

FRIENDS OF GUILDFORD MUSEUM

NEWS UPDATE

March 2020



by Nick Bale & Jean Wickens

Dear all

It will come as no surprise to you to hear that we have had to suspend our normal programme of meetings and events for the moment due to the unprecedented circumstances in which we all find ourselves:

- The AGM that should take place in May 2020 will have to be postponed. We have provisionally set the date for Wednesday 21 October but this will depend upon the situation at that time.
- The Gala talk held jointly with the Acorns History group that was planned for the morning of 5 May has also had to be cancelled.
- We cannot make plans for our Summer programme of events as everywhere is closed at the moment.

However, we have a number of news items that we wanted to let you know about at this time. We will be in touch with you again later in the year as and when the health advice prohibiting social contact changes.

Nick Bale and Jean Wickens

Undercroft

Guildford Borough Council recently announced that all Heritage buildings would close on 20th March and will remain so for the foreseeable future.

Having regard to the government's health advice, it is unlikely that the Undercroft will open to the public in May for the

2020 summer season. Furthermore, the annual reception for Undercroft volunteers planned for April 2020 has also been postponed until later in the year.

It might be possible to re-start the public visits in the latter part of the summer season, although this does not seem likely at the time of writing. If so, Carol Smithyes, who organises the stewards rota will contact those of you who already volunteer or would like to volunteer.

It's a very enjoyable way of spending a couple of hours, giving visitors information about the Undercroft's history. Visitors include people who have lived in Guildford all their life who have never visited it; visitors from the rest of Great Britain and tourists from abroad. If you are interested in volunteering, Carol would be very pleased to hear from you on 01483 503667 or email: carolsmithyes@hotmail.co.uk

With many apologies to Carol and anyone who tried to contact Carol, on the incorrect name spelling and contact details in the last newsletter.

Anniversaries

As we reported last year, 2020/21 will see the 25th anniversaries of both the Friends of Guildford Museum and the Undercroft Volunteer Stewards. If you have any suggestions for how we could celebrate these (probably in 2021) eg a garden party, special outing, gala talk etc please let us know.

Jackie Malyon

Many of you will have enjoyed Jackie's summer village walks, which she has led for us over many years. We were recently sorry to hear from her husband that she is having treatment for leukaemia. The committee sent their very best wishes to her for a speedy recovery.

Progress on the Museum Development Project

Julia Holberry reported to the FoGM Committee at the beginning of March that:

I am pleased to say that we submitted the Round 1 application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund on Monday, asking them for £4m towards the new Museum project.

We will hear the outcome at the end of June, but they are likely to come back with a series of queries and possibly a visit before the decision-making committee.

The bid is very strong, but competition is extremely fierce now - because they have less money - and it does depend what else is on the table at the time. We will just have to wait and see.

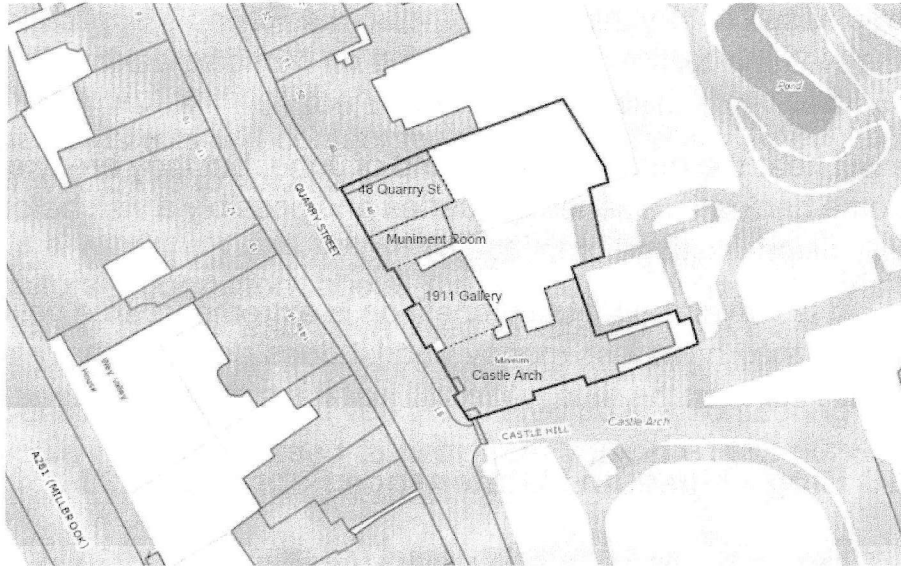
GBC Blog - Museum Maintenance February 2020

The following was written by Mark Graham, the Guildford Borough Council Surveyor and gives a flavour of the work which has closed the museum for the last few months.

I am a building surveyor with extensive experience of working on heritage properties. I currently work in the Corporate Property team at Guildford Borough Council and my role is to look after the repairs and maintenance work to the council's non-housing property. I am also the project manager for the museum restoration.

Guildford Museum is a complex building and is made up of four individual buildings linked together with a frontage to Quarry Street. Number 48 Quarry Street (built in 1835- Listed Grade II) is at the northern end. Next to number 48 is the Muniment Room (built in 1928), which replaced a 19th century warehouse.

Adjacent to this is the Gallery (built in 1910). At the southern end of the row is the oldest section of the museum, Castle Arch (Listed Grade II and part Scheduled Ancient Monument).



Castle Arch was a family home built in the mid-16th century. It incorporates a medieval (13th century) gatehouse. The building has had many alterations and was 'refurbished' in the early 17th century and divided into five separate dwellings.

The museum project began life as structural repairs to number 48 Quarry Street, with the aim to house all museum staff in one place. Other than the ground floor front room where there is a display, the rest of number 48 is used as offices.

The museum works have included damp-proofing, roof repairs over the main entrance, redecorating selected display areas and the installation of a new fire alarm. We have also upgraded the visitor toilet for disabled people who are able to walk, and installed a new reception desk and shop area at the main

entrance. Part of the collection has been moved to off-site storage and staff have been working from other locations while work has been carried out.

Working on such an old building must be quite special - can you tell us about any favourite moments?

My favourite moment was seeing the video room restored to its former layout. We removed a screen partition and discovered a window. This has created a new display area with a window and an exposed old kitchen sink, which has been kept. This might even be used as an exhibit in its own right - so look out for it when you next visit!

Have you uncovered any hidden treasures during the project?



Although not hidden, the two attic rooms next to the King's Chamber were very difficult to access and no members of the current museum staff had ever seen them until we climbed in there during the current works.

We reached the rooms through a ceiling hatch in the first-floor room overlooking Castle Arch. We think that an old staircase was removed to maximise floor area on the first floor. These rooms have windows overlooking the rear courtyard and were built around 1672.

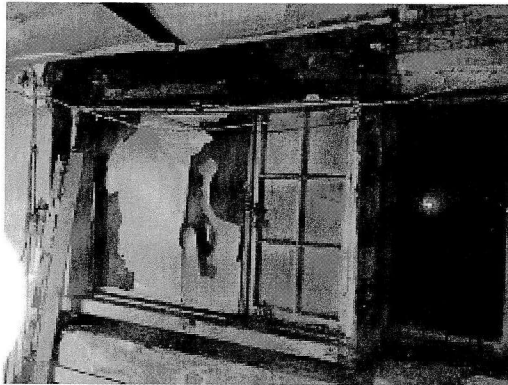
Working on a building as old as our museum must have uncovered a few surprises...

Part of the works involved replacing the window to the textile display room. This had been boarded up inside and out. When the boarding was removed to replace the window, we found that there were two windows to replace.

We also found that there had been a 'catslide' roof (which is a steep roof ending close to the ground) which had been removed when two rooms (currently used as the staff kitchen and staff toilet) were added.

What has been the biggest alteration?

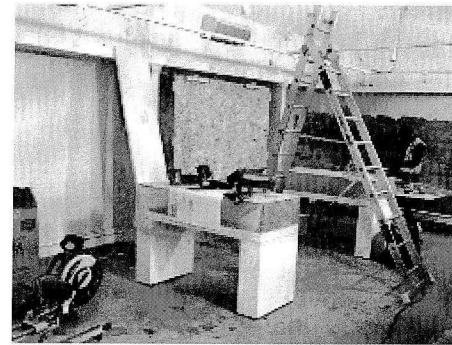
The caretaker's flat in 48 Quarry Street had not been lived in for ten years. This has now been converted as part of the museum. We have taken down a partition, added in the 19th century when the building was in use as a school, and we have made a new staff room with a kitchen that can also be a meeting room.



One thing that the public should come and see when we re-open is...

The redecorated and re-carpeted entrance gallery. There is also a new enlarged reception counter and shop area. Many

of the display spaces have also been refreshed and will be ready for the return of our collection objects. The temporary gallery space, which changes regularly during the year, will host various exhibitions.



We hope you will pop in and visit us soon and please tell us what else you would like to see at the museum in the future. (Written before the current situation with coronavirus)

Friends of the Museum Committee

Normally at the AGM, Committee members are elected for the following year. As the AGM is now postponed to October 21st we hope that all our members are happy for the present committee to continue until then. We are always looking for members to join the committee or help with roles organising activities outside the committee. .

Committee

Chairman:	Jen Powell
Vice Chairman:	Nick Bale
Secretary:	Carol Brown
Treasurer:	Richard Williams
Membership secretary:	Hugh Anscombe
Newsletter:	Jean Wickens
Member:	Keith Powell
Member:	Nikki Nelson-Smith (co-opted)
Member:	Peta Malthouse (co-opted)