

Dear friends,

Welcome to the Forum's spring newsletter. It looks as if all of you have been busy over the winter months with some fantastic exhibitions coming up as well as events that have happened. May I also remind you all that it's that time of year again for renewing your membership of the Forum! A note regarding this is at the end of the newsletter. Don't forget the Forum's facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/NMHFF> as well as our website [www.nmhhforum.co.uk](http://www.nmhhforum.co.uk) which will keep you up to date with all events. Here we go with all your news....

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## CHRISTMAS AT ROCKINGHAM CASTLE



From 18<sup>th</sup> November to 6<sup>th</sup> December Rockingham Castle held a very successful Christmas opening.

For the first week the Castle was open to the general public and visitor numbers were only just below the highest ever number for this event. Over the following two weeks there were visits by private groups booked in advance. The Castle was decorated as it would have been for Christmas Eve 1881.

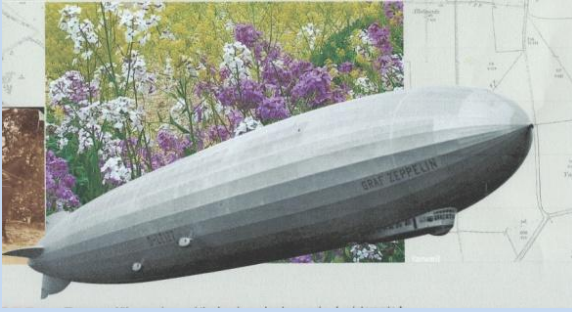


The shop and restaurant were open with a heated marquee in the courtyard for snacks and the sale of garden produce. From the moment the visitors entered the Castle they were transported back to the Victorian era as they were taken on a tour by guides in character dressed as the housekeeper, governess, butler or footman. On two evenings there was Carol singing in the courtyard by the 'Valley Voice' community Choir from Cottingham and Middleton.



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## 'A ZEPPELIN OVER YARWELL'



The title of the exhibition at Prebendal Manor Nassington is 'A Zeppelin Over Yarwell' an allusion to the sudden wartime appearance of a zeppelin over the village (to the considerable consternation of the villagers) which dropped a bomb in a nearby field. During this past winter the Prebendal Manor team has been working with the communities of Nassington, Yarwell, Wansford/Stibbington, Woodnewton and Apethorpe on our WWI project and exhibition.

The children of the Nassington Primary School have produced their own WWI leaflet documenting their research which started at the Church and continued with old school records. The children discovered that during an afternoon in October 14th 1917 the school children picked 412lbs of blackberries for jam making for the soldiers. They also discovered that Mr. Hoare, the then headmaster, was given four days off after his son Robert had died in action in 1917.

As a result of an appeal in the various villages' newsletters local adults have joined in to support the project by digging in their attics and cupboards for photographs, documents and artefacts from the period.

One exhibit will be the campaign medals of Charles Ernest Acred, whose grandson lives in Church Street, Nassington.



Another is the shrapnel fragment from a zeppelin that dropped a bomb in Potters Bar. The Owner's grandfather moved to Nassington in 1920 and this keep- sake was hidden away within his belongings only to be discovered years later.



Horace Longfoot who lived in Yarwell was just eighteen when he enlisted into the Northamptonshire Regiment on September 14<sup>th</sup> 1914. He was drafted to the front in Flanders on December 27<sup>th</sup> 1914 but he died of his wounds on January 5<sup>th</sup> 1915, probably during the Winter Operations. Horace's brother Harry was killed on March 21<sup>st</sup>

1918 when the Germans mounted the Spring Offensive.

Percy Compton, born in 1893, was a labourer living in Woodnewton with his parents, four brothers and his four sisters in a small four roomed dwelling. He enlisted into the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment and became a Company Sergeant Major. He won the DCM when he was leading a patrol over "no man's land" in broad daylight when they were pinned down by machine gun fire, all his patrol were either wounded or killed, he manually picked each one up and returned them to the British lines and he did that six times and was not personally injured. He was later killed on September 21<sup>st</sup> 1918.

For his bravery he was awarded Distinguished Conduct Medal, Military Medal, Belgian Croix de Guerre, 1914 Star 7 Bar War Medal, 1914-1918 Medal.

Research revealed that the Haycock Hotel, Wansford was in the private ownership of Sir Bache Cunard, who anxious to contribute to the war effort on the home front set up a munitions ordinance factory in the former cook-fighting barn at the Haycock Hotel.

The mannequins acquired have given the volunteers at the Manor some amusement, the female, who will be a land army girl, arrived with two right hands! The shoulders of the male are two wide for the WW1 army jacket! They had to remove his shoulders and arms to fit the jacket, which is on loan from Oundle Public School, and rather wonder what will happen when the unwanted arm is disposed into the refuse collection!

The 15th foot Zeppelin which we have built looks more like a giant flying slug is currently suspended on its line and is waiting to be raised to a greater height within the Tithe Barn Museum.

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## DESBOROUGH HERITAGE CENTRE

Desborough Heritage Centre is rejoicing in the acquisition of five very large display cabinets of several kinds obtained (with the help of nine strong men) from Weedon's National Fire Service Museum which is to move to the Cotswolds. Given the splendid size of these we have now an exhibition of Northamptonshire Lace Making from the extraordinary life-time's collection of one of our volunteers, with many examples of bobbins, lace etc. dating from the 18th century - with details relating to lace-makers of Desborough and nearby villages.

Work on the large window exhibition on the Railway Station (1857-1965) continues to expand. Our second window shows 19th century tools of small local crafts from woodwork to wrought iron. A steering group of our volunteers has been working intensively in preparation for a major exhibition, "Desborough 1914-1918: Men at War and Families at Home". This will include a display of the 140 men from Desborough killed over the five years, their faces and histories. Our town had a population of little more than 4,000 in 1914 and 725 went to war. We are seeking information about them all and the War's impact on the town and its people. Our visitors will notice our other new, smaller exhibitions, changes due to our wonderful, energetic volunteers.

## CORBYPHERITAGE CENTRE

The opening times for Corby Heritage Centre are; Monday – Friday 1pm to 4pm and Saturday 11am to 2pm closed Sundays and Bank Holidays. In the year 2000 one of the most important archaeological finds of the Late Iron Age in Britain was discovered near Hallaton, Leicestershire. The find became known as the Hallaton Treasure and was excavated by a group of dedicated amateur archaeologists, the Hallaton Fieldwork Group and professionals from University of Leicester Archaeological Services. Over 5000 Iron Age and Roman coins were found along with a Roman cavalry parade helmet, mysterious silver objects and the remains of hundreds of pigs. The site has been interpreted as a shrine of the local Corieltavi tribe who lived across the East Midlands in the Late Iron Age. The objects are seen as ritual deposits given to the gods, perhaps asking for protection during the turbulent period around the Roman conquest of Britain in AD 43. The Hallaton Treasure is of national importance being the largest number of Iron Age coins ever found. The tantalising question of how a Roman helmet came to be buried on a British Iron Age site has intrigued experts and the public alike. The finds were declared treasure and purchased by Leicestershire County Council for display in the East Midlands. This includes access via a permanent exhibition at Harborough Museum, Market Harborough (currently closed for refurbishment until spring 2014), for research at the Collections Resources Centre near Loughborough and through a Travelling Exhibition at Accredited museums across the East Midlands and beyond.



**Corby Heritage Centre**  
**11<sup>th</sup> March 2014 – Sat. 10<sup>th</sup> May**  
**Contact Billy Dalziel, Corby Borough Council**  
**01536 464284 or e-mail**  
**billy.dalziel@corby.gov.uk**

## SYWELL AVIATION MUSEUM

Sywell's grand opening will be on the 19th April 2014 when you will see the Sywell Aviation Museum emerge from its winter hibernation for the 2014 season. The traditional Easter Saturday opening will see an array of military vehicles from friends at the Troops Trucks and Stores Military Vehicle Group and the Military Vehicle Trust, drill demonstrations from the good folk of The Northamptonshire Home Guard, a modelling competition with the Northants Modelmakers Group, aircraft jet cockpits to try out and even a display by a Supermarine Spitfire!

The event will see the rededication of the Sywell Airfield Memorial, refurbished by Museum members and Heidi the Hawker Hunter's 60th birthday party - all this and its free!

The Museum is then open from 1030-1630hrs every Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holiday until the end of September - entry free, donations welcome! Free parking, onsite bar, cafe, restaurant and hotel, disabled toilets, small Museum shop and secondhand bookshop and superb aircraft viewing area.

This year the Museum Raffle returns - raising funds to repaint Heidi - details TBA on our website [www.sywellaerodrome.co.uk](http://www.sywellaerodrome.co.uk)

For more information contact [sywellaviationmuseum@gmail.com](mailto:sywellaviationmuseum@gmail.com) or call 07968061708 - group tour bookings now being taken!

Artefacts relating to Northamptonshire aviation always sought - and also any unbuilt model kits and aviation/military books...



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## THRAPSTON HERITAGE

### Heritage Centre with a difference!

The NMHH Forum Meeting held at Stoke Bruerne was a turning point for Thrapston Heritage. They had spent a number of years looking for somewhere in Thrapston that they could establish a Heritage Centre. No property had become available and it looked unlikely that one would do so in the immediate future.

This was mentioned to Jane Seddon who was Museum Development Officer at the time, and she suggested that they should have a look at the Quorn on-Line Museum website. The Quorn site is an on-line catalogue with digital images or transcriptions of their artefacts; 1823 items at the last count.

This gave them the idea that perhaps they could have an on-line catalogue but also take it one step further by using the digital artefacts to tell a story on a linked website. After what seemed, at the time, to be an endless task of preparing their bid, they were able to apply for Heritage Lottery funding. They were therefore very pleased to receive a grant in September 2012. The work then started to prepare a tender document that would provide the framework for the new on-line catalogue and website. They consulted widely and were greatly helped by Fiona Marshall. Eventually, following a formal process, the tender was awarded in October 2013 to Community Sites Ltd.

Since then they have been working with Jack Latimer from Community Sites Ltd, to design the new site. This has involved not only the graphical presentation but the extent and type of Meta-data, the optimum size of images, the standard formatting styles required, etc. etc. The site has been built using WordPress, which is an open source software, and they have had training on the use of a Content Management Software to populate the website.

They have now started to add digital copies of artefacts but it will be awhile before we match the number that Quorn have on their site. At the same time they are developing a linked website which will allow them to have exhibitions on-line. From the launch date at Easter 2014, it will always be work in progress as there will always be that new acquisition just around the corner.

The domain name for their site is [www.thrapstonheritage.org.uk](http://www.thrapstonheritage.org.uk)

## LYVEDEN NEW BIELD

The mild weather over the past few weeks' has provided many benefits at Lyveden. Visitors continue to enjoy the delights of the Cottage Tea Room, which celebrates its 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary in April 2014. They had a record breaking Sunday a couple of weekends ago with over 300 visitors to the property, which was an amazing result for a Sunday in March. As the grounds around Lyveden start to spring into life, the blossom can be enjoyed in the orchard and spring visitors such as Skylarks and Yellowhammers can be heard in the hedgerows.



They are busy planning the Lyveden Easter trail, sponsored by Cadbury's, which will run from Friday 18<sup>th</sup> April to Monday 21<sup>st</sup> April where visitors (young and old!) can become 'eggsplorers' around the grounds, finding clues to claim their chocolate prize.



## BOUGHTON HOUSE

### The redisplay of the French Porcelain



Boughton is resplendent in the breadth and depth of the Collection and the porcelain element is no exception. There are stunning pieces from the Sèvres and Meissen “factories” including those made for the French Kings and/or their Mistresses and a variety of Chinese Dehua figure, often described in the West as “blanc de chine”.

The Sèvres factory was created through the influence of Madame de Pompadour on King Louis XIV of France and chiefly made soft paste porcelain as opposed to the hard paste of the Orient and Meissen. The Sèvres porcelain was more costly to create but as it was able to incorporate vibrant colours and rich gilding, it quickly became famous. Many of the pieces now at Boughton were acquired by the 5<sup>th</sup> Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch in 1830-31, following the French Revolution.

Included within the Sèvres are 99 pieces from the great dinner service ordered by Louis XIV in 1751 with its striking turquoise blue colour and which, when ordered consisted of some 1,749 individual pieces of porcelain. The Boughton collection contains rare examples of the two largest meat plateaux, sweetmeat baskets and a unique mortar, only included in the very grandest of services.

For many years the porcelain has been principally displayed in the Audit Room, but with the arrival of Dame Rosalind Savill, formerly Director of the Wallace Collection and President of The French Porcelain Society, now a BLHT Trustee, it was decided to redisplay the Collection to update the

arrangement and celebrate the beauty of the pieces with modern lighting techniques.

Duke Richard led the project commissioning Michael Crick, The House Custodian, to create a new pair of cabinets, inspired by those already in the Audit Room. Throughout he worked closely with the Duke, Dame Rosalind and Gareth Fitzpatrick, Director of Collections and Archives to provide an appropriate setting for the porcelain. The new construction includes specialist lighting and glass to produce a stunning effect. Everything was completed in time for a visit by the prestigious French Porcelain Society; it was hosted by Duke Richard, and Dame Rosalind officially cut a ribbon to introduce the new display.

For the first time, all the Boughton Sèvres porcelain is now on display and is grouped in a more coherent manner, with the Louis XV dessert service exclusively occupying a whole cabinet and the new cabinets highlighting some of the more important and rare pieces, including) the two pot pourri vases, which date from 1759.



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## NORTHAMPTON MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY



Working in partnership Northampton Museums and Art Gallery and Royal & Derngate Theatre will investigate and explore the history and heritage of Northampton Borough during WWI. This will include researching physical collections (objects and archive), cultural heritage (plays, poetry, film, photography) and family oral history.

The diverse communities and schools in Northampton will engage with and learn about the shared history and heritage of WWI in a way that is relevant to their lives and locality. The project will be key to the town commemorations in the Cultural Quarter.



### Volunteering

They are looking for volunteers to help the project with research, oral history, exhibitions, theatre, events and activities, digitising collections and helping with the archive. If you would like to get involved please email

[janeseddon@northampton.gov.uk](mailto:janeseddon@northampton.gov.uk) or  
[museums@northampton.gov.uk](mailto:museums@northampton.gov.uk)

For all events at Northampton Museum please see [www.northampton.gov.uk/info/200246/events-and-exhibitions/1977/ww1/2](http://www.northampton.gov.uk/info/200246/events-and-exhibitions/1977/ww1/2)

### Northampton shoe collection goes viral!

One of the largest shoe collections in the world is going to be digitised and made available online for everyone to see. The virtual shoe collection will provide an accessible source of inspiration for designers, students, researchers and academics across the globe as well as for people who love shoes. The project is part of a wider drive by Northampton Borough Council's museum service to raise awareness of its world famous shoe collection and make it accessible to a greater audience.

Northampton museums have been collecting shoes since the 1870s and today there are over 12,000 pairs of shoes in the collection dating back from 1000BC to the present day. In 1997 the collection was given designated status by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council in recognition of its national and international importance.

International shoe and fashion designers, academic institutions, researchers, filmmakers, TV, radio and print media as well as other museums and galleries use the collection as a resource, but currently only around five per cent of the collection is available digitally.

This latest initiative, which will increase access to the collection and raise its profile, has been made possible thanks to a successful bid by the council to Arts Council England for £69,900 in grant funding.

Work will now start to photograph all of the shoes in the collection which will be featured online alongside descriptions of the shoes. The virtual collection is expected to be online by April 2016.

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**ROCKINGHAM CASTLE**  
**A Royal Castle for 450 years and 450 years a family home.**

Easter  
Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> April & Monday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2014

Easter is fast approaching and so is the Castle opening –traditionally the first open day of the Season, Easter Sunday will see them open the doors of the Castle again to visitors for 2014.

Come and join them for the annual Easter egg hunt taking place around the beautiful gardens; many fluorescent stars have been secreted amongst the yew hedges to be found and exchanged for chocolate eggs. The trail in the gardens this year is 'Wentworth's Gold'. The 'Guardian of Rockingham Castle', Wentworth the Griffin, has discovered that the Castle trove of gold coins has been stolen. Who could be the culprit? Help the gallant Wentworth find out. By following the trail of gold coins around the Castle grounds the villain's identity is revealed and earns the successful sleuth a Wentworth 'Badge of Honour'. Make your way to the Castle Courtyard to meet our Egg Hunt team who will be happy to assist.

If you've not visited Rockingham Castle before you are in for a real treat. From the friendly welcome at the Ticket Office to the well-informed and enthusiastic guiding team in the house, the beautiful formal and informal gardens with views across the remarkable Welland Valley to the fabulous lunches and cream teas available in Walkers House; there is something for everyone.

Those visiting the Castle can explore inside the beautiful parish church, St Leonard's, which sits inside the grounds and also take in the recently restored Ice House. Rockingham Castle has a wealth of stories to tell of its history, being built under the instruction of William the Conqueror and standing on this site for a little less than 1000 years.

For the last 450 years the Watson family have lived here at Rockingham Castle and the current owner, James Saunders Watson says "The ground is finally drying out after the incredibly wet winter we have just experienced and they are looking forward to a wonderful season ahead with the Easter Egg Hunt as the start of a full programme of events for us here at Rockingham.

Rockingham Castle grounds and Walkers House Restaurant open at 12 noon. The Castle opens at 1pm with last entry at 4.30pm. Details of the Castle & events taking place can be found at:  
[www.rockinghamcastle.com](http://www.rockinghamcastle.com)

Opening 2014

**From 20<sup>th</sup> April to the end of May.** Sundays & Bank Holiday Mondays  
**June to end of September.** Tuesdays, Sundays & Bank Holiday Mondays  
Open 12 noon – 5pm. Grounds open at 12 noon. Castle opens at 1pm.  
Enquiries: 01536 770240 and  
[estateoffice@rockinghamcastle.com](mailto:estateoffice@rockinghamcastle.com)  
[www.rockinghamcastle.com](http://www.rockinghamcastle.com)

Media enquiries: Nicola Moss at Rockingham Castle on 01536 770240 or 07759 106807 or  
[n.moss@rockinghamcastle.com](mailto:n.moss@rockinghamcastle.com)

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**FORUM MEMBERSHIP**

Membership Forms for 2014-2015 will be sent out shortly, prior to the AGM on the 24<sup>th</sup> April. Membership runs from 1st April 2014 - 31st March 2015 and will be £30. This is to be paid as soon as possible please. If payment is not received by the time of the Heritage Awards it could result in your application being withdrawn from the Awards.

The Membership Form is very simple to fill in and we do ask some key information to help the Forum stay in touch. We also kindly ask for data to be supplied in regards to visitor numbers, volunteers, employees etc over the previous calendar year. This information is very useful for the Forum to quantify the impact of heritage and tourism in the county so please do make sure you fill it in. The Treasurer will be available at the AGM and will be happy to receive your application forms and cheques on the evening.

**If you need an invoice** before you can make payment the Membership Form will explain what you need to do in regards to this.

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Compiled and edited by Carole Bancroft-Turner (Forum Coordinator) – [carole.bancroft-turner@virgin.net](mailto:carole.bancroft-turner@virgin.net)