

## FRIENDS OF ATHELSTAN MUSEUM Newsletter Winter 2018



### MORAVIAN CHURCH PROJECT



Dear Friends

Many museums shut down during the winter months, looking a bit sad and empty. Athelstan Museum is fortunate in being able to remain vibrant and open for all but a couple of weeks each year thanks to our growing number of volunteers, led by Bridget Robison. With the Moravian Church project now in full flow, we shall be looking for more help. I am sure you will join me in thanking every Athelstan volunteer for keeping us open this winter. We are planning events for the next two years and would like to hear from you.

What kind of talks, exhibitions, events and visits would you like to see in our wonderful new space when it is open? This is your museum, please tell us.

Sharon Nolan  
Chair Athelstan Museum  
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This is going well - exciting times! We have awarded the contract to Andy Nurden after stiff competition and we were very pleased to be able to give it to a local firm knowing he will do a good job. They have started work; the church has been cleared, the studwork has gone up and now they begin on the floor.





The lovely stained glass windows on the road side have been carefully removed and are being restored by a local craftsman M Vincent, based at Grittleton. When these windows are finished and replaced the other three will be removed and he will be able to start work on them.

Most of the project details have been finalised and we think the final effect will be stunning - let's hope you will all think the same! Naturally we will have an official opening and we are starting to make plans for that. We may need two or three events because, although the hall is spacious, so many people have generously supported us it will not be possible to cram everyone in together. And then, of course, we will have an open day and invite Malmesbury in. Watch this space.



## ORGANISATIONAL CHANGES

### Treasurer

Ruth Ritchie, our treasurer has retired after a valiant spell. As the museum grows so do the demands and she had the additional burden of processing all the donations from the Moravian Church. She has earned her retirement - thank you very much, Ruth.

Chas Gould stepped into the breach as temporary replacement and very gallant too as he has quite enough to do as project manager for the Moravian Church. Thank you Chas for your hard work.

Mark Odlum is the new treasurer. He was involved in Crosslink so coping with our finances should be child's play.

### Events

Sarah Baillie is going to be in charge of our programming; this will become ever more important as we take advantage of the Moravian church. She will co-ordinate events and ensure there is always something to look forward to, and also, importantly, something for everyone. Some of you will remember Sarah - she used to work at The George Veterinary Hospital and more recently has spent time at Bristol

University sorting out the veterinary school so she brings a lot of experience with her.

### **Collection**

Maria Marsh has been looking after the entire collection for which we are very grateful - thank you, Maria. This has become too big a job for one person to manage so Council has split it into separate roles. Maria will continue to lead the Roman Hoard project where she has done such excellent work.

Deborah Clogg with the aid of the Collection Team has provisionally taken over the management of collections and exhibitions, and the supervision of the transfer to the new climate-controlled store in the Moravian Church.

Obviously there will be overlap between these groups and Council hopes that by spreading the burden the Museum will benefit.

## **RECENT EVENTS**

### **Quiz night**

Another very successful evening much enjoyed by all present. We raised in the region of £800 which included a raffle. This is now an annual event and much anticipated - look out for the date next year.

### **Family days at half term**

Our children enjoyed making Roman mosaics using paper tessera and trying their hand at lacemaking. This is an activity we return to again and again because it continues to draw children in; many come back to finish their piece if they've not been able to do so on the day. These days are free, although donations are welcome, and we do ask that there is an adult accompanying the children - you will be allowed to join in! Look out for future

events during school holidays - a great way to share your Museum with children and grandchildren.

## **FORTHCOMING EVENT**

### **Jane Austen and Chawton**

### **Expert talk with music and readings**

### **Friday 9 March at 7.30 - Town Hall**

Richard Knight is an expert on Jane Austen. He has a personal link with Chawton House where Jane did much of her writing. His talk will be illustrated with readings by Jackie Tong and music by Helen Coombs.

Tickets are available at the museum to include a glass of wine. Bring your friends!

## **EXHIBITIONS**

### **Hankerton**

The Hankerton History Society has just finished a very effective exhibition on Hankerton village. We were very pleased to host this. Over the years we have featured several local villages and would be delighted to do more.

### **Wiltshire at War**

This has replaced the Hankerton exhibition. It is the third in a series put on by the Wiltshire Museum Service with input from museums around Wiltshire, not least from Malmesbury. This one is called 'A Child's War' and concentrates on the effect it had on children. The toll on our soldiers was great and naturally the focus has been on the dreadful casualties at the front. But there were repercussions at home which this intriguing exhibition highlights.

### **Roman Coin Hoard**

Work continues - conserving, cataloguing and photographing each coin is painstaking and time consuming, but we are getting

there. They will be on display as soon as possible.

**Acquisitions**

The Museum has bought an assorted collection of old Malmesbury prints and memorabilia which the collection team is busy sorting out. We think our collection will be more comprehensive as a result. Some of the material may be duplicates which will be disposed of. We are always looking to add to the collection.

**EVENTS - LAST YEAR**

**Late Night Shopping**



*Roger Griffin*

Busy, sociable and successful; we do sell some of our goods but it is really about building goodwill and reminding the town we are here. And it works: we think we had more people than ever before; donations

covered the cost of refreshing the weary shoppers; we sold a lot of Raffle tickets for the huge hamper - and everyone enjoyed it!

**Museum Shop Day**

This National Event was held as an experiment before Christmas and we were very pleased with the result and will repeat the event this year. Lots of you came and we sold quite a bit of merchandise, which all helps to keep our finances the right colour! It's worth remembering that we do have an increasing range of things: they are not expensive and make slightly out of the ordinary gifts; and most being small, are easy to post!



*Sue Wilson*

**FOAM CONTACTS**

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