

British Association of Friends of Museums

News from the East 18 March 2016 www.bafm.org.uk



South East - Eastern Counties: Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire

From Alan Swerdlow regional co-ordinator

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Membership renewals

Thanks to all who have promptly renewed their membership. You will have noted on the form that insurance cover would lapse if payment is not received by 31 March. The NFU questionnaire should be returned with your payment. Do let me know if any problems.

Some member contact details have changed. If this newsletter has gone to an incorrect email address please let me know.

BAFM Insurance – increase in premiums *from the BAFM Administrator*

A lot of groups have expressed concern about the increase in this year's insurance premium. The reason for the increase is due to the fact that there has been a minimal increase over the last few years and our premiums have fallen behind those in the public liability insurance market. In order to establish the risk the NFU are undertaking each group needs to be separately assessed, hence the reason for the completion of the Risk Assessment Form. A lot of insurance companies have opted out of the Public Liability market due to these 'no win no fee' cases and the cost of public liability cover is increasing generally. We have been very fortunate in the past that we have not been subjected to substantial increases but hopefully the premium from now on should only increase by a marginal rate, unless of course there are a number of claims. You will also notice that the wording of the Public Liability insurance certificate has changed in that the individual group is no longer mentioned. The policy incorporates all members of BAFM and as long as the subscription and insurance premiums are paid, your group is covered.



Regional Conference for the Eastern Counties 18 May 2016

This year's day event will be held on 18 May at Chelmsford Museum by kind invitation of the Friends of the Museum. These events are not just for your committee so do advise your members that they may also attend. The programme and booking form are attached below. Please put the date in your diary now.

BAFM Travel Bursary Award

The award has been promoted nationally and full details may be found on the BAFM web site together with a simple application form. If you know of anyone who might be interested whether a volunteer or student do let them have the information. It has attracted a good many hits on the BAFM web site. The closing date for submissions is 30 April 2016.

BAFM Annual Conference

This year we will be at Ironbridge on 1 October. If you have never visited the wonderful World Heritage Site this is a golden opportunity to join us at the Conference and AGM hosted by the Friends of Ironbridge Gorge Museum. The conference itself is on Saturday 1 October and the following day there is an optional tour visiting the Iron Bridge, Jackfield Tile Museum and Blists Hill Victorian Town. The cost for this tour includes the coach and a Passport ticket for all ten of the museums for unlimited repeat visits over 12 months.

Very few BAFM members from this region attend our annual event – what about it this year? Full details are on the BAFM web site and a leaflet and booking form was included in the recent Journal.



Lynn Museum - Photo by Paul Damen

Area Meeting at King's Lynn 29 February 2016

We had an outstanding attendance of over twenty people representing almost all of the BAFM member groups in the north of my region. The Friends of Lynn Museum gave us a warm welcome and provided a delicious lunch: thank you! Oliver Bone, the Curator, took us round the immaculate museum displays particularly Seahenge which he dated precisely as from 2049BC, but there were so many fascinating things including a special display of Savage's the famous Lynn fairground makers – photo above. If you are thinking of destinations for a Friends outing I can highly recommend King's Lynn.

Amy Cotterill, the Museums Association representative for our region, gave us a presentation about the new MA Code of Ethics. The Code now places public engagement as the first priority even before stewardship of collections. The third strand is individual and institutional integrity. This perhaps is the area most relevant to Friends groups. Accredited museums are duty bound to follow the Code and that would include Friends and Volunteers. Breaking the Code could mean being stripped of eligible status for HLF, Arts Council and other funding but one member queried the legality of the Code. Amy mentioned sponsorship by oil and tobacco businesses. Friends should be familiar with the Code particularly in the area of public access.

We discussed the relationship of the museum and the city or county funders where members of the Friends may well have been involved far longer than the professionals or politicians and if they were a separate body could challenge or support their museum especially in the present financially worrying times.

Keith Robinson from Friends of Ancient House Museum in Thetford reported back from a group discussion on preserving heritage in the local area. There may be several like-minded groups in an area and they should get together to discuss who does what. With an ageing population some members are keen to 'retire from their retirement' feeling past their personal sell by date but there were no easy solutions to finding new and younger members. Social media might be a way forward to attract younger people. Winter closure, necessitated by funding problems, results in

reduced visitor numbers that could have a knock-on effect making the funders question the viability of the museum.

Ernest Warman from Friends of Peterborough Museum said that there are over 50 languages spoken in the city. They invited various groups to tell how they celebrate their festive season – a link with their heritage bringing new people into the museum. He urged us to be proactive and to submit ideas such as education projects.

Cromer Museum's Peter Stibbons talked about relationships with management and professionals. When museums have trust status they have more freedom but their constitution may be restrictive. He urged Friends not to underestimate what they could do and that good proactive publicity, in consultation with staff, could be crucial particularly in a crisis.

Miranda Rowlands from SHARED talked about new ideas in funding. Her organisation is funded by an Arts Council England grant and provides many opportunities for Friends and volunteers – see their web site. The sector is meeting challenges with skills broadly the same whether in a large or small museum so they are scalable. Friends must be alert to changes in funding; when they are an independent charity they can access funds that a local authority cannot such as legacies, an important area for research. Asking a local supermarket for gifts for an event - requested at the right time, not last minute – can bring free food, wine, raffle prizes. In all cases build up a relationship - and say thank you. Miranda herself is using Crowdfunding for her own abseiling challenge in aid of Cancer Research UK and would welcome donations and can advise Friends groups on this method of raising money.

There was such interest in the topics that little time was left for much general discussion and after votes of thanks we finished at 4.00 pm.

Another fundraising idea

How many of you have a Cream Tea Volunteer Group? The Friends of Welwyn Hatfield Museums provide a useful, and I am sure delicious, benefit for visitors to Mill Green Museum from Easter into the summer. It is a good income generator. I read in their Newsletter that the official cake taster role has already been filled!

BAFM Strategic Development Group

I chaired a meeting of the SDG in London on 24 March. The group is charged with looking after BAFM's development between Council meetings. We had a long agenda but managed to get through a wide range of topics including receiving a draft of the Consultant's report on BAFM's potential and organisational development.

We discussed the forthcoming vacancies for Chairman and Vice Chairman. Should you or anyone you know be potentially interested in putting themselves forward I can provide more information on what is involved. I am also looking for a 'shadow' to take over as coordinator for this region in a year or so. Being involved in BAFM is very worth-while so do think about it.

SHARE news

I have urged BAFM members before to sign up for the regular newsletter from SHARE. The most recent edition is full of information and has links to further useful contacts. A ten minute film on Co-Production is well worth watching. There are details of an Arts Council Sector Survey you might complete and an invitation to a special session on Governance that is part of the Association of Independent Museums' Hallmark programme at Hughes Hall, Cambridge on 20 April.

I send you my best wishes for a busy and successful season.

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Eastern Region Annual Conference 2016

Wednesday 18 May 2016

Hosted by the Friends of Chelmsford Museums
Oaklands Park, Moulsham Street, Chelmsford CM2 9AQ

Communications and Strategy

Outline programme

- 10.30 Registration, tea / coffee and biscuits
- 11.00 Curator's tour of the Museum with Nick Wickenden, Museum Manager
The museum tells Chelmsford's history including ceramics, glass, archaeology, the worlds' first radio factory, ball bearings, and the Essex Regiment Museum all in a Victorian mansion with a modern extension set in a fine park.
- 11.30 London Transport Museum and its Friends: Working in harmony
Barry LeJeune, Chairman, Friends of London Transport Museum
- 11.50 Questions
- 12.00 Case history: Friends groups going in-house. Susan Wise, Chair of the Friends of the Horniman Museum.
- 12.30 Handling tables – a demonstration by Friends of the Chelmsford Museums
- 12.45 Newsletter design and production
- 1.00 Lunch
- 1.45 Break out sessions – possible topics to include
- In the face of cuts, what can Friends do to preserve local heritage
 - Recruiting new members particularly young and ethnic minority groups
 - Museums and the social agenda - memory boxes, hospitals, prisons etc
- 2.15 Feed back: question and answer
- 2.45 In it for the Long Run
Nick Wickenden, Museum Manager, Chelmsford Museums
- 3.10 Questions and discussion
- 3.30 Wash up session and general business
- 4.00 Finish

Transport For those coming by car there is parking by the side of the Museum. A map can be provided on request. There are frequent trains from London Liverpool Street and from Norwich/Ipswich (connections from Cambridge and Ely). Buses 42 from outside Chelmsford train station or 100 from the adjacent bus station have a stop by the Rising Sun Pub over the road to the entrance to the Museum. Taxis from the station should cost around £5 to £6.

Support towards the cost of this BAFM regional conference has been generously provided by SHARE.

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Co-ordinator Alan Swerdlow 01394 380044 alan@whr.demon.co.uk

Eastern Region Annual Conference 2016

18 May 2016 Chelmsford Museum.
Booking Form

Please send your application by 25 April with a stamped self-addressed envelope to
Alan Swerdlow, 1 Warren Hill Road, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 4DT

I/we would like to reserve places for the conference at £12.00 each including lunch.

I enclose a cheque payable to BAFM for £ To be paid in full at time of booking, please.

BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE

Name

Address
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Post Code

Telephone Email

Organisation

Position

Further delegates: confirmation will be sent to the first named above

Name/s
.....
.....

Position/s

Signed Date

If there is time please could we discuss
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Dietary requirements if any

I will be travelling by car / public transport.

Please reserve a disabled parking space (limited spaces) for car reg no