



Calendar of Events 2011

'Special' Friends Events in Bold

MAY

Tuesday 17 Evening Talk 7 for 7.30pm
by Mark Bevan: Salt, Slavery and Cheshire.

Friday 20 Launch of Special Exhibition:
'Transported – The Allure of Vehicles'
With Coffee Shop Exhibition. 7 for 7.30pm

Wednesday 25 Tea and Talk
The LMS-Patriot Project by Richard Sant.

Thursday 26 Film Night
'Made in Dagenham'

JUNE

Wednesday 8 Friends' Visit
Visit to the Blackden Trust. 2pm £6.50p

Tuesday 14 Evening Talk 7 for 7.30pm
by Tony Bostock: Mapping the Past.

Wednesday 22 Reserved date
Visit to the Blackden Trust. 2pm. £6.50p

Wednesday 29 Tea and Talk:
Motorbike Memories by Bill Murray.

Thursday 30 Film Night
'The King's Speech'.

JULY

Tuesday 12 Friends' Visit.
Visit to Norton Priory 2pm £5.50p

Thursday 28 Film Night
'Black Swan'

AUGUST

Children's Holiday Activities.

SEPTEMBER

Tuesday 13 Evening Talk 7 for 7.30pm
By Janet Bradshaw: Nine Lives at Tatton.

Thursday 29 Launch of Special exhibition:
'The Curious World of Professor Josiah
Mace'. 7 for 7.30pm

LIFE IN A MARKET TOWN.

Have you visited the new gallery yet?



The Friends have paid for one of the television screens in the new gallery and made a contribution to the cost of a specially commissioned artwork in the workhouse exhibit.

The focus of the gallery is Northwich in the last 100-200 years, our own local history. There is a wealth of fascinating facts and features. The gallery shows the unique way in which the buildings of Northwich are built. There are articles, photographs, artefacts and local evidence of Keeping the Peace, World War II, the Great Flood, Redevelopment and Stabilising the Ground and much, much more. Have you seen the commemorative spade? What about the chemist's shop? Do go and look.

Diana Bernice Tackley, wife of one of our Friends, otherwise known as Bernice Barrett-Brown, standing in front of her specially commissioned



painting of the workhouse boys' dormitory, in which it is now hung as part of the workhouse display in the new gallery. (You may already have seen Bernice's magnificent mural at the Anderton Boat Lift.)



Join Us - A VISIT to the BLACKDEN TRUST with the FRIENDS

The Blackden Trust was set up to protect two medieval buildings and their surrounding historic landscape. Former farmhouse Toad Hall is the home of author Alan Garner and his wife, Griselda. Finding they needed more space, they bought a semi-derelict Tudor building in Wrinehall sixteen miles away, moved it piece by piece and then rebuilt it on their site. This is now known as the Old Medicine House. The surrounding landscape, sitting below Jodrell Bank, has been the inspiration for many of Alan Garner's books.



Blackden, Holmes Chapel, CW4 8BY.

www.theblackdentrust.org.uk

The Blackden Trust is quite difficult to find - please ask someone who has been before - yes - it is down that unmade road and farm track!

Betty Knight has organised a guided tour, followed by tea and cakes for us. It will take place on **Wednesday 8th June at 2pm**. The cost is £6.50p each with cheques made payable to the Friends of Weaver Hall Museum. There is a provisional second booking on Wednesday 22 June if the first visit becomes full. Please contact Betty Knight to reserve a place.

Join Us - A VISIT to NORTON PRIORY with the FRIENDS.



Tuesday 12th July at 2pm. Cost is £5.50p per person.

Betty Knight has organised a guided tour of the Priory and the Walled gardens for the Friends. The tour will start at one site, followed by half an hour's break and then a tour of the second site. The half-hour's break allows time for a tour of the gift shop, a drink in the café (you to pay), or a sit in the sun (hopefully). There is no limit on places, as Norton Priory will put on more guides. www.nortonpriory.org
Norton Priory, Tudor Road, Manor Park, Runcorn, WA7 1SX.
Please contact Betty Knight to reserve a place.

THE MOST RECENT ACTIVITIES of the FRIENDS.

Nigel Dibben from the Derbyshire Caving Club gave us a superbly informed and illustrated talk about the history of the copper mining in Alderley Edge. He gave us an insight as to how the copper was mined and the tools used. He used his family history skills to follow the progress of some of the workers. In the photograph Nigel is showing a map of the area with all the mining evidence marked. It is clear the sandstone of Alderley Edge is a honeycomb of tunnels! Inspired by this talk several of us visited the mines and had a guided tour to see for ourselves all the features that Nigel had spoken about.



Report on the Visit to Alderley Edge Mines.

What an exciting night this was! The group met on the car park near to the Wizard pub, and walked across the road to the storeroom to be kitted out with helmets with lamps on the front, and batteries fastened around our waists. We then set off through the dark woods, with only our lamps to help us see the ground, following the three cavers who were guiding us. As I looked back, all I could see were the lights on the other helmets, bobbing up and down as we descended the hill. At the same time there were owls hooting, very atmospheric, even magical. Then we were given a real shock - we stopped by a metal manhole cover. The first caver lifted the lid, and we saw a ladder reaching down into the depths. How the cavers laughed when they saw us all recoiling in fright.



Betty 'all geared up'

Fortunately this entrance was only for one of the guides, who went down into the depths and walked along to open a proper door for the rest of us, and we entered into the system of passages underground. We went up and down slopes, clambered backward down some rock steps with only a chain to hang onto, went crabwise under overhanging rocks, and scrambled on our hands and knees. Great fun, but it was lucky we had our helmets on as we were constantly banging our heads.

Our guide made frequent stops to point out the features in the rocks showing where, millions of years ago, there had been earthquakes, floods, mudslides, glaciation, and riverbeds, and even some fossils. We saw various minerals, and rock formations, and the colours were striking. We were told about working conditions in the mines, the techniques of extracting ores, the funding and formation of the employers, the tonnage of the materials taken out, and disposal of waste. In fact, a thorough history. It was an excellent excursion and thank you to Jenny for organising it, and the members of the Derbyshire Caving Club for escorting us through. **Report by Betty Knight.**

Report on the Visit to the Lion Salt Works.

On Sunday March 27th, thirty Friends of Weaver Hall Museum went on a trip to Marston, where we were able to see the work in progress on site of this historic restoration. Although there is much work still to be done, it is possible to visualise its development as a heritage visitor attraction, telling the stories associated with salt, and putting Northwich on the tourist map as a 'wich' town. When completed, it will be possible to see how the salt works operated, and the impact of salt on Cheshire's people, economy and landscape.



THE MOST RECENT ACTIVITIES of the FRIENDS..... Continued

Visit to the Lion Salt Works continued

We saw a film of the Works before its closure in 1986, and the offices where the Thompson family established the Company in 1894. Many artefacts remain, and its sense of 'human occupation' is tangible. Donning safety helmets, we ventured into the works and clambered through the still rather dilapidated building. Outside some landscaping has begun, which will eventually include a themed play provision, as well as an imaginative learning programme and evolving calendar of events to take place in the Heritage Centre. Thanks to Betty for organising the trip, Colin Edmondson for his fascinating talk, John Hunt who kindly provided us with the film and refreshments, and not forgetting our very popular curator, Matt Wheeler. This was a very enjoyable afternoon. **Report by Angela Jones.**

The Rich Viking.



Ian Uzzell, otherwise known as the 'Rich Viking' who has appeared on the television programme 'Time Team' gave us a superb talk about the lifestyle and culture of the Vikings, when they were living in a settled community. Ian spoke exceedingly well, knowledgeably and with total conviction. He is an expert who has had replicas made of actual, well known artefacts, in order to illustrate his talk. It was a treat to look at, and be able to handle all these replicas.



Saying Goodbye to Matt.



Matt Wheeler, the Curator, has left the Museum service of CWAC to move to a new position in Eire, where he becomes the Curator and Manager of The Irish Agricultural Museum in County Wexford. www.irishagrimuseum.ie Matt has been our Curator in Northwich for six years. In that time he has made his mark. Visitor numbers to the museum have increased considerably and the museum has become a vibrant place to visit with its evening talks, film club nights, afternoon

tea and talks, coffee shop displays, children's activities and a host of excellent special exhibitions, some of national importance.

The Friends made a collection for Matt and he was presented with a handsome cheque, with some flowers for his wife, Anne. The presentation was made at the Vikings talk which over seventy Friends attended. Rita, our secretary, spoke on our behalf to express our thanks and good wishes. We wish Matt every success in his new museum, and he assures a warm welcome in Wexford for any visiting Weaver Hall Friends! (The Chair, Jenny, would like to thank all the Friends for their generosity. She passed on all your lovely messages to Matt along with a list of all of you who contributed to his cheque.)



The Lion Salt Works Trustees and Volunteers also presented Matt with an illuminated address in recognition of all his efforts. Some of the Friends committee were able to attend this presentation too - a fuller report is to be found on our website.

The future.

Sue Hughes, Museum Director explained to our committee the system she has put in place to cover for the vacancy caused by Matt's departure. A combination of Tom Hughes, Community and Education Officer, whom we know, and Kate Harland, Learning Development Officer will cover the management issues. Liz Royles, Keeper of Early History and Kate Riddington, Keeper of Natural History for Cheshire West Museums will cover some of the curatorial work. Steve Woolfall will oversee the Lion Salt Works development. Sue herself will take over Matt's role as a link with the Friends. The vacancy has to go through a number of management teams for approval and is at the final stage of being raised at Corporate Management Team. If this is successful, someone should be in post before the end of the year.

The Friends committee will do our best to keep you up to date.