

The museum season, 2015, started with the usual briefing for Stewards (the non-superstitious ones) on Friday 13th March and then in grand style on Saturday 14th March with an official opening ceremony conducted by our local MP. A good crowd of museum Trustees, Friends and Stewards supported Margaret Ecclestone, chairman of the Trustees as she welcomed Richard Bacon. His reply was full of praise and encouragement for the work that has been done to make the museum what it is and for the determination to keep up the standards that have been established.

That was the weekend of the Diss Dig which many friends supported. Jenny Wade opened the Shambles on Sunday (not usually done until May) in order to give the visiting archaeological enthusiasts an early viewing of this year's excellent display.

The Friday Lectures began on 20th March with Mike Wabe, Town Crier of Thetford, in full costume giving us an insight into the history and the present-day role of the Town Crier. It was an informative and amusing evening that whetted our appetite for the excellent programme that Roland Buggey has prepared for us.

We were not disappointed at our second meeting, on 17th April, when Pip Wright demonstrated his outstanding knowledge and enthusiasm for the history of newspapers and the history that old newspapers have to reveal.

Our third meeting, on 15th May was, of course, our AGM. After a good deal of arm-twisting behind the scenes we managed to fill the vacancies on the committee which now consists of: David Young, Chairman; Mike Clarke, Vice Chairman; Miranda Moore, Secretary; (these were all newly-elected) Brian Horner, Treasurer; Lynn Horner, Membership; Rosemary Palmer; (all these re-elected) Suzanne Kayne, returning to the committee and Basil Abbott filling the *ex officio* seat reserved for the museum management.

After the AGM Margaret Ecclestone kindly presented commemorative gifts to four people who have given outstanding service to the museum. On behalf of the Trustees she recognised the number of different roles that Norman Howling has undertaken as a Trustee, Friend and Steward. Only now has he given up the last of these which was managing the till in the Shambles. I can tell you that this is a trickier job than it sounds but one he executed with his usual quiet efficiency.

The other presentations were, on behalf of the Friends, to: Edna Buggey, immediate past chairman; Roland Buggey, past chairman, programme manager and still a Trustee; Alison Molnos whose last role in an illustrious career with the museum, notably as Curator, was that of Minute Secretary.

After a break we were treated to a talk by Roland Buggey illustrated with some of the fascinating objects from his collection of First World War memorabilia. The evening ended with refreshments provided, for the last time after many years, by Shirley Hall. We look forward to seeing her for many more years... without her *Marigolds!*

The new committee met on 2nd June with the 2015 programme its top priority!

The Newsletter for the Friends of Diss Museum
Editor: David Young 34, Louie's Lane, Diss, IP22 4LS

FODIMUS

Latin: we cultivate
Issue 001, June 2015

To join the Friends, email: fodimus@gmail.com

What's in a name?

You never forget your school song... well not all of it!

I had been racking my brain to find a title for our revived newsletter when I suddenly remembered:

Home plantat—Homo fodit
Man plants—man cultivates (digs).

At first I thought it was too good to be true... Could "fodimus" mean we cultivate? A quick email to brother Neil who heads the Latin group for the Chilterns U3A and, bingo! - we have a title that is a reasonable acronym for the Friends of Diss Museum AND is appropriate to our main aim of cultivating an interest in Diss Museum and developing the facilities that it affords! Yes, in addition to organising the team of volunteer stewards, that is what The Friends try to do while the Trustees and the Management are responsible for the collection, the displays and the fabric of the Shambles.

We have many Friends who live too far away from Diss to enjoy those facilities so it seemed a good idea to put together a few notes and pictures to give a flavour of what has been done recently. During his last year as head of the Trustees, Frank Howard organised the refurbishment of the fabric of the Shambles and tackled the damp that threatened the walls. During last winter's break Yoshi Shinagawa, our Premises Manager, and his team redecorated the interior to match the exterior. I think you'll agree, it is looking pretty good!



WRITERS CORNER

In each issue we hope to include a piece written, not necessarily specifically for this publication, by one of our volunteers. If you would like to make a contribution, please send it to me, David Young, as in the header.

Our first contributor, apart from being a current steward and a past officer of the Friends, is well known for her writings. We spent many happy hours together in a local writers group where her work was always admired for its direct and meaningful style.

Within a week of my request, the following piece came through my letterbox. It could not have been more appropriate. DY

DISS

As history is part of us, so should a Museum be. I was very lucky, my father was mad about history and my school took us to a museum at least once a term.

The Shambles is a perfect place for a museum! It is a basic part of Diss.

Imagine all the cattle being driven up Mere Street, slaughtered in Chapel Street and hung in the Shambles! All this while Skelton is probably drinking in The Pilgrim's Inn before praying in St Mary's!

I also think it is ethical to learn a bit about the historical past of the place where you have decided to reside.

That place has been moulded by people who have lived there. If the 'mould' suits you, you should discover how it came about and why it suits you.

So, visit the local museum; join in and enjoy learning and living.

Elizabeth Mooney - June 2015

I have to agree. The town of Diss is a wonderful, historical, place. How could it be otherwise with the A1066 running right through it?

In the early days of living in Diss it was my habit to take a daily stroll from Louie's Lane into the town and back. One particularly beautiful day I looked at my little shopping list and read:

Eastern Daily Press
Milk
Honey

... and thought: *Yes, I really have come to the Promised Land!*

DY



The Community Cabinet is one of the great successes introduced recently to the Shambles. Each collection is expected to be on display for six weeks and then make way for the next.

The anonymous collector of this beautiful china (who we can now reveal is Roland Bugey) writes:

My interest in Crested China dates from 1970 when we bought a holiday cottage in Norfolk, near Attleborough. Over the years we gradually put together a collection of

Norfolk Crested China and were surprised at the number there were, not only for larger places like Norwich and Great Yarmouth, but much smaller places such as Attleborough and Diss.

Moving to Norfolk permanently in 1995, we turned our attention to Diss Crested China. We now have 59 Diss pieces but know that there are many more. How many there are, I do not know, but we keep looking. A friend and long-standing Diss resident has collected for years and has over 100 different pieces and we each have pieces that the other has not.

Adding to my collection... We enjoy trawling antique shops, arcades and fairs in different parts of the country and they sometimes turn up at Gaze's but you usually have to buy a quantity to get one. Prices vary from £3 to over £30.

The birth of Crested China dates from the mid 19th Century and became popular up to World War II. The pieces were basically intended as souvenirs of places visited in the same way that plates have become popular today. They take a multitude of forms including small pots and vases, lighthouses, war memorials, furniture, animals and vehicles. Military-related items such as guns and tanks are very collectable, no matter what the crest. WWI generated this aspect of Crested China. The British Empire Exhibition of 1924 also resulted in a large quantity of items being produced.

Who produced them? There are several firms that manufactured them, the best known is Goss (red labelled in the display) which appeared in the mid -19th century and lasted until WWII. Others include Carlton (blue), Arcadian (green), Florentine, Willow and Swan (yellow). Many are unmarked or say "foreign". The makers name is usually underneath and some were produced for specific shops through which they were sold. In Diss they were sold by Brames, a book shop in Mere Street, now occupied by WH Smith.

Any reader of this who has a piece not on display and wishes to dispose of it should contact the Museum office on 01379 650618.