



Eden  
Valley  
Museum

# Museum News <sup>£3</sup>

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Issue Number 27

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2013

*- everywhere has a story to tell*



**EDENBRIDGE**

Charter Market Town centre





Eden Valley Museum  
Church House, High Street, Edenbridge, TN8 5AR  
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[www.evmt.org.uk](http://www.evmt.org.uk)  
Charity Registration Number: 1065466

## MUSEUM PROGRAMME FOR 2014

### Exhibitions

Major exhibitions are located in the Courtyard Bedroom Gallery on the first floor.

When practicable, folder versions are made available on the ground floor.

### Pills, Potions and Poisons

A short history of Hospitals and Health Care in the Eden Valley, A.D. 1075 to 2012.

**- Extended to 26 April 2014**

### 'till the boys come home

**– the story of the Eden Valley during WW1**

Opens 10 May

### Museum Open Evenings

Museum open to the public 6 to 8pm Thursday 15 May and Saturday 9 August

### Displays

Located in the long cabinet in the Buttery & Pantry Gallery:

Spring: **Rural Life in the Eden Valley** extended to April 2014

Summer: **WW1 themed display**

Autumn: **John Osborne Centenary**

### Talks

Talks to complement the various exhibitions and displays to be arranged.

### Dates for your diary

Volunteers Team Meeting & Tea Party Saturday 25 January

Edenbridge Festival – museum open Monday 26 May

Edenbridge Christmas Event Saturday 6 December tbc

Christmas Members Evening Friday 12 December

**Free Guided Walks** - See inside back cover for dates

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Front cover: *Edenbridge Market* by *Stuart MacGregor*

Back cover: *Collage of images of Edenbridge Market* taken by *Stuart MacGregor*

This issue of Museum News has been compiled by *Helen Jackman* and *Joan Varley*

## FROM THE CHAIRMAN:

'You will notice that this edition of the Museum News is dedicated to Edenbridge as a Charter Market Town. With the confirmation that Waitrose is now taking over the tenure of the Co-Op (on the old tannery site) and the prospect of Sainsbury's and/or Tesco moving into the north of Edenbridge, we look forward to a new era in the way we shop in the Eden Valley and the additional shoppers that will be attracted to our area. To thrive and connect with the unique identity of the Edenbridge High Street we also must consider the past and Gavin Bateman's lead article beautifully describes what a Charter Market Town is and why it is important for Edenbridge.

In this edition we also see recognition for the hard work of Jane Higgs who is retiring as curator. No man, or indeed woman, is an island so extended thanks must go to all the volunteers who continue to keep the Eden Valley Museum afloat. I urge anyone who has spare time (or money) to help contribute to the valuable work that EVMT does to preserve the culture and history of our area of outstanding beauty and interest, The Eden Valley.'

*Alan Smith, EVMT Chairman*

## WAYSTRODE SOIRÉE

*Report by Jane Wroe, Hon. Secretary*



WAYSTRODE, SOMETIMES CALLED WOOD FARM. FROM A DRAWING BY MRS. PERY-KNOX-GORE.

The museum held a successful fundraising evening at Waystrode Manor on Wednesday 18th September 2013. Mr and Mrs Claus and Valerie Prom, the current owners, kindly opened their

spectacular house and grounds to over 80 Eden Valley Museum Trust members and supporters for an evening of medieval entertainment.

This special evening began with welcome drinks and food served inside the main house followed by the opportunity to enjoy a stroll around the grounds. Originally designed by Mrs Jill Wright, a former Olympic ice skater who along with her husband purchased the manor in 1963, the gardens are in the process of being restored to their former glory.

As the sun began to set, guests made their way to the newly restored barn for a fascinating lamp-lit history of the manor courtesy of Claus Prom. Sited alongside the old London to Lewes Roman Road and thought to have originally been a hunting lodge for King John, the development of Waystrode owed a great deal to the wealth generated by the local iron industry. It is said that all of the cannon balls used by the English at the Battle of Agincourt were sourced from the area.

Of course, no soirée would be complete without music and guests were treated to a blend of mainly Scottish and Irish folk performed by the band Secret Celtic. Flora Nedelcu, accompanied by David Brett and Anna Cooper, gave an electric performance spanning various folk traditions with

a couple of late medieval and Tudor folk ballads in honour of the atmospheric setting including *The Three Ravens* and *The Death of Queen Jane*.

The Executive Committee would like to thank Valerie and Claus for their generosity, and also the trust's supporters for making such a memorable evening and raising a magnificent £1,050 to support the museum's work.

The museum is currently researching the history of

Waystrode Manor and if anyone has information that would assist in this, please could they contact the Hon. Secretary via the museum or by email at [evmtsecretary@evmt.org.uk](mailto:evmtsecretary@evmt.org.uk).

# EDENBRIDGE – A CHARTER MARKET TOWN

By Gavin Bateman



Does the man who sells greengrocery in Market yard every Thursday realize that he is following in a tradition going back well over 700 years?

From Acton to Wymondham what distinguishes nearly a thousand towns in the British Isles from villages is that at some point in the medieval period they acquired market rights, usually by charter. Edenbridge is one of these.



There appears to be some local confusion as to exactly how far back this goes. A charter for a market was first granted in 1227 by Henry III to Robert de Camull lord of the manor of Edenbridge<sup>1</sup>. There was a peak in the number of charter applications in 1227 to coincide with the end of the king's minority in that year.

Although a royal charter granted the right to hold a market, this did not necessarily mean that the market was established then or ever. To avoid disrupting existing trade, charters gave the right to hold a market only if this was not at the expense of a neighbouring one. The sheriff or other local official was ordered to conduct an *Inquisitio Ad Quod Damnum*.- *Enquiry as to What Loss*. If a nearby place (defined by rule of thumb in the mid thirteenth century as within six and two-thirds miles) with a market could successfully show it would be adversely affected, the new market would not be allowed to operate.

Westerham was also granted its market charter in 1227 and it is likely that the Robert de Camull mentioned above was (with the spelling of the name corrupted) Robert de Carnvill, son of Thomas de Carnvill to whom Westerham's market charter was granted. If so, we may assume that there was no need for such an *Inquisitio* in Edenbridge! There are, however, indications that Westerham may

have had to deal with an objection from the Earl of Gloucester who was probably attempting to defend his market at Brasted<sup>2</sup>.

The principal source of information on market charters is the Charter Rolls which provide evidence for the majority of the grants made in this period. There are also the Close Rolls as letters close were the routine means by which the king sent instructions to his sheriffs and many relate to markets. However, to establish whether a specific market was actually set up, evidence is needed beyond the actual granting of a charter.

There are many local references to Edenbridge's charter being granted in 1279 by Henry III.



If it was 1279, it could not have been granted by Henry III who died in 1272! An exhibition mounted by Edenbridge Historical Society in 1968 referred to a document dated 1278 showing that the lord of Edenbridge manor claimed the "right to levy market-tolls every Saturday, a monopoly of baking and brewing, and the right to sentence parishioners to the pillory, or to be tied behind the dung-cart in public procession." A series of enquiries was held by royal judges who were sent around the country, chiefly in the reigns of Edward I and Edward II (1272–1327), in an attempt to assert royal rights. These enquiries attempted to discover by what right (*quo warranto*) individuals were holding markets and it is likely that the document of 1278 is connected with one such<sup>3</sup>. What it does is confirm that Edenbridge market was by 1278 operating as authorized in 1227 and the sign as one enters Edenbridge correctly designates it as a "Charter Market Town".

Henry III, (king 1216-1272), exercised the right to licence all markets and fairs. Most market charters



date from the period from the 12<sup>th</sup> century to the Black Death (after which many faded out). Some places with market rights were unable to continue their markets, and are today simply villages (Brasted for example). Nearly all grants were

hereditary, that is they were made to the grantee and his heirs. This explains the continuity over so many centuries of market rights in a place. Of course if someone died without heirs the rights reverted to the crown.

Markets were and are trading opportunities held at regular intervals. In medieval England a market was held once a week, on a set day and in a set place. Edenbridge's charter appears to designate Saturday as its original market day. Many of the oldest markets were held by *prescriptive right*, that is, by custom, rather than by charter. For these evidence is often unavailable before the thirteenth century but it is clear that some towns had markets even before the Norman conquest in 1066. Three-quarters of all markets recorded by 1516 are known to have been created by royal grants which make their status clear, though there is nothing to say that an informal market was not held in Edenbridge even before its charter.

There were several advantages to having a market charter. Obviously, it established the market (or formalized any informal market which might have been carried on previously) and made it difficult for anyone else close by to carry on one in competition. It also attracted people into the town. In addition the charter granted privileges to the town and the traders, such as exemptions from tolls and taxing rights. Examples of charter taxes and toll exemptions that could be granted were:

- *Passage or Pedage* - The right to pass through the town without charge.
- *Pontage* - A local tax for bridge maintenance.
- *Payage* - A payment allowed by charter

where a peasant could pay a day's wages to his lord in lieu of a day's work on the lord's land.

- *Stallage* - The rent for stall space at a market, and the right to put up a stall at the market.
- *Tithe* - A contribution of one tenth, by way of a tax on goods and produce. This could be relieved in a market charter.

Additionally a charter enabled a town to institute local law enforcement – as evidenced by the reference above to the pillory or dung cart. So it is likely that the chief motivation for applying for a charter was not just to sell produce (which was probably already happening anyway) but to achieve a measure of local government and to put the town on the map.

There are towns that call themselves market towns and many do have markets. The difference that Edenbridge enjoys is that its market rights go back 786 years to its ancient charter. So next time you buy a ticket at Edenbridge Town station, just remember that the station name can only be used because Edenbridge is a town and not a village on account of its market charter. Also



be aware that dropping litter in Market Yard might result in being tied behind the dustcart!

## References

- <sup>1</sup> Samantha Letters, *Online Gazetteer of Markets and Fairs in England Wales to 1516*. [www.history.ac.uk/cmh/gaz/gazweb2.html](http://www.history.ac.uk/cmh/gaz/gazweb2.html)
- <sup>2</sup> *Curia Regis Rolls of the reigns of Richard I, John and Henry III* (preserved in the Public Record Office) xiv, no. 317.
- <sup>3</sup> *Placita de Quo Warranto, Edward I-Edward III in Curia Receptae Scaccarii Westm. Asservati*, ed. W. ILLINGWORTH (London, 1818) p.350.

## Images:

Acton Town – Source: Sunil Prasannan, licensed for reuse under Creative Commons Licence.

Wymondham – Source: Eastern Daily Press

Henry III - Source: Rev. C. Arthur Lane *Illustrated Notes on English Church History* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1901)

Other images: Gavin Bateman



WOMEN'S ROYAL VOLUNTARY SERVICE

## VOLUNTEERING IN THE COMMUNITY 1938 – 2013

By Helen Jackman



It was as war loomed over Europe, in 1938, that the Women's Voluntary Service for Civil Defence was founded. It inspired women to do their bit on the home front; assisting air-raid wardens, providing mobile

and static canteens, emergency rest-centres, and helping with the evacuation of children from cities likely to be the target of German bombers. By 1945 they had a membership of one million, and it had become the largest volunteering organisation in British history.

Mary Fox, who served for many years as the local organiser in Edenbridge, wrote in 1988: 'There are one or two people in Edenbridge who can recollect WVS providing comfort and refreshments in Church House to members of the forces stationed in the Edenbridge area during the 1939-45 war.' One of these was Mrs Ada Thompsett.



Women's Royal Voluntary Service

With the end of the war the WVS (as from 1966 WRVS, when 'Royal' was added to the title), took on a new role as pioneers in social welfare. Many of the amenities they put in place, such as social clubs for the young and elderly and 'Meals on Wheels' were later adopted by the Social Services. Our first written record dates from 1948, when 'a destitute family from Edenbridge was supplied with clothing.' In the same report we learn 'Mr Churchill very kindly provided many sacks of roots [sic] and plants for the Camberwell pre-fabs, from his garden at Chartwell.'

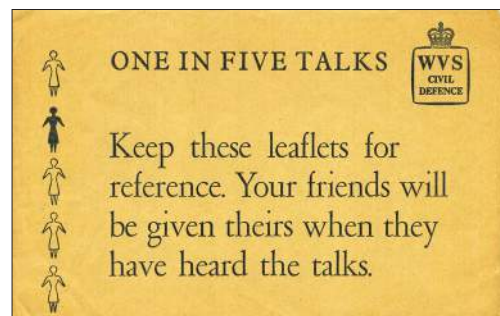
Edenbridge WVS operated under a Village Representative from 1950, when a Darby and Joan Club was set up in Church House. However, the

*Special note: EVMT Member, Elizabeth Gray, supplied much of the information for this article. Liz who sadly died on 16 November 2013, has been the joint Local Organiser of the WRVS in Edenbridge for the past twenty years.*

60's was the decade in which the organisation really took hold locally when an emergency team, to deal with local and national disasters, was formed.

Early emergency training exercises refer to building a washing-up unit, incinerator, hotplate cooker, dustbin oven cooker, laziman boiler and garbage disposal unit. Those who did their training in the 70's and 80's became very familiar with constructing trench cookers with bricks – sometimes the toy variety, and brewing up in the Soygar boiler.

The WRVS have been involved in many emergencies countrywide; Aberfan, Locherbie, the Selby Rail Crash and the London Bombings. The Eden Valley volunteers have also had their share of local emergencies. On 15th September 1968 their training was put to good use when severe flooding hit the town and surrounding area. A number of people were made temporarily homeless and at the request of the police, the WRVS opened a reception centre in the Women's Institute Hall. This offered 24 hour service for three days supplying practical and emotional support followed by an advice bureau, assisted by the CAB from Sevenoaks, which operated for a further ten days supplying material help such as clothing and essential items which had been lost. One volunteer remembers a flood victim being particularly distressed by the loss of her teeth – a request too far as they floated on their way to Tonbridge!



The 1970's were the time of industrial action; the three day week and power cuts. Our local volunteers visited the elderly, distributed supplies of candles, and following a general shut-down of gas supplies combined with other voluntary agencies to visit 'at risk' householders to see that all gas taps and mains had been turned off.

During the Cold War, which lasted until 1989, the WRVS took responsibility for educating the women of Britain on preparing for a nuclear attack. Known as the 'One in Five' scheme, it set out to inform one in five women on how to protect their families from radioactive dust by preparing a fallout room in their homes. These talks were given to schools and WI's in the area, and were part of the emergency training taken by all WRVS members.



*Paddy Berger of the WRVS providing sustenance for electricity workers at French Street after the hurricane of 1987.*

On October 15th 1987 the weather provoked another emergency when the Great Storm shook the south-east. Once again the police asked the WRVS to set up an emergency centre in the WI Hall, and up to twenty volunteers were on duty all night offering hot drinks, food, and if necessary, beds and at mid-night plans were made to distribute flasks of hot soup to those without power. For the following two weeks meals were made in members' homes and distributed to outlying areas without electricity, such as Cowden. When teams of electricity workers arrived from Ireland to clear the woods on the Greensand Ridge and restore supplies local volunteers served soup and sandwiches, to those working up at French Street.

In recent years Edenbridge WRVS have been invited to assist in national events.

Following the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, they manned stalls supplying refreshments in the Mall and, following the funeral, in Kensington Gardens where the wreaths were displayed and candlelight vigils held.

Similarly, in 2002 at the 'lying in state' of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother in Westminster Hall, a team attended to serve refreshments to the mourners.

Other exercises took them to East Grinstead,

feeding 25 police personnel investigating a local murder and, following the Tsunami in Thailand, a team travelled to London to staff the help line; answering calls from those offering their services or wishing to donate.

The welfare services blossomed locally in the Sixties, when the original cohort of volunteers established a wide range of social systems which have supported the local community over the last fifty years. The first 'Meals on Wheels' were delivered in 1964 - originally cooked by a local café then the canteen at Four Elms Packers. As numbers grew they were cooked in bulk at the WRVS kitchen in Sevenoaks and brought back in a hot-lock to be distributed from Pinehurst, in Four Elms Road. Two years later the WVS had their own kitchen in the WI hall, from where approximately forty freshly cooked meals were delivered twice a week to housebound residents in Cowden, Hever, Four Elms, Crockham Hill and Edenbridge. Between 60 and 70 volunteers were involved in cooking and delivering this service. Following the '68 floods, and to complement 'Meals on Wheels', a visiting service for the housebound was launched with a team of twenty volunteers, both men and women, who visited on a 'one to one' basis.



*Kensington Gardens, 8th September 1997. Jill Davison, Liz Gray, Margaret Everest and Helen Jackman.*



*Lying in State of Queen Elizabeth, Queen Mother, 7th April 2002. Lesley Martin, Jill Davison and Liz Gray.*

Once the Spitals Cross Estate was built a second club for the elderly was set up, as the original club was full to capacity. Known as the Fircroft Senior Social Club it first met in the Fircroft Hall then transferred to Church House

Other services focused on children. A 'Mothers and Toddlers Group' was started in Stangrove Clinic in 1964 and later moved to Church House. By 1967 parents were charged 2/6d per morning and there was a waiting list of sixty. Another venture was a Children's Holiday Hostess Scheme where youngsters from deprived urban areas stayed with local families in the country. Sixteen children came for a summer holiday in 1967 and it was recorded, 'On the whole the holidays went well but some questions were raised about the reactions of the children on returning to their own homes and such very different conditions.'

In 1982 a library service and trolley shop were introduced at Stangrove Lodge care home, followed by a trolley shop at Edenbridge Hospital the following year. These supplied essentials for long stay patients who didn't have family or friends to go shopping on their behalf; items such as toiletries, writing materials and sweets.

Over recent years the service has waned nationally, as responsibility has been taken over by the welfare state or other voluntary bodies. There are now only 40,000 WRVS volunteers registered. Edenbridge has experienced a similar decline. The play group was taken over by the church many years ago. The Visiting Service and Children's Holiday Scheme folded after operating for a decade or more. Stringent EU hygiene regulations effectively closed down the Meals on Wheels service in 1993 which was a great loss to the local community. Latterly,



*WI Christmas Party for the Darby and Joan Club, 1960.  
EDEVT:P2002.96*

the Trolley Service at the hospital and Stangrove Lodge was viewed as unnecessary, and finally withdrawn.

The first venture, the Darby and Joan Club, survived the longest. The two Senior Citizen's clubs amalgamated when numbers fell, and then finally closed in March 2011 when membership had dropped to sixteen and essential transport been withdrawn. Now the only surviving WRVS presence in the Edenbridge area is the Emergency Service.



*Darby and Joan tea party at Christmas Place, Marsh Green, 1955. EDEVT:P2002.184*

2013 marks the organisation's 75th Anniversary, and with the change of name to Royal Voluntary Service, the end of an epoch. The administration, once headed by titled ladies who devoted their lives to others through public service, has been taken over by a highly paid chief executive, and marketing team focused on identity. Fuelled by David Cameron's vision for a 'Big Society', and our aging population, the change aims to broaden the volunteer base by encouraging more men to volunteer. The future focus of the rebranded service 'will be on providing more integrated support, practical and emotional, to help the elderly remain independent.'

Despite the changes in structure, the new regime will continue to recognise the vision of the founder, Lady Reading, who amidst the turmoil identified a need and inspired women to volunteer and provide a 'comforting cup of tea and sympathetic ear' - something many in our community have appreciated over the last seventy five years.

#### **References:**

- Royal Voluntary Service Archive and Heritage Collection - WVS Sevenoaks Rural 1948-1970.
- Women's Voluntary Service Historical Notes (R0G22/86).
- Local organisers' reports and members' memories.

## SIR THOMAS RAMSEY: an Edenbridge boy who became Lord Mayor of the City of London

*And then there were seven...*

*By Allen Varley and Joan Varley*

It has long been accepted that five ‘Lord’<sup>1</sup> Mayors of the City of London were connected in some way with Edenbridge and the wider Eden Valley (Willsmer, undated). Research for a major exhibition in 2009<sup>2</sup> discovered a sixth ‘Lord’ Mayor, and more recently a seventh has been added to that list.

The exhibition in 2009 celebrated the lives and work of John De Pulteney who was Mayor of the City of London four times in 1330, 1331, 1333 and 1336, after which he purchased Penshurst Place. Richard (Dick) Whittington was also Mayor four times. Imposed upon the City by Richard II following the death of the incumbent Mayor in 1397, later that year he was elected to serve by the people and he went on to be Mayor again in 1406 and 1419. He was one of ‘six worthy citizens of London’ responsible for Broxham Manor, sited to the north east of Edenbridge, from 1408 until his death 15 years later. Geoffrey Bullen, perhaps more famous as the father of Anne Bolyen, was Lord Mayor in 1457 and he purchased the Manor and Castle of Hever in 1462. William Taylour was Lord Mayor in 1468. The Taylours were a local family and William was born and bred in Edenbridge. It is thought that he had Taylour House, located in Edenbridge High Street, built during the time he served as Lord Mayor. John Gresham was Lord Mayor of London in 1547. His connection with the Eden Valley is through the manor of Stangrave or Edenbridge. In 1540 Henry VIII granted to him the ‘manors of Westerham and Edenbridgge’ for the princely sum of £1,441 19s 7d. William Humphreys became Lord Mayor in 1714 and in 1715 he purchased Hever Castle from James, 2nd Baron Waldegrave.

Now we can add a seventh Lord Mayor to this list, **Sir Thomas Ramsey**, who was Lord Mayor of London

*Coat of Arms of the Worshipful Company of Grocers*



in 1577. Born in 1510 or 1511 in Eaton Bridge (Edenbridge), the second son of John Ramsey, he had an elder brother, William, and three sisters, Tyrell, Hebbarde and Elizabeth (Cooke, 1869) (Kent, 1726). Details of the family home have not been found. He was apprenticed in London, and became free of the Grocers’ Company between 1537 and 1539. In 1540 he married Alice (1492/93–1578), daughter of Bevis Lea of Enfield in Staffordshire, and became a successful merchant. He was elected alderman in 1566, and served for Cheap ward and then Cornhill ward in 1588 (the year of the Spanish Armada). He was knighted, served as sheriff in 1567–68 and Lord Mayor in 1577–78. He had an excellent attendance record as an alderman, and became one of the wealthiest men in Elizabethan London with a fine house in Lombard Street, purchased in 1566, which was also his place of business.

Alice died on 15 January 1577, aged 85 and having been married 37 years; they had no children. The following year, 1578, “Rich Ramsey” as Sir Thomas was known, married Mary, eldest daughter of the Bristol merchant William Dale. The identity of her first husband is unknown, but by 1554 she was married to Thomas Avery of Berden in Essex, who had made his career in the service of Thomas Cromwell. Avery died in 1576 and the marriage was childless, though in his will Avery left property to “a boy” John Avery, presumably a bastard.



*Dame Mary Ramsey  
by British (English) School  
Oil on canvas  
Christ’s Hospital Foundation*

Details of Ramsey’s life and career do not appear to have survived, with the main authority, F.W. Fairholt (1866), in his analysis of the wills and inventory of Ramsey’s household goods, stating that “the incidents of Sir Thomas Ramsey’s career have not descended to our time”. Some additional information appears in Lady Mary Ramsey’s entry

in the *Dictionary of National Biography* (Archer, 2008).

In his will, Ramsey refers to “my mansion house”, and it appears to have been a large and important building, with a garden in the rear and a lodge at the entry to a courtyard. A well was in the yard, and the existence of a ‘spice house’ might indicate that as a wealthy merchant he was active in the emerging and lucrative spice trade. His importance is recognised by the playwright Thomas Heywood with the appearance of Sir Thomas and Lady Mary among characters in the play: “If you know not me, you know nobody; or, The troubles of Queen Elizabeth” (printed 1605). The impression is given of a wealthy litigious man with his wife as the model of virtuous womanhood, and a peacemaker, particularly in the conflict and lengthy lawsuit between Sir Thomas and the more famous Sir Thomas Gresham (brother of ‘our’ John Gresham). Later in the play Lady Mary appears as a rich old widow with a young nephew of Gresham’s hoping to marry her. She helps him with money but declines to marry him (Rowland, 2010).

Sir Thomas’s charitable work was particularly concerned with hospitals. He was Governor of St. Bartholomew’s from 1559-60 until 1560-61, and also served as an auditor for St. Barts in 1560-61. He was the president of Christ’s Hospital from 1582-83 until his death in 1590.

Sir Thomas prepared two wills, one concerning personal possessions, signed on 20 September 1585, and the second, regarding property signed on 9 July 1586. The wills were proved in 1590. (Fairholt, 1866). Sir Thomas left sums of money to relatives, colleagues, servants and to the poor, including “to the poore inhabitauntes of Eaton Bridge in the countie of Kent tenne poundes”. Hospitals, prisons and the Grocers’ Company are remembered, and sums allocated for a stately funeral and dinners in Grocers’ Hall and in his own mansion. After legacies and bequests, half of the residue was to go to Lady Mary, with the other half being shared among named relatives. An indication of Ramsey’s wealth and influence is revealed in the note in his will reminding his executors that a loan of £550 to Robert, Earl of Leicester, Queen Elizabeth’s favourite, was payable in January 1587. On the death of Lady Mary, the estate was to go to

named relatives, prominent among these being his niece Elizabeth Holmeden, daughter of Ramsey’s sister Tyrrell Taylor. Three “trustie and lovinge frendes”, including Edward Holmeden, are named as executors. Sir Edward Holmeden, a Grocer, alderman and Sheriff of London in 1598 was the husband of Ramsey’s niece Elizabeth, They had five sons and four daughters and their son Thomas was Ramsey’s godson.

The Holmedens (Holmdens)<sup>3</sup> were a prominent Kent and Edenbridge family and Edward was the son of John of Hexted. He became a wealthy London merchant with particular interests in Mediterranean trade (Haklyut, 1812) and was a member of the Levant Company (Andrews, 1966), a chartered London company established in 1581 to regulate and promote trade with Turkey, Venice and the Levant. They profited from their sole right to import currants, wine and oil, and probably from prizes captured by English ships during the Anglo-Spanish War (1585-1604). Edward died on 4 June 1616.

*The Trewe Inventorye of all the moveable goodes, househoulde stuffe and plate, which were latelie the goodes and chattels of Sir Thomas Ramsey...* prepared in 1590, lists in great detail, room by room, the contents and furnishings of the mansion, with the estimated value of each item or set of items, in pounds, shillings and pence (Fairholt, 1866). Included in the inventory are furniture, carpets, curtains, tapestries, beds, bedding, clothing, linen, privy pots, pistols, muskets, bows and arrows, swords and daggers, lances, pikes and shields, cooking utensils, cutlery, candlesticks, pewter, copper and brass materials, plate, gold chains, jewellery, and equipment for horses.

Sir Thomas died on 19 May 1590 and was buried in his parish church St. Mary Woolnoth, with an appropriate monument. His first wife, Dame Alice who died in January 1577 was also buried there, and the monument, which was erected in 1596, also mentioned his second wife, Dame Mary. The parish



He beareth Sable, a Chevron Ermine, between three Rams Heads couped Argent, armed Or; by the Name of Ramsey of Kent. These were the Armes of Sir Thomas Ramsey, Knt. (Son of John Ramsey of Edenbridge in the aforesaid County) who was Sheriff of London, 1567. 9 Eliz. and Lord Mayor of the said City, A. D. 1577. 19 ejusd. This Sir Thomas married two Wives, 1. Alice, Daughter to Bevis Lea of Enfield in the County of Stafford, Gent. and 2. Mary, Daughter to William Dale of the City of Bristol,

*Thomas Ramsey Coat of Arms*

church was burnt in the Great Fire of London, and although it was reinstated, together with the tomb, it was destroyed in 1716 when the replacement church was built. (Stow, 1908)

Thomas Ramsey was one of the wealthiest men in London, and his widow, Lady Mary, received half of his estate. She continued the charitable work, leaving substantial amounts to relatives, hospitals, livery companies, poor relief, and to her native Bristol. She left just £20 to John Avery, reputedly her first husband's illegitimate son. At her death the capital value of the charities established by the Ramseys between 1583 and 1601 was the enormous sum (in those days) of £14,318. Mary Ramsey died in November 1601 and was buried at Christ Church on the 13th. Major beneficiaries were Elizabeth and Sir Edward Holmeden. Mary's portrait in oils survives at Christ's Hospital, with a line engraving, published January 1795, in the National Portrait Gallery. Unlike her husband, she has an entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The title of 'Lord' was only awarded to the Mayor of the City of London during the reign of Henry VIII.

<sup>2</sup> Royal Connections and Six 'Lord' Mayors, 18th March to 27th September 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Holmdens: "<http://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/Research/Maps/EDE/02.htm>"

<sup>4</sup> Edenbridge Tithe award schedule Part 1 signed 28th March 1844, Lists several Holmdens, including at Doggetts Farm. <http://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/Research/Maps/EDE/02.htm>

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**THE SEVEN 'LORD' MAYORS OF THE CITY OF LONDON WITH LINKS TO THE EDEN VALLEY**

**John de Pulteney** was Mayor of London in 1330, 1331, 1333 and 1336 during the reign of Edward III (1327-1377). *Connection:* Penshurst Place.

**Richard (Dick) Whittington** was first appointed Mayor of London in 1397 by Richard II, then elected Mayor in 1397, 1406, and 1419 during the reigns of Richard II (1377-1399), Henry IV (1399-1413) and Henry V (1413-1422). *Connection:* Broxham Manor.

**Geoffrey Bullen (Boleyn)** was Mayor of London in 1457 during the reign of Henry VI (1422–61, 1470-1471). *Connection:* Hever Castle.

**William Taylour** was Mayor of London in 1468 during the reign of Edward IV (1461-1470, 1471-1483). *Connection:* Edenbridge: Taylour House.

**John Gresham** was Lord Mayor of London in 1547 during the reign of Henry VIII (1509-1547). *Connection:* Edenbridge – Manor of Stangrave.

**Sir Thomas Ramsey** was Lord Mayor of London in 1577 during the reign of Elizabeth I. *Connection:* Born in 1510 or 1511 in Eaton Bridge (Edenbridge)

**William Humphreys** was Lord Mayor of London in 1714 during the reign of George I (1714-1727). *Connection:* Hever Castle.

## THE HEVER ROSE AND HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY – A POTTED HISTORY

By Doug Bowern

The Hever Rose and Horticultural Society, known affectionately as the 'Hever Hort', has a history which, in its various manifestations, goes back 112 years, all be it with a long gap between the wars. With Mr John Eastman in the Chair, and a committee of six members, the still existing minute book records that very first meeting, on 6th August 1901, to establish the 'Hever Cottage Gardening Society'. Its stated objective was to promote cottage gardening in Hever and that 'a minimum annual subscription of sixpence be paid in advance by all members'. The first President is recorded as the Rev. Latham Browne, vicar of St. Peter's from 1890 to 1920, with M.V. Charrington and G.A. Phillips elected as Vice Presidents.

It was decided to hold a flower show on the 29th August, based on a schedule of 21 separate classes covering mainly vegetables and fruit, but also Dahlias and a bouquet of wild flowers open to the children of members. Each class winner received a prize of three shillings, with second and third receiving two and one shilling respectively. According to one calculation three shillings in 1901 equates to £12.89 in today's money! Mrs Latham Browne presented the prizes and Walter Taylor, a printer of Edenbridge High Street, produced 100 schedules and cards for 18 shillings and three pence. The show was considered a great success with a total of 50 entries.

For the 1902 show Mr Meade Waldo<sup>1</sup> offered an additional prize of £1, shared between the best cultivated gardens; and H.B. Shephard Esquire offered one load of manure to be delivered to the garden adjudged the best. The following year (1903) an addition to the summer show schedule was made for the best 'newly budded rose on the common brier'. Following a recommendation from the judges, the January 1904 annual meeting decided that, for some classes, exhibitors be distinguished between amateurs and under gardeners on one hand, and cottages on the other. This was a distinction not negated until the mid 1960s.

Until 1905 meetings were held in 'the Reading

Room', but the location is not given, although there is a clue from a meeting in 1903, which refers to the meeting being held in the Reading Room 'by permission of M V Charrington'. Mowbray Charrington (of Charrington Brewery) had How Green House built, influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement, on the land of an existing farmhouse. However, it was not completed until 1905.



*Head gardener and staff at How Green House Hever in front of bothy, c.1905. EDEVT:P2008.1596*

Another possibility is that it was a building in the grounds of Hever Castle, used as a reading room for workers who excavated the lake and created the gardens. In any event, after 1905 meetings were held in the original Hever School, now Ghyll Cottage; the existing school being built by the Astors in 1911.

That first minute book takes the Society to August 1907, recording both committee and annual meetings and, of course, elected officials of the Society. The Presidents (and indeed Vice Presidents) alternated between Latham Browne, Waldo Meade, Mowbray Charrington (also a church warden at St. Peter's) and others. Those minutes are the usual fare of the minutiae of a small, local organisation but the minutes of the 11th July 1904 are worthy of note as they must be a contender for the Guinness record for one of the most succinct accounts of any meeting. After noting the names of those present the Secretary records; 'No business of interest transpired.' The minute was duly dated and signed by the Chairman, as a true account of the meeting!

From 1907 the minutes are missing, but the schedule for the summer show of 1914 does exist, so we can conclude that the Society continued

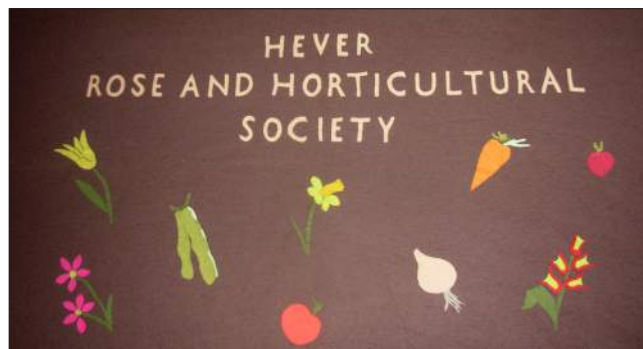
successfully until then. Annual subscriptions had risen to 2/6 and the show for that year was held on Wednesday, August 12th, eight days after Britain declared war on Germany. There were a total of 51 separate classes, divided into vegetable, flowers, fruit, best cultivated gardens and an 'Industrial Section', which broadly equates to what we now call the domestic classes. Many of the fruit, vegetable and flower classes would be recognisable in our own shows but some clearly belong to that earlier period. For example, the Industrial Section included a prize for 'Darning of stockings or socks', for women and girls over 14 years of age, and 'Best washed, starched and ironed shirt, collar and cotton dress', for women over 20.

We have no records for the war years and it would be understandable if it did not continue during this period. Indeed, there does not seem to have been any activity during the twenties and thirties, although there was a West Kent garden competition and an Estate garden competition initiated by Lady Violet Astor.

Minute books from 1948 show that the Society had reformed to become the 'Hever Horticultural



Lady Astor in her Red Cross uniform walking along a London street with her husband Lord Astor, c.1939-1945. EDEVT:P2005.1325.



A table cloth, made of wool with felt designs and letters. Post 1979

Society', with Lady Astor as President. This revival was due, to a large extent, to the efforts of Messrs. Ridgwell and Hugh Eastman, the latter presumably related to the original chairman. Committee meetings were held in the Henry VIII, and in 1949 a large summer show was held in the grounds of Hever Castle with children's sports and sideshows. There were 86 classes including one open only to the W.I. branches of Edenbridge, Chiddingstone, Hever, Markbeech and Cowden. In addition to the expected jars of jam, a prize of 2/6 was awarded for the best jam sandwich. At this time Cottagers still had their own class, and the first prize winners still received three shillings, worth a mere £3.71 in today's currency! Hever Castle continued to be the venue until 1955, when the shows were moved to Hever School field.

In 1974 Lord Astor sponsored a garden competition, and in 1979 he suggested the society hold a rose show in conjunction with the South East England Rose Society. This was held in the Castle Pavilion with separate classes for Hever members. This was apparently not a great success and the following year the society held its own show in Hever Village Hall (on land given to the village by the Astor family), where shows have been held since. From 1979 the society became what it is today: the 'Hever Rose and Horticultural Society'.

I should like to acknowledge the late David Woollett, a long standing member and former Chairman of the Society, whose own account has been invaluable in writing this article. If anyone has photographs relating to Hever Horticultural Flower shows, particularly relating to the period of this article, please contact the museum.

<sup>1</sup> The Meade Waldos owned Hever Castle from 1750 to 1903, although they lived in Stonewall Park and let the property to a series of tenant farmers.

## 41 HEVER ROAD

*By Peter Winchester*

Recently it was said that most people's memories are in fact what they imagined, so here's mine...

Being only young I have no idea exactly when, or why, we moved to 41 Hever Road - but I'm sure it was nicer than Paradise Row (Lingfield Road). A bigger house (though an old lady still lived in one room of it) with a scullery, crickets under the copper and an outside toilet - as there was at Lingfield Road.

Out front we had a garden, and across the road, in the field alongside the hedge, was a tank trap (a large ditch, full of water). On the far side of the field was the river. At the top of the back garden was a small orchard and a shelter had been put up

the railway over the river. The railway embankment protected the houses in Church Street from the blast. We went over there after school to see the new hole by the river. The viaduct was not badly damaged but some of the decking was missing. I guess it had to be properly inspected before trains could run again.

Another evening someone knocked on the front door - some soldiers. Could we boil a kettle for them to make some tea? Soon all the houses were boiling kettles as there was a large group. Someone asked, 'what were they here for?' 'You'll see in the morning.' You couldn't miss them, barrage balloons all over the place, yet you could still watch a V1 fly through avoiding them all. One day I was by our back door and heard a loud noise, it was a

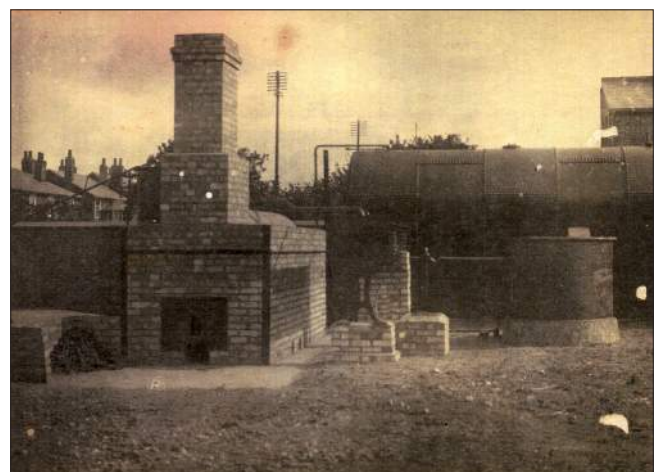


*View of Hever Road taken from the High Street end, c.1900.  
©H D Keyte.  
EDEVT:P2001.1.16*

there of corrugated iron sheet. One day, in spite of a fight going on overhead, Dad was outside gardening. I persuaded him to come in the shelter for a while, and as he did a piece of shrapnel hit and dented the tin.

We lived just three doors from the gas works. I did sometimes wonder what would happen if a bomb hit that, or the gas holder. There was an opening on to our access, and as the gas workers were friendly I watched how it was done - and it was easy to buy a bag of coke! Looking back I can remember the retorts, but not how they were loaded.

One evening, as Dad was leaving for duty at the fire station there was a loud explosion. A parachute mine had gone off, close to the viaduct carrying



*Edenbridge Gasworks tar plant, c.1920.  
EDEVT:P2002.616*



*RF bus No 465, MLE 679, outside the Baptist Church, c.2000. EDEVT:P2004.1308*

V1 just above the tree tops. I thought it would hit the trees on Mill Hill, but it didn't. I believe it came down near East Grinstead.

We rarely used the train to go to see Gran and Grandad, it was usually the 465 bus to Holland; but sometimes we cycled. This had the problem of the roads in Staffhurst Wood being closed. But you could usually get round the barriers with a bike. The wood was an ammunition store and a base for Italian prisoners. I was fascinated by the long runs of rollers used to push the crates of ammunition - just as the crates of drinks did in the Presta factory just up the road from home.

The hourly Maidstone and District Motor Services buses along Hever Road, route 93, ran a circular service to Tunbridge Wells. In the war they had some utility buses, with wooden seats along the side of the saloon. They weren't that comfortable for an hour; perhaps bearable to Cowden or Blackham. Later, when we kids collected car numbers the novelty started to wear off when the same bus came round again two hours later. We did go to Tunbridge Wells on the train once and got caught in a raid so had to shelter in an unfinished Assembly Hall.

When the bonfire celebration started again, and was held in Town field, we had grandstand seats and were able to see Winston Churchill and Jean

Kent go by in their cars to officially light the bonfires.

I still lived in Hever Road in the harsh winter of 1947. The snow was above the hedges on the open area beyond the Manse and up to the railway bridge - just a small track was cleared through it.

It must have been about 1949 when I left Hever Road and moved up to the farm. Since then the bus garage has been built opposite and all the houses along the north side. When that happened all the places on the south had their numbers doubled. The gas works and the Presta soon disappeared.....

We were very pleased to receive this contribution from museum member Peter Winchester. We hope that this will encourage other members to put their memories down on paper to share with us.

*Editors*

# PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE - WILDLIFE IN THE EDEN VALLEY

By Mike Reed

Cowden Conservation Society

*This article is based upon a talk given at the museum on Thursday September 26th, 2013.*



*The River Eden, c.2013.  
Image courtesy of Mike Reed*

Past evidence is there amongst literature and old maps. Town names with Hurst suggest a woodland history, with the addition of Buck telling of Beech woods and several references to Ash in the area, we can build a picture of a varying landscape. A broad, enclosed river valley would develop marshes before human intervention, and Cranleigh to the west as well as Cranbrook to the east suggest a time when these great birds were a dominant feature. These birds are spreading south once again from the very successful reintroduction programmes in Norfolk and elsewhere – will they return to the

Eden? Records of other wildlife are sparse but there may have been wild cat in the area into recorded times – this cat is now Britain's rarest animal with possibly less than 50 confined to Scotland. Back in Edenbridge old churchwarden accounts gave a telling though puzzling tale of money paid for the heads of foxes, hedgehogs and polecats with the latter commanding the highest prices in the 1700's. No wonder polecats became regionally extinct!

The present status of our wildlife is in part a reflection of our heritage and our activities. With hedgehogs lined up to be the next mammal on the endangered species list and polecats long since gone we are currently left with a rich array, both animal and plant. Some of these are introductions and do worryingly well compared with our original wildlife. The broad fertile valley of the Eden allows invasive plants like Japanese Knotweed and Indian Balsam to push out a rich variety of waterside plants like purple loosestrife, water dock, gypsywort, sedges, water plantain and a range of parsley relatives like dropworts. Beneath the river surface things are doing



*Banded Demoiselle - Calopteryx splendens, c.2013.  
Image courtesy of Mike Reed*



*Guelder Rose - Viburnum opulus*  
Image courtesy of Mike Reed

well with a variety of invertebrates including many dragonfly and damselfly species along with case dwelling caddisfly larvae moving amongst brandy bottle lilies and round-leaved pondweed.

With a plentiful food supply no wonder the river has a reputation for supporting some fine fish, with pike and chub high on the angler's list. Within the network of hedgerows and woodland belts of the valley sides there are plants which indicate an ancient woodland heritage – guelder rose, tutsan, wild service tree and the plants of the woodland floor are precious relics.

The largest of animals are the fallow deer but the original and secretive roe deer just reaches into Kent from the west at this point. Another deer, the muntjac, is just making itself known in the valley though it has taken over a century to spread from its original introduction from Asia into Tring in Hertfordshire.

The future is a mystery but we can imagine changes as new plants and animals are spreading from all sides. Marsh frogs are doing well along with American crayfish, though neither are good news. New dragonfly species are appearing from their strongholds in southern Europe to add to the richness of the river fauna. The good news is that otters may be back in the last area of England to be re-colonised. Thoughtful and well understood management



*Wild Service Tree – Sorbus torminalis.*  
Image source Wikipedia

of some fields and boundaries as hay meadows is supporting a flush of butterflies and moths, and may yet be the saving of bee populations in the future. The presence of mink will hold back the re-colonisation of the waterside by water voles and there are a host of concerns about ring-necked parakeets who have just reached us from their main areas of colonisation in west London. Beautiful but marauding, these green tyrants are capable of driving out or consuming most other tree dwelling wildlife – bats, owls and nesting birds don't stand a chance.

The best thing to focus on is the way that critical study of natural processes in the countryside has led to success in restoration of nature in the recent years – let's hope it can continue.



*Roe deer - Capreolus capreolus*  
Image courtesy of Mike Reed

## A LIFE OF SERVICE TO THE LAND

### From the archives...

*During research for stories to accompany the Rural Life exhibition the following eulogy at the funeral of Reuben Payne, given by local historian Barbara Penman, came to light. It seems to perfectly encompass a rural life in the Eden Valley during the last century.*

*by Barbara Penman, (16 July 1991) and reproduced with the kind permission of Reuben's family.*

It is a privilege for me to speak at this service today about Reuben, or Jack as he was known by most of his family and friends, someone who had been part of our community for nearly 89 years.

A countryman born and bred he had lived all his life in the Kentish countryside he loved, as generations of his family had done before him. His grandfather had bought Trudges Farm in How Green Lane in 1895 for his son, Jack's father when he married, so that it was at Trudges that Jack was born in 1902.

All his schooldays were spent at Four Elms School, just across the road from this church, where indeed two succeeding generations, his son and grandson, followed in his footsteps. Jack had many vivid and happy memories of his days there and could recall and name fellow pupils in an old school photo of 1912.

Then followed a long life of service to the land; a life which spanned the most dramatic period of change in farming and the countryside ever known; from a way little changed for centuries to the high-tec and diverse agriculture problems of today.

In his boyhood days, working with his father during the hop-picking they would spend long nights in the oast house at Furnace Farm, tending the drying of the hops in the kiln. Later,



*Reuben Payne, courtesy of Jenny Braiden*

as a shepherd boy on that farm, he sometimes drove sheep to Knockholt and was expected back in time to help with the milking. Work at Furnace Farm continued before he went to Mapleton to work under the head gardener in the large garden on Mr Russell's estate.

Village life in those days was thriving and Jack took an active part in all that was going on; the cricket and football, the meetings and social gatherings, and it was here that he met Madge, who had come from Essex to work for Mrs Williams at Boones.

In April 1929 they were married here in this church by the Rev. Douglas Winniffrith (instituted as Vicar



*Mapleton, c.1930. EDEV:T:P2008.1574*

of the Parish the previous day), a marriage that was to last for more than 62 years, encompassing a happy family life with their son John and daughter Jennifer, who in their turn married and lived nearby. So it was a close knit and extended family of which he was very proud, particularly of his grandsons, and which meant much to him.

He and Madge spent their early years together at Bough Beech, where Jack was employed on the Bough Beech Estate of Col. Stanley Williams, working the land with horses. During the Second World War he worked for the other branch of the Williams family (the big landowners of the time) on the Boones Estate in Four Elms and like many farm workers engaged in the production of food, he was a member of the Home Guard, one of the few rifle holders in the early days, fulfilling the duties that were the role of that invaluable 'Dad's Army'.

Then in 1946 they returned to Trudges Farm, taking over the fruit farm from his father, and so it was here in the old family home where he was born that he was to spend the rest of his long life, a life of hard work and dedication to the land like his ancestors before him. Until a few years ago people

would come from miles around for the fruit and vegetables which Jack grew and the home-made jam which Madge made; so many people knew and respected them and received a warm welcome and hospitality.

In recent years when he was no longer able to get about he loved to reminisce about life in days gone by and the ways of the countryside around. Sitting with him and Madge in their living room, beneath a photo of his grandparents and family taken outside the Chequers Inn at Bough Beech at the turn of the century, where his grandfather was landlord; with other treasured old photographs of Four Elms School and the village church where they were married, and a painting of his house, I was privileged to record so many memories of a bygone age and the life of a real and true Kentish countryman, a man, like many countrymen, with a simple faith and belief, who has passed from this life to the one greater life beyond. And so we gather today to support Madge, John and Jennifer and all the family and to give thanks for a life of service to the land.



*St. Paul's Church, Four Elms, c.1920*  
*Photographer H. Camburn, Tunbridge Wells.*  
*EDEVT:P2001.1.153*

# JANE THORNTON HIGGS MBE

by Brenda Hillman



Jane's involvement with the museum began in 1997 when, as a volunteer, her talent for display, presentation and organisation proved very useful in the time before the opening.

In September 1998 she mounted our first display in the High Street on Heritage Open Day and as June 2000 approached she was kept busy helping with the presentation of the exhibits and organising the spectacle of the opening ceremony.

Once open, the museum benefited from Jane's skills, and the success of the Victoriana exhibition in 2001 and the Coronation Experience in 2003 owed much to her design and expertise.

When Elizabeth Wright moved on in 2003 Jane was appointed part-time honorary curator, and faced the task of getting to grips with the bureaucracy involved in running the museum by attending meetings, courses and consulting helpful contacts.

Her dedication and enthusiasm were obvious and she proved adept at inspiring volunteers to contribute in many ways to the running of the museum. Her Curator's Tea Parties and Curator's

Newsletters helped everyone feel involved and valued.

Jane's 'people skills' were also well used in her dealings with professionals in the museum world, visitors and groups and in her outreach work.

Comments in the visitors' book are testimony to how much people enjoyed and valued their time at the museum.



*Jane celebrating her MBE with museum volunteers without whom, as Jane says 'she couldn't have done it'.*

Recognition of her achievements came when she was awarded the Alan Dell Local History Award by Edenbridge & District Historical Society in 2009, and an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List in 2010 for services to the Heritage of the Eden Valley in Kent.

And now, after ten years during which Jane has spent time on museum matters, well beyond her stipulated hours, she has opted for a well-deserved retirement as curator; fortunately, she will still be active as a volunteer so we shall still benefit from her skills.

We wish her well and thank her for all she has done to bring the museum through some challenging times and for the pleasure and satisfaction people have had as a result of her hard work.

## EDEN VALLEY MUSEUM CURATOR NO 2 – JANE HIGGS

By Don Garman

The need to establish a collection of at least 500 hundred items, of which about 75% would be owned by the Museum Trust, required the formation of a team to gather artefacts, photographs and information. Jane was one of the 27 who attended the first meeting and at an early stage, because of the Higgs' family's links with the retail scene, she offered to gather information about the High Street and

build up a set of photographs. Her endeavours also resulted in the gathering of artefacts related to some of the shops.

Once construction of the museum displays began in the late spring of 2000, Jane was able to use her stage design and set construction skills to good effect. She joined forces with Jean McLaclan-Clark who had also studied set design and construction. The two of them got on like a house on fire, and as soon as Ken Cooper's team had completed display structures the two girls were busy creating finishes for the various industrial activities and the High Street.

Jane volunteered to lead on the procession prior to the formal opening, and signed up a variety of different organisations including the circus that happened to come to town. Once again her theatre experience was put to good use. As a member of the Galleries and Exhibition Sub-committee, she used her creative skills to help Elizabeth the first curator and I to design the successful Victorian and Coronation exhibitions, both of which transformed the meeting room into cosy period environments in which to display artefacts, documents and photographs. A Roman Day culminated in a dinner and Jane designed a chariot race game which was great fun. I wonder what happened to the hippodrome she created?

During 2002/3 the Trust began to plan to appoint an honorary curator. Jane applied and was short listed with another candidate. Very aware of her lack of curatorial expertise, I do not think she anticipated she would be successful. However, with a track record of successful contributions to exhibitions and events, and an obvious creative flair and good interpersonal skills she was appointed by the small selection panel. Ten years on the panel can be content that they made an excellent choice. Jane has used her creativity to develop a range of interesting exhibitions, made improvements to the layout, and developed and expanded the volunteer force using her strong interpersonal skills.

Her newsletters for the volunteers and the annual Curatorial Tea Party sought to keep them informed, involved and rewarded. These methods of communication also provided opportunities for feedback, which Jane readily took on board.

Jane was keen to develop her curatorial skills and knowledge and made use of opportunities in Kent and further afield. These personal development opportunities often also resulted in useful links for the museum.

By the appointment of Jane the Trust also gained the support of her family; sons helping with their technical expertise, mother-in-law enlisting as a volunteer, mother making items to sell to raise funds and father, the actor, the late Frank Thornton being engaged to open events and bring along members of the cast of "Are You Being Served?" to support the exhibition "Were you Being Served?". This event proved so popular that Jane and I discussed closing the doors for a while as both museum and Rickards Hall were bursting at the seams! We must also thank her family for the support that they have given Jane during her time as curator.

Jane has given freely of her time for ten years, exceeding her contracted hours, but the commitment has ensured that the museum has developed and thrived under her leadership and from her enthusiasm. Still self-effacing about her curatorial knowledge and skill, she has learned much in ten years and would be equal to most qualified professionals in this role.



*Don Garman, Helen Jackman, Jane Thornton Higgs and Alan Smith, museum accreditation, 2010.*

© *Champion Photography*

Jane's contribution has not ended, and although she may hand over the remaining 40 – 50% of her duties in the future I am sure the volunteer team and Trust will continue to benefit from her involvement.

*Don Garman, Project Manager 1995 – 2000,  
Galleries and Exhibition Sub Committee Chair 2000  
-2003, Trust Chair 2001 – 2003.*

## NEW HOUSE MANAGER

The museum was joined this year by Alex Paton as new House Manager. This means that he will be taking on many of the duties of former Hon. Curator Jane Higgs MBE, who has stayed on as Collections Manager. Many of you are already aware of the change, but for those of you who aren't here's a little background.

Alex currently divides his time between duties at the museum and working in the Conservation Team at Knole House. This is the second National Trust property he has worked for and has volunteered with several others. With a BA (Hons) in History from the University of Nottingham he went on to take an MA in Museum & Heritage Management graduating in November 2012.

Although he is new to the area he has family connections with Edenbridge and is keen to get stuck into the local history. As a volunteer he has worked at several National Trust properties, the Churches Conservation Trust, York Minster, and Derby Museum & Art Gallery. This is as well as working at a number of local history museums such as his local Cranbrook Museum.

With a background primarily in historic house conservation he is working closely with Jane Higgs, Jean Reader and all of the museum's wonderful volunteers to keep the museum running to the highest standards as we re-apply for official Accredited Museum status.

In the coming year he is hoping to take a more active role in a number of different areas. Drawing on experience in different types of heritage institutions, Alex will not only be running the day to day business of the museum, but will also be helping out with the collections, exhibitions and events as well as increasing the museums online presence.

Building on the fantastic work of so many dedicated volunteers, the goal is to see the Eden Valley Museum continue as an inspiring museum and to develop further into an invaluable resource for visitors, researchers and the whole community.

## FRANK THORNTON

*15 January 1921 – 16 March 2013*

In March this year staff and volunteers at the museum were sad to learn of the death of Frank Thornton. Frank was perhaps best known as Captain Peacock, the character he played so well in the long running comedy series 'Are You Being Served', but he was known



to us as Jane Higgs's Pa. Frank and his wife Beryl supported Jane when she took on the role of Hon. Curator in 2003 and in February of that year Frank brought his acting colleagues, Mollie Sugden (Mrs



Slocombe) and Trevor Bannister (Mr Lucas) to Edenbridge for a Celebrity Coffee Morning at the museum. Their attendance and support attracted a huge crowd to

the event and the steady stream of visitors meant that Mollie, Frank and Trevor were kept busy handing out cups of tea and signing autographs. The event was a huge success and raised in excess of £1200 for the museum.



*The Celebrity Coffee morning held on Saturday 14th February 2003*

# EDEN VALLEY MUSEUM

*A Dynamic Social History Museum in a 14th Century Farmhouse*

## MUSEUM OPENING TIMES

February to December 2014  
Wednesday and Friday 2 to 4.30pm  
Thursday and Saturday 10am to 4.30pm  
Sundays (June, July and August) 2 to 4.30pm

*Details of any special opening dates will be posted on the museum notice board and disseminated via the local press.*

## FREE GUIDED WALKS

Saturdays June 7th, July 12th, **August 9th\***, September 13th 2014  
Meet at the museum at 2pm. **\*This is an evening walk starting at 6.30pm**

## MEMBERSHIP

Annual individual membership £10  
Annual family membership £20  
Annual corporate membership £75

## DONATIONS

Cheques should be made payable to:  
**Eden Valley Museum Trust**

Send to:

The Treasurer, Eden Valley Museum, Church House,  
72 High Street, Edenbridge, Kent TN8 5AR

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Eden Valley Museum Trust - Registered Charity No. **1065466**

## LEAVING A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

*Leaving a legacy in your Will to the Eden Valley Museum is a gift to future generations. Helping to safeguard the future of our past.*

If you would like to discuss leaving a legacy, please contact The Treasurer,  
Eden Valley Museum, Church House, 72 High Street, Edenbridge, Kent TN8 5AR

## EDEN VALLEY MUSEUM

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