



# NEWSLETTER

Issue 5: May 2009

Editor: Robert Marshall

If you are a renewing member of the 'Friends' then thank you for continuing support. For our new members welcome to our newsletter which provides details of recent & upcoming events and news. If you are a casual visitor then we hope that after reading this and having seen what the Salt Museum has to offer you will consider joining us.

2009 is a significant year for us, we reached our tenth anniversary and the museum, and thus the Friends, now face change in being part of a new authority - Cheshire West & Chester. You can read more about this in 'Curator's Corner' on page 4.

Maybe you have a contribution you'd like to make, join the committee perhaps or volunteer to help out now and then, if so contact a committee member or write it to the address at the end of the newsletter.

Inside are reports of recent events and news items such as Mary Curry's notes on the Friends exclusive visit to Stretton Watermill and Colin Edmondson on the museum playing host to 'Cheshire's Best Kept Station' - 2008 - Competition.

Robert Marshall, Editor.

## Forthcoming Events

On **11 June** we have an evening talk on '**Cheshire's Lowland Search and Rescue Service**' by **Ray Milne**. They are based in Warrington, handy for access to major motorways M6, M56 & M62. They have a website at <http://www.cheshire-sarteam.org/>

A visit to **Keith Siddorn's farm** on **7 July** will include some homemade light refreshment, for which a small charge (£5 pp) will be made. Keith will give us a tour around his farm and show what he does to promote wildlife. See separate flyer for further details.

The launch of an **Exhibition** called '**Jumelage/Amitie (Twining & Friendship)**' takes place on **16 July**. Hartford is twinned with Mornant and so it is a chance to see a bit of French culture without having to travel.

Thursday **24 September**, '**Victorian Workhouse Evening**' of drama, poetry and songs from the Victorian Workhouse. This event was originally to be held in February but had to be postponed.

A local **trip round Sainsbury's** at Northwich, behind the scenes with food & wine tasting, has been booked for Monday **16 November**, 6.30-8.30pm. Note we are not promoting nor endorsing Sainsbury's, but joining in on one of their outreach initiatives. Further details and a reminder of this tour will be sent out with the next newsletter.

As usual a full list of events in chronological order is printed on the last page of the newsletter and details are also available from our website: <http://fotsm.org.uk> The website features the facility to subscribe to a calendar of events, so you don't have to make any notes yourself!

## Previous Events

The exhibition '**Image & Identity - Faces of Romans and Britons in the North West**' on Friday 16 January was very successful. There was plenty of Roman food to sample and drinks to relax and chat to friends over. Tom demonstrated the art of quantitative easing, by striking coins and allowing visitors to make their own to take home!



The exhibition was literally opened to a fanfare by our own Roman visitors, who added greatly to the atmosphere and were much in demand for photos and chats on life in Roman Britain.



**Our tenth anniversary celebrations** in February were a success, with appearances by Matt and Jenny on Cheshire FM and ten memberships given away to the first two visitors each day for one week.

The night started with Friends gathering for a chat in the coffee shop before moving in to the Board Of Guardians' room where they were greeted by John Hulme who provided the drinks for the night.



Jenny, our chair, gave a formal toast to the Friends past and future successes and then we enjoyed a piece

of birthday cake, baked by a fellow Friend and cut by some of our founding members.



A presentation of the 'Birds of Cheshire and Wirral' was made by David Cogger to Matt, who accepted it on behalf of the museum. We were then given a guided tour to places not normally open - not even on the museum open days!

Our March Talk was by **David Hayns**, who gave a talk on 'Cheshire's Changing Boundaries.'



A topic that was relevant given the changes in local government within Cheshire. David showed us a variety of slides combining old and present day maps; documentary evidence and extracts; and his own photographs tracing Cheshire's county border.

He tracked the boundary in the landscape and on the ground, and delving through woods and undergrowth in order to find his evidence. He searched for the junction of the three counties of Cheshire, Shropshire and Staffordshire, which were marked by the confluence of three streams. David found that boundary stones

had disappeared and others had been used in the fabric of buildings.

Unusual place names, such as Bumpers Lane in Chester, were now easily understood after David explained the ceremony of 'beating the bounds.' An interesting talk that showed David's love of history and natural scenery, which was enjoyed by all who attended.

On 15 April twenty-one of the Friends gathered at **Stretton Watermill** on a morning



threatening thunderstorms and heavy rain showers. Luckily the weatherman was wrong and although quite chilly it remained dry. We were split into two groups, one starting inside the mill and the other looking at the outside.

The mill itself has been there for many, many years and some of the original features still remain despite being renovated in the late 1700s. The process itself is fascinating; more so because we are looking at ancient crafts that have withstood the tests of time. The methods may have originated with the Saxons but today such an environmentally friendly process is startlingly relevant.

It was interesting to learn that the mill intends to harness the power to produce a small amount of electricity that will enable it to be self-



sufficient. The millers were friendly, helpful and knowledgeable and made our visit a very enjoyable

one and I would thoroughly recommend a visit to any Friends unable to join us on the day.

Afterwards thirteen of us went to the Cock O' Barton for a pub lunch. We were dining in style in our own private room! The food was excellent and the company even more so. All in all an extremely enjoyable experience.

Report by Mary Curry

**R' We S'D'frnt - My Weekend exhibition**, curated by Michael Troy of Connexions, was



launched on 2 April and was attended by over 60 people including many of those who took part in the project.



With the thoughts and recollections of thirty local people, ten from each of the three generations - teenagers, parents and grandparents, the exhibition provided an insight into what young people got up to in the past and what they do now. The work behind this exhibition was done mostly by teenagers and it arose from their own pondering of whether life for a teenager is now different, harder or easier, than before.

The question posed by this exhibition is left for the visitor to draw their own conclusion as to 'are we so different?'

## News & Notices

### Museum/Friends News

February saw record numbers of visitors - 1800!

Galleries are being updated on a rolling basis to reflect the broader remit of the museum.

New acquisitions: a cheese-press made by Cluetts of Tarporley and a gas lamp made by Bates of Northwich.

The Friends have been asked back by Rudheath Community School to represent the Salt Museum on Friday 12 June. Another opportunity to publicise the museum to young and old alike.

### Cheshire Best Kept Stations - where everyone is a winner!

By Colin Edmondson

The 20th of January 2009 was a big night at the Salt Museum, when at the awards Evening of Cheshire Best Kept Stations, Chelford Railway Station was declared Cheshire's Best Kept Station.



Way back in 2003 John Hulme, who is an active member of the Friends Committee and used to run his business at Plumley Station, decided to start a little competition to raise the standard of the local railway stations. Over the years the competition has grown in size and stature, and was hotly contested by over twenty stations this year. Points are awarded in such a way that a station planted by local groups has as much chance as one funded by a large railway operator, and judges make surprise visits over the course of the year.

An idea of the standing of the competition can be judged by the list of attendees; six mayors, the Chairman of the County Council and the Sheriff

of Chester joined over 90 other guests in congratulating the villagers of Chelford on their success. As John said, "The local volunteers in Chelford have transformed their small village station. With little to start with, the station is now tended on a daily basis by those in the Community. They were last year nominated for a national award. This evening they are Cheshire's Best Kept Station." In the spirit of Cheshire Best Kept Station, the villagers were supported by Northern Rail, ISS, Marshalls, AJN Landscapes, Chelford Farm Supplies and Chelford Parish Council.

Awards were also made to Crewe, Delamere, Frodsham, Helsby, Holmes Chapel, Knutsford, Nantwich, Neston and Wilmslow Railway Stations. On presenting the Awards, Chris Brown



thanked all those who had helped make Cheshire's Stations more hospitable, tidier, and welcoming. He reported that Cheshire's Year of the Gardens 08 - which was the focus of 2008 Awards - had been a great success and had made a significant contribution to the increase in the visitor economy. The task now was to sustain everyone's hard work into 2009 and beyond.

A big thanks to John, who puts a great deal of time and hard work into the project, and to all who supported him in his endeavours.

As can be seen in the photos, the friends were active on the night providing much needed refreshments!



If you wish to set up a project at your local railway station and contribute to Cheshire Best Kept Stations, use their Contact Page:

<http://www.bestkeptstation.org/contact-us.php> and they will give you all the assistance you need.

### BAfM News

The [British Association of Friends of Museums](#), of which we are members, has just released issue 94 of their journal which has for a cover story: 'York Minster at Night.' The Minster dates back to 627 and was built for... Well, why not come and have a look for yourself over a cup of tea or coffee! A copy is kept in the museum for the use of Friends.

The fee that we pay for membership of BAfM has gone up, the first time in eight years. For the time being we are able to absorb this cost and so have kept our membership at the same price, unchanged since the Friends formed ten years ago.

### Miscellaneous

Lisa Jones, Facilities & Events Manager at Hazelmere, the new Winsford extra care housing village that will open in June, contacted us after reading about the Friends in the local Guardian. She has invited us to arrange talks and/or trips for the residents.

Simon Martin, curator of a major contemporary art exhibition called '[Salthouse 09](#)' to be held in the Church of St Nicholas in the village of Salthouse in North Norfolk - contacted us after looking at our website. He has invited any Friends who may be in the area, during July, to come along and have a look. Last year they had over 9,000 visitors in one month. If anyone wants to visit then Yvonne Millwood has kindly said that a guided tour can be arranged, just email her at:

[yvonnemillwood@waitrose.com](mailto:yvonnemillwood@waitrose.com)

and tell her you are a Friend of The Salt Museum responding to their invitation.

Want to join the Friends? Call in at the museum, download an application form from our website or write to us at the address at the end of the newsletter.

## Curator's Corner



Another busy period at the museum what with the end of the financial year, the end of the county council and the opening of a new exhibition. The museum service is now part of the new authority, Cheshire West & Chester. This means that our two sites, the Salt Museum and Stretton Watermill, have joined forces with the Grosvenor Museum in Chester and the Lion Salt Works. We will be exploring ways in which we can work more closely together over the coming months. We hope we can create a dynamic portfolio of museums that everyone in West Cheshire can be justly proud of. As you are no doubt aware, we have plans to re-develop the Salt Museum as the museum exploring the wider history of the mid / west Cheshire area. This is the direction in which we've been moving over last few years and will give the Lion Salt Works scope to develop as the main salt-related attraction for the area. At Stretton Watermill, we have plans to improve the access at the rear exit of the mill and also introduce a low-key scheme to generate electricity using the power of the water wheels.

On 30 April, 94 guests came to the Salt Museum for the preview of our WW2 exhibition, 'Northwich at War – the Home Front'. This has been a fascinating project to put together and we were delighted that so many people came forward and answered our appeal for artefacts, photos and memories. We have assembled an array of original artefacts relating to air raids, evacuation, the blackout and rationing. We interviewed around 15 people with vivid memories of various aspects of the war years. Most allowed us to film them as well as record with sound equipment their memories. This can

be a daunting experience for the interviewee so I was very grateful that the majority allowed us to do this and I hope it enhances the film. We also interviewed Dr Arthur Townsend, a member of the friends and a museum volunteer, who provided us with a compelling account of his time as a child in London. Although, his experiences differ greatly from those of the Cheshire residents, we felt it was important to make this recording to share with others. The final result is a film lasting 2 hours 19 minutes. We showed a 30 minute extract at the preview which was well received. You can find out more about the exhibition by coming along to our 'Tea & a Talk' on 24 June when I will be talking in more detail about the project. I will be joined by local author, Paul Hurley, who will talk about what might have happened to Britain if Hitler and Germany had won the war.

We are now working on our programme for the second half of the year. Exhibitions to look forward to include a display of work by French artists from Mornant (the twin town of Hartford), 'Art by Chips' a display by Northwich Photographic Society and an exhibition exploring the lives and achievements of Andrew Irvine and George Mallory, Cheshire's infamous mountaineers. We will also be organising more holiday activities and another monthly programme of film shows in 'The Regalette'. We now have an air-conditioning unit installed in the cinema so we hope to keep you cool during the summer months - that's if we get a nice summer this year! We look forward to seeing you all at one of these events.

Matt Wheeler, Curator

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## Calendar of Events

### Friends Events in bold

#### **May 19 Evening Talk - Shipbuilding on the River Weaver by Tony Barratt**

May 23/24 Open Weekend

May 27/28 Activity - Air Raids and Evacuees

May 27 Tea & Talk - Salt Museum, past, present & Future, presented by Matt Wheeler

May 28 Film Show - Kung Fu Panda cert PG at 11am & 2pm. Then at 7pm Frost/ Nixon cert 15

#### **Jun. 11 Evening Talk 'Cheshire Lowland Search and Rescue' by Ray Milne**

Jun. 24 Tea & Talk - Northwich At War, Life on the Home Front, presented by Matt Wheeler

Jun. 25 Film Show - Slumdog Millionaire (cert 15).

#### **Jul. 7 Visit to Meadow Bank Farm**

#### **Jul. 16 Exhibition Launch 'Jumelage and Amitie - Twinning and Friendship' (Mornant Paintings)**

Jul. 22/23 Activity - Ancient Images

July. 29/30 Activity - Vikings in Cheshire

Aug. 5/6 Activity - Super Socks!

Aug. 12/13 Activity - Castle Builders

#### **Aug 19 Exhibition launch 'Art By Chips' for Northwich Photographic Society**

Aug. 19/20 Activity - Marvellous Masks

Aug. 26/27 Activity - Two By Two

#### **Sep. 10 Exhibition Launch 'Mallory & Irvine'**

#### **Sept. 24 Evening Talk 'Victorian Workhouse Evening'**

#### **Oct. 20 AGM & talk on 'Mallory and Irvine'**

#### **Nov. 16 Trip round Sainsbury's at Northwich**

#### **Dec. 9 Christmas Social.**