



Brixham Heritage Museum & History Society

Summer 2017 Newsletter



Welcome!

What amazing temperatures we are experiencing – ‘flaming June’ is certainly living up to its reputation with the hottest day for 40 years recorded in Britain! At least if all else fails, you can use this copy of the Newsletter to fan yourself, while sitting in the garden sipping a cool drink (but don’t forget to read it first).

We seem to be experiencing a time of great change at the moment with political upheaval and the beginning of Brexit, not to mention terrorism and tragedies whose victims and families are never far from our minds. We have changes at the Museum, too; however, whether upheaval is national or local, we can all draw inspiration from the men who served in the Great War and their immense courage during conflict and uncertainty. Another extract from the Museum’s most recent publication is reproduced for you in these pages.

SAMANTHA LITTLE

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

It is a personal sadness to me that our chairman, John Read OBE, has had to retire due to ill health. His leadership qualities and belief in the Museum have been second to none and he will be missed. We would like to thank John for all he has done as Chairman and send our sincere regards to him, and his wife, Lindsay.

I have nothing but admiration for those involved in serving the Museum and, thereby, the wider Brixham community. Everyone to whom I have spoken has nothing but the highest praise to offer for the way that Brixham's heritage is interpreted for all generations. This state of affairs can firmly be laid at the door of the working partnership between Dr. Philip Armitage, our professional curator; our inestimable secretary, Carol Daw; Executive Committee members; and the army of volunteers, all vital to the future survival of Brixham's treasure house of heritage.

I have now completed my first year as President of Brixham Heritage Museum. It is a year in which it has been a pleasure to have represented the whole concept of the Museum, its staff and volunteers, to the wider world.

THANK YOU ALL.

JOHN RISDON

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Further to the AGM, which was held in the Museum on 14 June, Samantha Little has been elected Chairman of the Board of Trustees, having been Acting Chairman since March. John Scotney is the new Vice-Chairman. This message is reproduced from the Annual Report; however, in future editions of the Newsletter, the President will take over the regular message to members.

Dear Members,

Firstly, I should like to thank you for your strong commitment to safeguarding Brixham Heritage Museum's place as a constant and much-loved attraction in our local community. The Museum *is* its members, volunteers, staff and all who support it.

Public enthusiasm for the Museum also remains high with excellent levels of satisfaction. Feedback from survey forms indicates that 94% of visitors regard the welcome they receive from volunteers, along with the educational and social aspects of Museum provision as 'good or very good'.

The Museum saw thousands of visitors over the past year (12,440 adults and 2,684 children – a total of 15,124 people), although closure during the winter period was slightly extended due to the extensive renovation of displays. Added to this figure should be the 56,979 virtual visitors who accessed the Museum website, while the many favourable reviews on TripAdvisor (some of which are reproduced at the end of this Newsletter) and comments in our Visitor's Book speak for themselves.

We are extremely grateful to Torbay Council and Brixham Town Council, who have financially supported the Museum, and we also extend our sincere thanks to Gordon Oliver for further help from the Mayor's Fund, along with our project funders and those who have made donations to enable our work to continue.

This has been very much a time of transition for the Museum, particularly as our Chairman, John Read OBE, had to stand aside due to ill health. He served in office for several years and his cheerful personality and presence are missed. He deserves our thanks for all he has done over the years, particularly as an advocate outside the Museum.

As a charity, the next year will be very much about moving forward in an uncertain financial climate, reviewing our Executive structure and bye-laws, looking at our working model, and making positive changes for the future to ensure that the Museum will be able to tell Brixham's story for many years to come.

I am clear that with your continued support, we can make those changes and find long-term success.

SAMANTHA LITTLE

If you would like a full copy of the Annual Report, please contact Carol in the Museum's office, who will be pleased to e-mail, or print and post you a copy.

OUR INTREPID MARATHON RUNNER...NEW SUCCESS!

The remarkable (and remarkably fit) Vivien Mifsud has once again participated in the London Marathon AND the Malta Marathon to raise funds for Brixham Heritage Museum. Vivien has raised over £2,000 for the Museum, which will be match-funded by her former employer, Santander Building Society. We are extremely grateful to Vivien, Santander and all those people who gave such a marvellous response in supporting her efforts financially.

HOT OFF THE PRESS...NOT ONE, BUT TWO NEW MUSEUM PUBLICATIONS!

During April this year we were delighted to hold a Book Launch for Samantha Little's *Writing Home to Brixham – Lives Across A Century: Letters of Brixham Men and Women Serving in the Great War 1914-1918, Volume I*, and Chris Potts' revised and expanded edition of his original 2006 publication, *Voyaging Over Life's Sea*, a history of the British Seamen's Orphan Boys' Home.

This was the first joint launch held by the Museum and proved to be extremely successful with many guests enjoying a truly sumptuous afternoon tea, provided by Sophie Bower of Millie and Me, while Samantha and Chris talked about their books and signed copies. The authors were extremely grateful to Dr Philip L. Armitage, our Curator, for his warm introduction, and they were extremely pleased to see among the guests, Nick Bye, Athina Savva (from Grenville House, the original Boys' Home building) and Mary Eveleigh. A nice coincidence occurred when Athina realised that Mary had been her teacher at school – they hadn't seen each other since, so they were able to have their own reunion, too.

Sophie was able to find some more local people to talk through their memories for her Brixham Heritage Trail project, including Mary, so the afternoon was most productive, as well as enjoyable.

Samantha's book is available from the Museum for £3.00, while Chris' book can be purchased for £5.95 – **make sure you have your copies!**

Here is a further extract from *Writing Home to Brixham*, featuring letters received towards the end of 1914 and showing the stoicism of Brixham men far from home, enduring variable weather or fighting the enemy:

Private Arthur Martin, serving in 1st Battalion, the Devonshire Regiment, wrote to his wife of a proud moment:

...Our rest is up and we are back in the firing line again. Am thankful to say it is a little drier today than it has been. We have been having very wet and cold weather – up to our necks in mud. We had General French pay us a visit, and he gave us great praise for the work we have done during the war, saying that if the great demands were made upon us again, he felt sure the Devons would be ready to answer them. We had a visit from the King and the Prince of Wales the day after. Bill Webber, Dick Shears and myself were picked out with the Devons to represent the Company. It was quite a parade. The King and Prince inspected us. The General called for three cheers, which the boys let go at the top of their voices.

I hope the boys of Brixham are answering the country's call and joining the good old Devons, to help keep up the good name the boys of Brixham have helped to win for them.

Arthur

An interesting letter arrived from a soldier stationed on the island of St. Helena, South Atlantic:

Mr. H. M. Smardon, Correspondent, *Brixham Western Guardian*.

Dear Mr. Smardon,

...I have not had the good fortune to be drafted to the seat of war [*Belgium/France*], but as you are aware any place on the globe is likely to be the scene of battle now with those German cruisers still at large [*after the Battle of Coronel*], but let them come. I can assure you we are quite prepared. If the Kaiser wants a place in the sun I can specially recommend St. Helena to him, and assure him that he will be well looked after.

Well, we have the pleasure of knowing that we were the first troops to leave England on active service, and I can assure you our work as Royal Engineers has been arduous...by day and night. I am N.C.O. in charge of defence electric lights here, and we are attached to the Naval Establishment as this is a naval station.

Seeing so many of our Brixham boys are at the front I only wish they would have the honour of capturing "Kaiser Bill" and his associates. I could pledge my word that... no good [would] come to them if sent to St. Helena. I must say this is a very lonesome place, of course interesting for a few hours to visit the tomb of the Emperor Napoleon. It is quite a pleasant spot there, too, and I am sure the Emperor William's [*the Kaiser's*] would be good company for it as well. [*This would have resonated with Mr. Smardon and newspaper readers. During 1815, Napoleon Bonaparte was confined to a ship that lay off Brixham after his capture. Following a brief interlude in Plymouth Sound, his ship returned and anchored beyond Berry Head to transfer him to another ship that would convey him to his last exile on St. Helena. Folk memories of the occasion were prevalent in Brixham and many stories about him were handed down in families*].

We do not have much news. We have a cablegram at times, but depend upon the papers from home for news. Father sends me the [*Brixham Western*] "Guardian" and I can assure you the Brixham items are of rare interest to me. I was in high hopes of being home for the Regatta this year [*he had been serving in the Army before the War began*]. I saw it last year, but on the cinema pictures at Gibraltar [*Pathe newsreel*]. It was quite a treat I can assure you.

We must put up with our little lot, for we are required as much here as in France, or would not be sent here...The climate here is hot, and our summer is just starting....

Corporal Janes wasn't the only one serving in exotic climes. Mr. Samuel Oakford wrote from Bombay on 10 November; several Brixham men had enlisted in the Territorial force, based in Paignton, where 170 recruits left for India on 13th August, taking with them 4 guns, eight ammunition wagons, 3 general service wagons, not to mention 131 horses:

...I thought that you would like to hear, how we of the good old Town of Brixham in the 2nd Devon Battery [*Royal Field Artillery, Wessex Brigade*] have been faring on our outward journey to India. The weather has been really very fine, throughout the trip, and we've all enjoyed it immensely.

Our first stop was at Gib[raltar]. From Gib we journeyed to Malta, where we stayed four or five hours. Whilst we were in the harbour there, a brisk trade in cigarettes, baccy and fruit was carried on. From Malta we steamed to Port Said. There we stayed for half a day, while coal was taken aboard – more fruit and cigarettes – we entered the Suez Canal, and anchored...for...three days.

Next through the Gulf of Suez through the Red Sea to Aden...we stopped a day or so, much against our will, for we found it “rather warm”, especially at night. The voyage across the Indian Ocean was delightful, but although...good...It was “much gooder” to feel “Mother Earth” beneath one’s feet again. But then I am a landsman!

We go on by train tomorrow to our destination – a four days’ journey – sounds like the 9.45 to Brixham.

R. Janes

N.B. Due to the length of this feature , ‘From the Medicine Cabinet’ will continue in the next edition of the Newsletter.

Once again, we have received several favourable reviews on Tripadvisor:

TRIPADVISOR REVIEWS

LOVELY AND WELCOMING

‘I visited with my Dutch family...a small, but nicely presented collection. I was told the day before they had 90 visitors!’

May 2017

WORTH A VISIT

‘Small museum, but interesting. Especially liked the section on fishing and boat building. The volunteers present were very knowledgeable.’

May 2017, Paignton, Devon

GREAT LOCAL MUSEUM

‘We were greeted by two friendly volunteers who gave us a leaflet explaining the location of exhibits...a good history of Brixham and the area...Well worth a visit if you are in Brixham.’

April 2017, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire

SURPRISINGLY INTERESTING

‘...Well done to the volunteers, it’s easy to see a great deal of time and dedication has been given.’

February 2017, Gloucestershire

SUCH A GREAT MUSEUM

‘...Well worth a visit as the stories, displays and friendly staff really bring our history to life. Put it on the “to do” list, you’ll be glad you did.’

November 2016, Devon

SUCH A NICE PLACE

‘Bless the volunteers, they made our visit so lovely...’

October 2016, Norwich, Norfolk

And who could ask for more...

UNEXPECTED GEM

‘For a small local museum, it is a triumph.’

July 2016, Loughborough, Leicestershire

EVENTS CALENDAR

JULY

4th **COFFEE MORNING** Methodist Church Hall
10.00 - 12.00

24th **TALK - NIGEL SMALLBONES**
HIDDEN SECRETS OF BERRY HEAD
2.00 for 2.30 start

29th **QUIZ NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM**
7.00 FOR 7.30 START

AUGUST

21st **TALK - BRIDGET CUSACK - THE GREAT GALE OF BRIXHAM**
2.00 for 2.30 start

SEPTEMBER

25th **TALK - CRAIG BALLARD - FRIENDS OF THE VIGILANCE**
2.00 for 2.30 start

30th **QUIZ NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM**
7.00 FOR 7.30 START

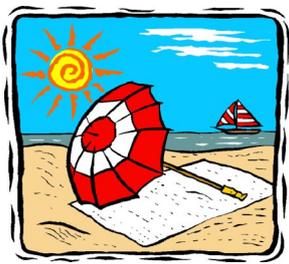
Please note that our quiz night is a regular event which usually takes place on the last Saturday of every other month, come along and join in the fun!

Brixham Heritage Museum, Bolton Cross, Brixham TQ5 8LZ

Telephone - 01803 856267

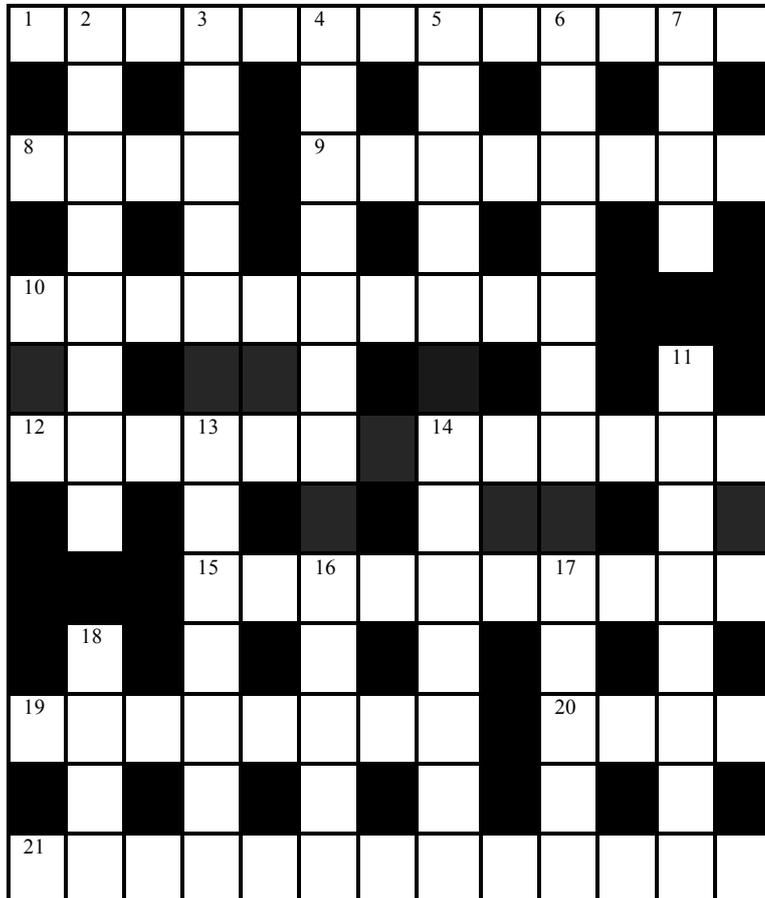
Website - www.brixhamheritage.org.uk

E-mail - mail@brixhamheritage.org.uk



SUMMER 2017 PRIZE CROSSWORD

We offer a small prize to the person who puts in a correct solution, drawn out of the hat! You don't have to use up all your brain cells—but you might find it 'challenging'. So do send in your solutions by the end of August please!



Across

1. Coastal wooded area nr. Elberry Cove (8, 5);
8. Talon (4);
9. Science of viniculture (8);
10. Not one specific place (10);
12. In need of sustenance (6);
14. Inert gas (6);
15. Basic form of verb (10);
19. Area near 1. (3,5);
20. To talk wildly (4);
21. Cetacean visitor to Torbay this year (8,5).

Down

2. Sedimentary deposit (8);
3. Oarsman (5);
4. Means of entry and egress (7);
5. Eric's partner's first name (5);
6. Source of liquid mineral (3,4);
7. Canines (4);
11. Endurance (8);
13. Ascending (5,2);
14. Browbeat or nag (7);
16. Botanical life of an area (5);
17. Means of illumination (5);
18. You (archaic) (4).

2017 Spring Crossword Solution

Across

5. Man and Boy; 8. Dine; 9. Tractors (8); 10. London; 11. Suffer; 13. Fabric;
15. Berets; 16. Primrose; 18. Eels; 19. Cream teas.

Down

1. Calendar; 2. Carton; 3. Ideals; 4. Fort; 6. Dinosaurs; 7. Freestyle; 12. Furzeham;
14. Choral; 15. Breath; 17. Mare.

PLEASE ACCEPT OUR APOLOGIES FOR THE ERROR ON THE CLUE 2 DOWN. WELL DONE TO THOSE THAT WORKED IT OUT. THE WINNER OF THE SPRING CROSSWORD IS VIV MIFSUD

**THE NEXT QUIZ NIGHT IS SATURDAY 29th JULY 2017
COME AND JOIN IN THE FUN ... 7PM FOR 7.30PM ...
£5 ENTRY TO INCLUDE A DRINK AND SNACKS!**