

FRIENDS OF Tom Brown's SCHOOL Museum

Forthcoming Events

Wednesday
8 March, 7.30pm

with
**Edward
Caswell**
See pg 3

Friends Membership Fees

**NOW
DUE**
for 2023

NEWSLetter

SPRING 2023



Josephine
Coad

One Friend to Another..

We start 2023 with the sad news that Derek Lindo, a founder member of the Friends, has died. Together with Sharon and Jane he was on the first Friends committee and was treasurer for many years. Although unable to visit the museum for some time he remained interested in our progress and remained a loyal supporter.

Planning for the new season is now well underway. Garry is reorganising the exhibition space ready for the opening on Easter Saturday, 8th April. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the launch. Further details will be circulated to the Friends nearer the time.

In preparation for opening, Verity will be planning the rota for the season and would very much welcome any Friends who are not on the rota to consider taking a turn. Being on the rota involves being on duty between 2pm and 5pm one day over a weekend. Training is given to ensure you feel comfortable with the layout within the museum, your main purpose is to welcome visitors. A bonus of being on the rota is you do not have to pay the annual Friends subscription fee of £10.

Garry has planned another series of lectures commencing on 8th March in the Village Hall at 7.30pm when Edward Caswell will talk on **Treasures of Oxfordshire**. Please note that this is a Wednesday. Tickets at the door, £3 for Friends, £5 for guests. Tell your friends and neighbours and ask them along, we look forward to seeing you all again. Find the full listing on page 3.

Finally, if you are booking summer hols, please consider signing up to...



www.easyfundraising.org.uk

1 Choose a charity --

**Friends of Tom Brown's
School Museum**

2 Sign up

3 Choose the retailers you use most.

Remember to use these retailers when you book or order anything online. It does not cost you anything.

Easyfundraising automatically makes the donation as a percentage of your spend.



Garry Gibbons

Curator's Report

Last year the museum undertook two surveys. The results of the first have been illuminating, if not a little surprising at times. Here are some of the headline findings.

Museum Visitor Survey

The prime purpose of the survey was to record the profile of visitors to TBSM, determine motivations for visiting TBSM, and to measure levels of visitor satisfaction. A respectable total of 109 completed surveys were collected onsite by the museum's front of house volunteers.

761 people visited the museum during our 2022 open season. Since 2017, and discounting the COVID affected years (2020 and 2021), the museum has seen a steady decline of 37% in visitor numbers, a situation broadly witnessed across the museum sector.

Almost 9 out of 10 (89%) visitors are coming to the museum for the first time; only 1 in 10 are return visitors. Almost half of our visitors live within 30 miles of Uffington, and one third live 30 -- 100 miles away. 6% of our visitors in 2022 lived overseas...*exactly the same number visiting the museum that lived in Uffington.*

A little under three quarters (73%) of visitors were aged 45 years and over, the largest age group was 65+ years (28%). The average length of stay per visitor was 30 minutes.

Pleasingly, the museum's volunteers were reported to have contributed most to our visitors' museum experience.

	<i>Individual Visits</i>	<i>Individuals in Group Visits</i>	Total Visitors
2017	1021	178	1199
2018	868	202	1070 (-10%)
2019	666	172	838 (-20%)
2020	-	-	-
2021	284	145	329
2022	565	196	761 (-10%)

Table 1: Visitor Numbers 2017-2022.

The Gallery Gets a Revamp

A new display space on the mezzanine floor has recently been created following a successful grant application to South East Museum Development.



Towards the end of last year, the Museum was notified its grant application for £1850 had been approved by SE Museum Development, allowing the construction of a new display area and costs to develop an exciting new exhibition for 2023. Friends of Tom Brown's School Museum has generously donated a further £500 towards this project.

Early in the new year the mezzanine area was stripped out and the upper area repainted, including the building work undertaken around the window to the side of the stairs which had been left to dry out for most of last year.

Volunteer Mr Mike Gosnell (pictured opposite), working with the curator, drew up plans for the new modular display boards and ordered in timber. Mike has spent the past few weeks fabricating the new panels in his workshop before installing them in The Gallery.

Mike has completed an amazing job in just a few weeks. Plans for the 2023 exhibition are ongoing working alongside a team of volunteers.

Forthcoming Events

Wednesday 8 March

Doors open 7.00pm for 7.30pm.
Thomas Hughes Memorial Hall, Uffington

Treasures of Oxfordshire

Join Edward Caswell, Oxfordshire Finds Liaison Officer, for an update on the county's latest discoveries.



During the Covid Pandemic the Portable Antiquities Scheme reached a historic milestone having recorded its 1.5 millionth find! Since this time the database only continues to grow as do the number of

finds discovered in Oxfordshire. In this talk Edward will present some of the highlights of the county's finds, including exciting treasure cases, breaking news and some local stories that can be found out about Uffington and its surround parishes using this ever-expanding dataset.

Tickets on the door from 7pm.
Entrance £5; Friends £3.

Wednesday 19 April

Let's Dare Look at Wiltshire's Chalk Horses Anew!

Garry Gibbons, Curator, TBSM

Wednesday 17 May

The Ancient English Morris Dance

Mike Heaney, Bodleian Library

Wednesday 7 June

A Guided Tour of NT Coleshill

Monday 24 July

And So To Ted....A History of Teddies and Other Bears

Melanie Gibson-Barton

Two New Exhibitions Planned for 2023

From scouring the white horse to Uffington's most famous teddy bear.

Cleaning and re-chalking the Uffington white horse has now become a regular summer event but it was not always so. For almost 300 years letters-to-the-editor across the local and national press regularly complained of the hill-figure's poor condition -- such is the enduring appeal of this nationally important monument.

Replacing last year's 'Village Celebrations' exhibit, we will be examining the evidence for scouring events across the 18th and 19th centuries. Thomas Hughes and others hand down to us dates at which the horse was groomed or when vast events were organised on white horse hill. This exhibition will look at the evidence to support these dates and seek to better understand how cleaning the horse was undertaken and how it was celebrated.

As reported elsewhere in this newsletter, we have a new display area up on the mezzanine floor which will accommodate an exhibition exploring the life of one of Uffington's most famous residents – Archibald Ormsby-Gore or, as he was known in Sir John Betjeman's close circle, Archie.

Archie was Sir John's teddy bear and accompanied him just about everywhere throughout his life.

Whilst at Oxford in the 1920s, Sir John and Archie provided the inspiration for Sebastian Flyte and Aloysius in Evelyn Waugh's novel *Brideshead Revisited*.

Archie was in Sir John's arms when he died in 1984.



In a survey undertaken a few years ago, resulting in 6000 responses, it was estimated that as many as 50% of adults still have their childhood teddy. Come along to the museum and bring your teddy,

Archie loves meeting new friends!

Who Were The Masters?

Extensive research had been undertaken by former curators to establish a chronological list of the Old Schoolroom's masters since its inception.

In some of these cases, although the dates of their appointment could be verified, in most instances there was very little information about where these men came from, how they were nominated for this post, and what part this experience played in their subsequent careers. Identification of the schoolmasters is in itself challenging, but fortunately parish records can help in this regard.

Prior to the Restoration of the Monarchy, following the demise of the Protectorate,

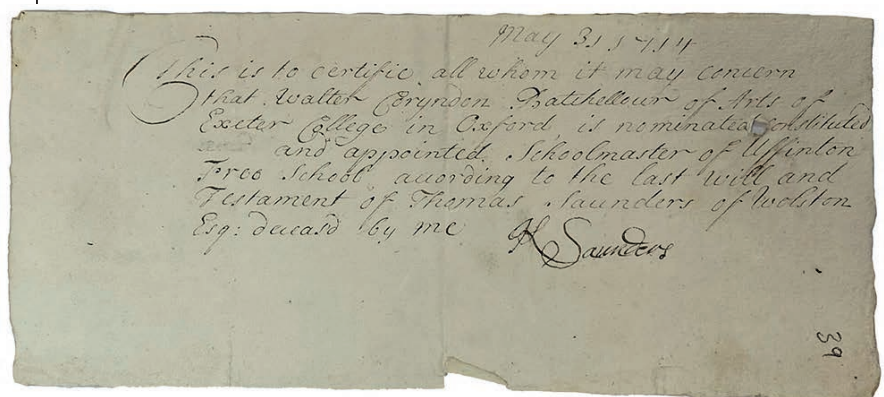
a requirement existed for all teachers to be licensed by the bishop of the diocese in which they were employed. This was reinforced in 1662 by the Act of Uniformity, which required all ministers and teachers to subscribe to the Thirty Nine Articles of the Church of England. Thus, the report of the churchwardens to the diocese can be a useful source of information in identifying a schoolmaster in a given period.

This, of course, is when the Uffington churchwardens and vicar saw fit to name the schoolmaster rather than report: '*..we doe presents that wee have a Schoolmaster already licensed, & likewise a Midwife ...*' (transcribed report of 28th April 1679, held in TBS Museum).

Even when the name of the schoolmaster is given, e.g. Caleb Perfect, appointed as the schoolmaster in 1711, there are the vagaries associated with possible transcription errors when recording his name in various other records, such as: Caleb Perfect, Caleb Parfectt. It is not so difficult to discern in this case but with other more common names, some considerable effort is required to verify that the records relate to the same individual.

This work is continuing and a review of its findings will be presented in due course.

By Alvin Blackie, volunteer



Walter Coryndon, nomination to be schoolmaster.
Signed by Katherine Saunders, 31/05/1714.

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

uffingtonmuseum@gmail.com