

CURATOR'S COLUMN



Zara Matthews,
Local Heritage Officer
(Harborough Museum)
and Curator of the
Market Harborough
Historical Society's
collection.

The magnificent Roman helmet from Hallaton went on permanent public display in January 2012 at Harborough Museum (see Vicki Scores report). A special exhibition 'Revealing the Hallaton Helmet' opened at the same time explaining the process "from first beeps of the metal detector" to the display in Harborough Museum.

Ten gold coins found near Peatling Magna, dating from 60-50 BC and made in northern France/Belgium, were acquired by the county council with grants from the V&A Purchase Fund, the Harborough Museum Purchase Fund, the Friends of Leicester & Leicestershire Museums and the Leicestershire Fieldworkers. The coins are now displayed in the Hallaton Treasure Gallery. The finder Steve Bestwick joined local dignitaries and members of the public at a special launch in July as part of the Festival of Archaeology.

Six trades certificates were acquired with the Harborough Museum Purchase Fund thanks to the efforts of museum Friend Philip Baidon. Issued between 1915 and 1924, the trades include locomotive engineers and firemen, carpenters and joiners, and hosiers. They came from the former Market Harboro' United Trades Club on the High Street.

The Highlights of Harborough project funded by Renaissance East Midlands continued thanks to the hard work of Mandeep Dhadialla, Elaine Brown, Carol Betts and Mike Walters. The project allows Museum visitors to search on a digital map for key photographs and artefacts by town, village or street. In 2012 the focus was on retail, and will include Falkner's boot and shoe workshop.

A steering group for the Friends of the Hallaton Treasure was set up, and the group drafted a set of rules for consideration at the September meeting. The purpose of the Friends of the Hallaton Treasure is to promote the finds known as the Hallaton Treasure and to support the interpretation of and access to these finds.



MIKE BROWN, DAVID JOHNSON & DOUGLAS WOOLDRIDGE OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY VIEW THE HELMET AT THE MUSEUM.

The Friends of Harborough Museum saw their numbers reach a record high and a new committee was established, chaired first by Lynne Bovey and now Len Holden. The purpose of the Friends of Harborough Museum is to provide additional support for and to increase awareness of the museum.

Harborough District Council released proposals to transform the present council offices, including the museum and library. If approved the whole building will be refurbished, the museum and library integrated on the first floor, with equal access from the front of the building, improved air circulation and customer toilets. The District's full council will make a final decision in October 2012.

Changes within Leicestershire County Council saw the integration of the former libraries, heritage and arts, and adult learning services into the new Communities & Well-Being. As part of these changes Fred Hartley, a previous Keeper of Harborough Museum and organiser of many History Days, retired, and I became the last, as well as longest serving, Keeper.

I would achieve nothing without the excellent Jane Tugwell, Karen Harrison, Mari-ann Hewitt and Pam Aucott, who keep the museum open and continue to provide a quality service to all our customers. Their work includes all aspects of the museum such as exhibitions, events, collections, administration, performance indicators, volunteers, learning and retail.

Harborough Museum continues to enjoy a very great deal of support from volunteers, several people help us every week, many more people help us ad hoc, as well as work experience students, and young people working for their Duke of Edinburgh awards.

For more information about Harborough Museum including opening times and special events, please phone the Museum on 01858 821085, email harboroughmuseum@leics.gov.uk or check the website www.leics.gov.uk/harboroughmuseum

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

This edition of the Historian embraces three themes. Firstly, memories of long term and prominent residents of Market Harborough. Marjorie Adcock and John Tillotson who have long served the community and continue to do so. Their memories of the changes undergone by the town and its working life are elegantly recorded.

Secondly, we returned to an industrial theme with an article by Michael Stroud on the nearby town of Desborough outlining its industrial development. David Holmes, of Leicestershire Industrial History Society, describes the growth and development of the shoe industry. While Harborough was not an important centre it had sufficient shoe making businesses for it to be considered part of the industry's local history. Finally, well known local historian Ken Day describes how Clarke's Carpet factory was fatally entwined with the Harborough Bank leading in 1843 to the demise of both.

Thirdly, some associations with the history of the nearby Leicestershire village of Thorpe Langton are examined. Elaine Edge traces the family history of Sir Richard Roberts and his relationship to Thorpe Langton throughout the 17th century, covering the critical Civil War period. A familiar author of this journal, Janice Morris, investigates a marriage between William Kendall of Faxton and Mary Kendall (nee Hales) of Thorpe Langton in the 19th century. This gives a fascinating insight into the trials and tribulations of researching family history, but as a result Janice has unearthed much of interest from the records. Elaine and Janice have added considerably to the knowledge we have of the village of Thorpe Langton.

Derek Seaton continues the theme of researching local and family history by relating where he gathered information on William Boulter who won the Victoria Cross in the First World War. He shows that military records can be a rich source of material.

Our last two articles are very much on the theme of Market Harborough. Well known local historian and museum archivist Pam Aucott reveals, through the Harborough Museum records, who dwelt in Aldwinkle's Yard in 1809 and in what trades and occupations they were involved. It is a wonderful snapshot of a specific time and place. Finally, Rosalind Willatts relates what impressions Colonel John Byng, a widely travelled gentleman, made of the locale. He seems to have been a hard man to please and his impressions of Harborough are poor, although he had positive things to say about Kettering and Lutterworth.

Please keep the articles coming. There is so much still to tell of our fascinating town and its hinterland.



Dr Len Holden
Editor of the
Harborough Historian