Dear friends,

Welcome to the Forum’s Autumn newsletter. There has been lots of news from members with successful events and exhibitions all summer and more to come.

The Forum, as many of you may now know, has a facebook page http://www.facebook.com/NMHHF as well as our website www.nmhhforum.co.uk

Forum Patron HRH Duke of Gloucester

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Check out this brilliant exhibition at Northampton Museum, on until 5th January.

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Exciting news from Daventry Museum

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Daventry Museum – Shaping History, Sharing Stories

After a long campaign by members of the Daventry Community, to ensure Daventry retained its museum, 14th September 2013 saw the re-opening and launch of the new Daventry Museum – Sharing Stories – a People’s Museum for Daventry.

To celebrate this long awaited event, volunteers were invited to be involved in the opening ceremony and welcome members of the public to view its vibrant and interesting exhibition space and displays.

Radio Northampton’s Treasure Quest also paid a cryptic visit to the opening and whilst enjoying tea and cake, they admired the pictures and photos on the ‘Wall of Faces’ of Daventry People, past and present.

The Town Council building has been refurbished, with the help of HLF and SITA funding, to ensure the artefacts and information on Daventry can be displayed in a more professional and pleasing way. Thanks to the volunteers, both past and present it is now a cultural hub for the town, where people of Daventry can tell their own stories.

The museum is open Tuesday to Friday 9.30 am until 1.30 pm and the first Saturday of every month from 10 am until 4 pm or by prior appointment. For more information call 01327 301246 or go to www.davtrymuseum.org.uk
KELMARSH HALL - EVENTS COMING UP

Thursday 31st October - **Halloween Party** – 5pm to 8pm, Join us for an alternative to trick or treating—there will be spooky stories, apple bobbing, face painting, crafts and more. Tickets are £7.50 per child which includes refreshments and all activities. Free entry for children aged five and under. Some activities will be outside so remember to wrap up! Booking is essential so call 01604 686543 to book a place.

Saturday 31st November and Sunday 1st December **The Kelmarsh Christmas Experience** 10am to 6pm - Featuring:
- Ice-skating rink (sessions should be booked in advance), Father Christmas, Bespoke Christmas gifts, Hot refreshments, Christmas decoration workshop for children, Choirs, Cooking demonstrations, Wreath-making demonstrations and Christmas trees for sale.

December 10th and 11th
**The Flower School – Christmas door wreath workshop** 10am-3pm £95 or £76 for RHS members (Dec 10th only) - includes all materials, refreshments and lunch

December 12th and 13th
**Christmas table decoration course** 10am to 1pm £45 – includes all materials and refreshments

A major bit of news from Kelmarsh is their plans to bring a derelict ‘below stairs’ area of the hall back to life, to tell the stories of those who worked in the hall and served its residents. A grant awarded by the HLF will be used to put together a full Lottery application for the £1m project.

Dating back to 1800, the basement of the main house contains a butler’s pantry, brew house, wine cellar, bakehouse and footman’s bedroom. A separate laundry block - which is accessed from the basement via a long underground tunnel - includes a wash house along with ironing and fuel rooms.

While some of the areas are in extremely poor condition, some well-preserved original cupboards and fittings remain. These, along with other features from different phases of occupation, will be retained and conserved, starting with the laundry area. Once the project is complete, it will provide a valuable education resource for both visiting school groups and general visitors. For instance, families will be able to take part in fabric and textile activities in the laundry area, or have a go at bread-making in the bakehouse.

General Manager Lesley Denton said the project was a manifestation of the Kelmarsh Trust’s aim to conserve the built environment and promote education about the hall. She said: "We’re delighted to have received a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to help us put together our Lottery application. It marks an exciting step forward in the biggest project we have undertaken for some years. We want people to visit Kelmarsh and learn about their own and other people’s history by taking part in educational activities. We have identified the need for more heritage-related family activities which the whole family can enjoy together, and these are things we want to deliver in a heritage environment”.

EAST CARLTON COUNTRY PARK
STDOUT MUSEUM – 20th Anniversary

How and when did it all start – and why did Oundle not have a museum before then? The origin lies in a group of people who became friends through studying in 1981 in a course on the history of Oundle. This led to a small exhibition held for three days in the Yarrow Gallery of Oundle School, and from that Oundle Historical Society took root. Ten years later the need for a museum had become clear.

The Town Council encouraged this idea and offered the upstairs room in the Old Drill Hall at a peppercorn rent. Very helpful advice was given by the East Midlands Museum Service and a visit was arranged to a new museum recently started near Nottingham when many useful ideas, especially about the need for good storage and for keeping records, were taken on board. A constitution was written, Trustees were appointed - and on 24th May 1994 the first exhibition opened.

The day to day running of the Museum is carried out by a Management Committee of about 14 people who meet once a month. They decide the theme for the year’s exhibition and spend the three months from the end of November till the beginning of March preparing the display. We have heard the comment that a committee involving that number of people could not work well, but we find that it has brought together a marvelous range of talents that have been a key to the success of the Museum. A major step forward was taken at the Millennium when we were able to move into the Courthouse.

The Town Council had obtained grants which enabled them to relocate at the Courthouse and the Heritage Lottery Fund made £50,000 available for furnishing the Museum.

Since the Museum opened it has been possible to build up the collection and to maintain very careful records of acquisitions and loans made for current exhibitions. A large collection of items associated with Oundle Brewery donated by Jim Irving are a remarkable feature. The range in our collection, together with the willingness of people and other museums to lend articles, has made it possible for a different theme to be displayed during each of the twenty years since 1994. The current committee is celebrating the 20th Anniversary with a buffet evening in November inviting past committee members and trustees.

SYWELL’s Season Zooms to a close for 2013

Following the terrific success at the Heritage Awards in July, Sywell Aviation Museum has had a very busy season! Due in no small part to the Awards’ publicity, we had record numbers visiting us in August and September, their numbers boosted by several large events at the aerodrome. The main effort has been to repaint the whole Museum building – no small task as it is corrugated and you can’t use a roller to do it! All 200ft of it had to be brush painted by our volunteers and now looks very smart in a correct wartime olive drab. The Museum officially closed at the end of September and our thoughts now concentrate on our Grand Opening next year – Easter Saturday, 19th April 2014. It is hoped that our friends in the re-enactment and military vehicle world will again support us and a Spitfire will be in attendance to make the opening really special. It is also planned to refurbish and rededicate the aerodrome memorial to those who flew from Sywell, including a large contingent of Free French. With that in mind, contact has been made with the French Embassy in London with a view to representatives of the French Air Force (Armee De L’Air) attending.

Heidi the Hawker Hunter will not be neglected either, with luck, by the end of next year, she will have a new coat of paint and wear the original 257 Squadron markings she wore in 1954 when she was new – 2014 is Heidi’s 60th birthday!

We also hope to revamp our displays relating to The Great War, with the centenary due next year. In addition we hope to put a special display together relating to Sywell’s resident wartime artist – Frank Spencer. The Museum has 8 of his paintings (they were always of a twin engine Wellington bomber, painted with aircraft dope on surplus plywood bomber flooring) – he often gave them out as presents. If you have such a painting – (they are very distinctive, in a rather amateurish but pleasing 1930’s style, usually A3 size they will be signed F.A.S and have a serial number eg R4118 on the bottom) we would be delighted to hear from you!

Thank you once again to the Forum for all its support and encouragement this year – we look forward to seeing you again in 2014, and of course hosting the Awards in July!

P.S. Don't forget Sywell Airshow 17th August 2014 in aid of the Air Ambulance...

www.sywellaerodrome.co.uk/museum.php Contact –Ben Brown 07968061708 sywellaviationmuseum@gmail.com
Burton Latimer Heritage Society’s website, www.burtonlatimer.info, passed an historic landmark sometime in July when its millionth visitor since the site started in June 2005 logged on. At the end of July the number of unique visitors (unique visitors are counted only once no matter how many times they visit the site) totalled 1,026,479. The number of bookmarks since site launch stands at 142,458. The visitors in June and July totalled 58,329, an average of 956 each day.

Following the success of its recent House Histories exhibition, Burton Latimer Heritage Society has published a book containing the history of over fifty Burton Latimer houses, large and small that contains over 150 illustrations. Many seemingly ordinary houses have a hidden or forgotten history and this book attempts to tell their stories to people who pass them every day without a second glance. Several were farms, schools or commercial premises, factories, shops or pubs. For example, one building is said to have a ghost; one definitely had a hidden skeleton; one housed a Hawaiian princess and another kept military defaulters in its cellars – the list goes on. The book, which costs £8, is on sale at Burton Latimer Heritage Museum, Civic Centre, 120 High Street, Burton Latimer when it is open, or by post costing £10, from: ‘Burton Latimer House Histories’, 46, Bridle Road, Burton Latimer NN15 5QP. Please make cheques payable to Burton Latimer Heritage Society.

A Royal Castle for 450 years and 450 years a family home.

The visit of the Vikings of Middle England to Rockingham Castle at the end of August was marked by some good weather and lots of visitors. The Vikings set up their camp on the Tilting Lawn for two nights and entertained our visitors during the day on Sunday 25th and Monday 26th August. They laid on combat displays in a roped off area, and recreated a tented Viking village, occupied by many Viking families, round which our visitors could wander. There they could visit the surgery, the kitchen, the mint, the herbalist, the armoury, the calligrapher and others. Children could also practice archery.
Rockingham Castle Christmas Eve 1881
18th – 22nd November 2013

It’s Christmas Eve 1881. George Lewis Watson, his wife Laura Maria, and several of their relatives, are at Rockingham for Christmas. The Castle staff are busy preparing for a magnificent family Christmas gathering. The food is prepared, the silver polished, the candles are lit, the fires are burning and the table in the Great Hall is laid. Dressed in magnificent period costume, the House Keeper, Governess, Butler & Footman will be take you back in time to the reign of Queen Victoria. Their stories of Victorian family life below stairs and above will entertain and delight.

A wealth of beautifully lit Christmas trees in the Castle Courtyard welcomes you to Christmas of a bygone era. Our team in Walkers House restaurant will be serving a delicious selection of homemade locally sourced dishes, a cup of tea & cake or mulled wine & mince pies. In the heated marquee, which houses a café serving hot snacks, soup & coffee and our gardening team with their ‘Gardeners Shop’ is also very happy to dispense gardening tips.

The Castle Gift Shop is filled with delightful Christmas goodies and gifts for friends and family. Come along and enjoy Christmas Shopping with a difference in the Castle’s beautiful surroundings.

Castle owner, James Saunders Watson said “With around a fifth of our annual visitors coming along for our Christmas event, its popularity is undoubted. We have found that our visitors return year on year and tell us it marks the start to their Christmas celebrations. The Castle decorated in true Victorian style attracts visitors both locally and further afield.”

The gates open daily ready for the first tour of the Castle at 11am. Tours run every 15 minutes throughout the day with the last tour at 7.30pm. Adults £7, Children (5-16) £3, under 5’s free, car parking £2.50. Aside from car parking there is no additional charge for visiting the Castle Gift Shop, grounds, gardens and restaurant.

For additional information please telephone 01536 770240 or visit the Castle’s website at www.rockinghamcastle.com

NEWS FROM PREBENDAL MANOR, NASSINGTON

A Zeppelin over Yarwell

Under the auspices of the Imperial War Museum, London and with a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund of £3,400, an important local exhibition is in preparation to commemorate the outbreak of the First World War (1914–1918) and to reflect that war’s effect on local communities.

The exhibition will be called Zeppelin over Yarwell, an allusion to the sudden wartime appearance of a Zeppelin airship over Yarwell (to the considerable consternation villagers) which dropped a bomb near Wansford. It is thought the Zeppelin may have been looking for the air base at Wittering, near Stamford.

The geographical reach of this exhibition will encompass villages within the recently extended parish of Wansford, Thorhaugh, Yarwell, Nassington, Apethorpe and Woodnewton. The exhibition will be held at The Prebendal Manor, Nassington with a number of organisations and educational establishments participating in local activities. Nassington Primary School will ‘knit mittens for the troops at the front’, re-enacting its students’ activities one hundred years earlier.
They have had a busy summer at Lyveden with the beautiful summer weather and the opening of the new Cottage Tea Room. Their busiest day was August Bank Holiday Monday when they had 212 people through the tea room! Homemade cakes and cream teas were the most popular.

They have some Christmas events coming up;

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**NORTHAMPTON MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY**

- **Christmas Carols**
  - Celebrate Christmas by joining in with Lyveden's Carol sing-a-long at the Kitchen. Sing along with your favourite Christmas carols inside the Kitchen. Why not top up your vocal chords with a glass of mulled wine?
  - Saturday 21 December 2.30-3.30pm
  - 01604 200158 | nationaltrust.org.uk/lyveden
  - National Trust

- **Lyveden Christmas Lunches**
  - 14 & 15 December, 12-2pm and 2-4pm
  - Enjoy a traditional Christmas lunch in the Cottage Tea Room
  - £25 per person

- **New Year Walk**
  - 9 January, 10.30am - 12.30pm
  - Join in a beautiful start to the New Year with a guided walk to burn off any remaining Christmas calories!
  - £5 per person

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**NORTHAMPTON MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY**

- **LAST MAN STANDING**
  - 1 November - 31 December
  - A showcase for Northampton last manufacturer Springline, featuring lasts designed and produced for UK designers and shoe factories.

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**LYVEDEN NEW BIELD**

- **Wreath Making Workshop**
  - 7 December, 11am
  - Make a beautiful Christmas wreath to take home and decorate your front door. £20 per person, materials provided. Booking essential

- **Lyveden Christmas Lights**
  - 14 & 15 December, 12-2pm and 2-4pm
  - Enjoy a traditional Christmas lights in the Cottage Tea Room
  - £25 per person

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THRAPSTON HERITAGE

In partnership with Thrapston District Historical Society, we organised a Heritage Weekend for local residents and also, as it turned out, a few people from as far away as Tunbridge Wells and Cornwall. Our publicity worked very well! Our event was an exhibition in the Plaza, which, with its large open space, is an ideal venue for such an occasion. In addition to new displays on the history of the area, it was an opportunity to launch a new publication by Eric Franklin, “Forget Me Not”, which is an account of life in Thrapston 1914 – 1921, completely illustrated by extracts from the local papers of the times. Our first 50 copies were sold over the weekend.

The exhibition also enabled us to pass on the good news that the design for our new website, which will be our “Virtual Heritage Centre”, was progressing well and that the likely date for a live site will be late March next year. HLF Funding is paying for the professional design of the website and they also included the cost of a mentor to help us through the new requirements of the HLF Digital Policy.

Over the two days there were 222 visitors and the exhibition was supported by 23 volunteer helpers. The number of visitors and volunteers confirms our belief that there is an interest in heritage locally and that it is important that the local heritage is made more accessible to the local people; which is why we are developing a “virtual” Heritage Centre.

A focal point for our visitors during the weekend was a local expert who was offering advice on the dates that photographs had been taken. Her expertise is in costume and fashion and she can pinpoint a style to within a very narrow time period; very helpful information when you want to confirm the subject of the photograph. This was a very popular stand.

Overall we judged the weekend to have been very successful, not only in the number of visitors, but also the number of volunteers that supported the event.

IRCHESTER NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY MUSEUM

We have had a good year. Visitor figures are up again and income too, perhaps reflecting the improved weather in 2013 after the washout of Summer (!) 2012.

We expect to start shortly the very expensive process of Insurance inspection for Loco. No 86’s boiler and work to prepare the boiler for this has been completed: the boiler has been totally stripped of cladding and boiler tubes, fittings etc. Details and dates of inspections and ultrasonic test have yet to be arranged.

It will be interesting to see how costs for this inspection have increased since the last time it was undertaken 12 years ago. Our treasurer waits with bated breath.

We look forward to returning No. 86 to steaming condition, as seen, in the not too distant future, time and loads of money permitting!
The Forum’s Patron HRH Duke of Gloucester has been busy this year visiting various members

78 DERNGATE

The Duke of Gloucester attended a special reception at 78 Derngate on October 3rd to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the opening of this Mackintosh House following its restoration in 2003.

Attendees also included local MP Michael Ellis, Borough Council Leader, David Mackintosh, the Mayor, Les Marriott, trustees and volunteers of 78 Derngate and children from a local school, Eastfield Academy.

The visit was arranged following a meeting earlier in the year with the Duke of Gloucester, Michael Ellis MP and the trustees of 78 Derngate at The Houses of Parliament. On that occasion Michael Ellis MP commented, "The Duke was very interested in what was happening with this important building. It was quite clear he recognised it as a significant part of the cultural heritage of Northampton that we should cherish."

The Duke unveiled a commemorative plaque to record his visit and cut a celebratory cake decorated in the 78 Derngate iconic triangles.

RUSHDEN HISTORICAL TRANSPORT SOCIETY

For those who didn’t see the Nene Valley News earlier this month.

Royal visit for local heritage attraction

The Rushden Historical Transport Society (RHTS) was delighted to welcome HRH The Duke of Gloucester for a visit to the Historical Transport Museum at the start of October.

The Duke was presented with a book written by the society, ENG Chairman, Clr Pam Whiting, and other district councillors were also in attendance. To find out more about the Rushden Historical Transport Society, visit www.rhts.co.uk.

Just a few more days to visit Northampton Museum for this exhibition;

The Pre-Raphaelites and the Middlemores

14 September - 3 November

Northampton Museum & Art Gallery

www.northampton.gov.uk/museum
There are also chances to have a go yourself with workshops from street dance to salsa – check out the website for more details;

http://www.northampton.gov.uk/museumevents

There is also a new website for Museum Development East Midlands – this is it for those of you who haven’t had a look yet;

www.mdem.org.uk

Desborough has enjoyed a busiest year than ever in 2013 putting on some nine or ten new displays and running monthly themed coffee mornings. Some of the summer displays remain in enlarged form like the window display or the Desborough Railway Station 1857-1965, or in a reduced form like our award winning Childhood Memories from the 1940’s and 1950’s display. This was because they have been and still are extremely popular and involved large numbers of the public. The ‘and so to bed 1780 to 1930’ exhibition which is largely a costume exhibition has just gone back to the store except for the 1780’s pewter bed warmer.

The celebration of 150 years of Desborough’s Independent Industrial and Provident Society can be seen in the museum largely on a monitor screen along with photos of 7 or 8 vanished inns, agricultural life and maps of the last two centuries. There is a new ipad in the museum showing off Desborough’s contribution to the filming of Global Footprint.

A 1940’s day was held recently with costumed people and cars etc. arriving from far and wide with a contribution from the volunteers of soup, spam sandwiches and Pathe News films!

They are currently working on re-ordering the centre on a time-line from 100BC with the Desborough Mirror to the Roman era on a space-saving touch screen. As well as this the volunteers are putting on an art display and encouraging the local public to bring in materials and records for a WW1 exhibition next year.