



REDBOURN VILLAGE MUSEUM

Friends of the Museum Newsletter

**New Year 2018
Issue 119**

Money! Money! Money!



We were delighted to receive a grant of £700 from Weyman Stores towards the Redbourn House portico project. The photo shows the cheque being presented by Neil Weyman to our curator Maria Maynard with your editor acting as security guard.

Shortly after receiving the cheque from Weymans, we were amazed and delighted to receive a further £350 from the Friends of St. Mary's Church which was half of the Round Table Santa's sleigh street collection in the village. Thank you to the Friends for their great generosity.



Redbourn Through The Centuries

Following last year's very well received talk by Kate Morris on the 1700's we are grateful that she has agreed to return to give a talk on the 1800's which is the focus of this year's Redbourn Through The Centuries project.

The talk is on Saturday 21st April in afternoon at the Parish Centre and there will be further details in the next newsletter including information about how to book your place for what will be another very informative lecture.

Email: RedbournMuseum@gmail.com Website: www.RedbournVillage.org.uk

Sense & Sensibility Film Show - Saturday 2nd December

We had an excellent audience of 53 for the show with some welcome new faces, and very welcome old ones too! Ice creams were served during an interval and mince pies and mulled wine was enjoyed after the film. Since the screening we have received some very nice compliments about the afternoon and hope to show another film probably in December again. Thank you to everyone who supported the event.

Renovations & Re-opening

While I am compiling this newsletter, we have contractors on site at the museum who are replastering the walls in the Occupations Room and the upstairs office/store following the drying out of the walls after the damp remedy. We hope to open on time on February 3rd but may have to delay this slightly if the museum is not in a fit state for visitors.

Parish Maps



Don't forget that we have a new supply of these colourful parish maps for sale at the museum for £5 each.

Redbourn Through Time Books

We are selling some of these popular books by one of our trustees, Geoff Webb, to Ashtons estate agents who are giving them to anyone buying a house featured in the book. This is a useful extra source of income for the museum.

Recycle Your Inkjet Cartridges

We have a large supply of recycling envelopes at the museum for your empty inkjet cartridges. The museum receives £1 for each cartridge the company receive. If you would like to order your own envelopes the website is: recycle4charity.co.uk and the museum's code is D85350

Loose Links With The Village

Many thanks to James Millers for another interesting contribution:

After a recent visit to Palace House, Newmarket which is a sports art centre, horseracing museum and horse retraining centre (a lovely place to go for a visit), on reading the guide book when back at home I noted, "In 1830 that one Thomas Coleman of the Turf Hotel in St. Albans organised the first commercial jump race at Wrest Park in Bedfordshire.

Looking on the internet about Mr Coleman, there's a number of articles. He was the organiser of the St. Albans Grand Steeplechase and the 1834 race was won by the controversial cricketer and hunter, The Rev. Lord Frederick Beauclerk.

On checking some of my old Redbourn books:

- "St. Mary's Church, Redbourn, Two Centuries of Pictures 1786 - 1986" I find him as vicar 1827 - 1850 plus a small portrait.
- "Redbourne Registers 1561 - 1974" by the Redbourn Research and Local History Group. Redbourn has had a cricketing tradition since 1666 and it is appropriate that we should have one of England's greatest cricketers as vicar. Lord Frederick Beauclerk was currently vicar of both St. Michael's, St. Albans and of Redbourn. He was a founder member of Lords Cricket Ground and it is arguable as to whether he or the more famous W.G. Grace was the better cricketer. The registers confirm that "Lord Fred" as he was known, did not spend too much of his time at Redbourn but used curates to run the parish.

If you find any other odd loose links with the village, why not share them with us?

James Millers

Museum A.G.M. - Thursday 1st March
7:00 pm St. Mary's Church Transept

We hope (as usual) to have a fairly swift business meeting which will be followed by a film entitled "The Stephens Ink Story".

Henry Stephens lived with his parents at "The Bull" public house in Redbourn and was the inventor of permanent non-clogging blue black ink. He was at medical school with the poet John Keats in the 1800's which is one aspect of our "Redbourn Through The Centuries" project this year.

Following the A.G.M. refreshments will be served with a chance for all our museum friends, and guests, to mingle and have a chat.

Gordon Beningfield - Wildlife Artist And Broadcaster

Gordon Beningfield who died in 1998, aged 61 found the inspiration for his work in the British countryside and its wildlife. His paintings, especially his watercolours, reveal his meticulous eye for detail. His books have proved to be very popular and include collections of his paintings and sketches together with both prose and poems in praise of traditional landscapes, flowers, butterflies, birds and farm and domestic animals.



Gordon was born in London and, while still a child, moved to Hertfordshire. He attended local schools where his artistic talent was recognised to such an extent that his history teacher allowed him to illustrate his work rather than to write essays! For a fortnight every year, in early autumn, the boys were allowed to help on local farms, picking fruit and lifting potatoes. In later life his drawings and paintings reflected his first-hand experience of the land and traditional mixed farming.

When he left school Gordon became an apprentice at an ecclesiastical art company and he learned to turn his hand to anything associated with church furnishings and decorations. This included sculpting, laying on gold leaf, creating designs for embroidered altar fronts, banners and stained glass windows.

Gordon campaigned effectively for the preservation of the countryside. He was a founder trustee and vice-chairman of the Countryside Restoration Trust and in 1990 he succeeded Sir Peter Scott as president of the British Butterfly Conservation Society. In Redbourn many of us have enjoyed Gordon's illustrated talks when he combined information about his work on conservation with slides of his own artwork. He took a keen interest in the life of Redbourn and was a long standing supporter of St. Mary's Church.

As this year is the 20th anniversary of Gordon's untimely death, Redbourn Museum will be collaborating with Beningfield art collectors, Alistair Lindley and Mark Stephens to put on a series of events around the district in Spring and Summer. The first of these will be "Beningfield's Birds" - a bird walk in the morning on April 14th led by John Fisher. If you are interested, please contact Pauline Ridgwell (01582 626055 or pauline-r@ntlworld.com) to book a place as numbers will be limited.

Over the weekend of June 16—17th, the lovely church of St. John the Baptist, in Great Gaddesden will be the venue for a flower festival with themes related to Gordon Beningfield's interests and Margaret Metcalfe has kindly agreed to make an arrangement on behalf of Redbourn Museum, where we will also have a small exhibition. If you have some of Gordon's work or memories of him to share, we would be very pleased to hear from you.

The main commemorative event will be an art exhibition at the Natural History Museum in Tring on July 7-8th, with original works on show, appropriately at the place where Beningfield spent so much time, adding detail to his wildlife sketches. The exhibition and series of events are being supported by many of the wildlife and conservation charities that Gordon was involved with.

St. Albans Museum & Gallery

An ambitious project is now underway to transform St Albans' landmark Georgian Grade II* Listed Town Hall and Courthouse into a glorious state-of-the-art new museum and art gallery. You may have noticed that the scaffolding has started to come down and the new façade, especially on the Market Place side, is being revealed. The museum is due to open in the spring, with a "soft opening" but the date has not yet been announced.



What will be in the new museum and art gallery?

Museums are moving away from rigid fixed displays that cannot be refreshed. The plan is to create a museum and art gallery that has flexible spaces allowing a programme of changing exhibitions which will encourage repeat visits.

One of the wonderful aspects of the flexibility of the project is the opportunity to house exciting temporary exhibitions, encouraging people to return.

Stakeholder engagement groups and an Advisory Group have already been set up to consider fundraising, business planning, interpretation and collections.

Our curatorial team has been involved in this and it is hoped that there will be some content relating to Redbourn's story which will act as a signpost to bring visitors to our own village museum. Naturally we will also have a presence with our leaflets and books for sale.

The refurbished building will have a 'core story' for St Albans and District, temporary exhibitions derived from a combination of a programme of community and touring displays, education space and a contemporary art gallery.

Visitor facilities will include a reception, Tourist Information Service, shop and a café.

It all sounds very exciting and will be a great asset to St. Albans in a very central location.

Redbourn in Steam

This year's Redbourn in Steam will be held on the late May bank holiday - Monday 28th May. Further details (if you need any after all these years!) will be in the next newsletter.

Once again we are indebted to Sandy Ross and his friends for bringing their steam engines to the museum for this annual treat.

We gratefully acknowledge the generous support received from the following:

Redbourn Parish Council



Changing Views



Halsey (Builders) Ltd

Hertfordshire County Show



Little Revel End Kennels



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ST ALBANS
CHOOSE YOUR STORY

Contact Us

**Redbourn Village Museum
Silk Mill House
The Common
Redbourn
Herts. AL3 7NB**

Patron: Sir Simon Bowes Lyon

**Museum open February to November
Saturday & Sunday 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm**

Last admission 4:30pm

Tel: 01582 793397

Email: redbournmuseum@gmail.com

Visit us on the web at:

www.redbournvillage.org.uk

Museum Trustees:

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