

FRIENDS OF GUILDFORD MUSEUM  
**NEWSLETTER**

*AUGUST 1997*



*issue 4*



The late 15th Century Town Mace

## From the Editor

Members will be aware that Iris Rhodes is to leave her post at Guildford House. Iris has served this town well and I am sure we all wish her every happiness in the future. Our Curator will assume responsibility for the museum and Guildford House and outlines on page 6 the changes that will take place. Matthew also informs us that the post of Technical Designer held by Clare Spain is to be abolished. Many of the exhibits in the museum and exhibitions in the town are the result of her talents and we shall be very sorry to see her go.

By combining the two departments under one administration it is hoped that the current level of services will be maintained with less staff. The large membership of the Friends coupled with the huge voluntary support that the museum can rely on demonstrates the huge interest in the museum and we look forward to the Borough's continued support for the museum's activities.

Don't miss Heritage Day on Saturday 13th September when many of Guildford's well known and not so well known buildings will be open to the public

We would like to give a warm welcome to Peter Hattersley who has joined the committee.

### COMMITTEE

Chairman  
Vice-Chairman  
Treasurer  
Secretary  
Editor

Elizabeth Cobbett  
Bill Bellamy  
Tim Bryers  
Derek Somner  
Eric Morgan  
Matthew Alexander  
Heather Anderson  
Peter Hattersley  
Maureen Newman  
Brigitte Alexander-O'Neil  
Jennifer Powell  
Marjorie Williams

## Message from our Chairman

Dear Members,

Our second AGM has now been and gone and along with approximately 60 members we were delighted to welcome the Mayor Cllr. Linda Strudwick and to be able to thank her personally for allowing us to use the Guildhall for the occasion. We were also delighted to greet John Brearley who came with the finished Hereford Chair which we commissioned him to make last year, it is really beautiful and I think we all feel so pleased that the first thing the Friends have done for the museum is something that will be seen and admired for many many years to come. It is now temporarily in the Undercroft and can be seen when it is opened to the Public during the summer months. We have now decided to start financing the Interactive Video Display Unit at the Museum, this is a badly needed service which will make a great deal of difference to the presentations there and will also add a great deal to the enjoyment of our visitors. Derek Somner has written about it in more detail so that you will know what I am referring to.

I would like to thank all the committee for their untiring support during the past year, particularly Marjorie Williams who has handed over the duties of Secretary to Derek Somner. It was always understood that when we could find a replacement for her that this would happen, but even so, busy as she always is she has given her time and energy unstintingly as the Secretary, we are eternally grateful to her, and we are so fortunate that she is still willing to serve as a Committee Member so we are not losing her altogether, thank you Marjorie for all you have done, and welcome to Derek Somner in your place.

We are hoping to tempt you all with many happy outings and occasions this coming year, and we hope you will enjoy reading our newsletter.

Sincerely

*Elizabeth Cobbett.*

## Secretary's Letter

Although my name may appear on documents as secretary, I am only the representative of your committee who work together throughout the year sharing the various duties and hopefully, producing what is required by our members. We are fortunate that we still have invaluable help from Marjorie who is continuing to arrange social gatherings and organise stewards for the Undercroft, the museum's presentations and the museum's share of Guildford's festival weeks. This alone can be a full time job in June & July. Peter Hattersley and Maureen Newman have worked together to provide a varied selection of town and village tours for the remainder of 1997 and we shall soon be publishing our programme for 1998.

Since last January we have had an excellent tour of Horsley Towers arranged by Jennifer Powell, a full coach of 57 on Maureen's day trip to Southwark Cathedral and the Globe Theatre plus a walk to the site of Chilworth gunpowder works guided by Prof Alan and Glensy Crocker. All of these outings were over subscribed with many members being disappointed. Matthew provided us with a most interesting evening at the museum and finally there was the AGM which ended with Bill Bellerby's hilariously entertaining "Tales of an Antique". The fund raising sale in April realised £115.00. This could have been better but it was not for the want of effort - only customers.

Looking forward now, we have guided tours of three Surrey villages all of which sold out within the first few weeks. The demand for Albury was so great that we offered a second tour date. Our overnight tour to the Royal Armouries at Leeds and visit to York has been modified to provide more free time in York with an alternative of 6 hours of free time for those who do not wish to visit Jorvik. The latter will be at a reduced cost of £64.00. Full details are on the reverse of the future events sheet.

During October there will be another of Marjorie's Quiz evenings and a visit to Sutton Place is also planned. In November Kevin Fryer is giving a lecture on the findings from the 1991 excavation at 16 Tunsgate. For all those interested in archaeology this should not be missed. November also offers a tour of Tower Bridge and in December there is the museum's Christmas Party. do you know how the Victorians entertained and danced? Come along and find out.

We are now working on the programme for 1998 and propose to include visits to 3 more Surrey villages, Chatham Historic Dockyard, Canterbury, hidden London & Little Venice, Salisbury, Hatfield House/ Bletchley Park plus local walks and social events

Most guided tours are limited to a maximum of 25 people, otherwise a group on a village walk would stretch along an entire High Street and there would be little chance of hearing the guide. Also think of the chaos in the village pub!

Obviously, the limit will be still be reached but it does give us a chance to arrange a second day should another visit be warranted - as was the case with Albury.

Did you know that the Friends have a notice board at the museum? This is by courtesy of the Curator and is regularly updated with information on current events. Also, whilst there, do have a browse in the museum shop where there is an excellent selection of books on local history plus a well stocked gift section - most of which is subject to member's discount.

An urgent request from Marjorie. This is for volunteer stewards at the Undercroft and Salter's. If you can spare a couple of hours and would welcome an opportunity to make new friends please contact her on Guildford 569794

Last year the Friends provided the museum with a replica of the Hereford Chair which was on view at the AGM when the Curator thanked us for providing this addition to the museum's displays. Matthew went on to request that the Friends consider providing the museum with a much needed interactive video display system, the funding of which is not available from other sources. A provisional figure of £1,000 was agreed at the meeting but, in reality, this is likely to be an ongoing commitment. I have provided a short introduction to the aims and problems in a separate article.

Our membership at the end of March was 175 but inevitably, some members have not renewed due to moving to other areas or taking up other interests. However, we have since been able to welcome some new members and we now number 180. It is this steadily increasing membership that enables us to offer a greater variety of events which has become an important part of the social life of the Friends. We have also had the advantage of the return of some 60 questionnaires and I thank all of you who have kindly responded in this way.

Please remember that you are part of an Association and if you have a query or suggestion let me know and if I am personally unable to help I will raise the matter at the next committee meeting.

Derek Somaer

Hon Secretary



(01483) 539447

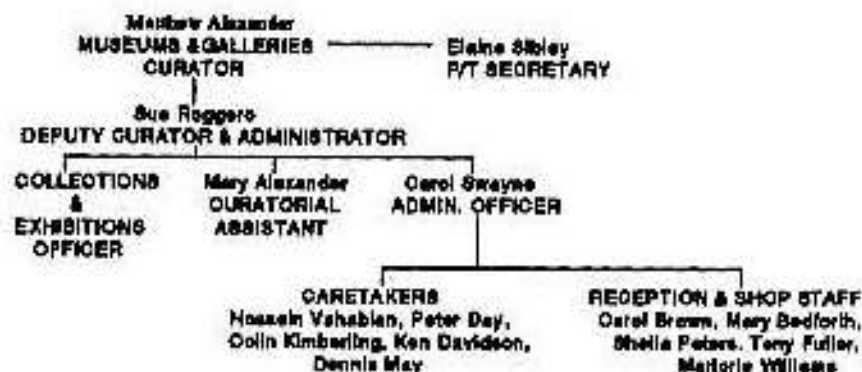
## Curator's Corner

### THE MUSEUM and GUILDFORD HOUSE

Friends will be aware that it is proposed that Guildford House and the Museum should be run jointly in future and by the end of September the new staffing arrangements will be in place(see organisation diagram). Naturally this will mean changes within the present staffing structure. On the departure of the Curator of Guildford House, the new Museums and Galleries Curator will have overall responsibility for both sites with the Deputy Curator, Sue Roggero, being responsible for the administration of both the Museum and Guildford House as well as having some responsibility for education and archaeology. A new post has recently been advertised for the position of Exhibitions Officer. This post will be responsible for the Borough collection, exhibitions, design and associated education and marketing. Sadly, the changes do mean that the Museum will be losing the post of Technical Designer, currently held by Claire Spain.

I very much hope that both Friends of Guildford House and the Friends of Guildford Museum will form closer links and it may be that in future both Friends groups will be asked to become more closely involved with the operation of the two buildings.

*Matthew Alexander*



## SYMBOLS of POWER

When visiting the Guildhall I have often wondered why such a small town should possess not just one but two maces. However, with the help of a booklet, 'Sidelights on Guildford' written by Mrs J K Greene and reprinted in 1953, I have been able to solve my problem. This article is based on her research.

The early mediaeval mace was a weapon of war, often carried by battling bishops who declared that it enabled them to kill their enemies without shedding their blood.

By the fourteenth century it was used less as a weapon and more as a symbol of authority being carried by an officer entitled 'Sergeant - at - Mace' whose duties included arresting offenders and also summoning persons to court. At first this privilege was granted to very few but during the 15th century it was extended to some of the more important cities. Now Guildford has certainly never gained city status yet the 1489 Charter of Henry 7th which confirmed the rights of several of its lost charters referred to its 'servants - at - mace'. It is believed that our smaller mace, silver gilt and bearing at the top the coat of arms borne by the Tudors, dates from then. Many consider it to be the second oldest mace in the country and believe that the hallmark of 1581 just refers to repair work.

To support this theory one of the few remaining ancient records refers to the duties of the Guildford Sergeant. In 1521 he was allowed to fine those 'letting hogs run in the streets'. In 1531 he was also required to toll the market bell at closing time and could fine those traders who disobeyed.

By 1580 there was a second 'Sergeant - at - Mace'(as there is today). Both were elected at the Gilda Mercatoria along with the Mayor and other important officials.



In 1599 it was ruled that at any public assembly 'touching ye government of this Towneshipp' the Mayor had to be preceded by 'one of the seriente of the saide Towne with ye mace to be carried orderly before the said Mayor'

In 1650 the custom of carrying small maces began to die out and very large ones were introduced such as that in the Houses of Parliament. In 1663 Henry Howard (later the Duke of Norfolk) - the High Steward of Guildford, followed the fashion of the time and presented the corporation with its large civic mace which was henceforth considered to be the more important although it is far less beautiful than the smaller one. On ceremonial occasions they are both still carried in procession in front of the Mayor.

Far more fascinating details about the work and history of former Sergeants - at - Mace can be found in Mrs Greene's book, copies of which are stored in the archives of both the Surrey Local Studies Library and Guildford Muniment Room.


*Marjorie Williams*

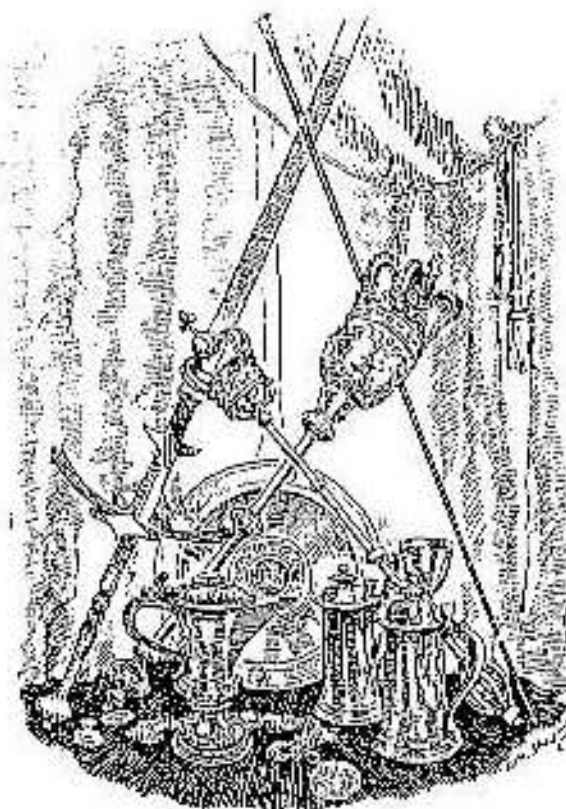
## Guildhall

The maces and town plate can be seen on a tour of the Guildhall

These take place on Tuesday & Thursday afternoons  
at 2pm and 3pm (unless the Crown Court is sitting)

*Parties must be booked in advance*

 (01483) 444035



## THE TOWN PLATE and REGALIA

Items shown: The two handed German sword carried in procession.  
Small mace 15th century  
Large mace 1663 presented by Duke of Norfolk  
Mayor's staff 1593 given by Elizabeth 1st  
Mayor's chain 1673 presented by Arthur Onslow  
The Parkhurst Basin and Ewer- given 1567  
The Thomas Baker Tankard 1602 (Mayor 1566, 1575, 1580)  
The John Austen Tankard 1620 (Mayor 1566)  
The John Austen Cup 1620  
The 15th-century and 16th-century town seals

## Interactive Video Display



For over a year now the Curator has felt that the museum should have an interactive display to augment and perhaps eventually replace, the present ageing video presentation. This would consist of selective sequences covering aspects of Guildford's history produced by a computer and shown on a large, and preferably touch sensitive, monitor.

The system would enable a selection or a menu to be visible on a screen and run a selected sequence by simply touching a specific area on the screen with a finger and finally returning to the menu ready for a further choice.

Unfortunately commercially available systems such as the above are expensive and the museum has received quotations of some £3000 plus ongoing service and updating contracts. All completely out of question as there are no funds available.

As I have a working knowledge of computer hardware and software, Matthew asked if there was anything I could suggest to progress with such a project and after experimenting with various programmes, I produced a basic sequence which shows promise. We have been donated a framework of a computer but this will require updating with a new motherboard, extra memory, larger hard drive and CD ROM drive. We have been able to obtain a 17 inch monitor at a good price but this will not be of the touch-screen type as these cost some £1,800. However, by using a set of numbered push buttons, we can make the system selective.

The contribution of £1,000 from the Friends which was voted at the AGM should provide us with most of the essential hardware but there will inevitably be ongoing improvements and maintenance which will have to be considered by the Friends Committee.

Producing the programmes will take time which is in short supply these days and the early product may well be rather basic but portions can be edited and enhanced as required and we should eventually attain a reasonable standard of presentation.

*Derek Somner*

## Surrey Young Archaeologists Club

The YAC continues to attract new members. We have 66 to date, 52 Juniors and 14 Seniors. The Seniors particularly enjoy the annual dig and follow up work, and have become very competent, thanks to the care and patience lavished on them by the dig team members.

The Juniors have been out and about. Our trip to the Hominian Museum was popular and we visited Hampton Court in June as part of our build up to Tudor day in July.

The preparations for Tudor day are well in hand and it promises to be a lively and successful enterprise. The YAC's are running a Schools Competition to run with the event, in which primary Schools are invited to enter a collage on a Tudor theme with books as prizes.

The May session was a practical one in which the YAC's recreated the Club logo as a mosaic. It took more than one session to finish and is now hanging in Salterns as an advertisement for the Club and its activities.

*Christine Hardman.*

*For further details about the Club contact Sue Roggero or Christine Hardman at the Museum 6 Tel No (01483 444752)*

To join the FRIENDS OF GUILDFORD MUSEUM, please send a cheque with the appropriate subscription to Mr T.C. Bryers, Friends of Guildford Museum, 2 Southbury, Lawn Road, Guildford, GU2 5DD

Subscription rates for 1997/8

Individual £5	Family £10	Under 18's £2
Corporate £25	Individual Life £100	

Please make cheques payable to

FRIENDS OF GUILDFORD MUSEUM

## 1913 ELECTRICITY WORKS a Powerful History

The Holloway Electricity Supply Company, formed in 1892, became the Guildford Electricity Supply Company when it built the first Guildford Power station in 1896 on the site of the old Militia Barracks in Onslow Street. It contained steam driven plant, later augmented by diesel generators.

An article in the Surrey Advertiser dated 21st November 1896 reads,

"Several business premises in the town were illuminated with the new light on Saturday evening and it appears to have given the greatest satisfaction. About twenty customers have already applied for the light, and other applications are coming in. The company are prepared to supply electricity not only for lighting purposes, but for motive power and for heating and cooking purposes. Motor cars propelled by electricity will be able to charge their accumulators at the works. When the advantages of the new light are better known, the demand for it will no doubt be considerable increased."

The domestic "All-in- Tariff" had a minimum charge of 9 shillings [45p - but perhaps nearer £25 or £50 at current values] a quarter (based on up to 800square feet) and there were two rates per unit - Town area 1/3 penny - Rural area 1/2 penny [0.2p], which was one of the cheapest in the country.

The 1913 Electricity Works was built adjacent to the first station with an initial capacity of 1100kw. In 1921 Guildford Corporation bought the company, increasing the generating capacity at the Works to 1610kw. It was then superseded in 1927 by the new station in Woodbridge Road, and in the summer of the following year all the plant from the 1913 Works was sold by the Corporation for £1260 and removed from the building.

For virtually seventy years the shell of the building has essentially remained a town centre curiosity, without real purpose. What a joy it is now to see the building once again alive with an energy of its own.

## Dr Monsell

If you pass by St Nicolas Church in Guildford you will notice a plaque informing you that the vicar, Dr. Monsell, died from injuries received when he fell and fractured his arm while examining work on the rebuilding of the church in 1875. The Sussex Express, had this to say, on 29th March "the Rev Gentleman was standing on a large boulder watching the progress of the work, when for some unseen cause the stone slipped and precipitated him with extreme violence to the ground dislocating his shoulder and fracturing his left arm, besides inflicting other injuries of a less serious nature".

Dr. John Samuel Monsell is known best for his hymn writing and wrote a staggering 300 or so in number. Even today there are still four of these in Hymns Ancient and Modern. He was born on the 2nd March 1811 at St Columb's, Derry, in Ireland, son of the Archdeacon of Derry. He went to Trinity College Dublin and was ordained a priest in 1836. Before coming to Guildford he had several appointments in Ireland and one in England as Vicar of Egham in Surrey. It was his very good friend and patron Bishop Wilberforce who offered Monsell the incumbency of St Nicholas Guildford in 1870 and in 1872 he was made honorary chaplain to Queen Victoria. His obituary in the John Bull magazine describes him as the best gift the Irish Church ever bestowed on her English sister. He was a prolific author for the church and many of his books such as the one entitled "Our dear Vicar" were compulsive reading for new clerics. Henry Peak who was the Borough Surveyor and later Mayor recounts a conversation he had with Dr Monsell. The postmen worked on Sundays and this concerned many of the local inhabitants who believed that Sunday should be observed or at least only essential work carried out on that day. A meeting was called at which many prominent people of the town attended. At that meeting a number of the people said they did not open their letters on a Sunday anyway and it was agreed to send a petition to the Postmaster General. Strange as it may seem to us many of the clergy refused to sign and Dr Monsell was among these. When approached by Peak, Monsell replied "no I cannot sign that. I like to have my letters on a Sunday, as well as on other days and it

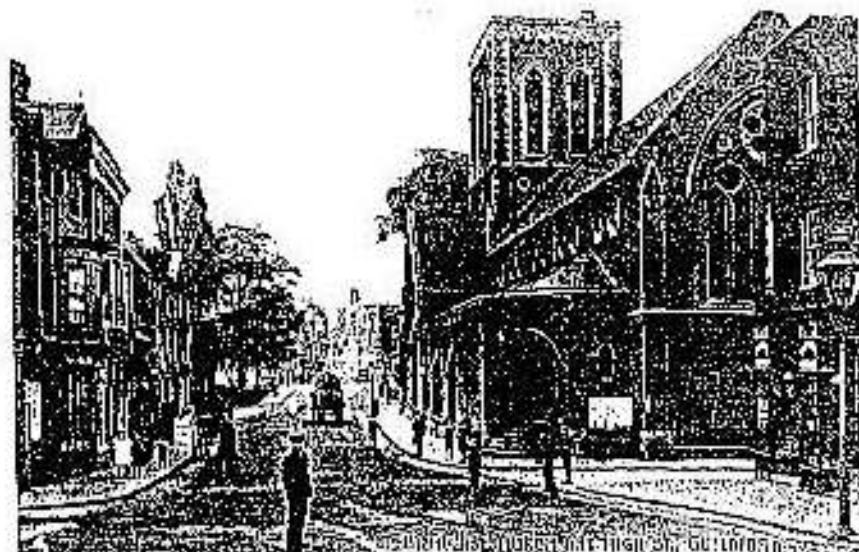


would be a sacrifice for me to be without them". Peak replied "I venture to suggest that it would be a sacrifice for the good of others; that with the work they do, the postmen could rarely get to the Sunday Service. He reminded the Doctor that David when offered the threshing floor for sacrifice to God, free of cost, would not accept it but said, "neither will I offer unto the Lord"---"that which does not cost me nothing". Monsell replied "you are right, I too ought to be ready to bear the cost and sacrifice in a good cause". He then signed the petition. It turned out that his cousin was in fact the Postmaster General anyway and Monsell said he would write to him concerning this matter. As a result the postmen's work was lessened on Sundays although it did not cease. Anyone willing not to have a Sunday post could notify the Guildford Postmaster.

Queen Victoria is said to have admired the sincerity of Monsell's sermons and his last visit to Windsor was only three months before his death when he preached at the memorial service for Prince Albert. After Monsell's accident, two telegrams of enquiry were received, one from Queen Victoria and the other from Sir James Paget, surgeon to the Prince of Wales, who came to advise the local doctors.

Monsell was a profuse writer of prose and poetry and some of his works almost appear as though he had forewarning of his impending demise. Only a week before his accident when he had no reason for feeling sad, he completed a poem on the expectation of death, entitled "Near home at last". This he suggested should be sold by private circulation and the profits used to pay for a window in the chancel. Nothing surely predicts his accident so clearly as his own hymn number 186 in the old Congregational hymn-book where a line in the third verse reads - "When my feet stumble to thee I'll cry".

But it is his evangelical hymn "Fight the good fight" which has so many memories for many of us. For it was during those dark days of the last war that this hymn took on a special meaning and significance to all of us. I little realised at the time that I should have the honour to live one day in the town Monsell knew so well.



St Nicolas Church, Guildford.

#### NEW MEMBERS

We are delighted to welcome the following new members to our Association

Dr H & Dr M Allison  
 Mr A & Mrs M Bowen  
 Mrs J Bruton  
 Miss B Butts  
 Mrs E Cole  
 Mrs B Collins  
 Mr P Grayburn  
 Mr M & Mrs J Hall  
 Mr B Kirker  
 Mrs A Laver  
 Mrs J Mant

Mr C McCarthy  
 Mr D Mountford  
 Mrs E Noakes  
 Miss J Overton  
 Mr K & Mrs F Palmer  
 Mr P Redshaw  
 Mrs S Stirling  
 Mr T Talbot  
 Mr A & Mrs D Vineall  
 Mr D & Mrs P Whitehead  
 Mr P Youngs



## Make a note in your Diary

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- 13th August Wednesday Guided tour of ABINGER ---fully booked
- 10th September Wednesday Guided tour of PIRBRIGHT & BROOKWOOD  
--- fully booked---
- 18th September Thursday HISTORY OF GUILDFORD BOROUGH POLICE  
lecture by Richard Ford - 7.30pm Electric Theatre  
---(Aero Room)---
- 27/28 September Sat/Sun Weekend visit to THE ROYAL ARMORIES AT  
LEEDS AND YORK
- 10th October Friday QUIZ EVENING
- 30th October Thursday A VISIT TO SUTTON PLACE
- 14th November Friday THE PIT AT 16 TUNSGATE  
lecture by Kevin Fryer - 7.30 Saller's
- 22nd November Saturday THE TOWER BRIDGE EXPERIENCE  
leave 9.00am return 5.30pm
- 11th December VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS PARTY  
7.30pm Saller's