



# NEWSLETTER

Issue 9: September 2010

<http://fotsm.org.uk>

In this edition of our newsletter we have an article from Jenny, our Chair, in place of Curator's Corner. In it Jenny gives information on the proposed changes to our constitution. This is important as it affects all members, so please take the time to read it thoroughly.

At the A.G.M. there will be four appointments to the committee available, to-date we have not had any enquiries from new potential candidates. Don't leave it too late to get more involved with how the Friends is run, after all this is your charity.

Robert Marshall, Editor.

[Click here to see more images from the exhibition.](#)



Salt Museum by Frances Seba Smith



Winter Farmland - Lostock Green by Debbie Goldsmith

## Previous Events

### Launch Night - Weaver Hall Museum.

Report by Robert Marshall

1 June saw the official renaming of the Salt Museum, and with it a change in the content of some of its galleries. A new Transport gallery, a new exhibition 'Seven Artists Paint the Town' and Barnton Silver Band ensured that this was the most widely attended event of the year.



There were many Friends and honoured guests including one of the Friends founding members, Lord Rochester

Photos copyright Andy Pratt/CWAC

(pictured above with Tim Lamb, his son, and Jenny, Chair of the Friends in the Mary Rochester Library).



The special art exhibition features the work of Richard Carman, Richard Edmonds,

Debbie Goldsmith, Richard Hannabuss, Patricia Kelsall, Julia Midgley and Frances Seba-Smith. The inspiration for all the paintings is 'Northwich and the surrounding countryside.' Some of the works on show can be seen on the right.



Impact I by Richard Edmonds



Town Bridge with boat by Patricia Kelsall



County Conundrum 9 30 by Julia Midgley



Snow Comberbach by Richard Carman



In the Forrest by Richard Hannabuss

**Visit to Blackden Trust, 9 June.**

Report by June Hindley

The brochure says: "Come to Blackden, who knows where it might take you?" It is this quote I remember as we turn onto a rough, stony track at Blackden Firs to wend our way to Toad Hall (a corruption of The Old Hall) and The Old Medicine House, moved here beam by beam by stone the seventeen miles from Wrinehill.

Blackden Trust, set up by Alan Garner and his wife Griselda in 2004, has its origins in a rundown three bay timberframe cottage found by Alan and made into his home in 1957 with a little financial help from his father.

The adjoining cottage was eventually acquired, Alan having realised that this had been a single building of some importance.



The Old Medicine House was bought in 1970 for £1. Even though they had no funds they could not bear to see it demolished so Alan and Griselda decided to move it to the Toad Hall site, and eventually built a two-storey link between the two.



The Old Medicine House is also a beautiful three bay timber frame building, occupied by many different

people during its long life including an apothecary and Johnson's paints. Indeed the site has been used since the last Ice Age and there is evidence of hunters and their stone tools, ancient camps and recently a bronze age burial site has been uncovered.

Alan Garner likes to take things into his "protective custody" and has many artefacts connected with the buildings and the area throughout the houses and grounds including an ampula from a Norfolk pilgrimage. Many are in boxes to be investigated on some of the wide variety of courses which are run here.

Griselda and Joyce gave us a fascinating and informative tour revealing the passion and love which is felt for the house. One of the

things I found interesting was the plants which had grown up around The Old Medicine House after it had been rebuilt. The seeds had apparently been shaken from the beams during the reconstruction.

The juxtaposition of these ancient properties to the mainline railway and The Lovell Telescope at Jodrell Bank emphasise their continuing life and importance in the twenty-first century. It is certainly "A door from the past to the future" and "a place of extraordinary things."

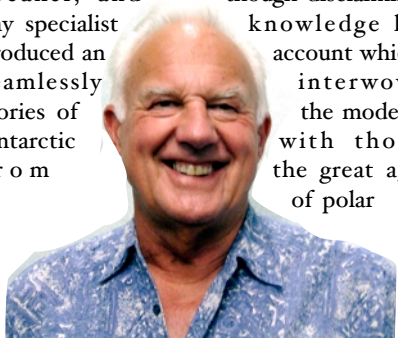
THIS is where it takes you!

Information about the Trust, courses, visits can be found at [www.theblackdentrust.org.uk](http://www.theblackdentrust.org.uk)

**In The Footsteps of Scott and Shackleton - 29 June.**

Report by Rita Lamb.

On a warm summer's night the Friends gathered in the Board Room to hear a talk about Antarctica. Peter Logan was the speaker, and though disclaiming any specialist knowledge he produced an account which seamlessly interwove stories of the modern Antarctic with those of the great age of polar



exploration, when Scott, Shackleton and Amundsen battled the elements and each other to reach the South Pole.

Peter's fascination with the lonely places of the world - he has been to Pitcairn Island and just recently returned from Alaska - led him to book a voyage aboard a Russian icebreaker to see this remote continent at first hand. His pictures were stunning, and featured several arresting shots of Antarctica's wildlife. As well as some very endearing penguins that brought involuntary 'Aaaahs' from the audience he showed us some of the many different sorts of seals. (It seems that despite their fearsome appearance you can safely approach some large species, whereas those which look like cute circus sea lions are not just unfriendly but can also 'run' faster than you!)

The shots from modern tourist Antarctica, with its shipside barbecues on ice, gave way gradually to those from a very different age. Black-and-white images from the early twentieth century told the sometimes grim story of polar exploration. With the help of maps Peter explained the routes each

expedition had taken, where they had pitched their camps, showed us contemporary shots of the men in the huts



they had built - and then switched to recent coloured images of the same locations, because of course those abandoned huts still stand. Pans sat on stoves; discarded sleeping bags lay rucked on the floor. The banal took on an eerie romance as his camera showed dim interiors where stores left a century before still litter the shelves, and familiar labels like Colman's, Birds and Bovril gleamed out of the shadows. (Discussion of how best to conserve these huts will of course be featured in a forthcoming talk.)

Peter was a relaxed but knowledgeable speaker, and picked out the early history of polar exploration with practised ease. If you left feeling a little sad that you would probably never be on the deck of an icebreaker battering its way through the Ross Ice Shelf, well - at least you knew a bit more about what you would see if you were!

**Each man in his way is a treasure, each man's treasures stand as testimony to the man...**

**A talk by Fran Clarke - 20 July**

Report by Jenny Tyson.

On the evening of 6 July we had a rare treat! Fran Clarke, Collections Care Officer at the Museum of Science and Industry, talked to us about her experiences in Antarctica. She shared her adventures with us, using her excellent slides. Fran was



chosen from a huge number of applicants for her expertise in conserving industrial equipment. She was to spend 6 months in Antarctica helping the Antarctica Heritage Trust, AHT. Their remit is to catalogue,

collect data about, repair, and conserve evidence of Antarctica's history. Fran explained how she had two weeks of intensive training in New Zealand, before even setting foot in Antarctica. This was on how to stay alive in such vicious weather – some of which we saw in her slides!



I felt very privileged to see Fran's pictures of the equipment used in Captain Scott's base camp. Some of the equipment used was surprisingly luxurious, like the ornate stove that she conserved. We also heard about crates of whisky that were found underneath the hut. Fran showed us some of the other articles she conserved. She showed us 'before' and 'after' pictures of these artefacts, which showed an amazing difference, such as in these horses' snow shoes.



It is hoped these will now last for another 50 years, because of her hard work and conservation skills. The AHT team are carrying out detailed research as to the best ways of conserving items in these conditions. Fran praised AHT for the professional way in which they were recording every piece of data for posterity. She also had the opportunity to meet Sir David Attenborough when he was in Antarctica filming for a BBC programme 'Frozen Planet' which we will be able to see later in the year. This was a fascinating talk which is very topical at the moment as it is the centenary of Captain Scott's Terra Nova expedition (1910 – 1913).

## Friends news

### What does membership of the Friends entitle you to?

Subscription to the Friends includes free admission to the museum throughout the year as well as free admission to evening talks. It does not include free admission to the afternoon 'Tea & a Talk' which is £1 per person (including a hot drink) nor evening films which cost £3 for Friends and £4 to non-members. Friends must also pay the standard admission charge if they wish to

see any children's daytime film during the school holidays. If you are not sure of what, if any, charges may apply to a specific event please contact the museum beforehand on 01606 271640 or email [cheshiremuseums@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:cheshiremuseums@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)

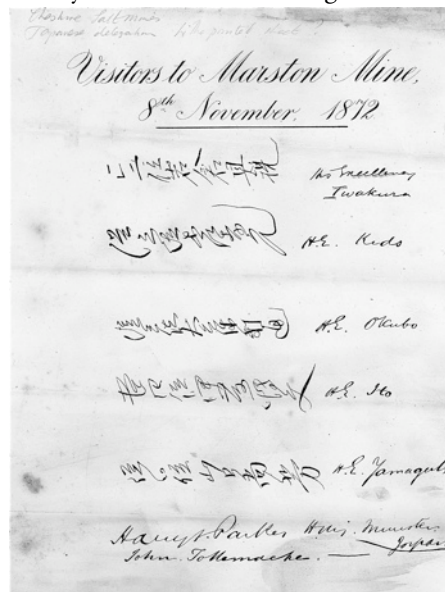
## Dedication of the Library to Lady Rochester.

Plaques showing the dedication of the library to Lady Rochester are now in place, plus a panel explaining her massive contribution to the existence of the current Museum. The plaques were paid for by The Friends.

## Museum news

### Signed document from 1872 acquired.

The museum has just acquired a document, paid for by the Friends, from 1872, which details those involved in a trade mission from Japan to Marston's Salt mine on 18 November. The visit was part of the Iwakura mission in Britain. His excellency Iwakura Tomomi, who had the status of Ambassador Plenipotentiary, was the second highest member of the Emperor Meiji's Government. They spent four months in Britain, the longest section of a journey around the world. The whole trip was chronicled by Kume Kunitake, a thirty-three year old scholar from Saga in Hizen.



The mission also spent three nights at Peckforton Castle, being entertained by Mr. Tollemache, the owner. For the detailed report on the mission see the [London School of Economics website](#).

### Exhibition Highly Commended.

In this years [Museums & Heritage Awards](#) the museum was Highly Commended for 'Above the Clouds - Mallory & Irvine and the Quest for Everest' in the category for a project on a limited budget. The winner was [Diss Museum](#) (in Norfolk): Tom Paine Festival.

## BAfM news

### BAfM President to Lead Alliance of Heritage Interests.

Loyd Grossman, who is, of course, President of BAfM, is very much involved in the world of history and the arts. Loyd says that he wants to lead the organisation into a new era as a more outward-looking, campaigning group.

37<sup>th</sup> AGM & National Conference takes place between 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> September 2010 on Douglas, Isle of Man with the Friends of Manx National Heritage.

## Miscellaneous news

### Northwich featured in the BBC's One Show.

On 9 August the One Show ran a feature on Salt, which included Northwich town and the Lion Salt Works. Andrew Fielding, local historian, gave a demonstration of how salt was made at the works.

[Museums & Heritage Show](#) 2011 takes place on 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> May.

## Local events

A few events taking place in our region for September and October.

[Meet the Music Makers](#) and get an insight into how woodwind instruments were made and played in Tudor times. At Little Moreton Hall 18/19 September, normal admission charges apply.

[Police and Fire Joint Open Day](#) at the Cheshire Constabulary HQ will feature a wide range of Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service vehicles including Hydraulic Platform, midi appliances, boat rescue unit, environmental protection unit and HAZMAT Unit.

[Nantwich Food and Drink Festival](#) 24-26 September. Free entry.

Victorian Harvest event at [Stretton Watermill](#) on 25/26 Sept from 12-5pm. The events and activities are free this weekend with a nominal charge for those wanting a guided tour of the working mill.

[Kelsall Hill British Eventing](#) 25/26 September, entry fee of £5 per car, Organsdale Farm, Winsford Road, Kelsall.

[Blackden Trust](#) are celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of 'The Weirdstone of Brisingamen' with a medieval fair at Alderley Edge on 8/9/10 October.

[Middlewich Beer Festival](#) 29/30 October, organised by Middlewich Round Table.

### World Heritage sites nearby.

The [World Heritage List](#) (Unesco) includes 911 properties (as of June 2010), of which the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has 28. Four of these are close enough for a day out:

Liverpool – Maritime Mercantile City;

Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal, NE Wales;

Ironbridge Gorge;

Castles and Town Walls of King Edward, Gwynedd, Beaumaris and Harlech castles and Caernarfon and Conwy fortified complexes.

Others not too far away include Derwent Valley Mills, Saltaire and Studley Royal Park.

## Chair's Chat.



I thoroughly enjoyed Northwich Heritage Week and the museum's rebranding evening. Looking at the photographs, it is obvious that many of you enjoyed the events too! I thought it very

successfully showcased and celebrated Northwich's unique heritage.

**Do let us know if you think Heritage Week is worth repeating next year,** contact the [museum](#).

We are proposing a new constitution for our Friends, and will recommend you support this at our AGM on Thursday 21st October.

### Reasons:

- we would like our name to reflect the museum we support

- changed rules and regulations from the Charity Commission governing small charities, such as our own.

### Guidance:

- we have relied heavily on the Small Charity Constitution developed by the Charity Commission in October 2009.

### Changes:

- a formal, detailed audit is not essential for small charities. We will, however, continue to have our accounts independently examined.

- the committee members are now called trustees

- a charity must ensure it gives 'public benefit' and 'education.' This has always been part of our constitution, but we have added a phrase 'advancement of education of the public' to strengthen our resolve!

- notice for the AGM will be shortened from one month to 14 days.

- the charity will be called Friends of Weaver Hall Museum.

- the simplified language will hopefully make the constitution easier to understand.

There are copies of both the current and proposed constitutions on our web site: [www.fotsm.org.uk](http://www.fotsm.org.uk) for you to look at. Paper copies are available in the museum, and if you want your own personal copy you only have to ask Rita Lamb, our secretary, 'phone 01606 47258 or email [rita.lamb@gmail.com](mailto:rita.lamb@gmail.com)

I look forward to seeing you at our next events and our AGM. For the AGM, instead of the usual talk we will have two short presentations. Catherine Fox will provide information on the Weaver Valley project, and there will be a short report on the progress at the Lion Salt Works. This will enable us all to be up to date with 'heritage happenings' in our area.

We are always looking for 'new blood' for the committee. Again contact details below to find out what would be involved. Sincerely Jenny Tyson.

Links to the [constitutions](#) on our website, Ed.

## Calendar of Events

### Friends Events in bold

(All 'Activity' events run from 10am-4pm)

**9 Sep. Exhibition Launch: Hard Times.** Exploring the plight of the poor in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

29 Sep. Tea & Talk: A 600 million year history of Cheshire, by Dr Kathryn Riddington FGS, Keeper of Natural History, Grosvenor Museum

30 Sep. Film show: [Robin Hood](#) Directed by Ridley Scott and starring Russell Crowe, cert. 12.

**21 Oct. 12th AGM & talk: The Weaver Valley - Project and Lion Salt Works Progress**

27 Oct. Tea & Talk: Stories from the Northwich Workhouse with Tom Hughes

27/28 Oct. Activity: Cheshire Myths and Legends. A whirlwind trip through history and mysteries meeting wizards, saints, fools, dragons and kings

**18 Nov. Exhibition Launch: I Had One of Those!** Toys, games and crazes of the 20th century

**23 Nov. Evening Talk: Medieval Chester's Trading Links.** By Dr Jane Laughton, author of 'Life In a Late Medieval City: Chester 1275-1520'

24 Nov. Tea and Talk - The House That Moved. The Work of the Blackden Trust by Griselda Garner.

**7 Dec. Evening Talk: Victorian Optical Toys.** With Nigel Richards and such things as a zoetrope!

**15 Dec. Festive Victorian Evening, music, tales mince pie & mulled wine!**

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