

Dear friends,

A very warm welcome to the Forum's newsletter, the first in 2015 which is flying by!

The Forum, as many of you may now know, has a facebook page

<http://www.facebook.com/NMHHF>

as well as our website

<http://www.nmhhforum.co.uk>

Here we go with some member's news:

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### SYWELL AVIATION MUSEUM



Easter Saturday 4th April 2015 saw the annual Sywell Aviation Museum Grand Opening at the Northamptonshire Aerodrome. Now in its 14th year of opening, the Museum always likes to start it's 'season' with a bang! A large number of military vehicles from the Military Vehicle Trust and Troops Trucks and Stores Group attended with support from re-enactors from the Northamptonshire Home Guard and other groups. A stalwart supporter of the Museum is cockpit Supremo, Tony Collins who brought with him his Hawker Hunter F.1 WT684 and EE Canberra B(1) 6 WT319. The Museum's resident Hawker Hunter F.2 WN904 has been joined by a new addition - EE Canberra TT.18 WH887 which was open for viewing for the first time.

A memorial plaque was unveiled to those 21 airmen who lost their lives flying from Sywell (and satellite aerodrome Denton) 1939-1945 and is now on display in the Museum together with a Roll of Honour.



The free event coincided with the inaugural Radial Fly In at the airfield. The weather was less than kind but the Museum welcomed two Harvards, three Piper Cubs, an Auster, Yak 52, a rare Beech Staggerwing and later in the afternoon saw a brief appearance by the Grace Spitfire! Many thanks to the pilots for their support!



The Museum is now open for 2015 every weekend and bank holiday between 1030-1630hrs to the end of September, for more details:

[www.sywellaerodrome.co.uk/museum.php](http://www.sywellaerodrome.co.uk/museum.php)  
[sywellaerodrome@gmail.com](mailto:sywellaerodrome@gmail.com) 07968061708.

## BURTON LATIMER HERITAGE SOCIETY

Preparations over the winter for the Heritage Museum's next exhibition: "Clickers, Cutters and Quarrymen - Burton at Work", culminated in the opening on Saturday 7th March. With the disappearance of the town's shoemaking and clothing industries, it is time to take a look back to the time when more people came to work in Burton factories than travelled to other places to find work.

Younger people today might find it hard to imagine the crowds of factory workers that thronged the streets on the way home at "dinner time" and "tea time" but this was a common sight in the middle years of the twentieth century.

Burton Latimer's industrialisation began with the building of Hart & Levy's clothing factory in Bakehouse Lane in 1884 but traditional shoemaking had been taking place in cottages for many years previous to that. Later, along with their wash-houses, lavatories and pigsties, all the Victorian houses would include a "shop" where men would work on shoe components such as closing uppers, usually on hired machines, then shoe agents would act as middlemen between them and the factories and much the same applied to the clothing industry. The first purpose-built shoe factories were built in 1896 but the only one still standing is behind 9 Alexandra Street.

The ironstone industry, Weetabix and Alumasc will also feature in the exhibition. The exhibition will be open on Thursdays and Saturdays 1000 to 1300 hours in the Heritage Museum within the Civic Centre in Burton Latimer's High Street (opposite Sainsbury's) until it closes on Saturday 6th June. Admission is free.

## EARLS BARTON MUSEUM

### BARTON BOYS – LOST BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

To mark the centenary of the First World War, The Earls Barton War Memorial Project Group came together and published a compilation book paying tribute to each of the 100 men named on the village's war memorial, and well as Northamptonshire's regiment in general. The group worked tirelessly for 2 years collecting contributions from local people, including poppy paintings by pupils at Earls Barton Infant School. One resident Amos Line, now aged 96, shared his story of life as a gunner during the Second World War and that of his father, of the same name, who served in the First World War.

The group's coordinator, Iona Flanagan, said: "We all contributed our own interests to research in the book; I'm more into social history while some the members had expertise in the military side. We've also had involvement from the British Legion and, as the museum are a charitable trust, and we are very grateful to the Northamptonshire Community Foundation who provided us with the funding to print 300 copies of the book."

The finished book, Barton Boys – Lost But Not Forgotten, was launched on Saturday, May 17 2014 at a tea party event at Jeyes of Earls Barton for contributors and the public. Copies of the book are available from Jeyes at a cost of £10.





## CORBYS HERITAGE CENTRE

### Corby's Electronic Brain

In May 1955 a proposal was put before those gathered at the Chairman's Conference at Stewarts and Lloyds Steel Works Corby, the proposal asked the board to part with £65,000 to purchase one of the worlds first commercial computers.

This proposal was a milestone on several counts, not least that £65,000 in the mid 1950's was a huge sum of money, but if this kind of money was to be spent then surely the technology was tried and tested, well no it wasn't. Computers at this time were in their infancy and were restricted to a few establishments mainly working in research where the computer performed academic calculations, the public's perception of these machines was as mechanical parlour tricks performing games of noughts and crosses and chess and little else.

Mr N C Pollock the author of the proposal put before the board at Stewarts and Lloyds had a huge task to persuade those in attendance at the conference that an Electronic Computer was what they needed. He needed to convince the Chairman and others of his belief in this new technology, he starts by saying 'These machines are neither figments of the latest Science Fiction, nor paper concepts on the drawing board. Their achievements are staggering and improvements are going ahead extremely fast.' If Mr Pollock could have seen into the future he would have been amazed at just how prophetic this comment was, computers are the King Pin of almost everything we do in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Mr Pollock's selling point was the savings in wage costs for the company through the need for less clerical staff to calculate wages and other office duties such as stock control, a computer capable of scientific calculations could also be hired to other businesses at £75 per hour.

Stewarts and Lloyds were convinced that a computer was the way forward and they invested in this strange new technology and in June 1957 a computer known as LEO II was duly purchased.

The name LEO stood for Lyon's Electronic Office, this choice of the LEO II highlights the risks that British companies just like Corby's Stewarts and Lloyds were prepared to take to keep ahead of competitors. Lyon's produced and operated the world's first commercial business computer LEO I and it came into operation months before nay equivalent in America. This machine caused such a

stir that a separate company was started by Lyon's to produce a further 13 machines on of which was purchased by Corby Steel Works.

LEO II could calculate one persons wage in under 1.5 seconds a skilled clerk was estimated to take around 8 minutes, this speed was a watershed in pushing the development of computers for business, speed meant less time on laborious tasks and required less staff, the cost savings were immense.

Stewarts and Lloyds were regular at the forefront of technological change and LEO II was an important part of the race to keep ahead of the competition, LEO performed its duties until 1971.



## OUNDLE MUSEUM

This year's museum exhibition also offers a glimpse into some of the social history, Oundle's people, their occupations and trades from the year 1851. The committee spent the winter researching the census of 1851 and the rich display of local trades are linked to a map of the town.

The town had a few tailors and dressmakers and one 'stay maker' or corset maker named Esther Afford. She was 22 years old and lived with her widowed mother and 4 other siblings. We have been fortunate to be able to borrow a lovely corset from Northampton Museum for our display



[www.oundlemuseum.org.uk](http://www.oundlemuseum.org.uk)

## BOUGHTON HOUSE

**Thoughts from the Gardens.....** Bernard shares his philosophy on how he plans his working days:

'Here at Boughton, we use the biodynamic calendar as a guide to the jobs we are doing. This is a system which works in harmony with the changing rhythms of the moon and planets. According to this principle some days are best for concentrating on the flowering aspect of the plants, others are better for leaf, fruit or root elements, so we try to plan our jobs with this in mind.

The year progresses and much to do!

The lawns need to be scarified and the borders trimmed and repaired ready for the later lush growth. The nursery stock is being tidied and reported – with special attention to the plants with a connection to Boughton House – for example penstemon Countess of Daleith and viola Boughton Blue.

The biodynamic system informs us that there are several days beneficial for plants for fruit – helping us plan for potting up our tomatoes and cucumbers.”



## NORTHAMPTON MUSEUM

### **Conflict & Community Project – Northampton Remembers the First World War**

To commemorate 100 years since World War 1, Northampton Museum & Art Gallery and Royal & Derngate theatre have launched a project to tell the story of Northampton during this time. Conflict & Community – Northampton remembers the First World War involves delving into the archives, discovering and recording hidden histories of local people, family activity days, theatre performances and programmes of public talks.

#### **Do you have:**

- Family stories from the war years
- Objects, photos or memorabilia from this period
- Family or local history research relating to this period that you'd like to share

If you would like to share your memories, stories or research, we would love to hear from you. Please contact the project officer using the details below:

**Tel: 01604 837 669**

**Email: [hsanghera@northampton.gov.uk](mailto:hsanghera@northampton.gov.uk)**

A promotional poster for the Aubers Ridge Event at Abington Park Museum. The poster features a collage of images including a person in a trench, a large group of soldiers, and a hand holding a red poppy. The text includes 'Free', 'Abington Park Museum', 'Aubers Ridge Event', 'Saturday 9 May • 12 - 4pm', and details about a talk by Geoff Grainger. The bottom of the poster features logos for Northampton Museum & Art Gallery, Lottery Funded, and Royal & Derngate & Northampton.

**Free**

ABINGTON PARK MUSEUM

**AUBERS RIDGE EVENT**

Saturday 9 May • 12 - 4pm

Find out about the battle through

- meeting re-enactors
- listening to our choir
- handling objects
- children's activities
- research your First World War family history and much more.

**The Slaughter of The Steelbacks Talk by Geoff Grainger**

1pm

Ring 01604 837397 to book

**Conflict & Community**

NORTHAMPTON REMEMBERS THE FIRST WORLD WAR

NORTHAMPTON MUSEUM & ART GALLERY  
Heritage Lottery Funded

ROYAL & DERNGATE & NORTHAMPTON



**Talks**  
at Northampton Museum & Art Gallery

**From Wives and Daughters to Citizens**  
Sat 6 June, 2pm  
In 1914 many areas of life were closed to women. However, their role during the war helped to modify attitudes. Local researcher John Buckell explores how Northampton women contributed to this change.

**Against the Tide - Northampton Conscientious Objectors in World War One**  
Wed 1 July, 7pm  
A significant minority in Britain opposed the First World War. This talk by local researcher John Buckell, is about Northampton men and women who made a public stand for peace.

**The War Memorials of Northampton Town**  
Sat 18 July, 2pm  
This talk by local researcher Angela Malin will look at the stories behind the various war memorials and regimental memorials to be found around the town.

**For Bravery in the Field**  
Thurs 6 August, 7pm  
Researcher David Folwell explores the story of men from Northampton awarded medals for gallantry during the First World War.

**Mixed Messages: A peek at the media and propaganda in World War One**  
Sat 22 August, 2pm  
Truth has long been cited as the first casualty of war. How were the realities of the trenches conveyed between the battlefield and home front? Former news librarian and member of the Western Front Association Kate Willis explores.

**Conflict & Community**  
NORTHAMPTON REMEMBERS THE FIRST WORLD WAR

NORTHAMPTON MUSEUMS & ART GALLERY  
Heritage Lottery Fund  
LOTTERY FUNDED  
ROYAL DERNGATE & NORTHAMPTON

## WOLLASTON MUSEUM

Wollaston Museum opened again on Easter Sunday. As well as the local history museum telling the history of Wollaston, Curiosity Cottage demonstrating life in the early 1900s, and our motte and bailey Beacon Hill, we have a newly restored garden area for you to enjoy. This was



formerly the cemetery attached to the Congregational Chapel, which now houses the Museum. We plan to add some scented flowers and some seating so that visitors can relax in the sunshine – with any luck! We also have a new display cabinet containing several trophies. This was formerly at the Wollaston Post Office but is now available to see at the Museum. What else can you expect to see? How about a stool which was used at the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, the old Wollaston School bell, a boxing trophy belt, and a Dictaphone machine (for which we can find little information but is a fascinating piece of social history). We certainly have an eclectic collection! We have also recently had a donation of a doll which again, we are researching.



Come and visit on Sundays and Wednesdays, 2.30 to 4.30, 102 High Street, Wollaston, NN29 7RJ. FREE ENTRY.

There is a little museum  
Tucked right away  
It tells the story of Wollaston folk  
Back in the day

There's a footwear display  
Including Doc Marten boots  
Scott Bader and Photography  
And horseradish roots!

Wollaston Museum has got the lot.  
Bones and coins and very old rocks  
Paintings and toys and the old school bell  
And even a 1751 clock!

[www.facebook.com/WollastonMuseum](http://www.facebook.com/WollastonMuseum) or 07804 241430

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

## Speakers wanted for WW1 symposium

Sat 10<sup>th</sup> October 2015

Are you interested in sharing your knowledge and research about World War 1 and its impact on Northampton & Northamptonshire?

We are currently looking for people with information to share with others at a history symposium on 10.10.15 which will be held at both the museum and theatre venues.

The event is intended to explore the legacy of the conflict on the town and county. Talks can be up to 1 hour in length.

If you are interested in speaking or wish to propose a topic, please contact the project officer at [hsanghera@northampton.gov.uk](mailto:hsanghera@northampton.gov.uk)

Deadline for submissions: 13<sup>th</sup> July 2015

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