MUSEUM FRIEND

Newsletter for the Friends of Lyme Regis Philpot Museum

Issue no. 27

January 2016

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**WE HAVE LIFT-OFF!**

Yes, the Mary Anning wing is moving much closer to reality. During an exciting few weeks in the Autumn the Museum was granted Stage Two funding by the Heritage Lottery Fund – another £798,000 - and weeks later it was granted planning permission from the West Dorset District Council on the Chairman’s casting vote!

Had the WDDC vote been lost the project would have been set back by at least a year, costs would have spiralled, and the project might – just might – have failed. Mercifully, we have been spared that.

The plan now is for building work to start this September with a view to completion in the summer of 2017. So what will the new wing deliver? There will be an extended shop, a new office on the ground floor, a lift (enabling disabled access to the floor above for the first time), and on the first floor a meeting room, public toilets, and a new geology gallery.

Nor do the Trustees’ ambitions stop there for they have also been given planning permission for “Phase Two”, resulting eventually in the creation of an extra floor above the literary gallery, the extra floor being designated as a research centre.

Says our Director, David Tucker: **“By the time the Mary Anning Wing and Phase Two have been completed the Museum will be utterly transformed.”**

What a tribute to the Director, the Trustees, staff, volunteers and Friends, all of whom have worked so hard and so long to make this happen. And what a colossal asset this extended museum will be to the town of Lyme Regis, situated on the Jurassic Coast and a favourite visitor attraction to students of the earth sciences from all over the world.
TREASURER’S REPORT AS AT DECEMBER 2015

Our fund-raising capacity has been greatly enhanced by the exuberance of the HUG (Help Us Grow) team. With their support, I expect the total funds raised to be in the region of £36,000 by the end of 2015, an increase of around £10,000 since the end of 2014. Based on this performance and our plans for 2016, I believe that we are well-placed to achieve our target of £50,000 by the set date of mid-2017. We simply have to keep going!

Our Friends and supporters continue to be extremely generous. During 2015 we have thus far received more than £6,100 from a combination of Local Giving and other donations, including almost £1,000 from John Marriage’s slides-to-digital conversion service. Please contact John to take advantage of this expert and good value service; after expenses, all money raised is donated to the Friends.

Once again, many thanks to the donors of good quality second-hand books. This year we have raised more than £2000 from our book sales. Books of special interest and value have been sold to local dealers, on E-bay and from the museum shelves.

It is very satisfying to report that we continue to attract new Friends; at the moment our membership is at an all-time high! Whilst our own activities contribute to this happy state of affairs, much of the credit lies with the museum managers and volunteers for giving visitors to our museum such a welcoming and enjoyable experience.
Subscription Reminder

• Single membership: £8.00 pa
• Family membership: £12.00 pa

Subscriptions are due in January each year; cheques, payable to ‘Friends of Lyme Regis Museum’, to Sylvia Oliver, 3 Barnes Meadow, Uplyme, DT7 3TD. If you wish to pay by bank transfer, our bank details are: NatWest: ‘Friends of Lyme Regis Museum’. Sort Code: 60-13-57; Account No. 73484172.

• Most members pay by standing order, which is simple and really helpful. If you wish to do this, please contact Sylvia on 01297 445537 or by e-mail: oliver@sylviav.plus.com

N.B. Before paying your sub. by cash or cheque, please check that you do not already pay by standing order!

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Here are some of the people who, by joining us in the past twelve months, have helped out membership reach the record levels mentioned by Treasurer David Cox in his report:

Mr and Mrs S Hanvey  Ms T Garner  Ms S Herman
Mr and Mrs D Badman  Mr and Mrs A Ruck  Mrs W Howell
Mr and Mrs J Sampson  Mr C Lakeman Fraser  Mrs D Holmes
Mrs J Rock  Miss S Acton  Mrs P Muscroft
Mrs P Notley  Mr and Mrs R Main  Mr A Wilson
Miss M Hart  Ms T King and Mr P Dooley
Miss C Brown and Mr P Sills  Dr J and Mrs B Cursley
Ms T Newsome and Miss J Saunders

You are most welcome, one and all. And if you have any views on the content of this newsletter and/or ideas that you’d like to feed in to the committee, our contact details are on page 15. Please feel free to be part of the Friends, and to get involved if only by e-mail or the social networks.

We love to hear from you!  

Ed.
AN INVITATION

Would Friends like to come to a Literary Dinner at Lyme Regis Golf Club on the 1st of October? On reflection your committee thought that this was a more appropriate title for the proposed Black Tie dinner, initial plans for which were mentioned in the July newsletter. Considering that the after-dinner speaker is Tracy Chevalier (a Patron of the Friends), the title “Black Tie Dinner” doesn’t quite give an indication of what is in store.

Tracy Chevalier is the best-selling author of seven novels and an eighth – “At the Edge of the Orchard” - is due to be published in the U.K. on the 8th of March. Her “Girl with a Pearl Earring” sold four million copies world-wide and was made into a highly successful film. “Remarkable Creatures”, for which she has also sold the film rights, has Mary Anning as one of the two principal characters, and much of her painstaking research for this was carried out in and around our Museum.

As if that weren’t enough, she is heavily involved in the current five-year programme of events marking the bicentenaries of the births of the Bronte siblings. First up is Charlotte (born 1816). An exhibition by Tracy Chevalier focussing on Charlotte’s work is due to open next month at the Brontë Parsonage Museum which is based at the family’s home in Haworth, West Yorkshire. In addition Tracy is editing a collection of short stories by well-known writers influenced by Charlotte’s writing, for publication in the Spring. In her spare time(!) she is involved in The Hogarth Shakespeare project, in which a number of authors are creating a series of novels inspired by Shakespeare’s work – in Tracy’s case, Othello.

So how was it that a brilliantly successful American author, domiciled in Britain for the past thirty years, became interested in fossils? Perhaps we will find out more at the Literary Dinner, although we’re not ruling anything else out.
Because we are limiting attendance to Friends and their partners at this stage, we’re inviting “expressions of interest” in the first instance.

This is not a commitment – it just means you will be given first choice when tickets go on sale and before the general public has a chance to make reservations. Please contact us stating how many are likely to be in your party if you confirm attendance by email on:

friends@lymeregismuseum.co.uk

or for Friends who receive their newsletter electronically:

lymemuseum@gmail.com

or in writing to:

Sylvia Oliver: 3 Barnes Meadow, Uplyme, DT7 3TD.

Ticket price: to be confirmed. Please indicate your interest by the end of March. Thereafter we will contact you at the beginning of April asking you to confirm before tickets go on sale to the general public on a first-come/first-served basis.

There’s a possibility that our first Patron, Sir David Attenborough, will be with us on this occasion (see below). This will be known nearer the time, but not before ticket reservations need to be confirmed. All we know for certain is that he will come if he can.

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Dear Margaret,

Many thanks for giving me advance notice of the dinner being planned for October next year. I have no idea what I will be doing then, but I will certainly do my best to keep that date free – and will confirm my acceptance closer to the event.

Best wishes,

[Signature]

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DOES THE PAST HAVE A FUTURE?

This was the provocative title of the annual BAfM conference in September when delegates gathered in Cheltenham – “the most complete Regency town in England”. Our hosts were the Friends of Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum, now known as The Wilson and re-opened to the public with a new building housing spacious fine art and touring exhibition galleries. The new name is a tribute to one of Cheltenham’s best known citizens, Dr Edward Wilson, whose medical and scientific skills were matched by his artistic talent. Sadly, he was a member of Scott’s ill-fated expedition to the Antarctic, but his exquisite Antarctic drawings and water colours can be seen in the Museum.

Co-hosts were the Friends of the Holst Birthplace Museum which occupies the Regency terraced house in which Gustav Holst was born in 1874 – it is one of only two composers’ birthplace museums in England, the other being Elgar’s. The Wilson & the Holst Museum – two great Museums to visit when you are in town.

As for the Conference theme: the emphasis throughout was on engaging with the next generation, something that David Tucker and his team do very well at the Philpot, and will do even better when the Mary Anning Wing has been completed. Even when the Museum is closed for building work there will still be that amazing outdoor classroom on its doorstep.

As always on these occasions we had some distinguished speakers, including Luke Syson, now Curator of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, but in a previous existence Curator of Italian Paintings, pre-1500, at the National Gallery. Our after dinner speaker, Lord Peter Hennessy, considers himself a local boy having gone to school in Stroud after being evacuated from London during the war. He is now Professor of Contemporary British History at Queen Mary University of London, and enjoyed the dinner venue as much as we did. “The Daffodil”, with its Art Deco interior dating back to when it was Cheltenham’s first purpose-built cinema, is worth adding to anyone’s visiting list.
Friends of Lyme Regis Philpott Museum
Registered Charity No. 278774

PATRONS

Tracy Chevalier         Sir David Attenborough         Minnie Churchill

Annual General Meeting of
The Friends of Lyme Regis Philpott Museum
7th April 2016 at 2.30 pm

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the 2015 AGM
3. Matters arising
4. Director’s Annual Report
5. Presentation of Annual Accounts
6. Election of Auditor
7. Committee’s Annual Report
8. Election/re-election of Committee Members
9. Any other business
10. Date of next annual general meeting:
    Thursday 6th April 2017
Friends of Lyme Regis Philpot Museum
Registered Charity No. 278774

PATRONS

Tracy Chevalier        Sir David Attenborough        Minnie Churchill

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Woodmead Hall on
Thursday, 16th April, 2015 at 3.45 pm

1. Those present and Apologies
18 Friends were present. Apologies were received from Margaret
Rose, David Edwards, Alison Mitchell and Joe Tesoriere.

2. Minutes of the 2014 AGM
These had been included in the January 2015 Newsletter and
were approved. Proposed: Ken Gollop; seconded John Marriage.
No matters arising.

3. Directors annual report
David Tucker thanked the Friends and committee for their work;
also the museum staff and volunteers. Compared to this time last
year, we had moved forward significantly. The first submission to
the HLF had yielded a grant of £100,000 to proceed with plans,
employing architects, project managers, gallery designers and so
on. On May 22nd 2015, David will submit the second HLF
application. If this is successful, the delivery phase will start in
September. We hope to start building in September next year
with a view to opening our new-look museum in 2017.

4. Presentation of annual accounts 2014
David Cox summarised the main points. Subscriptions were up,
reflecting a steady increase in membership. The substantial
increase in donations was in part due to contributions via the
Local Giving “Grow Your Tenner” scheme and in part to the generosity of many donors. Almost £1,000 was raised from our book sales. Good quality book donations were always welcome. John Marriage’s ‘slides-to-digital’ service has raised around £4,000 over recent years. Friends donated £3,071 to the museum during 2014. Total funds on 31st December 2014 amounted to £23,185.12. The total raised by the Friends since January 2012 amounted to approximately £28,785; this included £5,600 donated to the museum during this period.

The audited accounts, discussed today, included the December 2014 interest on our Deposit Account (approximately £20), which was not present in the unaudited accounts, published in the January 2015 newsletter. From 2016, audited accounts only will be published, and will appear in the July newsletter. Ken Gollop proposed that the accounts be adopted; seconded by Val Doney. Agreed unanimously.

5. **Election of auditor**
   David Cox proposed that Richard Gullock be asked to audit the 2015 accounts; seconded by Val Doney. Unanimous agreement.

6. **Committee’s Annual Report**
   David Cox read the report, as published in the January newsletter

7. **Election of Committee Members**
   All of the officials had agreed to stand for re-election. Duly and unanimously elected were: Margaret Rose (Chairman); David Cox (Vice Chairman & Treasurer); Sylvia Oliver (Secretary); David Edwards (Minutes Secretary); Alison Mitchell (Database Manager). Proposed by Ken Gollop; seconded by John Marriage. Committee members Richard Wells and Joe Tesoriere were then unanimously re-elected. Proposed by Val Doney; seconded by Stephen Locke.
   Angharad Strillozi has stood down from the committee due to family obligations and an increased museum managerial workload. She has offered her services when available, especially for lifting boxes of books! We thank Angharad for her help in recent years.

8. **Any other business:** None; meeting closed at 4.10 pm.
YOUR COMMITTEE’S ANNUAL REPORT

What a year! After months of nail-biting uncertainty the Museum has finally been granted Stage 2 Funding by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Other things being equal, the building of Mary Anning Wing will start in the Autumn of this year, with completion planned for the summer of 2017.

We organised a number of successful fund-raising events last year including – memorably – a trip to Salisbury Cathedral to see the Magna Carta on the 800th anniversary of that mould-breaking meeting between the Barons and the King. If ever one document encapsulated “The Spirit of Justice – the Power of Words”, this was surely it. And it was a trail-blazer for many others.

On Whit Sunday we ventured out of our comfort zone to organise a cream tea at the beautiful Cliff Cottage with its breathtaking view over Lyme Bay. The weather was unkind – very – but we still managed to raise £280! In October we organised our first ever Skittles evening at the Pilot Boat: noisy and great fun, with the advantage of adding to our fund-raising target, as did our traditional lectures programme throughout the year.

You responded to the October “Grow Your Tenner” programme with your usual generosity. Many thanks to you all. At the time of writing donations are still coming in; our Treasurer, David Cox, will no doubt be able to give you a good indication how much has been raised when we all meet at the AGM. Elsewhere in this issue you will see details of the programme we have planned for the whole of 2016. Now that we are getting closer to our ultimate goal of contributing £50,000 towards the final cost of the Mary Anning Wing, we are relying more than ever on your continuing and generous support.

At the 2017 AGM we should be close to announcing the opening date of the Mary Anning Wing, to which we, The Friends, will have made a significant contribution. What a superb achievement.

Margaret Rose – David Cox – Sylvia Oliver – Alison Mitchell

Richard Wells – Joe Tesoriere – David Edwards
Our Director David Tucker has good reason to look delighted, for this metal disc, discovered on the beach at Lyme Regis, is believed to have belonged to Mary Anning. Found by metal detectorist Phil Goodwin and donated to the Museum, it became the subject of much interest to newspapers locally and nationally, not to mention causing a flurry in the social media network.

Says David: “The significance of the coin is really interesting in that we simply have no idea why it was made. Mary’s father was a cabinet maker and the disc looks like the metal blanks cabinet makers used in making handles for drawers. Inscribed on one side is ‘Mary Anning MDCCXX’, (meaning 1810) while on the reverse are the words ‘Lyme Regis Age XI’. In 1810 Mary was eleven years old and had yet to find the specimens which subsequently made her famous.” The disc was found on the beach below Church Cliff, which is where Mary could well have lost it during a fossil hunting expedition. Says David: “The disc is a culturally significant artefact, and the way it was found is wonderfully serendipitous.” The Daily Telegraph writer was equally impressed; “The discovery can be attributed to the same happy co-incidence of geological evolution and pure chance which enabled Anning to make her ground-breaking discoveries in the first place. These included a 4ft ichthyosaur skull – and went on to revolutionise our understanding of the planet’s evolution.”
GOOD THINGS COMING UP
THIS YEAR

• **Thursday February 4th:**
  “2012 - A summer to remember: the Weymouth sailing Olympics and Paralympics Legacy” by Simon Williams, MBE, Head of Operations

• **Sunday February 29th:**
  “Under Shady Tree”. Another in the popular Ken Gollop series, Woodmead Hall, 2.30, admission £3, proceeds to the Museum Development Fund. To include a raffle by The Friends, with many prizes.

• **Thursday March 3rd:**
  “Tales of the Deep” by Prof. Denys Brunsden. Spectacular sea-floor surveys with incredible imagery, including Weymouth Bay

• **Thursday 7th April:**
  “Jane Austen and Lyme Regis” by Natalie Manifold, to be followed by the AGM. Two good reasons for attending

• **Thursday 16th June:**
  Trip to Grade 1 listed Dunster Castle and the beautiful Dunster Medieval Village. See application form on facing page for further details or contact Sylvia, our organiser, on 01297 445537

• **Saturday 1st October:**
  Literary Dinner at Lyme Regis Golf Club. For further details see page 4.

• **Thursday 6th October:**
  “World Heritage Sites: the Best of the Best or just a nice badge?” Talk by Dr Sam Rose exploring their history, background, and people’s perceptions.

• **Thursday 3rd November:**
  “In search of the Black Iris – a journey through Jordan” by Stephen and Nina Locke. A mix of natural history including the Black Iris, the national flower, and the ancient human settlements of Petra, the Roman town of Jerash, and the mosaics of Madaba.
COACH/STEAM RAILWAY* TRIP TO DUNSTER CASTLE

Thursday June 16th 2016

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Surname: ..................................................................................................................

Address: ..................................................................................................................

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Telephone: ............................................................................................................

E-Mail: (block capitals)

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Number of tickets required: _____

Charge including castle tour/railway trip: £20.00 per person

(N.B. Castle entry free for N.T members. £9.20 charge for non-members)

I do/do not wish to join the tour at 2.00 pm

Cheques payable to:  Friends of Lyme Regis Museum

(as early as possible to avoid disappointment)

Closing date: May 2nd 2016

Form, cheque and S.A.E. to be returned to:

Mrs Sylvia Oliver
3, Barnes Meadow
Uplyme, DT7 3TD  Telephone: 01297/445537

*If you prefer, you can stay on the coach all the way to Dunster Village, an unspoilt medieval village with many attractions and good pubs/restaurants.
MISCELLANY

Following the well-earned retirement of Alix Fairley in November we have a new Operations and Project Manager at the Museum. Bridget Houseago has been working in Museums and the Arts for most of the past twenty-five years, including a stint as a Museums Adviser in East Devon before moving to Norfolk to co-ordinate a partnership project between the Tate Gallery and Norwich Castle Museum. Moving to Worcester to manage the City Art Gallery, she became involved in a lottery-funded education project, Big Art for Little People, introducing younger people to the Museum, an experience which will stand her in good stead as we develop education in the new wing.

Remember our first full time Curator, Mary Godwin? Mary was head-hunted by the Arts Council three years ago to give the benefit of her advice and experience to Museums and Libraries all across the south-west. Now she has – in her own words – “gone back to the coal face” as Director of the Military Museum at Bodmin in Cornwall. Here you can see, among other things, the largest section of the Berlin Wall in the United Kingdom as well as the George Washington Bible, a Masonic bible taken during the American War of Independence. A future coach trip for the Friends? A warm welcome is assured.

Don’t miss this year’s Fossil Festival, which is more ambitious than ever. Thursday the 28th of April will be the very popular Secondary Schools Science Day. Friday the 29th has many events for Primary Schools but is open to the general public. Saturday and Sunday the 30th of April and the 1st of May will see the Festival in full swing, and on Monday – the Spring Bank Holiday – there will be an added dimension with a Food Festival as well. The Museum will be a hive of activity throughout the period, as will the Marine Theatre.
Total book sales last year amounted to more than £2000 – a record. While a number of people are necessarily involved, manning the sales and carrying heavy boxes of books back and forth, special thanks must go to Desk Volunteers Felicity Cox and Richard Wells, working behind the scenes all the year found. Also unseen is the storage facility offered by Gill Steinberg in her garage – vital for us so that we can keep books safe and dry between sales. So please support our sales when you get a chance – there are lots of good bargains to be had at pocket-money prices.

Please also support the valuable work being done by the HUG (Help Us Grow) team. On the 30th of December they held a well attended Quiz Night and raffle at the Pilot Boat, raising a valuable £226 towards the Mary Anning Wing. Another quiz is being planned for the 30th of March and this, combined with the many events they organise for children in the Museum, especially during the school holidays, raises our profile to a significant extent in the local community. Are you a trad jazz fan? They’ve persuaded the Sunset Café Stompers to give a fund-raising concert on behalf of the Museum at the Marine Theatre on Friday the 4th of March.

You can now follow us on Twitter: @FriendsofLRM or keep up to date with our events and talks which are advertised on our page of the Museum’s website: http://lymeregismuseum.co.uk/friends-of-the-museum and also on many local Facebook pages such as “Lyme Regis Museum”, “Lyme Regis Notice Board”, “Uplyme Notice Board” etc.

We look forward to seeing you at our talks which are held at Woodmead Hall starting at 2:30pm.

Sadly, we have to announce the death on 28th December of Mary White after a long illness. Mary was a desk volunteer for many years, and Vice-Chairman of the Friends during John Lello’s chairmanship. Our deepest sympathies go out to her family. Mary was greatly loved, and will be missed.
Museum Friend

is published by

The Friends of Lyme Regis Philpot Museum

Chairman:  Margaret Rose (445503)
Vice-Chairman and Treasurer:  David Cox (443156)
Secretary:  Sylvia Oliver (445537)
Minutes Secretary:  David Edwards (443696)
Publicity:  Margaret Rose (445503)
Newsletter:  Margaret Rose/Alison Mitchell
Members:  Richard Wells Joe Tesoriere
          Alison Mitchell (Database Manager)
          David Tucker (ex officio)

The objectives of The Friends are to promote, support and assist the Museum in its educational and other aims; and to raise funds to help care for and improve the Museum.

Email:  friends@lymeregismuseum.co.uk
Twitter:  @FriendsofLRM

Contributions/comments from Friends at home or overseas are always most welcome
Scott Rowe

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