



NEWSLETTER

Winter 2023

Dear Friends,

Sadly, I have to report that Michael and Phyllida Flint both died in early September. Michael was the main architect of the Museum as we now know it and Phyllida was also deeply involved in its early days. Their joint funeral took place on Tuesday, 10 October in St. Bartholomew's Church, Orford and I attended this in both a personal capacity and as Chairman of the Museum. You will find an obituary of Michael in this edition of *The Orford Historian* written by Tim Fargher, a longstanding friend. Both Michael and Phyllida will be very much missed by us all.

Orford Museum is very grateful to Dentons, where Michael was Chairman for many years, and to all his friends and colleagues who have made such generous donations to the Museum in his memory.

This Newsletter comes to you with Issue 02 of *The Orford Historian*. I hope you will enjoy it as much as you did the first one which received universal praise for its fresh approach to the history of this area without abandoning the original concept of Jane Allen, editor of *The Orford & District Local History Bulletin*. Further on in this Newsletter the editor, Jack Cooke, gives you a taste of what to expect. We always welcome comments, ideas and contributions for inclusion in *The Orford Historian* so, if you have any of these, please get in touch with Jack at editor@orfordmuseum.org.uk.

The exhibition of Celtic ironwork (the Barrow Collection) in the Museum display area in Orford Castle has attracted much interest and praise and, together with the talks at Butley Priory, has brought the Museum to the attention of a far wider audience than has previously been the case. We are, therefore, very grateful to the owner of the Collection for allowing us to leave it in place until Easter 2024 when the Castle will once again be fully open for the summer season. This extended

period will also give us the opportunity to refresh and renew the display of our own collection when it returns to the Castle.

We are still no further forward with our plans to return a kiosk with an interactive screen to Orford Church so that visitors unable to access the display area of the Museum in the Castle can see what is there. We are, however, pressing ahead with installing a virtual tour of this area on our website. We hope to have it up and running once we have returned the permanent display to the cases in Spring 2024.

I am delighted to say that Dr. Joanna Martin has agreed to join the Orford Museum CIO as a Trustee. Dr. Martin is a well-known historian and was, until 2017, editor of *Proceedings*, the journal of the Suffolk Institute Archaeology & History. I am sure that her knowledge and expertise will make her a very valuable addition to our team.

Events at Butley Priory

These have proved enormously successful and I wish, yet again, to thank Edward and Clare Greenwell very much indeed for allowing us to use this wonderful building. Our last event, **Chanters Jigge**, a performance of a mixture of readings, carols and music played on traditional instruments was a sell-out and greatly enjoyed by all present. The festive atmosphere was enhanced by an enormous Christmas tree, log fires, mulled wine and mince pies. The event was filmed by Ralph Cochrane and will be uploaded to our website.

On Tuesday, 6 February 2024, **David Warren** will give a talk entitled **A Personal 60-year Journey on Orford Ness**.

David will explain his connection with Orford Ness from when he spent four years there as a Scientific Assistant going on to become a National Trust volunteer Ranger and, later, an independent military researcher. His long-lasting affinity with the Ness increased during his time spent at Aldermaston.

As a volunteer, David led a National Trust programme to find and record the memories of Orford Ness 'Veterans'. The facts and memories shared by 55 Vets motivated him and other volunteers to work on acquiring and adding new information to that already published by the National Trust. David's talk will include an overview of the vast range of military technologies that were carried out on the Ness, together with an explanation of the various projects newly discovered by independent researchers - now branded as IRGON. It will also demonstrate IRGON's use of CGI intended to give the public 'virtual' tours of the Ness and the interior of its many iconic structures.

Analysis of the Vets' recordings by a Framlingham-born, Canadian Sociology Professor in his academic work on 'Secrecy' will be explained as will the boost given to research by AWRE Aldermaston supplying 850 declassified files.

Can you help?

To raise the public's awareness of the significant role played by Orford Ness, IRGON has acquired and published** much new information and this has been improved by the input provided by Ness veterans and involved organisations. While this vital support has improved the accuracy of what IRGON publishes, they recognize that there is still much more to be discovered. If you have knowledge of what occurred on the Ness or know of someone who does, please contact David Warren at davidwarren43@gmail.com or on 07899 978414. IRGON's recent Pagoda video can be found at <https://youtube.com/watch?v=W2Duou6S-m0>.

**most of IRGON's published research can be found on their website www.irgon.org.uk

Our second talk for Spring 2024 will be given on Thursday, 14 March by **Philip Wise**, Heritage Manager at Colchester & Ipswich Museums, on **The Fenwick Treasure**. In 2014 the Colchester Archaeological Trust undertook a major excavation at the Williams and Griffin, now Fenwick, department store on Colchester High Street. The Trust uncovered evidence of the Boudican Revolt, including the remains of a house, which had been destroyed by fire, burnt food items inside the house and the remarkable Fenwick Treasure.

The Treasure is a hoard of Roman jewellery and coins which was hurriedly buried under the floor of the house shortly before it was destroyed. It consists of silver coins, gold finger rings, earrings, armlets, bracelets, and military awards, which are comparable to finds from Pompeii.

In this talk Philip Wise, who was personally involved in arranging for the Fenwick Treasure to come to Colchester Castle Museum, will discuss the significance of the Treasure, especially what it tells us about life in Colchester at the time of the Boudican Revolt.

A third talk, possibly in April or May, is at the planning stage and we hope to have more information for you early next year.

To book tickets for these talks, please go to our website at www.orfordmuseum.org.uk or contact our Treasurer at info@orfordmuseum.org.uk.

Elizabeth Spinney
Chairman

News from the Curator

In August Trustees, staff, and volunteers from Orford Museum worked together with English Heritage staff to take all the items out of four display cases in the Castle to make way for the Celtic Spirit exhibition. Everything was carefully wrapped up using the appropriate materials and brought back to Potkins Lane. Since then, Valerie Fenwick has completed a photo inventory of the display objects and Joanna Martin has also been busy transcribing all the original labels. This is an important task because English Heritage have offered to produce new labels and signage for the cases when it returns to the Castle next spring.

Every artefact must be carefully checked for its condition, and where necessary cleaned and remounted. All items will need an accession number, which most do have already but where not they will be given one.

Having the objects back at the archive store will enable us more easily to update the displays and give a modern interpretation to the objects which will benefit schools and the public visiting the Castle in the future.

Next summer, the Orford Sailing Club will be celebrating their centenary which will include

an exhibition of photographs, documents, and original artefacts. I have had an enjoyable time looking through the Museum's archives for anything I think will be of interest and showing these items to the OSC members.

Stephen Mael
Curator

The Orford Historian: Issue 02

Issue 02 of *The Orford Historian* promises a diverse array of articles: from a royal visit to Orford in 1879 to the trial of a smuggler who gave the town a lasting street name, a transcription of a horseman's prize notebook and a record of local nicknames. Further afield, we have a fascinating account of five hundred years of family history in Knodishall. Regular features return with oral histories, highlights from the Museum's collection and tributes to local men and women who have left lasting legacies.

Jack Cooke
Editor

Audio/Visual Equipment for Hire

Is your group or organization planning an event that would benefit from the use of audio/visual equipment? Orford Museum has a range for hire which includes a projector, screen, PA amplifier with two speakers and a choice of microphones. We can also offer personnel to set up the equipment and connect it to your laptop, PC, Mac etc. For more information and availability, please email mike.welsh99@gmail.com or leave a message on 01394 450596.

Mike Welsh
Technical Support

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Orford Castle Opening Times and Prices:
www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/orford-castle/prices-and-opening-times/.