

Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum



Woodhall Spa Community Band squeezed into the
Magic Lantern Room in the Museum for Carols
at the Christmas Past Event

Newsletter No. 49
March 2025

Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

A Note from the Editor

Here we go again with another season starting this month. The museum normally opens its season at Easter, but as Easter is so late this year we are opening for Thursday and Fridays, from 6th March, 10.30am to 4pm with last entry at 3.30pm. Entrance will be free but donations would be welcomed. From Tuesday 18th March the Museum will be fully open from Tuesdays to Saturdays, 10.30am to 4.00pm with last entries at 3.30pm and normal admission charges will apply.

This issue of the Newsletter has all the usual items, with "From the Collection" which this time tells the story of the Lunn sisters, Bertha's letter telling us about the goings on in Woodhall Spa in Spring 1925 and Marjorie Sargeant's "Axle Cooling" feature which focuses on Carlton & Sons, Photographers. Tom Johnson brings us up to date on work that has been going on for some months to replace all the museum's windows and window frames. Not as straight forward as you might think. Loki's page has a great puzzle - The Wildflower Alphabet Puzzle for our younger and probably our not so young readers to solve. Annette Southcott brings us up to date with all the Friends news on page 20.

The museum depends on its volunteers to function and we are actively trying to attract new volunteers. Are you or perhaps a friend looking to occupy those spare hours by volunteering? Look no further. There are no set hours, so you can be as flexible as you like. The museum is a very friendly environment and offers an enormous variety of opportunities for volunteers to be involved, be it meeting people, using practical skills or office and computer knowledge. We look forward to meeting you.



Philip Groves

Front Cover Story

Due to the heavy rain on the day of the Christmas Past Event the Woodhall Spa Community Band played for Carol singing by squeezing into the Magic Lantern Room. Our picture is not able to show them all due to the confined space!

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The Newsletter Committee

Chairman - Paddy O'Neill Editor - Philip Groves Marjorie Sargeant

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or email philanddeliagroves@gmail.com

Reg. Charity: 1114268 Reg. Museum: 1929

“Tales from the Tower” - The Spring Talk

The Cottage Museum spring talk 'Tales from the Tower' will take place at the Golf Hotel, Woodhall Spa, on Saturday 12th April at 2.30pm. Doors open at 2pm. The speaker will be Keith Hanson RVM, former Yeoman warder of the Tower of London and latterly Chief Exhibitor responsible for the safety, security and presentation of the Crown Jewels. Keith was awarded the Royal Victoria Medal in 2020 for service to the Crown. Tickets cost £8.50, including refreshments and will be available from 6th March online. From Tuesday 18th March tickets can be obtained from Museum Reception during Museum opening hours (Tuesday to Saturday from 10.30am to 4.00pm.) Pre booking is essential. There will also be a raffle.



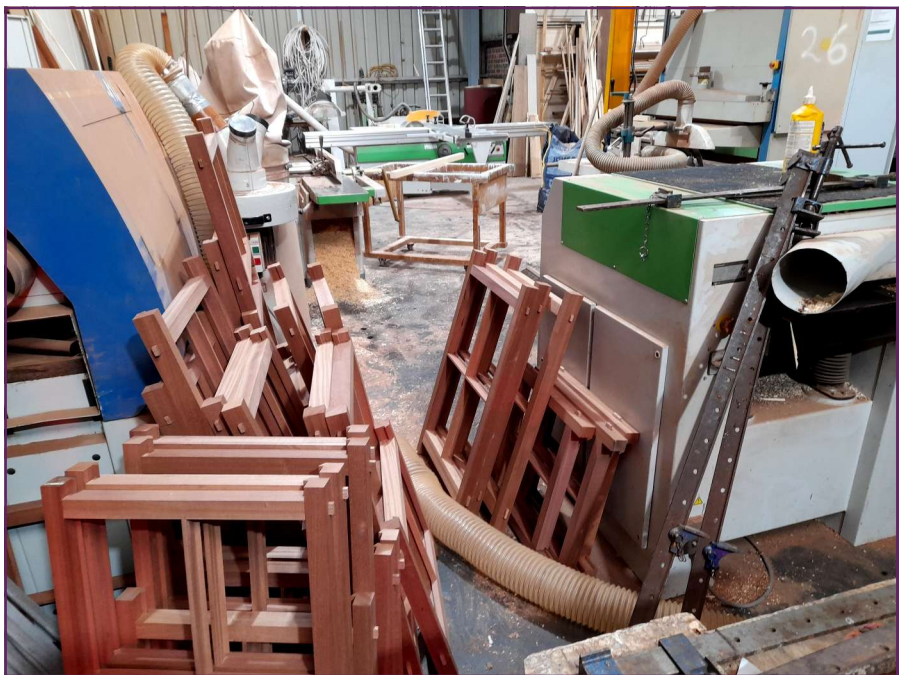
Keith Hanson RVM

Annette Southcott

New Windows for the Museum

The Cottage Museum building was originally erected for the Wield family in 1887. It is believed that the window frames are original and after 137 years were definitely showing their age. It had become a constant battle to keep them in good repair and so the decision was taken to replace them throughout the whole building. This is not as straight forward as it may seem, as the building is in a Conservation Area.

The Conservation Officer for East Lindsey was contacted before work commenced and we were given the go ahead subject to the design of the frames being an exact copy for the old ones.



The new window frames at the workshop of Carres Heritage.

Tom Johnson took on the job of finding a suitable company to make these special frames and he has overseen the whole job. A number of the frames were in very bad condition, which in itself is not surprising, given the time they have been in place. Thanks to a legacy and a grant the frames were handmade by Carres Heritage, a conservation firm in Sleaford. The grant was part funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and distributed by East Lindsey District Council and helped pay for the final part of the project which entailed replacing the windows in the “War Room”. Getting to the war room windows was particularly difficult and it took four volunteers to move the cabinet from in front of the window to be replaced and returned afterwards. Their help was invaluable and given at short notice, so ensuring the terms of the grant were met.

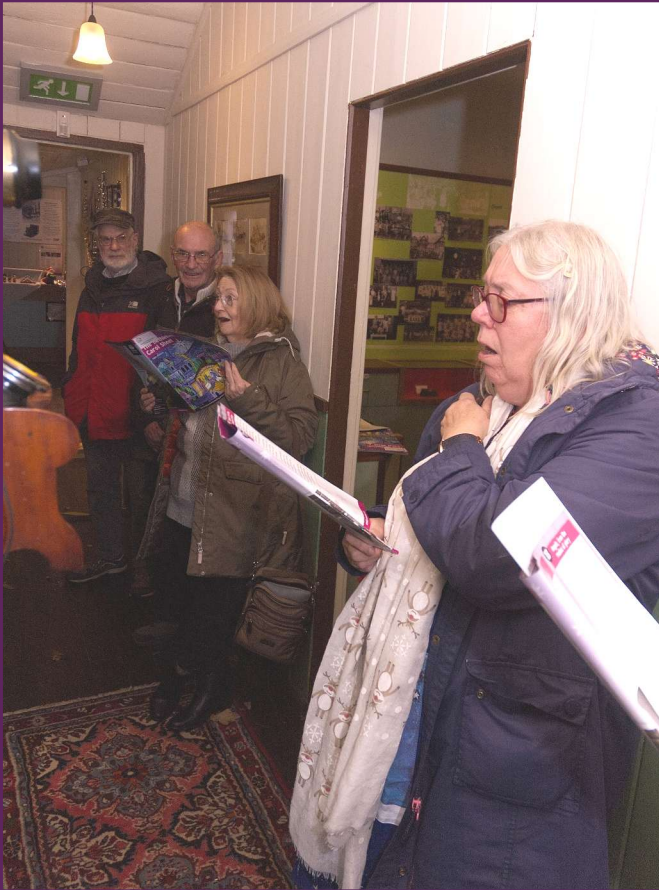
It is hoped the new frames will last as long as the original ones!

Tom Johnson

Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

Christmas Past 2024

On November 23rd the museum held its “Christmas Past” event. Unfortunately it was the weekend of Storm Bert passing over the UK and the weather was terrible. Despite the rain we had a surprising number of visitors, particularly in the morning. The Carol singing had to be held inside the museum and the Woodhall Spa Community Band managed to squeeze into the Magic Lantern Room (see front cover picture). Visitors were able to join in the singing from all parts of the museum! A big thank you is due to the Band, who donated their time free of any charge or donation.



Singing carols in the museum hallway



Part of the craft stall in the courtyard

There were craft and home made produce stalls in the courtyard, where two large awnings were erected giving a weatherproof area. The Community Room was set up to cater for Craft Activities for the children and there was also a Museum Trail for the youngsters to follow.



The “Shoes not Stockings display

The Temporary Exhibition Room had the New Stories, New Audiences, (NSNA), set up. This exhibition will continue in this month when the museum re-opens. The New Stories, New Audiences exhibition is made possible with AIM, The Association of Independent Museums and The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Thanks to National Lottery players for the support to make this project possible. Tina Delaney, who organised the event said “a big thank you is due to all volunteers from the Learning team, especially those who braved the weather to help on the craft stalls outside. Also to Peter Scott Shoes, who very kindly contributed to our Christmas 'Shoes not stockings' display.”

Philip Groves

The Annual Memorial Talk - Escaping the Ordinary



Lorna delivers her talk to the near capacity audience

On the afternoon of Saturday 9th November last year, the Annual Memorial talk was presented by Lorna Almonds-Windmill, daughter of the legendary “Gentleman Jim” Almonds, a founder member of the SAS, who was born and bred in Stixwould. She presented the Memorial talk last year and this year continued his story, which she called “Escaping the Ordinary”, into the post war years and his exploits in Eritrea and Ethiopia. Following such a distinguished wartime career, Jim Almonds could have been excused for

wanting to settle down and grow old gracefully, away from war and conflict. But this was a tall, fit and strong man who thrived on action, as a member of the Eritrea Police Field Force and later in the SAS in Malaya, where he parachuted into the jungle to pursue Communist terrorists. When he was not in the front-line, he was exploring unknown lands or sailing his ketch SS Kumasi. Almonds designed the yacht during the Second World War while a prisoner of war in Italy, committing the design to memory, and then built the



Lorna Almonds-Windmill with her books

yacht after the war, entirely by hand and without power tools from local timber. It stayed moored at Stixwould for several years after he sailed it back from Ghana. He was a natural designer and builder, capable of improvising in all situations, a skill which saved his life and that of his colleagues on many occasions.

Look out for him in the new series of “SAS Rogue Heroes” which is currently being broadcast on BBC1. Jim Almonds is played by actor Corin Silva.

The talk attracted an audience of around 80 people and was a huge success.

200 Club Winners

October 2024

£25 [135] Heather Bradshaw
 £20 [63] Jules Finley
 £15 [103] Jimmy Armstrong
 £10 [28] Joe Stanhope

November 2024

£25 [10] Jeffrey Ridley
 £20 [100] Becky Bell
 £15 [142] Jane Townall
 £10 [34] George Lilley

Annual Draw 2024

£100 [152] Keith Baguley
 £75 [145] Roy Hairsine
 £50 [121] Robert Lake
 £25 [4] Daisy Hibberd

Philip Groves

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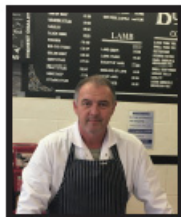
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From the Collection - The Lunn Sisters

The March 2024 article was devoted to the Williams sisters. In this newsletter we turn to the other spinster sisters who were important to the village, namely the Lunn sisters.

Susanna and Katherine (or Catherine) Lunn were of great benefit to Woodhall Spa, in establishing a school for ladies in the village at Hartington House which prospered for over 25 years.

They hailed from Horncastle where their father, Henry, was a grocer and chemist on Bridge St. He prospered employing not only his son in the business but also four apprentices and two servants at his home. Henry and his wife, Susanna had eleven children. Our sisters were the 4th and 5th.

Susanna, the eldest of our sisters and the main-stay behind their future endeavours, was educated at the Penrhos College, an independent private school for girls, near Colwyn Bay in Wales. She was obviously well thought of as she taught English at her *alma mater* in 1891. Teaching was her love and she returned to Horncastle to set up her own establishment, initially above her father's shop, but soon moving with her sister Florence to 54, West Street in the town.

Their ethos, of a thorough education and to prepare young ladies for the world in front of them became a success and the need to expand was soon upon them. Thus, they moved to Woodhall Spa early in the 20th century, joined by their younger sister, Katherine to act as matron, as she had obtained a nursing qualification. The premises they chose was a previous boarding house, Hartington House, situated in the heart of the village and with much more accommodation. By the time of the 1911 census the school was a resounding success with 18 pupils ranging in age from 10-16. The teaching staff included four assistants, these together with a cook, housekeeper and two housemaids.

Continued on Page 9

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The Lunn Sisters continued from page 8

As the new century progressed more accommodation was required and the adjacent large building called Victoria Lodge, but which the sisters named Hartington Lodge, so as to associate it with the school, was purchased.



*A delightful photograph of the three sisters on the steps of Hartington House.
From left to right: Susanna, Katherine and Florence.*

Nicholas Duke-Cox

ANSWERS TO WILDFLOWER ALPHABET PUZZLE ON PAGE 18
1. Wood Anemone 2. Iris 3. Lily 4. Daffodil 5. Foxglove 6. Loosetrife 7. Orchid 8. Woodruff
9. Eyebright 10. Rose

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Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

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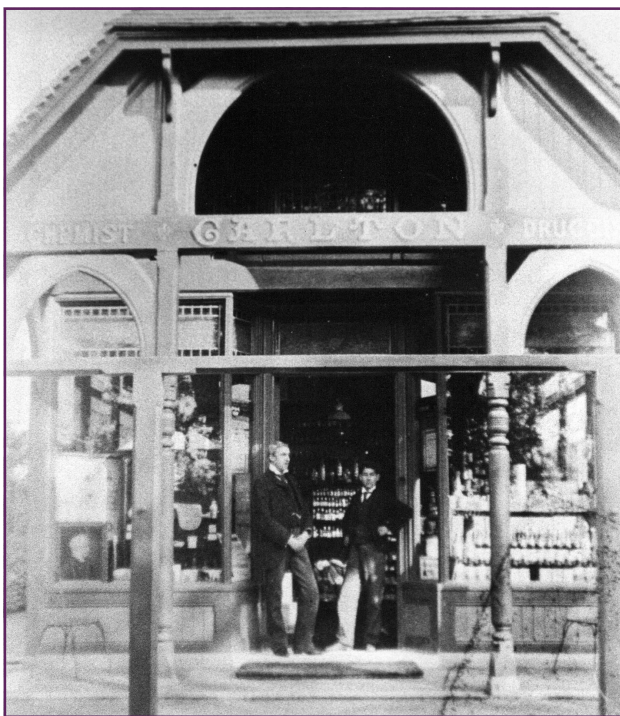
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When Mellow Observer rested awhile in Woodhall Spa in 1890, he may well have called at Carlton the Chemist's for a remedy for the fatigue of his journey or a pretty green bottle of medicine, made up on the premises. Or he may have been tempted by a more frivolous purchase, for Mr. Carlton was also a photographer advertising his newly opened studio. Photographic studios had become popular in the last forty years or so but Mr. Carlton may also have been inspired by the photos of amateur but highly successful, Mr Johnny Wield, in

the bungalow next door (now the Cottage Museum.)

I imagine the souvenir of the Spa would be popular, as unlike today, these were times of limited and cumbersome cameras.

Marjorie Sargeant



Carlton & Sons - Photographers

Come and Join Us

The backbone of the Cottage Museum is our volunteers and some of them are putting a lot of hours in and could really do with a hand. Can you help? Do you have a few hours to spare in the month? It does not have to be a massive commitment. There are numerous opportunities to suit most interests. If you would like to find out more without committing yourself then please call us on **01526 352456** .

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Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

Bertha, March 1925

Dear Readers,

Praise be! The Baths are to remain open! How this has been achieved we do not know – Perce sniffs about “goings-on by the powers that be.” He is sure there will be an increase in the rates sooner or later. I say “Fiddlesticks!” What matters is that visitors will be coming this Season.



Part of the ruins of the Victoria Hotel

members of aristocracy present and on another occasion, attended a Russian Headdress Ball there. Another dinner party was at their house in Carlton House Terrace which they were lent for the Season by one of the Guinness family. This was in aid of a children’s hospital and the Prince of Wales was principal guest.



Mr Dickinson's motor shop in Woodhall Spa

The Victoria Hotel is not yet rebuilt – it is now nearly 5 years since that disastrous fire. However, there is enough accommodation with the other hotels and with us boarding house keepers. Perce says to mark his words, the Victoria will never be rebuilt, even though it was the reason many upper class people came here.

Sir Archibald Weigall must be relieved that his personal expenditure on the Baths is over. He and his wife spent winter in Town, leading their glamorous life. They hosted a dinner party at Claridge’s for the Austrian Prime Minister with

Villagers of Woodhall Spa were concerned to hear that Mr. Dickinson, our motor dealer, had been in collision with another vehicle in Norfolk. Fortunately, neither driver was harmed but one or two of the old folk here still shook their heads, muttering about the dangers of “these horseless carriages.” You can imagine what they say about talk of white lines being painted in the village, “to inhibit speed.” “They would disfigure our village...drivers should inhibit speed themselves...noisy, frightening things.” Perce wonders if the last comment refers to the cars or their drivers!

Bertha
March 1925

Marjorie Sargeant

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LOKI'S PAGE Here we are again. It'll soon be Easter and the museum is already open. Why not try your hand at the Spring Flower Trail, not to mention the great Wildflower Alphabet Puzzle. Maybe I will see you at some of the outdoor events planned for the museum later on. Until then be very good and enjoy yourselves. Bye for now LOKI 

Children's Trail

The next CHILDREN'S TRAIL in the Museum this year will be 'THE SPRING FLOWER TRAIL'. You will need to search around the Museum and in the garden to find pictures and the names of 10 Spring flowers.

Wildflower Alphabet Puzzle

Here is a 'Wildflower Alphabet Puzzle' for you to do. Can you rearrange the letters to find the flower names? We have given you the first letter of each name.

- 1 W odo nnmeoea (2 words)
- 2 I sir
- 3 L yil
- 4 D doaflif
- 5 F vxgeloo
- 6 L feeoossrit
- 7 O hrcdi
- 8 W fofourd
- 9 E gtehiryb
- 10 R seo

ANSWERS ON PAGE 9

Jane Hodgson



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The Friends of the Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

Committee: Annette Southcott

Membership Secretary: Kelly Jestin
(Hours of work Tuesday - Thursday 9.00-4.00pm
Email: friends@cottagemuseum.co.uk)

Dear Friends,

Suddenly it's almost spring. How did that happen and where did 2024 go?

It doesn't seem five minutes since we were closing down the museum for Christmas and now we're preparing to open again.

We have been busy as usual over the autumn and winter period with our programme of events.

The November talk by Lorna Almonds-Windmill on the further exploits of her father Major 'Gentleman Jim' Almonds, one of the twelve originals of the SAS, was again a sell out and the audience was captivated by the extraordinary stories of his life after WW2, Amazing how a rudimentary education at a Lincolnshire village school can equip a person with such a range of life and life-saving skills.

At the Christmas Past event Friends made their contribution, serving mulled fruit punch and mince pies. Given the appalling weather, this was much appreciated by the hardy souls who came out support us and we were amazed and grateful that so many did.

We are now beginning our programme of events for 2025 starting with the spring talk 'Tales from the Tower' on Saturday 12 April, 2.30 pm at the Golf Hotel Woodhall Spa. The speaker will be Keith Hanson RVM, former Yeoman warder of the Tower of London and latterly Chief Exhibitor responsible for the safety, security and presentation of the Crown Jewels. Keith was awarded the Royal Victoria Medal in 2020 for service to the Crown.

Tickets £8.50 including refreshments. Pre booking essential.

The 1940s day which we held last year will be repeated on Saturday 12 July when we will have the popular courtyard cafe in operation. Hopefully our star bakers will be willing to provide their delicious cakes once again, which always go down well with visitors

This year we will be looking at how to keep the Cottage Museum relevant to visitors in the digital and AI age, without losing any of the essential history and heritage, or its place in chronicling the development of Woodhall Spa. We will be gathering the views of volunteers Friends and visitors throughout the year to provide us with the evidence that will be needed to apply for grants to undertake any large scale work. You will all have an opportunity to contribute your ideas and opinions via informal meetings and surveys.

On behalf of the directors, thank you again for your ongoing support and interest in our wonderful little museum.



What's On Guide

Spring Talk

TALES FROM THE TOWER

By Keith Hanson RVM
former Yeoman warder of
the Tower of London

Golf Hotel, Woodhall Spa,
Saturday 12th April 2.30pm.
Doors open 2pm.

Tickets £8.50

Inc. refreshments.

Available online from 6 March &
from Reception 18th March.

PRE-BOOKING ESSENTIAL RAFFLE

-0-

For the latest information visit
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Friends and Volunteers Coffee Mornings

A coffee morning is normally held on the second Wednesday of the month, to enable volunteers from the various teams to meet each other and to meet some of the Directors.

The next event is planned for Wednesday 12th March from 10.30am. until 12 noon.

Please check our website, or social media for the latest information.

Annette Southcott

