



Museum Musings

Newsletter of Sleaford Museum Trust

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www.sleafordmuseum.org.uk

Hello Friends! Welcome to our eleventh Newsletter. July has been an eventful month for the Trust, we had a tabletop display of some of our artefacts at the Cogglesford Mill History Day. There is a report on this in the newsletter. We were also able to attend the Heckington Show and had a display in the Heritage Marquee, again, there is a report in this newsletter. We are very grateful to Wendy Atkin, Brian Kay and Valerie Keal for manning these events for us, we would really welcome more volunteers for this sort of thing, so that people could do a couple of hours rather than a whole day. We also need a few more people who would be willing to help with the refreshments at the talks - you don't have to be a committee member for that. Everything is provided, you would only have to get 2 pints of milk on the day. Please get in touch with me (Sue Titmuss) if you are willing to help.

Events to look forward to are:

Thursday 3rd September - an illustrated talk by Kath Holland on the St Katherine's Project, Lincoln, at 7.30 pm in St Denys Church Room. It is always interesting to find out how other groups get funding etc. and this is a fantastic project.

Saturday 3rd October, - We will have our Farmers Market Coffee Morning and Exhibition from 10 am to 12 noon, also in St Denys Rooms.

Thursday 5th November, we will have an illustrated talk by Andrew Jackson on "Continuity and Change in Village

Sleaford Museum Trust was fortunate to be invited to have an exhibition stall at the History Day at Cogglesford Mill on 12 July 2009. Dr Wendy Atkin, our Curator, led a small team of volunteers and organised a display of some of our artefacts from the museum collection. Among the most popular were the Butlers sales/accounts ledger going back to 1911, a Victorian/Edwardian dog cart and a Magneto/Electric Health Machine originally from Rauceby Hospital. The Trust was fortunate to have a prime position on the Ground Floor near the entrance; thus most visitors took the opportunity to visit the exhibition and many collected one of our latest information leaflets. The day was considered most successful and some 120 visitors attended the Mill at some point during the day. While the team was at the Mill, they were also offered the opportunity to have a similar exhibition at the Heckington Show, which they readily accepted. (The stall and team have been preserved for posterity as their picture appeared in the Sleaford Standard: 22 July 2009 – page 22).

Thanks go to Brian Kay for this report.

THE 142nd HECKINGTON SHOW, 25th and 26th JULY 2009

Sleaford Museum Trust assembled an exhibition for a stall at the Heckington Show in the Heritage Tent. Valerie Keal, committee member, co-ordinated a small team of eager volunteers to staff the stall over the two days, to maintain the artefacts and to answer queries and receive comments from visitors. Once again the Butlers Ledger seemed to excite the most interest, along with the electric health machine (from Rauceby Hospital) and many former nurses had a nostalgic appreciation of the inhaling pots. The weather held well until the closing hour on Sunday and the stall gained considerable interest (the Show regularly attracts in excess of 20,000 visitors over the two days).

Some 168 visitors took a copy of our new information leaflet and our Future Attractions leaflets were also well received. About twenty young people had a go at our Quiz and one young lady managed a 100% score. Many young people also took a copy of our questionnaire designed to elicit the level of interest in history and archaeology among the under 18 year olds (membership of the SMT is free to this age group). Our stall was opposite the very popular archaeological dig experience for the younger visitor, organised by Heritage Lincolnshire, and many of their customers took the opportunity to visit our free sweet bowl and look at the artefacts. Seven thirsty dogs also availed themselves of our Under Table Fresh Water Service (that is until a particularly enthusiastic Newfoundland scooped the lot!)

Many old friends and supporters visited the stall and offered us their best wishes and Valerie was also able to introduce many new friends and supporters to the Trust.

The exhibition was deemed to be very successful and we are most grateful to the show organisers for this terrific opportunity (of course the major success will be the number of new members we have recruited through the exhibition).



Thanks go to Brian Kay for this article.

The Committee recently met at our new storage site, Scotts Storage, at Bracebridge and Dr Wendy Atkin showed us around. We were there to choose items for display at the Cogglesford Mill History Day and it was fascinating to see the wide variety of items that the Trust holds there. There were paper documents, private and commercial, including catalogues, ledgers, back copies of magazines and papers, toys, clothes, domestic and farming implements, signs, and lots more. The Trust is most grateful to Scotts Storage for providing us with this wonderful facility, free of charge.

This item submitted by Sue Titmuss

ANNUAL JOINT SIXTH FORM PRIZE – “CLASSICAL CIVILISATIONS”

The Committee has learned of a new A-Level course on “Classical Civilisation” and has decided to give an annual joint sixth form prize of £25 in book tokens. Guy DelaBedoyere will be the tutor for the course and will decide on the most deserving student who will receive the prize. In view of our charitable trust status, the Committee discussed this matter extensively and took advice. Our Constitution gives us a clear mandate to involve young people and although it makes no specific mention of archaeology, archaeology is a tool of history and heritage and our collection, as with other local history collections, contains archaeological and geological material. The prize will be paid for from our income from events, talks, refreshments, raffles etc. and will not involve any income from grants.

LIFE MEMBERS

Sincere apologies to all Life Members for the typing error on your membership cards, which seemed to imply that you would only enjoy membership until 2010!! New cards are being issued to you.

FROM SLEAFORD TO SYRACUSE

Readers of Jonathan Smith's article in newsletter 7 might be interested to learn of the US reception given to Lee and Green's New World venture. On the 13th April 1900, the Syracuse Journal headed its report: "Under Two Flags: Syracuse Receives Her English Cousins And Starts A New Concern".

It goes on: 'Syracusans are to be treated to a new beverage which is of local decoction, and is made from both home and foreign products. Although it has been known to some who have had the important article, it will now be put on the market from the local branch located at 113 Raynor Avenue. The beverage in question is the world famous brewed ginger beer manufactured by Messrs Lee and Green, who have factories at Bourne, Sleaford, Spalding and Skegness, England. The foundation of the beer is the famous Sleaford water, which has poured forth in undiminished volume for centuries from the boiling spring at that place, and which has been increased in output by artesian wells, and the purity of whose waters is appreciated by all, and attested to by the best medical and expert authority of England. Although the firm manufacture many brands of aerated waters, such as seltzer, lithia, potass, etc, they are willing to stake all on the excellence of their brewed ginger beer, and stand or fall by it.'

The report proceeds (in the custom of the time) to enlist expert medical opinion on the health benefits of this famous beverage. It also suggests that the proprietors had been assiduous in their planning of the new undertaking. 'Negotiations have been pending for some time regarding the advisability of starting a branch in this city, and the ground has been thoroughly gone over. One of the chief factors in deciding Messrs Lee and Green to locate here is the honey supply. The clover fields about here are productive of the most fertile growth, and the honey made from this clover is of a superior quality to that of the home fields in England...From its pure ingredients and natural method of fermentation, it may be drunk with impunity. The beer is put up in neat stone jugs, and is altogether a most excellent article, comprising both a necessity and a luxury, the latter at a very moderate cost.' The article makes no mention of the Erie Canal, but it is possible that this waterway, connecting the Hudson River and Lake Erie, was also a factor in the choice of location.

At the risk of putting two and two together and getting XX11, does this Syracuse venture throw any light on our museum's Lee and Green vessel, which is not a 'neat stone jug' but a bottle in the style of a Roman amphora? It may be of course that this otherwise puzzling bottle was designed to stand on a special base. But what it was clearly not designed for was conventional shelf storage alongside the familiar stone bottles. Was this a publicity exercise, a marketing homage to the Graeco-Roman origins of the European Syracuse? A trawl through the Gazette or the almanacs should produce an answer. Early ginger beer bottles are now pricey collector's items, but SMT's curio, at present on display in Navigation House, may well be unique.

Thanks to Steve Woods for this article

NEW LEAFLET

A copy of our new leaflet, (hot off the press!) is enclosed, together with a joining slip, which will accompany the leaflet: The Committee have agreed that we will not increase the fees this year, so they remain as £12 individual, £18 household and £24 corporate. These figures are easily divisible by 12 (months) and enable us to offer membership pro rata during the year, depending on the number of months left e.g. if you join in July, you will only pay £10, £15 or £20. **Under-18 have free membership.** Your membership enables you to have free entry to meetings and to receive the bi-monthly newsletter, and also contributes to the development and conservation of the Trust's collection of artefacts.

We need contributions for future issues of the newsletter, e.g. museum reviews if you have visited somewhere, articles, puzzles, pictures, postcards or information about local events or places of interest. Our virtual museum is online at www.sleafordmuseum.org.uk and is constantly being updated and improved by our Webmaster. Sue Titmuss, Secretary, 01526 833964, 07949 116564, sootit@btinternet.com welcomes all enquiries.