there.

We all wish her the very best – and also to **Colin Main**, who has stepped up to the plate to carry on the proud tradition.

TRUSTEES COMINGS AND GOINGS

After years of devoted service, **Paddy Ching** and **Geoffrey Morgan** have hung up their Trustee hats while remaining valued front line Volunteers. Well-known Twickenham local historian and Volunteer, **Mike Cherry**, has accepted the invitation to become a Trustee. Despite her illness, **Jean Cranswick** remains a valued Trustee.

ELIZABETH OF YORK – SELLOUT

The **Annual Lecture**, given this year by the popular author Alison Weir, featured Edward IV's eldest daughter who was relegated at the age of 17 from pampered princess to bastard fugitive, and who survived to become heiress to the royal House of York and the first Tudor Queen. **Ken Howe** has engaged another best-selling lady of letters, Dr Tracy Borman, for the 2015 Lecture. Her chosen subject is one-time near neighbour of The Museum, Henrietta Howard. The date for diaries is 28th April.

BOOKS & BOOKSHELF

Gone is the mighty oak table that groaned with our many local interest books and publications. Now we possess a fine new, custom-built display cabinet. And not a moment too soon, according to **Suzannah Herbert** who reports a record year for sales.

GETTING DOWN AND DIRTY



Facilities Manager, **Ralph Cox** was on hand to supervise Trustees, **Ed Harris** and **Mike Cherry** in the

removal of the kitchen unit and shower cubicle from the attic to make way for new office space now fully equipped for the digital age. The resulting space now boasts a new (responsibly sourced) PC and a broadband connection. New filing cabinets will secure the safe storage of our rare photographs and ephemera.

CHILDRENS' HOLIDAY WORKSHOP



Wendy Verrall held another successful round of Children's Summer Workshops throughout August. WW1 Xmas Truce centenary workshops based around the famous football match are planned for 27th & 30th December and 3rd January.

NEW YEAR PARTY

23rd January, St Mary's Parish Hall, Church Street, is the date and place for our annual Volunteer festive get together where **Sandy Dempsey** is planning a Pot Luck Supper comprising delicious pies and hotpots with bread, salad and mouth-watering desserts. Free to volunteers, guests £5.

NEW FACES

Remember – if you know of anyone who has a couple of hours to spend a month and who would like to be part of our Volunteer force then please get them to contact our new co-ordinator **Colin Main** (colin@4main.co.uk 07941 546896).

Opening times: Tuesdays and Saturdays 11am to 3pm. Sundays 2pm to 4pm

Much good use is now being made of the three display cabinets generously donated to The Museum by the Royal Richmond Archery Club. Situated throughout the first floor, they display new artefacts and host supplementary exhibitions such as that marking the Murray Park centenary. Included is a pocket book belonging to James Wills, the newly elected representative for Whitton on the Twickenham Urban District Council in 1911. Its contents answer many questions with regard to how Murray Park came about and also provide an insight into the mind of the man within the political context of his 'much neglected neighbourhood'.



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The curator of the Brooklands Motor Museum contacted us regarding a haul of motoring trophies received from Australia. Ten trophies in all, they were won between 1962 and 1964 by Mr F. Aldridge, a member of the Hampton and District Motor Club. Despite much diligent research even **John Sheaf**, our resident Hampton expert has been unable to find out much about Mr Aldridge or the club. If anyone has any information then please let us know.



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The power of our website was again demonstrated when The Craven Museum Gallery in Skipton made the connection with Twickenham and gunpowder manufacturing. They had in their possession a small gunpowder bag bearing the name of Curtis's & Harvey for which they could find no local connection and were happy to pass onto us. Although we can't prove positively that it came from the former Whitton mills it does represent a very rare - and the only three dimensional association with the mills we have.



The Twickenham Museum **website** is a valuable resource for local history research in Twickenham and the surrounding area. It contains more than 400 articles on local people, places and events, written by local historians. It currently has about 200 visits per day and has been operational since 2002. The University of Oxford's Humanities Hub has described it as

"...an excellent example of a local museum online resource. It contains a wide range of well-presented materials relating to the history of Twickenham, Whitton, Teddington, and the Hamptons; towns and villages by the river Thames situated to the South-West of London. The site includes artworks, image archives, and accounts of notable individuals that lived in the region."

As **Robert Youngs** reports, it is now imperative that the website is changed to adapt to, and to exploit, new technologies and techniques which were not available 12 years ago. New end-user technologies (internet-connected mobile phones and tablets) expect websites to accommodate these types of devices. New technology will provide contributors with access without the need for extensive training and experience, and secure e-commerce facilities will provide for online book sales and ticketing for our lectures.



How the website might appear on a mobile phone

Joan Huggett died on the 9th February. A dedicated volunteer since the museum opened, she was always cheerful and welcoming to visitors. We shall miss her.

Dr Dick Cashmore was a stalwart of the Borough of Twickenham Local History Society and true Friend of The Twickenham Museum. Following his recent death The Museum has been left a wealth of research material that is now in the process of being categorised by the Accessions team. But help is needed. Volunteers **Joy Lee** and **Sophie Palmer** are already combining their desk duties with sorting through the box of material left in reception (to which instructions are attached). And **Dick Beasley** will in future be devoting his shifts to this valuable task.

Mavis Batey MBE died this year aged 92. As one of the leading female codebreakers at Bletchley Park, she cracked the Enigma ciphers that led to the Allied victory over Germany in WW2. After the war she became a driving force behind the Protection of Rural England, English Heritage and the Garden History Society of which she was President for many years. One of her books, *Alexander Pope: Poetry and Landscape*, was published in 1999 shortly before she accepted the invitation to become Patron of The Twickenham Museum.

Elemental Business was a recent BBC World Series about using the chemical elements to measure the global economy. And when it comes to sulphur, Twickenham looms large in the form of a colourful local character by the name of Joshua Ward, who appears on our website. The author of the piece, **Tony Beckles Willson**, was asked to appear on the programme to explain all, which he did.

Ward was elected MP for Marlborough despite the fact that no-one voted for him. Expelled for forgery, he was pilloried and imprisoned before fleeing to France where he was convicted as a fraudster. Having invented various 'medicines', he was pardoned by George II and returned to England in 1734 to enjoy both notoriety and fame.



He opened a factory in Twickenham in 1736 for the manufacture of sulphuric acid, which involved the continuous production of ignited saltpetre with sulphur to produce a highly unpleasant smell, which permeated throughout the neighbourhood, 'displeasing the gentry'.

The factory closed in 1749 following court action

MEDIA MOMENTS

Majesty and Mortar: Britain's Great Palaces was the last in a three part series on BBC Four last October. In it presenter Dan Cruikshank told of Queen Victoria opening Hampton Court Palace to the public in 1838. At first visitors came by horse-drawn bus from Richmond and then by steam engine after the railway came to Hampton Court.



On contacting The Museum, we were happy to provide photographic images of both these events.



The *Richmond & Twickenham Times* benefited from **John Sheaf's** spotting of these tram lines during excavation work this summer on Hampton Court Road. Last visible when the trams ran here until 1935, a number of the original tarred wooden blocks laid in 1903 were also visible.