

# FRIENDS OF Tom Brown's SCHOOL Museum

Forthcoming  
**Event**

Monday 7  
November, 7.30pm

with **Mike  
Heaney,**

See pg 3

**Volunteer  
NOW**

Call for  
Volunteers

**Museum  
Projects**

See pg 4

## NEWSLetter

WINTER 2022



Josephine  
Coad

## One Friend to Another..

**October has come to an end and our museum has closed for the winter. Thank you to all the Friends who have taken their turn on the rota during our first full year after closure due to Covid.**

Visitor numbers gradually crept up as the year progressed with Sundays proving to be the most popular day -- doubtless encouraged by tea and cake at the Church. Perhaps we miss the free advertising gained from the 'What's On in Faringdon' monthly circular?

**White Horse Show** - another thank you to the volunteers who helped in the lovely weather at the White Horse Show. Volunteers came forward very slowly to start with and then with a rush towards the end which meant on a few occasions we had more help than was needed, amazing! We look forward to seeing you all again next year. The show brings in much needed funds towards the running of the museum.

It was great to see so many of you at the series of talks organised by Garry. These talks have proved popular both with the Friends and the general public We hope they will raise the profile of the museum both in the village and the surrounding area. It is proposed to book further talks

in the New Year so please come along and invite your friends.

Please also consider signing up to [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) which turns your online shopping into charity donations to the Friends. You do not pay extra; it is the company that donates a percentage of your spend to the charity you have nominated.



*It's amazing who the Museum attracts at the White Horse Show!*



Garry Gibbons

# Curator's Report

**I can't believe the Museum is now closed until Easter 2023! This year has passed by in a flash and I think it's safe to say the Museum has taken up a little more of my time than I had originally anticipated – let's hope it's worthwhile!**

That said, the journey of discovery for me has been absolutely fascinating as I come to better appreciate Uffington's heritage and get to know the Museum's amazing volunteers (and I'm not the only one that thinks so, but more about that below).

A few weeks ago I was fortunate to attend the **Oxfordshire Museums Council** AGM held at the Abingdon Abbey Buildings (if you've not been to the Abbey before it's well worth a visit, and the town's museum is also close by). Although the group that gathered for the AGM was relatively small, the contacts were invaluable to me in terms of accessing real professional experience and developing future support. Among others, Museum Development South East (Sarah Menary) was present, as was the newly appointed manager of the Oxfordshire Museums Service (Jemma Davey).

On the subject of **Museum Development South East**, I am currently in the throes of applying for grants through two of their programmes. The first, an Organisational Health Check, aims to review the Museum and its operations with the opportunity of claiming a grant of up to £2000 in order to address issues the health check may reveal. The second grant provides for an assessment of the Museum's collection and the items we have on display by a professional conservation company with the possibility of applying for up to £1000 to mitigate any possible problem areas they may identify. We should have formal notification of our grant applications by the end of the year.

There's a number of projects in the pipeline that will hopefully be in the public domain soon -- depending on the financial support available to realise them. One project you will soon be aware of is the Museum's **COVID Lockdown Memories Survey** which will be distributed to all households in Uffington. This survey has been in the planning for some months and I must acknowledge the co-leads for this project, Michelle Garwood and David Barnes. The cost of printing the survey pack has kindly been sponsored by **Waymark Properties** (many thanks Mr Edward Preece), with match funding supplied by **Friends of Tom Brown's School Museum**.

Finally, back to our volunteers. As you may be aware, this year Museum visitors have been requested to complete a visitor survey. We've received a high return of questionnaires completed by visitors, 98% of whom have given our rota volunteers their highest approval rating. That's a great effort and I shall here end on giving a flavour of responses written in the questionnaire's feedback box:

**'Friendly volunteers – lots of interesting and useful information'**

**'Welcomed, the museum is friendly and accomodating'**

**'Great help and background given by the volunteer!'**



*Museum rota volunteers get together at the end of our 2022 season.*



## Forthcoming Event

### The Man Who Collected Oxfordshire: The Antiquary Percy Manning

Join Mike Heaney of Oxford's Bodleian Library for a guided tour of Percy Manning's Oxfordshire.



Percy Manning was an Oxford antiquary interested in all aspects of life in his county. He was a respected expert in local archaeology and history, but expanded his range into social history, custom, folklore and dialect. With the aid of his indefatigable agent Thomas Carter, he quartered the county looking for survivals of dying aspects of social life and custom, at first with an emphasis on collecting material remains but then turning to the more intangible aspects.

**Monday 7 November 2022, 7.30pm**  
*Thomas Hughes Memorial Hall, Uffington*  
Tickets on the door from 7pm.  
Entrance £5; Friends £3.



### Uffington Museum Gifts: Think Outside the Box this Christmas

The season of good cheer is fast approaching so this year why not save fuel and shop local?

The Museum offers a small range of gifts that are perfect for your loved one's Christmas stocking or handy to send overseas.

You can find us at the forthcoming Uffington Farmers' Markets (13 November and 11 December, Memorial Hall, Uffington, 10.00-12.30hrs). Alternatively, simply email the Museum and arrange to **Purchase & Collect**.



#### Uffington White Horse Necklace

Bronze stylised horse on a gold-plated trace chain.  
£45.00



#### Uffington White Horse Necklace

Silver stylised horse on a silver trace chain.  
£54.00



#### Uffington White Horse Tea Towel

Designed and manufactured in the UK (48 x 70cm)  
£10.00



# INSIDE the MUSEUM

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## Looking to the Future

**Although brimming full of history, the Old Schoolroom provides a small space for the Museum's work of telling Uffington's story.**

I hope that, over the winter closure, we can start to 'open' up the display area within the Museum but in parallel with that aim we must also look to take the Museum out of the building and into the community.

A number of projects which have been initiated have been designed to do just that – but we need volunteers!

### **St Mary's Churchyard Survey**

Last undertaken 10 years ago, the churchyard survey requires updating. As curator, I have started a conversation with Jeremy Gaulston (vicar) and his team to start planning the process.

### **Jubilee Field Metal Detecting Experience**

Building on work started by Karen, this is an exciting opportunity for residents and others from the wider community to experience metal detecting with trained, responsible detectorists, directly handling objects through the washing and conservation of finds, and better understanding the process of identifying artefacts with Oxfordshire's Finds Liaison Officer.

### **Sir John Betjeman Correspondence**

The Museum has been home to Betjeman's correspondence as collected by Candida, his daughter. Ultimately, the aim is for the Museum to partner with an academic institution to complete a joint grant application with the objective of building a database of the catalogue, digitising all the correspondence, and placing both online as a fully searchable resource.

## Understanding Our Visitors

**Knowing our visitors, who they are, their visit behaviour, their motivations and their expectations is a basic requirement to inform how we improve the Museum's offer in order to diversify and grow our audience. Equally, understanding the views of potential visitors is essential in planning future growth.**

Regular readers may recall a post in an earlier Newsletter highlighting a new survey aimed at Museum visitors. I'm pleased to say uptake by visitors of the survey has exceeded my expectations and is a tribute to the efforts of the Museum's rota volunteers. At the time of writing, we have collected more than a hundred responses.

Whilst the Museum has been out and about at farmers' markets and other public events, we have also collected more than 150 responses to our Community Survey. This survey aims to better understand how a community Museum is perceived by local people and to measure our impact on those yet to visit us.

I would hope there is agreement that no organisation can stand still – Museums are no exception. We must strive to improve what we do as an organisation, what we offer the public, and how we engage volunteers; each of the two surveys will help inform how we achieve the goal of making Uffington's Museum a success story by understanding current and potential visitors with the overall aim of building visitor numbers over the coming years.

The results of both surveys will be analysed over the coming months and summarised in the next Newsletter.

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**If you'd like to volunteer for any of the projects we're working on...get in touch:**

[uffingtonmuseum@gmail.com](mailto:uffingtonmuseum@gmail.com)