

Woodbridge Museum 2018-19
What's the Museum Doing This Month?

Talks will be in the Woodbridge Community Hall 2-30 – 4pm
£3 Friends £4 Visitors

June Tuesday	4 th	<u>Visit</u> to Martlesham Heath Aviation Society Control Tower. Tickets are still available at £3.
July Thursday	4 th	<u>Visit</u> to Kenwood House, English Heritage To include a Kenwood Highlights Guided Tour Tickets are still available at £28.
September	TBC	Woodbridge Walk. Route not yet chosen but a different one from previous ones.

The Friends Committee

Chairman	Anne Merrett
Treasurer	Bob Merrett
Minutes Secretary	Liz Wright
Management Representative	Brian Higgs
Committee Members	Una Mitchell Hazel Richards

FRIENDS OF WOODBRIDGE MUSEUM

Spring Newsletter
May 2019



Chairman's News

Dear Friends,

The new Museum opened on time, and within budget, and we are absolutely delighted. At the time of writing this newsletter, mid May, we have had over 1300 adult visitors which is more than 100 more for the whole of 2017, the last year in the old Museum. We definitely made the right decision to move to the Riverside. Comments from most of the visitors have been extremely complimentary and so all Bob's hard work has been well worthwhile.

Not that work has stopped as we are now focussed on getting the upstairs finished. Benches for computers have to be put in, the computers themselves installed and we need a projector and screen. The curatorial team are sorting out pictures to be hung and the toy area is gradually taking shape. There will be a lot to see when we can welcome visitors to the upper room.

The Friends continue to be a great help. At present we have one stalwart painting the cloakroom and another building a cupboard in there. Long mirrors have been donated and we are still hoping that someone will offer a small one to go over the basin. A curtain has been made to screen off the galley and a lot of crockery has also been donated. We will be having an event to welcome new Friends during the summer when it will be used. All this and more, because the display boards, tilting tables and the till were purchased out of money raised by the Friends. We now have plans to buy more chairs for the upstairs so that we can stage events and these will also be bought from Friends' money. So many people were so generous with the extra

donations sent in with their subs that we have been able to put more in place than we had originally expected.

Friends are also making it possible for the Museum to open at all by acting as Stewards. It is not proving hard to fill the monthly roster but as the summer approaches we do need more volunteers. Most days we only have one steward on duty but this is tricky when we get busy. Today 13 visitors from part of an unexpected coach party arrived, which was wonderful, but a second person would have made welcoming them easier. If you would like to know more about stewarding contact me, come down and talk to the steward on duty or try out a session and then think about joining us. Sessions are 10-1 and 1-4 daily.

Our summer visits will start soon and we still have a few places on each of them. On Tuesday **June 4th** we are going to **Martlesham Heath Aviation Society Control Tower** and on Thursday **July 4th** to **Kenwood House** for a Kenwood Highlights Guided Tour. There will also be a **walk** round a different part of Woodbridge in **September**. (Route, date and time to be confirmed.)

Our next **Day School** is on **Saturday October 19th 2019**, when Dr Andrew Lacey will be talking on the topic: *Pack Up Your Troubles: Britain at War 1914-18*. The cost for the day is still only £25. Contact me if you would like to know more.

Thank you to everyone who has already sent in their **membership renewal**. We are a few short and if you find a coloured sheet in with this newsletter you are one of those who has not yet responded. If you no longer wish to be a member thank you for all your support in the past and, if we do not hear from you, we will take you off our list so you will not be bothered again. It would help, however, if you could give us a ring so we can be sure that we have got it right.

Anne Merrett (385572) Chairman of Friends.

From the Museum

The new Museum has been open for 41 days and during that period there have more visitors than there were to the old Museum in the whole of 2017. The average number of visitors per day has been 37. This is four times greater than the figure for 2017. Donations and sales are also significantly greater than before the Museum moved. The comments in the Visitors' Book have all been complimentary and when talking to people it is clear that they have enjoyed their visit.

The displays tell the story of how Woodbridge has evolved and, wherever possible, the story is linked to objects in the collection. Where such objects are not available, drawings, maps and photographs are used instead. People who know something about the subject often skim read the text. Those who know nothing have a choice of whether to read the text or to skip it and move to something which interests them more. There will always some people who want objects to be the main attraction, and for the associated text to be kept to a minimum, but just a glance at the displays, by a new visitor from the Visitor Centre, is enough to show they are not completely objects based and that the Museum may not satisfy their needs.

A new steward told me recently that the displays 'are wonderful – they are so interesting and clear'. She had watched and monitored the visitors. They stayed on average for 30 to 40 minutes and many said they would be back to read more. They treated the displays as "pick and mix". They either read the headline, the bits that interested them or the full article. It's the same as what happens when people read a newspaper. A few others, however, have said there are too many words and not enough objects so we are putting out more artefacts as the displays develop. We would like to know your views on the subject.

Bob Merrett (385572)
Manager of the Relocation and Transformation Project.