



REDBOURN VILLAGE MUSEUM

Friends of the Museum Newsletter

**Spring 2018
Issue 120**

Membership Renewals

Your membership renewal is due - please. We have made a slight increase in the subscription costs this year which we hope you will find acceptable. Your renewal form will be sent by separate email as we felt renewals were being 'lost' in the electronic copy of the newsletter which may have resulted in a few lapsed valued members. If you have paid extra for a paper copy of the newsletter, your renewal form should be enclosed with your newsletter on a separate sheet of paper. Thank you for your continued support for your museum.

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Apologies from the Editor

Following our successful A.G.M. I returned home and slumped into my comfy armchair only to have a total loss of sight in my left eye. This was found to be due to a completely detached retina which has now been treated by urgent surgery. I'm currently working on one and a half eyes. Please excuse any silly typing errors in this newsletter - I hope to be back to 'normal' for the next newsletter.

Thank you for your kind understanding.

John Ridgwell

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



REDBOURN VILLAGE MUSEUM

Silke Mill House, The Common, Redbourn, Herts. AL3 7NB

Redbourn in the 19th Century *The impact of:* *Vicars, Victories &* *Victoria on village life*

Continuing the story of
"Redbourn through the Centuries" with

Kate Morris

Saturday 21st April at 3 pm
Redbourn Parish Centre

Tickets £7.50 (or £6.50 for Museum Friends)
Tea/Coffee and biscuits included.

Reserve seats by contacting Pauline Ridgwell on
01582 626055 or pauline-r@ntlworld.com

A tribute to Geoff Webb - A Redbourn Commoner

An edited version of an appreciation written by Geoff's son Mark

Late in January, we sadly lost one of our Trustees, Geoff Webb, who was our family history expert, author of several publications on Redbourn and a member of the gardening team.

Geoff will be remembered for being a quietly spoken, kind and modest man, who would always rather listen to what other people had to say than talk about himself. He had a dry sense of humour and was a true gentleman.

Born at the Old Dairy Farm on Redbourn Common, his family had run a milk business from the site since the 1840s. From an early age he was involved in delivering milk on his regular round on a horse drawn cart and after his schooldays in St. Albans, he went into the family business with his brother Ray. The business moved to Harpenden Lane in 1958, when Geoff's father retired and in the early 60's the brothers went into the poultry business.

Geoff was a very good cricketer, playing for Redbourn at the age of 11 and later St. Albans and Hertfordshire. He was selected to play several games for the Club Cricket Conference, including in games against the MCC at Lords.

He was an avid collector of books from a very early age and when he had trouble with his knees in his mid-forties, requiring surgery, he started writing. His first book "A Redbourn Commoner" contains an insight into village life as he grew up and this was followed by further books including books of photographs of the village.

When the idea of a Redbourn Museum came to fruition, Geoff was a leading figure. His family's association with the people of Redbourn helped him when he started to build up a vast collection of photographs of the village and its people. Geoff accumulated an archive, which was first shared with the village at photograph exhibitions, later at the museum and now all of these photographs have been put on-line. The Trustees of the museum are very grateful to Geoff's son Mark, who will continue to look after the photograph archive and has kindly offered to make pictures available to the museum as required.

We will miss Geoff but remember him fondly. When we were packing up, weary after a gardening session, he would always say, "You go, I'll just finish this bit that I have started."

Geoff, front left, enjoying a well-earned break with the rest of the gardening team



Annual General Meeting - Thursday 1st March 2018

Despite the very wintry conditions we had our usual large audience for the meeting. Thank you to all who braved the weather to attend the A.G.M.

The meeting was ably chaired by our curator, Maria Maynard. We quickly covered the reports from the Chairman/Curator, Treasurer Sandra Langstone and Events Committee Chairman Pauline Ridgwell.

We are very lucky to have recruited four excellent new Trustees to bring the number to 13 (Oh dear). Our new Trustees are David Forbes, James Millers, Linda Owen and Roy Woods who offered to fill the vacant post of Deputy Chairman.

Unfortunately, one of our long standing Trustees and current Chairman, Peter 'Podge' Fox did not stand for re-election as a Trustee and John Ridgwell was elected as the new Chairman.

After the business part of the meeting we took time for some refreshments before starting the second session of the evening.

We had intended showing the DVD telling the "Stephens Ink Story" but decided instead to show "Vintage Redbourn" the DVD made by Geoff Webb with over 400 photographs of Redbourn villagers in what was a virtual tour of the village street by street and area by area.

We thought this was a fitting tribute to dear Geoff.

Renovations & Re-opening

The repainting of the two walls in the Occupations Room and the upstairs office is now just complete and we have confirmation that some minor electrical safety work has been carried out allowing us to move all the items from the Skillman Gallery back into the office/store and enabling us to re-open the Skillman Gallery. It will be good to be fully open again!

After long hours of hard work by a band of Trustees, we did open - on time - as planned on Saturday February 2nd, albeit with only the downstairs rooms open.

We thank the Parish Council for their support for the museum, and arranging to have the remedial works carried out.

Our band of hardy voluntary assistants must be 'warmly' thanked as two of the weekends following our opening were very wintry indeed but they still bravely carried on and manned the reception desk as always. "We never close" springs to mind, but sadly that hasn't always been the case.

Thanks also to the co-ordinator of the volunteers, Alan Lindfield who ensures that there are enough names on the rota each month to staff the museum and welcome our visitors.

Gordon Beningfield continued:

Gordon Beningfield was a remarkable man; he was an artist; a conservationist, a countryman and a supporter of the traditional country way of life. He felt passionately about farming, wildlife, landscape and country people. This passion and love showed itself in his paintings and in his numerous best-selling books.

When he died so tragically in 1998, he was busy painting for a new book – *Beningfield's Vanishing Songbirds*. Anxious and angry at the destruction of the British countryside and the birds that depended on it, Gordon was keen to warn of the demise of our best loved birds.

If Gordon had finished the book himself, his friend Robin Page knows that he would have painted far more “vanishing songbirds”. He would have painted the willow warbler, the turtle dove, the swallow, swift and house martin and many more.

The Beningfield's Birds walk that we have organised for 14th April is now fully booked, but we will remember Gordon as we walk the local footpaths and refer to paintings from his last work, “Vanishing Songbirds”.

Robin Page writes:

“I will always remember 4 May 1998. It was the day after my birthday; the sun was warm bringing out the first orange tip butterfly of the year and the apple blossom in my garden was at its peak. On the Countryside Restoration Trust land, a thousand cowslips bloomed, and above, larks sang. There was fusion of scents, sounds and visual beauty; it was the art of nature. Such a day required painting; a painting that was quintessentially English. There was only one man who could have caught the mood to perfection – but tragically that was the day Gordon Beningfield died. A wreath made entirely from cowslips, picked on Lark Rise Farm, was placed on his grave. A song thrush sang – an unfinished painting of a song thrush was the last work of a courageous, gifted and good man. His family, his friends and the countryside still miss him.”

Other Beningfield dates for your diary:

Saturday June 16th and Sunday June 17th – Flower Festival at the village church of St. John the Baptist, Great Gaddesden. There will be a floral display on behalf of the museum courtesy of Margaret Metcalfe and another by the flower arrangers of St. Mary's Church.

Open 10.30 to 4.30 Saturday, 11.45 to 4.30 Sunday. The local Wildlife Trust are leading pond dipping and other activities nearby at the River Gade. Parking available at Wyevale Garden Centre by kind permission.

Saturday July 7th and Sunday July 8th – Beningfield Celebration Exhibition at the Natural History Museum in Tring. Open 10 to 5.30 pm both days.

Hertfordshire Countryside Magazines

Thank you to the Friends that volunteered to look through dozens of back copies of Hertfordshire Countryside for references to Redbourn. The relevant articles and have now been extracted for safe keeping, including several on Gordon Beningfield.

Annual Coach Outing - Tuesday 17th July

“L” is for Leicester and Loughborough



After a 90 minute coach journey from Redbourn, we will visit Leicester as we have unfinished business with King Richard III who was still “in limbo” when we visited Bosworth Battlefield Museum in 2014. His remains are now entombed in Leicester Cathedral and we start there for a short guided tour based on the King Richard III story. Many improvements have been made both inside and outside the cathedral to allow this fascinating story to be told. There are opportunities for coffee and lunch nearby.

Following this we transfer by coach the short distance to Leicester North Station where we enjoy a ride to Loughborough on the restored Great Central Railway. There will be time to look around the station, small museum and possibly the engine sheds before embarking for our return journey by rail as far as Quorn. Here, the station has a 1940's theme and, most importantly, a tea room where we can take refreshments before the coach journey home.

Please note that our trains may be steam or diesel hauled - fingers crossed for steam!

We will be leaving Redbourn around 8.30 am and expect to arrive back in Redbourn around 6.30 pm.

A booking form is attached to this email in addition to your newsletter.

If you receive a paper copy of the newsletter, the booking form should be enclosed.

Please contact John Ridgwell if you have any problems, questions or for further information.

Tel: 01582 626055 Email: John-R@ntlworld.com

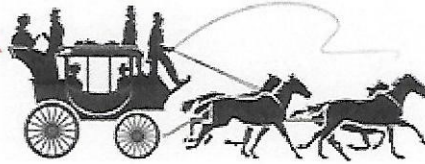
Tickets: £35 Friends of the Museum £37.50 Non-members

Full details regarding timings will be on your booking confirmation. Some timings will be critical as the trains will not wait for us - so be prepared to be punctual at crucial points.

Redbourn Senior Forum

Don't panic! - your museum will be represented too!

SAVE THIS DATE



REDBOURN SENIOR FORUM

Monday 17th September 2018

10.30am – 2.00pm

Where? - Redbourn Parish Centre

Entry Free. All Ages Welcome

20 village organisations & businesses will be there to remind you what help, advice, support and facilities are available within the village.

Includes health, safety, legal, financial, security, recreational & daily living.

Exhibitors include:

Redbourn Parish Council, Police/Neighbourhood Watch, Redbourn Care Group, Fire Brigade, Citizens Advice, Women's Institute, Library, Redbourn in Bloom, U3A, Solicitors, Opticians, Chemist, St. Albans Talking Newspapers, Dance for Seniors, Recreational Centre, Computer Shop, Accountancy, Investments/Annuities, St. Matthews, Trading Standards, Tea Shop

Please come along. There is more help, advice, support and facilities in the village than you think. See what is available for you, your friend, relative, carer or neighbour.

Refreshments available too.

Remembrance Sunday 2018

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the end of World War 1.

The 11th day of the 11th month falls on a Sunday - Remembrance Sunday.

The Parish Council have generously allowed the museum to have the use of the Parish Centre at no cost, to mount an exhibition similar - but larger - than the one we staged in 2014.

We are extremely grateful that Gareth Hughes has agreed to be involved with the staging of the exhibition as his wealth of information and knowledge will be invaluable in making the event a success.

As in 2014, we are appealing for villagers to come forward with artefacts, memories, items of interest and stories to share which can be incorporated into the exhibition. We will take great care of any treasured items which are loaned to the museum for the event.

It's early days, but we need to start planning for this important date.

All enquiries and offers of help or loan of items etc. to:

John Ridgwell, Email: John-R@ntlworld.com Tel: 01582 626055

Thank you.

Redbourn in Steam

This year's event is on BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY - 28th May

Our annual gathering of steam engines organised by Sandy Ross and his friends is in its 16th year and should be a great success.

We are also delighted that the St Albans Model Engineering Society are also able to be in attendance with their fascinating models and train rides for children and adults alike.



Admission prices remain at:

£2 Adults

£1 Children and Friends of the
Museum

Event kindly sponsored by:

TRING
BREWERY Co.

JOHN KEATS IN REDBOURN

On Saturday 23 June, as part of our Redbourn through the Centuries project, and in celebration of the 1800s, we will welcome Nicholas Roe, Professor of English Literature at the University of St Andrews, Chair of the Keats Foundation, and author of the 2012 biography *John Keats: a new life*, to speak on the poet's life and work. This event will take place exactly 200 years and one day after Keats visited his friends the Stephens family here, while en route for Liverpool with his emigrating brother and sister-in-law.

The talk will take place in the Parish Centre, starting at 2.30pm, and will be followed by tea and cake. Tickets are available from Arrangements in the High Street, the Museum during opening hours, and from myself (tel. 01582 626495) at £8 (£7 for Museum Friends). Early booking is advised.

To round off the day we propose to have a poetry reading session in the Museum garden. While not straying from the 1800s, we will broaden our scope to include other poets, and maybe consume 'a beaker full of the warm south ... with beaded bubbles winking at the brim'. Further details to follow.

And for those of you with your own poetic muse, Redbourn Village Museum will be running a Poetry Writing Competition, with two categories, one for under-11s and one for everyone else. Try your hand at a Keatsian sonnet! Or equally, follow in Keats' footsteps with some nonsense verses to amuse! Again, look out for further details. But get writing now!

Isobel Cranmer

From The Herts Advertiser - Friday 7th March 1941

Redbourn Fire Brigade:

It was reported that a serious position had arisen at Redbourn because the second-hand Thorneycroft engine stationed there had broken down and was beyond repair. The members of the brigade had stated that, if it was a question of a new fire station or new engine for the village, they would prefer a new engine and no station.

The Chief Fire Officer reported that, when the second-hand machine was stationed at Redbourn in 1939, the members of the Brigade were promised a new machine after twelve months.

The council agreed that the promise should be fulfilled, and instructed the Chief Officer to obtain estimates for a new engine and pump to be stationed at Redbourn.

The Chief Officer said that the Luton Borough Council had very kindly lent the Rural Council a large trailer pump, which would be stationed at Redbourn until the new engine arrived.

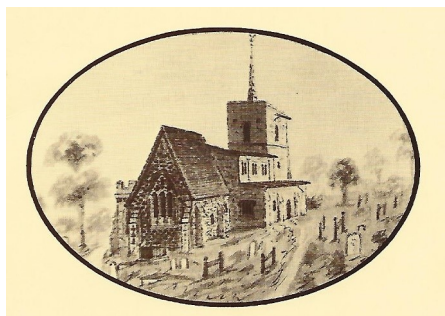
The Chief Officer reported that a letter had been received to the effect that the delivery of the waterproof coats for the Brigade - a matter on which representations had been made to the Home Office - would be effected within fourteen days.

Thanks to James Millers for submitting this article.

Loose Links With The Village

After a recent visit to Palace House in Newmarket (It's a sports arts centre, horseracing museum and horse retraining centre) on reading the guide book I noted that in 1830 that one Thomas Coleman of the Turf Hotel in St Albans, organised the first commercial jump race at Wrest Park in Bedfordshire. So, looking on the internet for Mr Coleman, there are 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 in some of my old Redbourn books:

- A. "St. Mary's Church Redbourn, Two Centuries of Pictures 1786 - 1986" (Alan Featherstone)
I find him as vicar 1827 - 1850.



Left:

St. Mary's Church in
1786 drawn by
Thomas Baskerfield



*Lord Frederick
Beauclerk 1827-50*

- A. "Redbourne Registers 1561 - 1974" (Redbourn Research & Local History Group) Redbourn has had a cricketing tradition since 1666 and it is thus appropriate that we should have had 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 much time at Redbourn but used curates to run the parish.

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

James Millers

Open Gardens 2018 & "Redbourn Affordable Art Fair"

Redbourn in Bloom Open Gardens is being held on Saturday 16th June and Sunday 17th June 11 am - 5 pm. The museum garden will be open on both days and we will be selling programmes for the event as usual.

This year we are hoping to serve refreshments provided we can recruit enough volunteers! If you think you might be able to help for a couple of hours or so on either or both days, please contact Pauline Ridgwell Tel: 01582 626055 or Email: Pauline-R@ntlworld.com

Come and see the portico! We are actively raising funds to have the masonry re-erected as an impressive feature in the museum garden.

The Redbourn Affordable Art Fair will be an added attraction at the museum during Open Gardens weekend. This is being organised by Linda Owen, a talented artist and one of our new Trustees who is already throwing herself into fundraising activities for us. Local artists have been invited to bring original work, mostly unframed and on sale for £50 and under. Admission is free, so please come and see the art work on display.

Redbourn House Portico Update

Redbourn Parish Council has now given landlord's permission for the erection of the Redbourn House Portico in the Museum garden and an application is to be made to St Albans District Council for Planning Permission.

To keep our costs down we are endeavouring to use local skills where possible and to this end a band of willing volunteers met recently to lay out the portico stones in the museum car park (see photograph). Ken Hart, a retired structural engineer, has kindly agreed to draw up the calculations thus ensuring the portico is erected to the relevant standards and Austin Trueman, a business friend, has agreed to add his professional indemnity to the project.

Funding for the project is going very well nearly £6,000 has been raised towards the current budget of £10,000. A village wide leaflet drop will soon be circulated informing everyone of this exciting project and seeking donations towards the scheme. An application is to be made for a Co-op grant. Diane Whiskin is holding "Dine with Di" nights at £25 per head – to include a glass of Prosecco, a three course meal with Bring Your Own wine. The meals will be for ten people – the first dinner is full and the second is almost full. If Diane can manage to arrange four dinners that should boost the coffers by another £1,000. If you are interested in perhaps attending one give Diane a ring on 01582 792846. A bottle stall is to be held at the Steam Day and donations of bottles would be very welcome.

These can either be left at the Museum or delivered to Diane at 42 Crown Street.

It has now been agreed that the portico should be erected at the far end of the garden, leaving the garden space open for events. Two very imposing busts that were in the Redbourn House garden (currently on display in the Museum) together with a piece of statuary which was delivered to Redbourn with the portico stones, (an unexpected bonus!), will be placed in the garden, beyond the portico, forming a little "grotto" entered through the portico. The aim is to have the portico erected towards the end of this year and the project completed by 2019/20 in time for the 20th anniversary of Redbourn Museum.



From the Herts Advertiser - Friday 7th March 1941

A musical treat was provided for refugees and English visitors at the Czech Occupational Settlement at Redbourn House on Sunday. Miss Marea Hlounova, violinist and member of the Czech Trio, played solos by Dvorak, Beethoven and Bloch, and two special numbers - an Adagio by Bach and an improvisation by Bloch. A well known Viennese actor also gave recitations by Karl Krause and Kisch Rosegger.

I guess they entered Redbourn House through the portico. Thanks again to James Millers for this article. Ed.

We gratefully acknowledge the generous support received from the following:

Redbourn Parish Council



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Changing Views



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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:

John Ridgwell:	Chairman
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Pauline Allcroft:	Secretary
Maria Maynard:	Curator
Diane Whiskin:	Assistant Curator
Sandra Langstone:	Treasurer
David Mitchell:	Parish Council Liaison
Alan Lindfield:	Exhibits Display Advisor
James Millers:	Local & Family Historian
Susan Aldridge:	Procurement Officer
David Forbes:	Legal Advisor
Linda Owen:	Design & Marketing
Pauline Ridgwell:	Minutes Secretary Events Committee Chair

John Ridgwell:	Membership Secretary Newsletter Editor
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