Dear friends,

A very warm welcome to this special summer edition of the Forum’s newsletter. In this newsletter I am going to highlight the winners and also the entrants of the HERITAGE AWARDS 2013.

The Forum, as many of you may now know, has a facebook page so please let me have your news, http://www.facebook.com/NMHHF as well as our website www.nmhhforum.co.uk

Carole

**********************************************************

THE 2013 HERITAGE AWARDS

This year the awards ceremony was held at the wonderful Boughton House near Kettering and was attended by over 100 people. We were very grateful for the sponsorship of The University of Northampton and the support of BBC Radio Northampton. The evening was a great success for the Forum and was a great opportunity to highlight YOU the members and your organisations. Here are the winners:

**Best Exhibition:** Kettering Museum and Art Gallery  
**Best Special Project:** Sywell Aviation Museum  
**Work with Children/Young People:** Wollaston Heritage Society  
**Best Volunteer Project:** The Canal Museum Stoke Bruerne  
**Best Project on a Limited Budget:** Highly Commended – Prebendal Manor House, Nassington  
**Winner:** Desborough Heritage Centre  
**Best Event for Museum:** Wellingborough Museum  
**Judges Special Award:** Piddington Roman Villa Museum  
**Forum Honorary Award:** Ioan Thomas from Oundle Museum  
**People’s Choice Award:** Sywell Aviation Museum  
**Historic Site of the Year:** Canons Ashby
**KETTERING MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY**

“We were delighted to achieve a hat trick this year winning ‘Best Exhibition’ for the third year running. Despite the hard work involved the exhibition’s popularity and quality, there was inevitably an amount of doubt “could we really retain the category for a third year?” There was an instant WOW factor and the award has meant more than ever for the staff, volunteers and others involved.. and weeks on we haven’t stopped smiling!

The exhibition ‘American Arrivals’ was on display from September to November 2012 and received huge visitor interest with almost 2700 people visiting from all over the UK. The exhibition explored the friendly invasion of thousands of American servicemen into the local area during WWII. It explored the social and cultural effects that these new arrivals had within Britain and more locally within Kettering Borough, from language, food and drink, music, sport, entertainment, dancing and romancing – and how for many Britons, getting to know the Americans came to be a refreshing highlight of the war. 2012 itself marked 70 years since the first American servicemen arrived in the Borough, at Grafton Underwood in 1942.

The exhibition sits as part of a wider HLF project in partnership between Kettering Borough Council and Northamptonshire County Council (Library Service) focusing on Kettering’s WWII legacy and in particular the influences of American personnel stationed locally. It was a great opportunity to work with the local community capturing memories and bringing back to life aspects of the wartime town, both fond memories and those of the hardships of war.

Visitors came to see the exhibition from across the country and a highlight was the four separate families travelling from far and wide, who visited the exhibition having a family member in each who had been born to a local woman and an American servicemen. In each case these families with the assistance of the exhibition and local contacts were able to find out more about their heritage.

We look forward to re-showing the exhibition in local libraries in the future and later this year will launch the final aspects of the project – an airbase tour and education resources for schools and community groups etc.

Valerie Hitchman (Head of Community Services at Kettering Borough Council) said; “*Winning the Best Exhibition for the third year running just goes to show that local residents have an award winning museum in Kettering Town Centre.*”

Councilor Jan Smith (Portfolio Holder for Community and Culture) said “*The Manor House Museum and Alfred East Art Gallery have had a fantastic year of free exhibitions and activities that have been popular with families looking for things to do. The American Arrivals exhibition in particular was a highlight which I am really pleased has been acknowledged by our peers.*”
SYWELL AVIATION MUSEUM DOUBLE AWARD WINNER AT HERITAGE AWARDS

We are delighted to report that Sywell Aviation Museum triumphed twice at the Awards. The first award was for Best Special Project which the Museum won (against stiff competition - it was the most hotly contested category of the night with 6 shortlisted projects) for Operation Hawker Hunter which placed the ONLY aircraft on Public display in Northamptonshire in 2012.

The second award was voted for by the Public. The Museum was voted favourite Museum in the PEOPLES’ CHOICE CATEGORY - visitors, friends and supporters all filled out voting forms and we were absolutely stunned to discover we had won - against HLF funded museums, those with paid full time staff and professional PR and fundraising teams! This award is the real cherry on the cake for us and means a huge amount to our volunteer team! Also big thanks to Northants Museums & Historic Houses Forum and BBC Radio Northampton for their support - to listen to the post-awards radio interview click below (about 42 mins in) http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01bww7c

“This seems a good time to do a Museum update! Landscaping around the Hunter is now complete with new fencing, flowerbeds and more! The Museum is also undergoing a FULL external repaint in a more authentic WW2 olive drab green.

Heidi the Hunter also now has her original powerplant on display - namely a sectioned Armstrong Siddeley Sapphire Jet Engine delivered about ten days ago thanks to the kind offices of The Aeroplane Collection, Hooton Park, Liverpool http://www.theaeroplanecollection.org/ who made a superb job of restoring the unit and have placed it on loan with us - what a top bunch of blokes! For more on the Sapphire, see here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armstrong_Siddeley_Sapphire

In addition, Heidi now has her teeth back! A 30mm ADEN Cannon , of which she carried four, has been acquired and will be placed on display shortly: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ADEN_cannon

In addition the Museum has recently received further additions to its Ordnance Collection; a Bae Skyflash Air to Air Missile from the top fellows at Newark Air Museum (thanks Dave!), and the final one for the Museum’s ‘set’ of WW2 unguided rockets - a 60lb RP3 Rocket Projectile courtesy of an exchange with The Royal Air Force Museum Stafford. The RP3 was used extensively in the latter part of WW2 and the 60lb version was very successful when used by Hawker Typhoon fighter-bombers against German Armour - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RP-3. Skyflash was a British upgrade of the American AIM-7 Sparrow air-to-air missile and following its introduction in 1978 was only phased out in 2006 with the replacement of the Tornado F.3 with the Euro fighter Typhoon. This missile then, brings our collection bang up to date! http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skyflash. There is more exciting news to come in due course including a new aircraft addition to the Museum....... The Museum is open every weekend and bank holiday 1030-1630 until the end of September - do come over and see us and see what the fuss is all about - after all we are now Northamptonshire's Favourite Museum of 2013 - as voted for by YOU!”
WOLLASTON HERITAGE SOCIETY

Wollaston entered their exhibition of delightful ‘then and now pictures’ using oil paintings done by a local artist in the 20th Century and modern photographs.

The committee and members were thrilled to hear that they had won the Award for Working with Children and Young People at the ceremony. The young people themselves, Jess and Becky from The University of Northampton were also thrilled for them and sent congratulatory messages. Their ‘honorary young people’ Charlie and Sarah, who designed the backdrop to the exhibit and who attended the ceremony with us were also very pleased. For Angela it was the culmination of several comments – “Jon-Paul Carr letting her know about the placements, Charlie wanting to ‘do something to help’ and other comments about our charming little oil paintings which deserved more attention and a better environment (which they are working on next). All in all many thanks NMHHF!”

THE CANAL MUSEUM STOKE BruERNE

The winning project was the restoration of Nb Sculptor (an ex-working boat) which was only possible through the combined efforts of volunteers working alongside skilled professionals. The project was able to reduce costs and utilise this combined expertise and the support of colleagues at the Heritage Boatyard and Boat Museum Society at Ellesmere Port. The restoration cost was entirely met through donations, bequests and fundraising.
This next Award is a new one for the Forum, Best Project on a Limited Budget, as we wanted to give all the small volunteer run museums a chance to show off what they can do with little expense.

**PREBENDAL MANOR HOUSE, NASSINGTON**

The Prebendal Manor House and Tithe Barn Museum were awarded ‘Highly Commended’ for their entry ‘Unlocking the Medieval Gardens’. They developed a QR code tour of the Medieval garden to provide additional information to that on their information boards. This project had to be carried out on a very limited budget due to lack of funds and they were very pleased indeed to have been awarded highly commended.

A visitor using the QR code

**DESBOROUGH HERITAGE CENTRE**

The winner was Desborough for their display of childhood memories. With large windows facing the main street in Desborough, a volunteer workforce and little funding, displays need to be eye-catching and relevant to passers-by to increase footfall and revenue. The display used objects from their collection supplemented by artefacts, memories and photographs from local people to provide a visual interpretation of their childhood experiences centred around infancy, home-life and schooling. Local people had been invited to submit a sentence or two about their childhood and these came in by the hundred together with photographs. Overall they provided an informative, eye-catching, amusing and memory provoking display and they were thrilled to have won this category. They were presented their award by the Mayor of Kettering Kelli Watts.
WELLINGBOROUGH MUSEUM

Best Museum Event was won by Wellingborough Museum for their event ‘Wellingborough 100’, celebrating 100 years of United Counties buses. The highlight for many people was to see the Leyland S3 bus in Wellingborough blue, red and cream livery from 1913 and it was used to recreate a scene from an old original photograph.

The judges this year decided they would like to award a ‘Judges Special Award’ and this went to PIDDINGTON ROMAN VILLA MUSEUM for their ‘Access all areas’ event. The event took place at the Museum, the Village Hall and the Roman Villa site where excavation was taking place. The public were invited to see what the volunteers get up to and view all aspects of the Society at work. This included demonstrations of conservation work on the finds from the villa site.

Liz Friendship-Taylor said “We were thrilled to win as it is an acknowledgement of the commitment and the diverse skills of our increasingly large group of dedicated volunteers”.

PIDDINGTON ROMAN VILLA MUSEUM

Liz Friendship-Taylor said “We were thrilled to win as it is an acknowledgement of the commitment and the diverse skills of our increasingly large group of dedicated volunteers”.
The Forum committee decided this year they would like to honour a person who has done so much for the heritage of Northamptonshire being a founder member of the original Museums Forum committee. Ioan Thomas from Oundle Museum was awarded a special ‘Honorary Award’. His energy and enthusiasm for the Forum in its infancy has left us with a successful organisation of over 40 members which now include many Historic Houses. He was absolutely thrilled to have been given this award and pleased that all his hard work in the beginning has been acknowledged.

The last award of the evening was ‘Heritage Site of the Year’ and this was chosen by the judges from all the shortlisted entrants. The winner was:

**CANONS ASHBY**

Their project ‘A Labour of Love’ was a 5 year garden restoration. The gardens at Canons Ashby were virtually meadow 32 years ago when the property was donated to the National Trust. This project focussed on restoring the 18th Century garden design with volunteers at the heart of the work involved and funding from the National Trust and donations from the Northampton and Rugby National Trust Associations. All at Canons Ashby were thrilled to have received the Award and it was a real boost for all the volunteers involved.

Some members of Oundle Museum Committee with Ioan and Alice Thomas.
Last and by no means least! I would like to acknowledge and thank all the entrants into the Awards this year – it was a very hard year for the judges with some fantastic entries. For all those who didn’t make the evening these are the other entries;

**Best Exhibition:** The Canal Museum for Waggonway, Tramways and Tunnels – a re-vamp of a display on the Blisworth Tunnel tramway with new interpretation panels.

**Best Special Project:**
**Oundle Museum** for Digs and Discoveries – a special exhibition on the archaeology of the local area including the Roman Town of Ashton.
**Kettering Museum and Art Gallery** for Gilty Pleasures – the largest display of the permanent collection seen for 100 years displaying 382 paintings in a ‘salon style’ hang.
**Lamport Hall** for ‘Bog House Restoration’ – a project to restore an outdoor loo which the gardeners would have used in days gone by.

**Best Volunteer Project:**
**Rushden Museum** for ‘At your Public Service’ – an exhibition about local public services to show how they have developed over the years and the impact they have had on people’s lives.

**Best Project on a Limited Budget:**
**Burton Latimer Heritage Museum** – ‘A Sense of Place’ is a website run entirely by the volunteers and a respected portal to the history of the town.

**Best Event for Museum:**
**The Canal Museum** Stoke Bruerne for Gala weekend – a weekend of craft, swan boats and pirates!
**Kettering Museum and Art Gallery** for ‘American Dance Experience’ – an authentic feel of the music and dance of the 1940’s was re-created with live performances and dance lessons.

**Entrants for ‘The People’s Choice’ Award:**

**THANKS**
A grateful thanks to our Sponsors The University of Northampton and supporters BBC Radio Northampton for letting us ‘borrow’ John Griff (our amazing Master of Ceremonies) and the Arts Council England for help with the judging process. Also many many thanks to our judges who gave up a lot of their precious time.

Also thanks to Angela who helped with the invitation and acceptance list. We also had some lovely notes of thanks, two are below;

“Hello Carole, I felt I must send a note of congratulations to you and all involved with the Heritage Awards. It was a terrific evening and very well organised and orchestrated.

A big thank you to all who put in the time and effort to organise this event and enable it to continue this year and hopefully future years.

A BIG well done. Roy Sharp (Honorary Forum Member and former Chair)”

“Sarah and Carole created such a lovely event last night. I heard so many good comments from the crowd regarding the ceremony. They both worked so hard and should be really proud of what they achieved.

Best Wishes, Jane Seddon”

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