

Make a note in your Diary

- Thursday 9th July** Chatham Dockyard &
River Medway Cruise (fully booked)
John Wilkins
- Wednesday 15th July** Surrey Villages – Alfold & Dunsfold
John Wilkins (places available)
- Thursday 13th August** Surrey Villages – Oxted
John Wilkins (places available)
- Thursday 3rd September** Dorset Steam Fair, Blandford
John Wilkins (places available)
- Saturday 10th October** River Trip from Tower Pier to
Peter Hattersley Thames Estuary Forts (fully booked but
names taken for a reserve list)

The Editor welcomes items for the Newsletter or comments. Please send them to Eric Morgan 21 St Michael's Avenue, Guildford, GU3 3LY.

Telephone Number: (01483) 233344. Copy date for next Newsletter is November 1st 2009

FRIENDS OF GUILDFORD MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

June 2009



Issue 28



Matthew Alexander

Matthew will be retiring shortly and we all send him our very best wishes for the future. Guildford and Matthew are inseparable and I am pleased to know we may still meet him occasionally at the Museum. He has created a wide interest in local history through his publications, lectures and events which will inspire future generations to preserve the Town. I loved his Mad Hatter Parties. The Town Guides which he formed over 25 years ago, have, through his encouragement, spread their love of Guildford to thousands of visitors and children alike. He has given us a firm springboard into the 21 century.

I asked Mary to tell us about Matthew's career and this is her reply:-

Matthew came to Guildford Museum in July 1975, after Cambridge and a postgraduate course in Museum Studies at the University of Leicester. He likes to remember that there were only two jobs available at the time: in Neasden and Guildford. There wasn't much difficulty in choosing! Guildford was rather different then. He was interviewed in the old Municipal Offices in the Upper High Street; Felix Holling recommended lunch in the Corona Café (now Whistles dress shop).

Matthew's post was Assistant Curator of Local History. Felix Holling was Curator, Deadre Dendy was Museum Assistant and Mrs Campbell-Smith was the part-time secretary. Dick Booth and his wife lived in the Caretaker's flat in 48, Quarry Street (a property which had been added to the Museum only a few years earlier, and housed the Guildford Muniment Room on the ground floor).

It would be fair to say that Matthew's encounter with Guildford's history was love at first sight. He admitted that when he saw the job advertised, he had to look Guildford up on a map to find where it was. He had only heard the name used scornfully in Private Eye (though not so scornfully as Neasden). Guildford seemed to have preserved its historic identity despite the economic pressures that

made it one of the most prosperous towns in the country. Even the recent Local Government reorganisation, which had done so much to damage local identities, had at least enabled Guildford Borough Council to retain its former name. The wealth of historic buildings in the town centre enchanted him, though it took until his second day in the Museum before he found out that Guildford actually had a castle.

When Deadre Dendy left to have a baby, Matthew's wife Mary, a qualified archaeologist, took her place. The Guildford Group of the Surrey Archaeological Society was very active in local history (and excavation as well – those were the days when amateurs were still making the major contributions to archaeology). Through the Guildford Group, Matthew published a booklet of Victorian photographs, "Guildford as It Was". Preparing the captions for this gave him a taste for research which has never left him. On the other hand, the publishers were horrified by the amount of words produced, and insisted on far fewer for the sequel volume. Thirty years on, Matthew is still being asked to produce books of Victorian photographs, and routinely refuses. While a picture is equivalent to a thousand words, he maintains that they can often be the wrong words. Much of Guildford's history, of course, generated no photographs at all – and it should not be limited to that which can be illustrated.

When Felix Holling retired in 1980, Matthew was promoted to Curator. He began a series of attempts to develop the Museum, the most ambitious being for a new building on the Farnham Road Bus Station site. The policy was formally adopted in the Borough Plan of 1983, but was never implemented and the site remains a car park to this day. More modest proposals to build on part of the Museum garden and construct an entrance directly from the Castle Grounds were equally unsuccessful, with planning and financial obstacles being apparently insuperable. It can only be hoped that the current proposals will succeed: the need for Guildford Museum to develop, rather than stagnate, has never been more acute.

There were significant advances, though. The loss of Salters, the Museum's store in Castle Street, didn't seem so at the time.

However, the new store at the Woking Road Depot provided excellent conditions – albeit difficult to reach. When Salters was returned to the Museum, it could function as an education centre, temporary exhibition gallery and ultimately as the Victorian schoolroom. The redisplay of the core archaeological collection in the Main Gallery in 1991 represented a major investment (although it lasted rather longer than the ten years originally planned).

Matthew continued to develop the local history service. There was a constant stream of enquiries, each leading to more and more information being amassed in the Museum's files. Requests for talks to groups demonstrated the local interest in historical subjects. In 1981 he began the Adult Education classes which not only introduced Guildford's history to a wider audience but often stimulated the class members to continue their interest afterwards. The Guildford Tourist Guides were formed by members of the first class, ably led by Marjorie Williams, and many former class members became volunteers – and later members of the Friends.

Matthew has experienced setbacks, inevitably. In 1997, the Borough's rejection of his proposal to acquire The Chestnuts as a Lewis Carroll centre was a decision which Guildford may well come to regret. The cost-cutting exercise that combined the management of the Museum and Guildford House Gallery was a failure: Matthew's strengths were not administrative. It is to be hoped that the latest cost-cutting amalgamation will prove more successful.

When Matthew retires in July, he will continue to be associated with the Museum, running the Local History class in the autumn and being involved in talks and events. He hopes to be able to write and publish on local topics. Matthew has no wish to abandon the subject which has been a driving force in his adult life. He has gained so much pleasure from it, and has communicated much of that pleasure to others.

Mary Alexander

Scandinavian Pine – but not from Ikea

In March the Friends were kindly invited by the Mayor to the Guildhall and also taken on a tour of the building. Here Hugh Ashcombe tells us about some of its fascinating history.

Next time you walk past the Guildhall imagine the scene of activity in the early 1680s when the frontage we see today was created. Thirty years previously (in 1651) the Mayor and Approved Men had been empowered by Act of Parliament to make the river navigable, and the Wey Navigation was now a success at last. The wool trade in Guildford had expired, but the town was prosperous again as an entrepôt where cartloads of goods were loaded and unloaded at the various wharves along the river.

The mayor and approved men celebrated this by panelling their new Guildhall with pine brought from Scandinavia via London and the Wey Navigation. Scandinavian pine panelling in the heart of Surrey was surely a statement of seventeenth century modernity. To the people of Guildford the renewed building and its astonishing clock must have seemed exotic indeed.

The Guildhall doubled as a courtroom and meeting room for the Mayor and Approved Men. A typical case brought before the court would be of a man accused of stealing a pig from his neighbour. He would be brought up from the cells below the court whilst the magistrates tried to maintain order and prevent the mob from entering and disrupting proceedings. Barriers were attached to the square wooden posts which can still be seen just after you enter the court room.

Behind the court there is now a room for the Mayor, and it is good to see it restored following the theft of the lead from its roof last year. The culprits were tracked down but it seems they received light sentences. So will the roof be stolen again? Probably not – it has been cunningly designed to be not worth stealing.

For all we know future historians may see this as just as symbolic of the age in which we live as the frontage of the Guildhall is of the self-confidence of its own age.

Second thoughts on cheap Scandinavian Pine

Was the panelling of the Guildhall really a celebration that international transport had reached Guildford? Perhaps there is a more prosaic scenario.

No doubt there was always much argument in the Guildhall – perhaps they jealously eyed each other in the upstairs room knowing how well some of them were doing as a result of the Wey Navigation.

Only a few years previously, in 1673, Arthur Onslow had presented the borough with the Mayor's badge, made of solid gold, with his own coat of arms on the reverse side. What was the gossip about this in Guildford? Did Onslow think he owned the town?

This was probably unsaid: "We thank you for your gracious gift, and of course both your family and the Corporation supported Parliament in the war, but we should also like to remind you that we are proud of having had a Royal Charter since it was granted by Henry III in 1256".

Onslow was prosecuted by James II in 1684 as it was claimed that the use of individual arms on badges was prohibited, although the charges were later dropped, and of course the Mayor's badge still has Onslow's coat of arms on the back.

Did Onslow run such a large operation that he could charter his own boats and supply the London market directly, avoiding the toll which was paid to the Corporation at the Guildford Cornmarket? If so, perhaps the solid gold mayor's badge and chain was seen by some as something of a consolation prize or peace offering to the town.

Before the new front and upgrading of the Guildhall the Mayor and Approved men may have at least been able to agree on one thing – that their dilapidated and old-fashioned accommodation should be upgraded. And perhaps the pine panelling was like the clock – a case of somebody knew somebody – maybe the wood was going cheap in the London docks - perhaps boats were coming up empty, leading to a good deal for the Corporation being done.

Can you have high quality and value for money? The answer is yours.

"A Few of My Favourite Things"

The Museum is currently staging an exhibition entitled "A Few of my Favourite Things". Guildford Museum, like all museums, only has a small part of its collections on display. A large amount is kept in storage and rarely sees the light of day. The collections cover archaeology and social history, with a specialist collection of needlework. Items vary from Stone Age axes to commemorative Millennium mugs. They aim to cover all aspects of human history in our area. In order to bring rarely seen objects into the limelight, we have invited local people to help us select some which they consider deserve to be displayed.

The response has been excellent and as we hoped the range of people and interests has resulted in a varied list of objects that well reflect Guildford Museum's collections. For some of these objects it will be the first opportunity we have had to put them on public display.

After receiving completed questionnaires, museum staff selected a number of objects that best reflected the person's interests. These were photographed and sent to the respondent to choose one.



The Master of Abbot's Hospital, Tony Richmond, perhaps unsurprisingly chose a gown once worn by a Brother of the Hospital as his 'favourite thing'. It has never been displayed in the Museum before.

He chose it not only because of the link with the Hospital, but also his interest in the late medieval cloth trade in the town: "Guildford Blue".

Often when objects go on display in a museum the labels that accompany them give such information as what the object is made of, or where it is from. We are hoping to say *why* contributors chose the object. Perhaps it had some sentimental value, or it is from a favourite period of history, or simply they liked the look of it. The label includes some information about the respondent as well, together with a photograph.

Guildford's MP, Anne Milton, has chosen a nurse's uniform – she having been a nurse herself. She is currently Shadow Minister of Health. The Rector of Holy Trinity & St Mary's, Robert Cotton, has chosen a Stone Age axe – reflecting his interest in archaeology. John Dennis, formerly of the Guildford vehicle builders Dennis Brothers, has chosen a radiator badge from one of the commercial vehicles made by his family's firm.

The exhibition is due to open on Saturday, May 9th and will run until 4th July.

Matthew Alexander

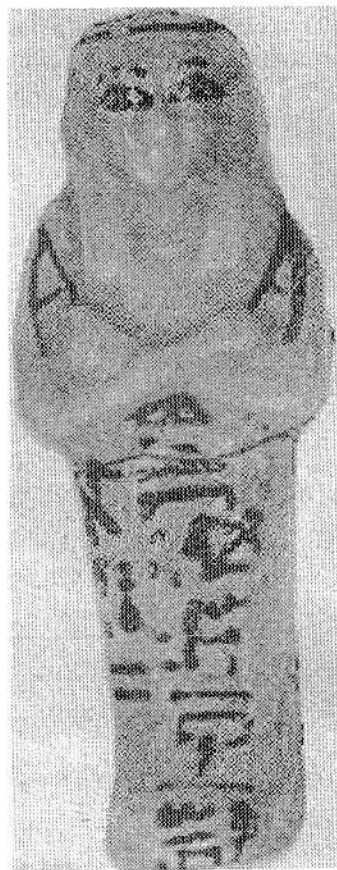
Nick Booth tells us about some Egyptian artefacts in the same exhibition.

Guildford Museum's collections date back to 1854, when the Surrey Archaeological Society was formed. Over the years literally hundreds of people have contributed to the museum's collections, and this has resulted in an estimated 78,000 objects being cared for by museum staff. Sometimes the collection can throw up objects not so clearly associated with Guildford, and that can come as a surprise to staff and researchers alike. One such example is a group of four Egyptian Shabti figures, recently identified by a volunteer working on the collections.

Made of faience (earthenware pottery coated in a glass-type glaze) these figures were made to accompany a dead person into the after life, and were intended to act as the deceased's servants,

completing all the manual work he or she might be required to do in the next life.

Shabti figures, or Ushabti or Shawabti depending upon when they date from, first appear during the Middle kingdom (2040 to 1640BC) period of Egypt, although some Egyptologists trace their development back to the Old Kingdom (about 2630BC to 2150BC) when those of high rank were buried with their servants.



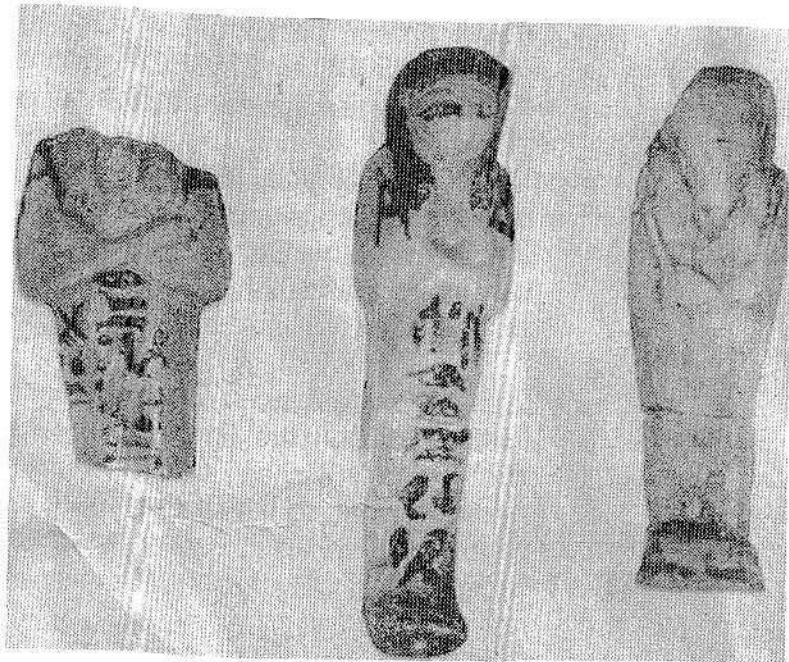
Placed in tombs, Shabti's were often decorated with a verse from chapter six of the Book of the Dead, a sacred text used by the Egyptians while preparing a corpse for the grave.

This spell, designed to bring the Shabti to life, calls upon the figure to awake when the owner wishes and do the dead persons work, to which the figure is meant to reply: "I will do it, verily I am here when thou callest."

It is these hieroglyphs that can be seen painted onto the front of three of the figures, and appear on the back of the fourth. The name and occupation of the owner was also sometimes included, and staff have tentatively identified the owner (or owners) of two of the three painted Shabtis as a scribe, Shabtis appear in the graves of people of all classes in the Egyptian world, although the richer and more powerful someone was the more numerous and elaborate the figures might be.

The young pharaoh Tutankhamen had dozens in his tomb and the most found so far belong to king Taharqa, whose tomb contained more than 1,000.

Although this figure is unusually large, as time went on, more and more figures would be included in graves, until eventually the dead were accompanied into the after life by 365 servants. This would be one for each day of the year, and one overseer per 10 servants, so the owner had even less work!



Guildford Museum exists to collect, preserve and help interpret the story of Guildford, and its Surrey backdrop. Objects such as these Shabti figures, more than 2,000 years old and from a country thousands of miles away, stand out in the museum's collection because they are like nothing else we have in our stores.

Even though they are beautiful objects with a fascinating story to tell, Guildford Museum would be unlikely to collect them now, because they would not really serve a purpose. They are in our collection, and offer a chance for local people to experience something unusual that they might not get a chance to see in Guildford.

A Place of Safety

In July, Guildford Museum will be presenting the results of its most recent oral history project in an exhibition entitled "A Place of Safety: evacuees in Guildford during the Second World War".

At the beginning of 1939 plans were drawn up for the evacuation of children and vulnerable adults from areas thought to be at risk from enemy bombing. Britain was divided up into 'evacuation', 'neutral' and 'reception' areas. Guildford, not regarded as a likely target, was a reception area. (In the event, only a few bombs were to fall on the town and casualties were light.) London, however, was considered a principal target and was accordingly an evacuation area. Neutral areas were those which would neither send nor receive evacuees.

The first official evacuations began on 1st September 1939, two days before the outbreak of war. The *Surrey Times* of 2nd September reported the arrival of the first evacuees in Guildford. The newspaper also reported that 'some of the children were taken to the Stoke Hotel where they were given buns and lemonade. Then they registered their names, were examined by a nurse and sent off in groups to their billets'.

The *Surrey Times* of 8th September reported that it was believed that the Guildford area would receive a total of 10,600 but less than 4,500 actually arrived. Most came by train from London, and included many mothers accompanying their children.



The report noted that. 'In addition to private billets, some children and mothers are staying at Stoke Hill House. To deal with difficulties connected with the billeting, a number of headmasters of the elementary schools have assisted the town clerk's department. Numerous complaints have been investigated.' The article ended. 'Stoke Hill House was quickly organised as a reception place for difficult cases, including persons with large families. The Women's Voluntary Service (WVS) assisted in the task.'

However, by January 1940 many had already returned to their homes. There were several reasons for this. Firstly, at that time there had been none of the predicted air raids on



London. Secondly, many children were acutely homesick and unwell (bedwetting was a very common problem), and thirdly, the cost of their weekly visits was for many London parents becoming unbearable.

More evacuees came after the fall of France in May 1940, when towns on the south coast were evacuated because of the threat of German invasion. When the London Blitz began on 7th September 1940, yet more children were evacuated. One was Phyllis Wilkins of Fulham: "At the end of 1940 my sister and I were sent to Guildford, we went by coach with other evacuees. When we got there, people came up and said, "I'll have you", "I'll have you"...."

This random selection could have major consequences: some children found themselves taken into loving families; others experienced much unhappiness.

In the first three years of the war, the population of Guildford increased by nearly eight thousand. Many of these were evacuees, though some were adults attached to firms and organisations that were moved out of London to avoid the bombs.

Schools felt the impact of war. At first, they were closed until air raid shelters could be provided for all the children attending. Soon, however, conditions began to return to something like normal. The teachers, however, had no holidays and had to work double shifts to cope with the increased class sizes and the departure of the younger teachers to the forces. Children helped to collect salvage and grow food. Evacuation did not officially end until March 1946, but by the summer of 1945 many evacuees had already returned home.

Their story will be told in their own words, and illustrated with pictures and artefacts of the time. The exhibition will run from 18th July to 24th October 2009, (closed Sundays) and will be open from 11.00am - 4.45pm. Admission is free.

Matthew Alexander

FRIENDS OF GUILDFORD MUSEUM

If you are not a member we would love you to join us
Please send a cheque with the appropriate subscription to

Mr D. Somner, Friends of Guildford Museum
18 Abbot Road, Guildford, GU1 3TA

Subscription rates for 2007/2008

Individual	£6	Family	£12	Youth	£3
Corporate	£25	Individual Life	£100		

Please make cheques payable to

FRIENDS OF GUILDFORD MUSEUM

Guildford Museums Stored Collections

On the 26th February, 2009, scientists at the London Natural History Museum announced that they had found evidence for one of the first vertebrates to reproduce through sexual reproduction. The 365 million year old specimen, of fish species named *Incisoscutum ritchiei*, had been in the museums collection since the 1980s. At first it was thought the tiny skeleton preserved inside the larger was the remains of the adult's last meal, however revaluation of the specimen has led to the recognition of something completely new.

Museums hold objects in stored collections for a number of reasons. One, as shown above, is to allow new work and revaluation to be carried out by the researchers of the future. Ideas need to be constantly tested and re-tested, to ensure they are correct. Guildford Museum receives requests from people from all over the world for information relating to our stored collections, and objects and finds held by the museum often appear in publications and academic papers.

Another reason the museum houses objects in its stores is to make them available for future exhibitions. On May 9th the museum will be putting on an exhibition entitled 'A Few of my Favourite Things', featuring



A Face Jug

objects from the stores chosen by Guildfordians, and other people with links to the town. It is hoped that this will give the public a chance to view objects rarely seen on display.

However Guildford Museum, like museums across the country, is facing an increasing problem when it comes to storage space. As more and more objects are collected, from archaeological digs, donations and purchases, we are running lower and lower on space. In recent years the museum has sought to address this by drawing up a disposal policy. This is a document that puts in place a system whereby the museum can take objects out of its collections, and either donate them to another museum, or (in very rare instances) dispose of them another way.

Guildford museum does not do this lightly; in fact to date nothing has been disposed of from the permanent collections. The museum would only consider such a move if we could be sure that the welfare of the other objects we care for would be improved. There is a famous story in the museum world relating to the last dodo specimen in existence, which was burnt over 100 years ago by a curator who thought it was a waste of space. Now-a-days this would never happen!



Another form of collections control comes from a document detailing what the museum can and can not collect, called a collecting policy. This document outlines from what areas of the world the museum will take objects, and from what time periods. Guildford's current collections policy covers the existing

Archaeology, Local history and Needlework collections, and aims to ensure that only objects that will enhance these collections, have a strong link to Guildford or will help with one of the museums roles enters the museum.

Local history objects will generally come from the Guildford area, or will have strong local connections. Archaeology material from Guildford will also come to the museum, however Guildford museum also acts as the collection institution of last resort for most of Surrey.

This means that archaeological material from areas without their own archaeological museums, such as the Mole Valley, will come to Guildford, as will especially valuable or hard to look after material.

In the past the museum has not had such stringent object entry criteria, and this has resulted in a number of oddities in the museums collections. These include arrow heads from North America, flint tools from Ireland and Coptic embroidered fragments from Egypt. More recently a set of four Shabti figures, buried with the dead in ancient Egypt, have been found in the museums collections, and the museum currently has a request with the British Museum asking for help identifying a ceramic bowl and figure believed to be of Peruvian origin, dating to 600AD.

Museums hold collections of objects for the enjoyment of people now, and people in the future. Many objects which are donated to the museum will almost certainly not be put on display immediately. We just don't have the gallery space! But objects that come into the museums care will be looked after and preserved for the future, so that in another 100 years time future researchers and members of the public will be able to access the collections of today.

Nick Booth

WRAC Exhibition

During the war, my Aunt was in the ATS and trained at Stoughton Barracks. So when I heard there was a WRAC exhibition at the Museum I went to learn how they had evolved over the years and I was not disappointed. We were greeted in the entrance by a battledress which led us to a very interesting film giving the history of the organisation. The piece I remember best was, of course, of the talented band and seeing them march up and down the High Street in various processions. The exhibit of the instruments and photographs of members playing brought it all back. The most famous trainee at the barracks when it was still the ATS was of course, the Queen when she was still Princess Elizabeth in 1945. A most interesting exhibition.

Sandra Morgan

Now Mrs Beryl Montague Butlin (nee Sims) tells us her story:

A WRAC'S Story

After leaving school in Plymouth, I trained as an architect and then went to Bristol University to study social sciences. Later, I was attracted by the glossy recruiting advertisements for the WRAC which appeared in women's magazines. In 1952, I enlisted at Plymouth and was sent to the Officer Selection Board. One exercise tested the candidate's initiative in getting a group across a series of obstacles. Leading my group across a deep ditch I planned to leap and clutch a tree on the opposite side. In fact, I clutched the officer who was taking notes. Nevertheless, I passed.

I was sent to the depot at Guildford for my six weeks basic training. All this time, I was told not to mention that I had been selected as an officer. Many of the girls were from the mill towns of the north and quite unused to the military life. The NCOs could make their lives quite difficult.

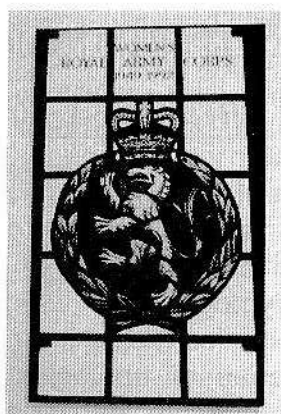
After that, I went as a cadet for two years officer training at Hindhead. Life in the camp was very strict but, curiously, included a

course in thinking logically which has not always proved an advantage. After passing out, I was posted to the Bicester Garrison. There I met the bandmaster of the Highland Light Infantry. However, the officer commanding strongly objected to our friendship: officers were not to consort with NCOs! I was sent back to Guildford in disgrace.

After a rather chilly reception at Stoughton, I became a training officer, being promoted to command N° 1 Company. Subsequently, I became Documentation and Pay Officer. This involved having to calculate the cash needed for each week's pay parade. The Quittance Roll detailed each individual's entitlement - in pounds, shillings and pence, naturally. Our job was to calculate the actual numbers of pennies, sixpences, half crowns and so on that would be required. All this had to be done without any calculating machine - much less a computer! It took all week and the day before the parade, I rang the bank to order the cash.

Then I had to go down to Lloyds Bank on Guildford High Street to collect the cash in heavy canvas bags. I travelled in a truck with my pay sergeant and we were followed by an armed escort in another truck. These were four young soldiers from Aldershot. On one occasion, I had just stepped out of the truck when there was a terrific bang from behind me. One of the soldiers had accidentally fired a shot. The bullet struck the Guildhall clock and ricocheted across the street. Fortunately, no one was hurt.

When the Queen came to the Guildford pageant in Shalford Park in 1957, it was my duty to mount the Guard of Honour for her. Not long after, I married but stayed in the service- which was unusual at that time. I was posted away as a staff officer with the military police in Richmond Park.



*WRAC window in
Guildford Cathedral*

New Book by Helen Davies

We call the planet on which we live 'Earth', a strange name perhaps, given that Earth is a watery world of rivers, seas and oceans. In the deep and distant past, all life on Earth came out of water. Yet only a tiny fraction of water is fresh. Clean water for drinking and domestic use is an element so often taken for granted, a finite resource held in groundwater reserves, lakes, and rivers.

The Archaeology of Water seeks to investigate the many aspects of water, including water - the great subterranean secret; prehistoric ritual and symbolism associated with water; early water technology and water-powered industries; wells and well sinking; the phenomenon of the spa, therapeutic waters and bottled waters; gradual improvements in drinking and domestic water provision, sanitation and sewerage; canals and water towers, how water reaches our taps today; and a great deal more.

The book is substantially illustrated in black and white and colour, with many original pictures. It has a lavishly illustrated colour cover, and features much of interest from the historic county of Surrey.

Published by The History Press at £17.99, *The Archaeology of Water* is available from the usual outlets.
ISBN 978-0-7524-4762-9

Benjamin Martin

Benjamin Martin, who was baptised on 1st March 1705 at Worplesdon Church, is considered one of the greatest designers and manufacturers of microscopes of his time. His insatiable appetite for work has produced far too many publications for me to mention. His father is described as John Martin, Gent of

Broadstreet. We know little about his early life except that he was an ardent scholar with no real interest in farming and that he inherited £500 from a relative. It is believed that while at Guildford he taught reading, writing and arithmetic but by 1729 he had a school at Chichester and that year married Mary Love the daughter of a Chichester maltster. His first publication, *The Philosophical Grammar* (1735), was a synopsis of the

various branches of science and produced in a single inexpensive volume. Indeed it was his intention to bring down the price of books so that others could educate themselves as he had done and within the following five years had published books on Arithmetic, Trigonometry, Geometry, Logarithms and Optics. In 1749 he published his *Lingua Britannica Reformata* or a new universal English Dictionary. This was six years before Dr Samuel Johnson produced his Dictionary. Martin's Dictionary is regarded by some experts as the first to distinguish between the various senses that a

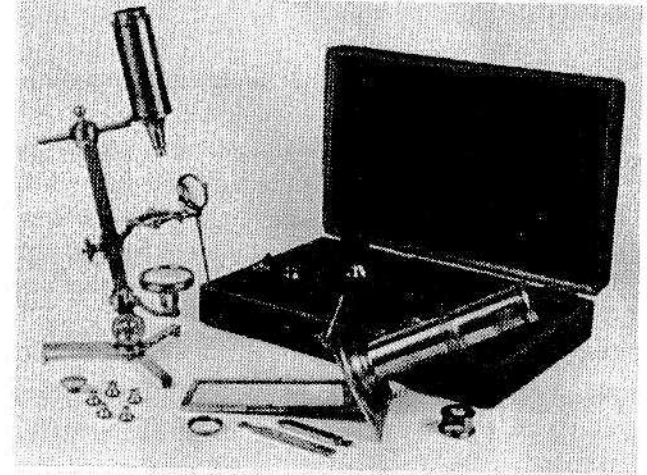


single word can have and was definitely an improvement on earlier works.

Optics was a major field of interest for him and he produced microscopes which were still sold commercially in Victorian times. He lectured on many subjects including electricity, the appearance of Halley's Comet in 1758 and the transits of Venus (1761 and 1769). Martin was one of the best known popularizers of science of his day and his most ambitious project was "*The General Magazine of arts and sciences...*" designed to be published in 120 sixpenny monthly numbers, beginning in January 1755. In the ten years prior to 1756 Martin's main occupation was lecturing and he claimed to have visited most of the principle towns in England. Now he settled in Fleet Street. Having obtained the freedom of the Goldsmith's

Company, he began to trade as an optician and instrument maker. He was now aged fifty and needed glasses for reading. Initially for his own use and then for general sale, he devised his "Visual Glasses" and used them for his shop sign. Unlike conventional

spectacles they had apertures partially blanked off by an annulus of horn, lenses tilted inwards and glass tinted violet or green. They proved popular and were copied by other traders. Some thirty tracts were published from his Fleet Street address including an essay on visual glasses. No problem seemed too difficult to him. In 1758 he produced "*New principles of Geography and Navigation*" which contained charts based on the true shape of the earth. His only patent was for a bilge pump and he was disappointed that it was not adopted by the navy..



A universal compound microscope and a solar microscope by Benjamin Martin, circa 1775

"The New Art of Surveying by the Goniometer" was published the same year and in 1770 he claimed a new form of pendulum and escapement in "The Description and Use of a Table Clock". He promoted his business through aggressive marketing and this led to him receiving substantial orders from Harvard College, Massachusetts, to replace scientific instruments lost in a fire in 1764. These marketing techniques and his claims to be better than other instrument makers did not make him popular and this is probably why he never obtained support for election to the Royal Society which he so coveted.

In 1738 Martin produced a lens with a very high magnification which enabled ordinary people to see the surface of materials for the first time. He called the instrument the MEGALASCOPE. Martin suggested people should buy the instrument because it showed objects to be completely different to their appearance to the naked eye. Over 150 years later, Lewis Carroll in "*Sylvie and Bruno Concluded*" writes:

"But we've seen elephants before', the Emperor grumbled.

'Yes, but not through a Megaloscope!' the Professor eagerly replied, 'you know you can't see a Flea, properly, without a magnifying-glass – what we call a Microscope. Well, just in the same way, you can't see an Elephant, properly, without a minimifying-glass. There's one in each of these little tubes. And this is a Megaloscope! The Gardener will now bring in the next specimen. Please open both curtains, down at the end there, and make way for the Elephant'"

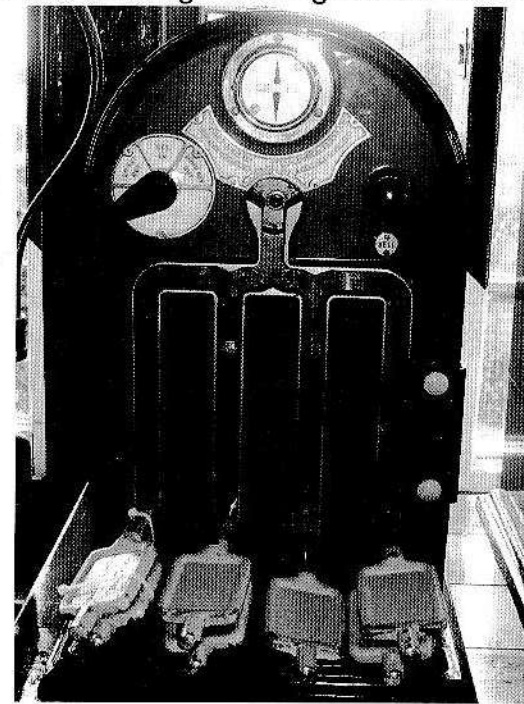
Benjamin Martin was declared bankrupt in January 1782. He died a month later following a suicide attempt. He was one of the first true retailers in the scientific instrument trade. He held an astonishing large and varied stock which raised a £1000 at auction.

(The British Science Festival, organised by the British Science Association is this year centred in Guildford. Hosted by the University of Surrey it runs from 5th to 10th September. For details-www.britishsciencefestival.org)

Railway Key Tokens

Last year I visited a signal box at Bishop Lydeard on the Somerset Railway. Inside was a Key Token instrument marked Tyer & Company Guildford. Since the earliest days of railways people have developed systems aimed at preventing accidents. Edward Tyer was one of those people and he first started working on signaling in 1852. By 1870 Tyer and Company were producing instruments for signal boxes to assist in single line working. The signalman would

remove a piece of metal (a key token) from the instrument, give it to the engine driver who in turn would hand it to the signalman at the other end of the track. He would then fit it into his key token instrument and since the machines were connected together by electric wires, the signalman at the first box now knew the line was clear. Since each machine carried several tokens several trains could follow in the same direction. These instruments were cleverly designed so that when a train was on the single track the spare tokens at both signal boxes were locked and impossible to remove and hence only one train could be in the section.



The Key Token Instrument at Bishops Lydeard Signal Box

Strangely enough I have been unable to find any information relating to the manufacture of these Key Token instruments in Guildford. We believe the firm moved to Guildford from Dalston in about 1959 and was taken over by Adlake at Reading some time in

the 1960s. If you know anyone who worked for the Tyer & Co please put me in touch with them

Matthew Alexander kindly looked through his notes and found that a firm by the name of P.A.M. was taken over by Tyer. and tells us the story. .

P.A.M.Ltd established themselves at the railway sidings at Merrow, just east of Guildford, in the late 1930s. They described themselves as 'engineers', but were very much involved in electronics and (later) television. P.A.M. seem to have been linked with Arthur Groves' electrical store on Guildford High Street, which was one of the first to market television sets in the area. In the early 1950s a firm based in Jeffries Passage, behind the shop, was registered as Aren (Radio & Television) Ltd, with the brand name Nera (which is just 'Aren' backwards). They sold television projectors which were actually made by P.A.M. Unfortunately, television projectors never really took off, and P.A.M. merged with Tyer & Go of Dalston in 1959.

The firm appears in the 1959 directory as "Tyer & Co. Ltd, (formerly P.A.M. Ltd), general & precision engineers, Merrow Sidings, Merrow St." They were gone by 1966.

Matthew Alexander

Appeal for Volunteers

Guildford Museum's summer exhibition for 2009 will be "**A Place of Safety: evacuees in Guildford during the Second World War**". This exhibition will tell the story of evacuees in Guildford, using oral history recordings of peoples' memories, and will also be illustrated with pictures and artifacts of the time. It's a fascinating subject and we've been surprised by the wealth of memories people have contributed to our oral history project.

The Museum is now seeking volunteers to be Visitor Assistants in the exhibition. Our volunteers will welcome visitors to the show, direct them to information, oral history recordings and objects on display, talk to individual visitors who have their own stories and memories of Wartime or evacuation and generally help the public enjoy the exhibition and feel welcome in the Museum.

We are looking for volunteers to help us from mid July to the close of August. The Museum is open from 11 am - 5pm but we are happy be flexible in the hours our volunteers work. Any help would be appreciated in making our visitors feel at home and getting the best from the exhibition! Please let us know if you are able to help by contacting Carol Brown at the Museum reception (01483444751, carol.brown@guildford.gov.uk).



Lewis Carroll was the first to use the word "chortle", in *Through The Looking Glass*, the sequel to "*Alice in Wonderland*". It is a mixture of the words "chuckle" and "snort"

Events at the Museum

July

A FEW OF MY FAVOURITE THINGS EXHIBITION continues until July 4. Open 11am to 5pm Monday to Saturday, admission free.

Summer Festival – The museum will have a stall open on the High street for the duration of the Festival



Sat 18- LIVING MEMORY: WWII EVACUEES EXHIBITION OPENS

During World War II thousands of people, many children, were taken from their homes in London and evacuated to the safety of the country. Many had never been outside the city before. This fascinating exhibition looks at the history and experiences of those who came to the Guildford area.

Sat 18 - Flint Knapping Workshop

Neolithic people, living thousands of years ago, used tools made from flint. A skilled flint knapper could make fine tools that were both useful and beautiful. Come along to our workshops and demonstration to see an expert flint knapper reconstructing these tools and learn how to make your own.

Tickets £5 adults, £4.50 children. Sessions start at 11.30 am, 2pm and 3pm. Contact Museum for more information or to book tickets

Sat 25- Trip to Foxenden Quarry air raid shelter

The trip will involve a talk about the quarry itself before walking up to the quarry for a guided tour and returning to the museum for refreshments and a talk on evacuees in Guildford. Tickets cost £3 adults. Tours will begin on the hour 11am to 3pm. Booking essential.



August

LIVING MEMORY: WWII EVACUEES EXHIBITION continues until October. Open 11am to 5pm Monday to Saturday, admission free.

September

LIVING MEMORY: WWII EVACUEES EXHIBITION continues until October. Open 11am to 5pm Monday to Saturday, admission free.

Sat 26- Surrey in the home front: WWII

A talk by Carol Brown in the museum classroom. Tickets cost £2 per person. Contact the museum to book.

October

Sat 24- Exploring History on your doorstep

How do I find out about my house or village, or Family History?
How do I write a local History? Where do I start?

Come and meet well known local authors between 2pm and 4pm and find out the answers to these and many more questions. The afternoon will include a workshop on how to find and use archives and documents.

This event will take place in Salters Gallery, Castle Street. Tickets £4.50 to include tea and cakes.