

# Bracknell Forest Heritage Forum

Function Room, Easthampstead House, Bracknell

7:30pm. 21<sup>st</sup> June 2006

## ***Meeting Notes***

Present:

Cllr. Iain McCracken (Chair)  
Helen Tranter  
Lynne Dick  
Agostina Hawkins  
Colin Hickson  
Cllr. Adrienne Jones  
Cllr. Alan Kendall  
Robin Seward  
Tony Fernadez  
Ray Weng  
Ruth Timbrell  
Anzir Boodoo  
Dr. Peter Holmes (Vice Chair)  
Daphne Harris  
Cllr. Elizabeth North  
Cllr. Martyn Towle  
Cllr. Dorothy Hayes

Will Phillips, Museum of English Rural Life – Guest Speaker

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### 42. Apologies and notices

Apologies from Guy Cole, Diane Collins, Cllr. Jean Bettison, Cllr. Cliff Thompson, Cllr. Gill Birch, Cllr. Jacqui Ryder, Cllr. Mike Beadsley, Cllr. Neil Harrison

There were no notices.

### 43. Minutes and terms of reference

Minutes were agreed as true.

### 44. Introductions. As there were a few new members to the forum, each person introduced themselves in turn.

It was also noted that Heather White had left and that since her departure there had been a staff restructure. Heritage had now been

placed with Arts and Lynne Dick was introduced as Agostina's new Line Manager. Lynne Dick is the Community Arts Development Officer.

45. Museum of English Rural Life (MERL). Will Phillips gave a fascinating insight into the collections at MERL, the history of the Museum and the new building.
- Museum founded by John Higgs in 1951. John Higgs was an agricultural lecturer at the University of Reading
  - 1955 the collection was given its first building on the university campus
  - 1965 the Museum was moved to another building on campus. Although this was large it was not ideal for housing a collection of national importance (the collection is designated). The collections of wagons and farm machinery had to be housed outside, albeit under a cover.
  - From then the collection began to grow in size and importance. Today there is a huge collection of rural history objects in addition to a wonderful archive and collection of photos and glass negatives.
  - It was agreed by all that this fantastic collection needed new housing and a Heritage Lottery grant was awarded to transform a former Hall of Residence (St. Andrew's) into a new Museum building to house the collection. This would allow both the object collection and the archives to be housed together for the first time.
  - They have had an enormous amount of help with the move from volunteers
  - The new building has allowed the Museum team to re-assess how the collection is interpreted. The old displays relied upon a certain amount of information about rural history on the part of the visitor. It was agreed that this placed a barrier between the collections and many visitors (especially younger visitors) who had very little, if any, experience of traditional crafts and rural ways.
  - The new display uses materials as the medium for interpretation. For example – a wire horse allows visitors to see exactly how equipment such as saddles were used.
  - There are a number of exhibitions coming up – Women's Institute exhibition in conjunction with the Women's Library, London and a Suttons Seed exhibition this Autumn.
  - The question was asked about how the exhibitions would be publicised as there would be many from this area that would be interested in the Suttons Seed exhibition in particular.
  - Will explained that they were working through a few issues to do with publicity but that there would certainly be a marketing drive that would include this area. Leaflets are currently being printed.
  - Agostina to put Will in touch with Louise Jones to help with the distribution of MERL leaflets.
  - Visiting times are: Tues – Fri 10am – 4:30pm and Sat and Sun 2pm – 4:30pm

- The group would like to visit MERL. Arrange visit during school holidays or at weekend with a minibus.

#### 46. Projects – Information Sharing

- Peter Holmes – On Sunday 30<sup>th</sup>. June Peter gave a talk on Sandhurst Church entitled – ‘St Michael’s Through the Years’  
Sandhurst Well – After a large amount of work this has been completely dismantled and restored. When it was dismantled it was discovered that the name ‘Binfield’ was stamped onto the bricks. The location of the well is about 200 yards up Scotland Hill. It is an old Victorian Well created by Mrs Blakely in memory of her mother. Adequate safeguards have been put in place to stop anyone from falling down.
- Daphne Harris – has been purchasing maps and looking at houses in Binfield which are not listed such as Cranbourn Hall and Church Cottage. Dorothy mentioned that parts of St. Mary’s Church Tower in Winkfield are Medieval.
- Mike Beadsley - requested extending the range of heritage leaflets the council produces to include historic buildings and pubs etc. It was agreed that this could be done in the future via the internet first. It was noted that is information on many historic buildings on the Heritage website.
- Elizabeth North mentioned New Scotland Hill Methodist Church celebrated their centenary with a drama. It has some interesting links to Sandhurst and UK history in general. For e.g. the first ever speeding ticket was given in Sandhurst! Suggested getting a copy of the drama and the photo.  
Elizabeth also mentioned the Sandhurst Freedom March on 15 July.
- Martyn Towle – still compiling the list of buildings worthy of attention in Warfield. Three heritage walks are being put together along with leaflets on each. Two have been completed with the third to be done later this year.  
Martyn will send Agostina leaflets which she will then distribute to Parish Councils and Libraries.
- Alan Kendal – asked for information regarding working with schools on local history. Agostina mentioned her session in conjunction with Sandhurst Museum Committee which had been successful. Also mentioned were the boxes being produced in partnership with the Museum of Reading. 6 boxes being produced on Bracknell Forest local History (Broadmoor x2, Bracknell New Town, Natural History, Archaeology and Brick Industry).
- Robin Seward mentioned the walk he is doing at Larks Hill at 2:30pm on Sunday 25 June. Dorothy to advertise this at Winkfield Parish Bike Ride.
- Tony Fernandez – he is new to Bracknell but is very interested in the local heritage and culture. He would like to be involved in projects for Black History Month.

- Ray Weng – brought us up to date on his projects. Explained his new discoveries to do with the Forresters Pub at Lily Hill Park and also the Victorian filtration system he has discovered. The filtration system is still in good working order! He is in the process of trying to get it conserved and to use it as a demonstration for schools.  
He has nearly finished his report on the archaeology he has undertaken at 'Burnt House' and will forward it to Agostina. Ray also mentioned a collection of documents relating to the development of the New Town which he will forward to Agostina.
- Anzir Boodoo – talked about his interest in New Town architecture and about how he would like Crossways House listed. This obviously has great local significance as it was the offices for the Development Corporation. Adrienne mentioned getting her house from there. He has spoken to English Heritage about this. He also asked about the M31 (Iain told him the route that had been intended). He also had a query about street names and whether some of the original names (before the New Town) could be used. Iain suggested we feed the suggestion through to planning as a suggestion from the Forum.
- Dorothy Hayes – talked about the English Heritage papers she had received. She will read through them and will report back at the next forum.  
Dot also made the point that decisions we make today affect the heritage of tomorrow so thinking about 'future heritage' should be in our minds.
- Iain McCracken – have found the original York stone path at Lily Hill park which they are hoping to restore.
- Helen Tranter – are currently trying to get Lily Hill Park on the Historic Parks and Gardens Register but are finding it difficult. Anzir mentioned a friend who had some experience of this and had been successful – he will pass on info to Helen on the process.

47. English Heritage White Paper – this is still to be published but will be forwarded when it comes out.

48. Ambarrow Court and Heritage Open Days – Agostina reported that a grant has been awarded to the Council. £21,000 which will be used to undertake an archaeological investigation at Ambarrow Court, Sandhurst. The actual investigation will happen next year to coincide with National Archaeology Weekend and will be a schools project culminating in a public exhibition. There will be initial site surveys happening this year.

There is a good programme of events this year for Heritage Open Days (7-10 September 2006):

- Warfield Heritage Loop
- Warfield Church Open
- Events at Easthampstead Church
- Walk around South Hill Park
- Guided tour of Sandhurst Church

- Gardens at Newbold College opening
- Exhibition at Lily Hill Park
- Town Centre exhibition with info about all the events

49. AOB

Agostina mentioned the box file of heritage and local history related papers. This would be brought to each meeting and members can browse and add to the box.

50. Date of Next Meeting

18<sup>th</sup> October 2006