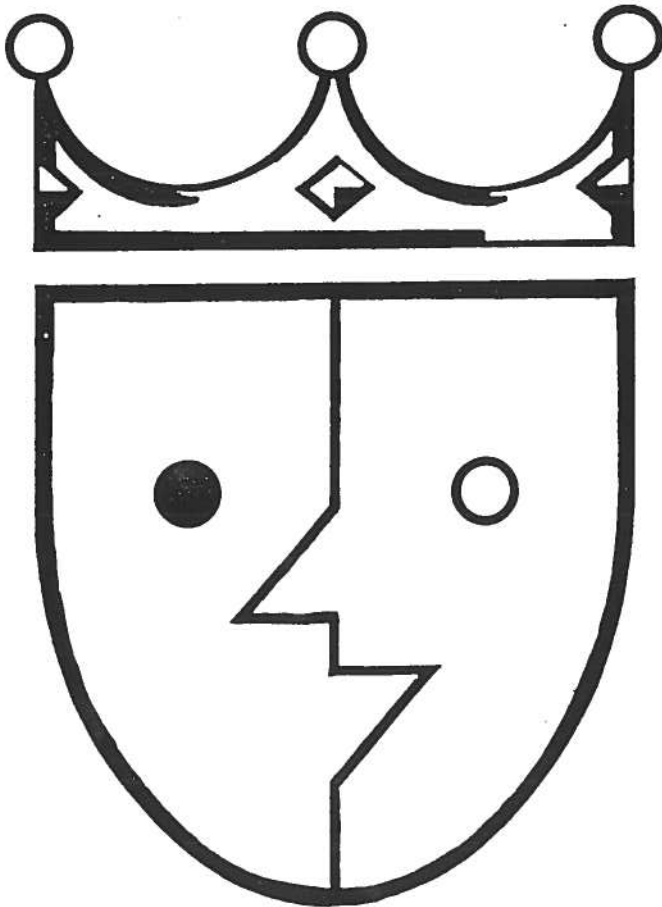


FRIENDS OF GUILDFORD MUSEUM

# NEWSLETTER

June 1996

issue 2



## **From the Editor**

It was good to see so many of you at the Annual General Meeting. Pat Cousins and Jean Rawlinson have resigned from the committee and we thank them for their valuable contribution to the success of our first year. We are pleased to welcome three new committee members, Heather Anderson, Maureen Newman and Derek Somner and hope they will enjoy their time with us. I asked Mary Alexander to provide an article based on her talk at the AGM on the Jews in Mediaeval Guildford as I was sure you would wish to have some permanent notes on the subject following the find of a Synagogue in the town last autumn.

The high hopes we had at our first meeting last year for an extension to the Museum and a roof placed on the Castle Keep were dashed when the Borough Council voted to postpone these indefinitely. However I was pleased to learn from the AGM that there is now the possibility that the Borough may apply for Lottery money for the Museum extension. Unfortunately the Keep is suffering from the inevitable decay caused by pollution and I hope means will be found to preserve it for future generations.

## **COMMITTEE**

**Chairman**  
**Vice-Chairman**  
**Treasurer**  
**Secretary**  
**Editor**

**Elizabeth Cobbett**  
**Bill Bellerby**  
**Tim Bryers**  
**Marjorie Williams**  
**Eric Morgan**  
**Matthew Alexander**  
**Heather Anderson**  
**Maureen Newman**  
**Brian Alexander-O'Neil**  
**Jennifer Powell**  
**Derek Somner**

## Message from our Chairman

Dear Friends,

How nice it is to write to you a letter of good news as in the first year of our Association we have reached our target of over 100 members. In fact to date we are One Hundred and Twenty fully paid up.

We hope that you have enjoyed our first years activities and that you will find the programme for this year even more exciting and that many more of you will be able to take advantage of them.

I know that the Secretary Marjorie Williams is also writing to highlight the progress so far of our future programme and I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for all the hard work that she and all the committee have done for us, not forgetting the excellent co-operation we have received from Matthew Alexander and the Museum Staff.

Let us hope that our second year will more than emulate the past one and that we will grow from strength to strength.

Elizabeth Cobbett

### A PIT OF HISTORY

Don't miss this series of temporary exhibitions in the Museum showing items assembled from 16 Tunsgate, excavated by the Museum's Voluntary Excavation Unit. The current display features the John Dwight teapot which is the earliest English made teapot found in an excavation. An excellent sheet accompanies the exhibit.

## A CHAT FROM OUR SECRETARY

Thanks to your support our target for the first year of one hundred members has been reached. With one hundred and twenty paid-up members already we are now aiming for two hundred in our second year.

"Friends" gave many hours of voluntary service to the Museum during the special exhibitions and are now enabling it to open the Mediaeval Undercroft to the public on three afternoons a week for the summer.

A considerable amount of money has been raised which will be used to improve the Museum facilities according to the wishes of its staff.

We do hope that you too feel you have benefited from your membership and enjoyed the meetings. In February Mary Alexander gave a most interesting lecture, "Investigating Guildford Castle", to a capacity audience. In April Matthew Alexander invited members to a reception to mark the official opening of the new mediaeval exhibition in the Undercroft. Tickets sold out for our Mediaeval Banquet in March. The sight of the colourful costumes of the guests contrasting against the background of the beautiful timbered Burchett's Barn will be long remembered. Our own Lord of Misrule, Matthew, ably assisted by his Court Jester, Ken Rowlands and two minstrels gave excellent entertainment. Originally we had intended to prepare the food ourselves, however due to illness it was necessary to call in professional caterers. This reduced the profits however their delicious period food was relished by all and it meant that the committee members could relax. (continued bottom of page 5)

## Curator's Corner

From the 1st April Guildford Museum has been part of a new department - the Department of Leisure Services, following the reorganisation for Guildford Borough Council. This is good news for the Museum. It will mean we have a higher profile on the Management Team and this can only bring benefits to us. The new Director of Leisure Services is Jim Miles who has previously been Leisure Services Officer at Oxford and has a wide background in local government arts administration. He is very positive about the museum's role and will be drawing up an arts strategy for the Borough which I trust will put the museum extension once more to the fore. Realistically though, we have to recognise that the restoration of the Castle Keep will have to be postponed until after the extension is built. New beginnings are always exciting and I am cautiously optimistic about developments for the future.

Matthew Alexander

Museum Curator

(Secretary's Report continued from page 4)

In April Brian Alexander O'Neil prepared a beautifully illustrated quiz sheet, "How Well Do You Know Guildford?". Numbers were disappointing but it was greatly enjoyed and the trail is to be used at one of the museum's Young Archaeologists' Club meetings. Unfortunately due to lack of bookings it was necessary to cancel the coach outing to Westerham.

The committee hope you will come along and enjoy this year's events and promise they will do their best to ensure everyone receives a friendly welcome.

I should be most grateful to receive members' ideas for future programmes.

Marjorie Williams.

## MONEY MATTERS

Thanks to the unfailing enthusiasm of Marjorie Williams, our indefatigable Hon. Secretary, the first year in the financial life of the Friends has gone well. The target figure of over a hundred members has been surpassed.

Marjorie's famous Guided Walks as well as the various social events, the Halloween and Christmas Parties and the magnificent Mediaeval Banquet at Burchett's Farm Barn all produced tidy amounts for the Friends. We are especially grateful to Mary Alexander for pulling in a large and appreciative audience for the lecture on "Investigating Guildford Castle".

The Treasurer can report funds of nearly £1,400 at the end of the financial year on 31st March. Many members have renewed their subscriptions for 1996. If you are not one of them, please take action now! You will not be disappointed.

Tim Bryers. Hon Treasurer.

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To become a member of the Friends of Guildford Museum please send a cheque with the appropriate subscription to Mr T.C. Bryers, Friends of Guildford Museum, 2 Southbury, Lawn Road, Guildford, GU2 5DD Subscription rates for 1995/96 Individual £5: Family £10: Under 18's £2: Corporate £25: Individual Life £100

Please make cheques payable to  
FRIENDS OF GUILDFORD MUSEUM

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## SHOPPING SENSATIONS

Have you been to visit the Museum Shop? There is a wealth of interest for all ages from 30p rubbers and pencils for the children to beautiful celtic jewellery which would be an asset to any ladies wardrobe. The new range of notelets by Fitzwilliam (£2.99) and Yorkshire pottery goblets and candlesticks (£7.50) are most attractive with the candlesticks making a most desirable souvenir as some have Guildford printed on the base. Lewis Carroll souvenirs feature prominently from postcards (15p) to keyrings (£1.99) and tea towels (£2.95). The blue and white victorian pottery cats (£2.50) are very pretty and would suit any age group but the boys I think would possibly like the rocking cardboard animals - my favourite is the elephant at £1.35. I think there can be few shops in Guildford that offer such a wealth of articles suitable for gifts, souvenirs and stocking fillers.

Finally who could resist the marvellous selection of local and general history books. New ones arriving all the time eg. "Three acres and a Cow" by Eli Hampshire (£12.50) and Volume 2 of Mark Sturley's book on the "Breweries and Public Houses" (£10.95). There is a special offer on Industrial Surrey, at £4 instead of £7.99 Don't forget also that members get 10% off on production of their card. Enjoy your shopping.

Sandra Morgan.

### GUIDED WALKS OF GUILDFORD

Monday, Wednesday and Sunday at 2.30pm.  
until 30th September.  
Thursday at 7.30 until 28th August.  
from Tunsgate Arch.

Events June 1996 to FEBRUARY 1997

SUNDAY JUNE 23rd at 2.30pm.

**A VISIT TO OCKHAM CHURCH**

Ann Watson, the Church Warden, will give a talk followed by a tour of the church. The Tower will be open. A maximum of fifty tickets are available. £1 of each ticket will go to the church funds. Jennifer Powell has most kindly offered to provide a cup of tea afterwards at her house which is close-by.

TICKETS £2 for MEMBERS £3 for GUESTS

THURSDAY JULY 4th at 7.30pm at SALTERS'

GEORGIAN GUILDFORD

NO CHARGE

Matthew Alexander invites you to a preview of the Museums exhibition on Georgian times to coincide with the festival. Wine will be available - donation appreciated.

R.S.P.V. Museum 444751 or Secretary 569794

SUNDAY AUGUST 18th at 2.30pm. in RACKS CLOSE

**"A Victorian Croquet Party"**

Arranged by our Curator. Cold drinks available. Bring a picnic and dress up if you wish. A prize will be awarded to the best costume.

Just Turn Up

.....  
: Tickets from 20 Shalford Rd Guildford GU4 8BL:  
: PLEASE ENCLOSE STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPE :  
.....



THURSDAY 26th SEPTEMBER 7.30pm. at the GUILDHALL

"The Borough Goes to Blazes"

A talk by Ron Shettle on the history of Guildford's firefighters

TICKETS £3 MEMBERS £4 GUESTS

FRIDAY OCTOBER 25th at 7.30pm. in SALTERS

A quiz evening with cheese and wine.

TICKETS £2.50 MEMBERS £3 GUESTS

FRIDAY 13th DECEMBER AT 7.30pm. in SALTERS

Museum Christmas Party.

TICKETS £5 from Museum

SUNDAY JANUARY 26th 1997 at 2.15pm.

VISIT to HORSLEY TOWERS

Talk on Lord Lovelace in Great Hall by Stephen Tudsbery-Turner followed by tour of the building.

TICKETS £2.50 MEMBERS £3.00 GUESTS

MONDAY 24th FEBRUARY 1997 at 7.30PM.

OPEN EVENING at MUSEUM for FRIENDS  
Just Turn Up

.....  
::Cheque payable to FRIENDS OF GUILDFORD MUSEUM::  
.....

## THE JEWS OF MEDIAEVAL GUILDFORD

Until the discovery of a 12th century room behind a High Street property, which might have been a synagogue, the history of the Jews in Guildford was almost unknown. This is strange as there is more information in documents about mediaeval Jews than about almost any other class of society. This is because the Jews were the property of the Crown, and many aspects of their lives were recorded: not just when things went wrong, such as being the victims or perpetrators of crime, but because of the frequent taxes paid by the Jews and above all because of their normal working lives - their money lending activities.

Mediaeval Christians were forbidden by their religion to lend money at a profit but Jews were not (although the practice was not necessarily approved of). As money became more important and capitalism developed money-lending became necessary. Jews in Europe were not allowed to own land or engage in trade so there was little else they could do.

The first Jews in England were introduced by William the Conqueror after 1066. They came from the colony of Rouen and probably settled in London at first and only later spread to other important towns such as Oxford, Norwich and Lincoln. There is very little information about the early years but it is likely that the move out of London took place during Stephen's reign(1135-1154) with his encouragement. The money-lending activities of the Jews lead them to travel around a lot and it was natural that they should move into other towns. We have no information about the Jews before the 13th century but it is likely that they arrived during Stephen's reign.

The town is a day's journey from London on a main route south and was a natural place to break a journey. It was also the county town and also likely to be the largest and wealthiest( though Southark and Kingston were also important towns). Guildford was a centre of the woollen trade and corn trade and as such would contain many people in need of cash.

It was not only the merchants who borrowed money. All sorts of people needed extra cash, from peasants buying animals or equipment or marrying off a daughter, to religious houses, knights, the nobility and the Crown needing money for building, acquiring land, fighting wars etc. The fact that Guildford was a royal town with a castle was another reason why the Jews settled here. The Crown owned the Jews and controlled them in all sorts of ways but would also protect them, so Jewish settlements were usually near royal castles where they could seek protection. We do not know if this was ever necessary in Guildford, but it certainly was elsewhere, sometimes with tragic results as at York in 1190, when the Jews sheltering in the castle all perished.

At about this time there was an attempt to make the Jews reside only in designated towns each with a special chest where the records of loans were kept. Guildford was not one of these towns but it is clear that Jews continued to live here and in other places.

The Crown often demanded a tax from the Jews known as a tallage. The Guildford tallage was ordered in 1186, so-called because it was issued from Guildford. This may have been because the King happened to be here at the time though it may well mean that there was a Jewish community here then, as there were at other places which gave their names to tallages, such as Northampton and Bristol.

The tallages were paid by Jews throughout the country, though it is possible that the Guildford tallage was confined to the south-east as for several years after 1186 the Pipe Rolls regularly record the Jews of Essex, London Kent and Sussex as owing arrears of the tallage.

The references to Guildford Jews known so far date to the latter 13th century, after the expulsion from Guildford and other towns belonging to the Queen Mother in 1275 and before the general expulsion in 1290. However, we know that in 1274 Isaac of Southwark had a house in Guildford. He is first recorded in Southwark in 1241 and was a very wealthy man. He had houses in Southwark and Winchester also, so Guildford would be very convenient to stay in when travelling between London and Winchester. There were two men of this name, probably uncle and nephew but we have not yet sorted out their dates, though the Isaac of 1274 would be the younger one. We know that he had a house in Guildford in 1274 because two men broke into it, doing £5 worth of damage to the doors and windows and stealing goods worth £2. In 1272 another incident took place concerning Isaac. One Thomas of Merrow owed him £2 and Isaac had seized his corn as security for the debt. Thomas and his wife broke the lock of the barn it was in and took the corn. Presumably the barn was Isaac's and he was living in Guildford then. Isaac was married to Thippe and we know the names of other members of their family - Josce, Formosa, Slema and Mandat. It appears that the Jews lived in large family groups - as might be expected for a tiny and persecuted minority. It is very likely that Isaac, or other Jews, spent some time in Guildford and that other members of the family would stay or live there, perhaps helping Isaac with the business.

He would also have servants, though not necessarily Jewish, so there would be Jews in Guildford needing a place for worship. Even if there were only a handful of families at any one time a wealthy man could easily have a private synagogue built. Even if the recently discovered room is not a synagogue it is highly likely that there was one in Guildford, and also other necessary structures such as a ritual bath and a bakery. It is a pity that so far we know nothing about 12th century Jews in Guildford, but the research has only just begun and there is a great deal more still to do. In time we hope that a clearer picture will emerge of this important and neglected part of Guildford's history.

Mary Alexander

Guildford Museum

## SURREY YOUNG ARCHAEOLOGISTS CLUB

The Club continues to flourish, with a healthy membership, which includes an active and lively Senior group. Several of the Seniors spoke at the Surrey Archaeological Society Symposium, in February on the subject of the Roman excavation last Summer. They gave an entertaining talk, and have received numerous compliments from those at the Symposium.

Our Spring sessions have concentrated on Mediaeval Guildford, with visits to the Castle and Undercroft. The next two sessions will have a more lighthearted theme: in May we will be cooking and eating Roman food, and in June we are going to Dover, to visit the Painted House and the "White Cliffs Experience"

As, ever for further details about the Club, contact Sue Roggero or Christine Hardman at Guildford Museum.

Christine Hardman.

## MUSEUM ARCHAEOLOGY LECTURE SERIES

The next season of these popular lectures will commence on 17th October 1996

17th October 1996

Joe Hillaby on English Mediaeval Synagogues

14th November 1996

Professor Bradley - "Signing the Land"

Prehistoric rock carvings in the British Landscape.

12th December 1996

Rosalind Janssen - "From Riches to Rags"  
Wardrobes for life and death in New Kingdom Egypt

16th January 1997

To be arranged

13th February 1997

Dr Peter Marsden - "Maritime Archaeology of South East England"

6th March 1997

To be arranged

TICKETS £5 from MUSEUM ONLY

## ST. CATHERINE'S

I'm sure most of you have travelled along the river at some time and come across that mass of golden sand that slides down Drakes hill into the river. Sand like this has been passing into the river for centuries and carried along the river bed. It's no wonder that in those early days when travellers trod the sandy river bed into Guildford they called it the golden ford from which the town takes its name. Yes Drake's hill is the name of that tuft of land that suddenly rises up from the river bank where the sand slides down and the children slide at their peril. On top of the hill sandwiched between the river and the Godalming road stands the ruined chapel of St. Catherines. The stonework has recently been repointed to enable the buiding to be enjoyed in it's present state for many years to come.

A chapel was in existance on this site over 750 years ago but in the year 1300 the vicar of St Nicholas Church which is at the bottom of Guildford High St by the river purchased the site. We will be charitable and suggest his aim was solely to spread the religious word but one can't help but wonder if he had the financial prospects of the site in mind as well, for within seven years he had obtained a licence to hold an annual fair on the hill and did very nicely from the fees. In 1317 the chapel was rebuilt. By 1550 it had fallen into disrepair and it is this ruin that we see today. The fair however continued right up until 1914. By the side of the hill a small lane leads from the Portsmouth Road down to the river. From time immemorial until it became uneconomic to run, about twenty years ago, a ferry existed here to carry passengers across the river. In 1985 a bridge was erected and it makes a pleasant walk from the town to the bridge and back over Shalford meadows. As far as we know this is only the second bridge to be erected here. The first was built in September 1377 but only a week

later the inhabitants of Shalford acting on behalf of the Prior of St Mary without Bishopsgate, took down and destroyed the bridge. I always find it fascinating how we know about events like this which took place 600 years ago. In this case we only know about it because the case went to court on the 6th October and was adjourned for a later hearing at Westminster. The prosecutor for the King argued that there had been a bridge at that spot previously or as the charming old English words put it since (time out of mind). He also argued that it had been a public road for horses and carriages as well as for foot passengers.

Robert of Chisendale, defence council for the Shalford people denied this and at a later hearing proved to the jury that the only bridge was at a mill nearby and this was only used by people going to the fair. So the people of Shalford won their case and the ferry continued.

Eric Morgan

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SEE YOU AT THE

GEORGIAN FAIR

SATURDAY JULY 6th 11 am. to 4pm. at  
The Castle Green

Period stalls and activities including an exhibition from the TV series "SHARPE". Meet Wellington's Red Coats. A day for all the family.

ADMISSION FREE

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