

CORONAVIRUS – Many thought that this horrible virus might stop everything happening? This is not the case. Your committee have decided that we shall not be dumbed down by this virus but shall do the very best we can to keep going.

COMMITTEE MEETING

The committee met on Wednesday, 1st April using the wonderful ZOOM program as is used by HM Government to hold their Cabinet meetings. We had ten of the committee in nine boxes on our computer screens with the ten of us able to converse really quite easily. We just need to get our other committee members up and running. At this meeting which was really an informal meeting to see how we could operate and what business we could discuss adequately, a number of things were discussed.

NEWSLETTER

The first thing was to decide that we should keep in contact with our members, well, most of them. Some sadly do not have computers and we thought the logistics of creating hard copy and distribution was clearly not deemed a necessity. We do have 90% of the membership online though so we think it well worthwhile. We also decided that we should be helpful to our members as much as possible as well as providing you with some useful information and something interesting to read. So here goes.

GRAND OPENING OF THE HERITAGE CENTRE

Many of you were able to join us for the Grand Opening of our Heritage Centre on Friday, 14th February. It seems an age ago but actually seven weeks ago. Due to space problems in the Centre we decided that we should limit the numbers attending the opening to about 70. However, we decided that if we were to have two sessions then we would be able to increase the numbers we could invite. However, sadly, this still meant that we could not invite all of our membership. We do hope that this did not upset those of our membership who we could not invite. Happily, the Centre opened for the season on the following day giving everyone the opportunity to visit and view the Centre with all the various changes that we had effected over the closed season. That was until we had to close as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic which we did after Sunday, 15th March.

Photos of our opening can be seen on our website under 'Heritage Centre' and clicking on the link to 'a number of photos'.

TALKS AND OUTINGS

Another casualty of the pandemic is the postponement of our talks from March onwards until the pandemic is no more! That meant our talk in February by Mr John Cushing who runs Thursford collection and the Christmas Spectacular was our last talk. This particular talk, which was well attended by members and quite a lot of visitors, was excellent and enjoyed by everyone. It gave us all an insight into how the collection was brought together by Mr Cushing's father and how the Spectacular started from small beginnings (a small concert by some singers) swelling into what is a national event attended and enjoyed by people from all over the country from early November finishing just before Christmas each year. Let us hope that it takes place this year!

We assume that there will be no more talks this season but we sincerely hope they will return afresh this coming September.

The same sadly applies to our **Outings** which have also had to be postponed until further notice.

LOCAL SUPPORT TO HELP YOU AVOID UNNECESSARY HUMAN CONTACT

A number of local businesses and groups are offering support to those who are self-isolating. Here is just a small basic selection, but there is a wide range of services and much more information available on line

(a) Home food deliveries

Kemps Fruit and Veg Tel. 01485 535212

Mr Bun the Baker Tel. 07576 666029

Richards the Butcher Tel. 01485 532830

The Norfolk Deli Tel. 01485 535540

(b) Help for those over 70 in self-isolation

Anyone over 70 who is self-isolating and needs some help can call the Hunstanton and District Round Table on 07592 636 534. Members of the Round Table can help with shopping, errands and advice

(c) Keeping active and healthy

The National Health Service (www.nhs.uk) provides advice, tips and tools to help maintain health and wellbeing. It also has a good selection of exercise videos (including aerobics, strength and resistance, Pilates and yoga) that will help to maintain fitness and flexibility

AN ITEM OF INTEREST FROM THE HERITAGE CENTRE

Each month, we are going to pick an item from our Centre and give a brief history about it and how we came to have it.

We start this month with a Ceremonial Mallet (pictured below).

The ornate Mallet was presented to Lady ffolkes of Hillington Hall who used it to lay the foundation stone at the building of the Children's Convalescent Home. This was on the 26th April, 1906.

The home's latest use was as the Council Offices, in the Valentine Road Car Park.

It was well reported how the Air quality here in Hunstanton was beneficial to those that suffered with respiratory problems or needed to Convalesce after illness.

In 1872 the Town capitalised on this 'miracle air' and built a temporary wooden structure housing 12 Beds, the most famous Patient was the Prince of Wales. He was thought to be in danger of dying from a nasty chest infection, all Royalty had come up to Sandringham in case the end was near. But he was brought up to Hunstanton to get some of this 'miracle air', and got better.

That was the best advertising for more Convalescent Homes to be built here. There were Convalescent Homes all over England, but none with the success that Hunstanton had.

So in 1879 an Adult Convalescent Home was built to have 40 Beds on the corner of Valentine Road & Greevegata – now known as Valentine Court. It was extended to house 100 beds by 1906 and then used for wounded Soldiers from WW1.

The building costs were from a Charity formed by wealthy Lords and Ladies plus a donation from the Prince of Wales.

Around 1906 it was decided to build a Children's Wing, 200yds south of the Adult Home, this is where the now closed Council Offices stand in Valentine Car Park. It was to contain 20 beds exclusively for Children at a cost of £5,000. Work started in 1906, with monies from the Building Fund which had an endowment of £11,000 invested in Consols. The Building Contractor was Messrs Clarke & Son and the Architect was Mr A.P. MacAlister.

So on April 26th 1906 a very large gathering of dignitaries came to the Laying of the Foundation Stone, not without its problems with who was to perform this. Originally Viscount Coke was to preside over the ceremony, but a week before the event his Regiment was called up for duties, then Lucy, Lady Braybrooke was to lay the stone, but was detained in the Isle of Wight by an attack of Influenza. The Earl of Leicester, President of the Charity, was very ill at the time so Lady Leicester who had been the intended layer of the stone (and had laid the stone of the Adult Home) was unable to leave her husband at this time so the duty of laying the foundation stone fell to Lady ffolkes.

The Ceremony was attended by some 50 wealthy dignitaries and most of the Town Council. Letters of apology were received by some 200 Friends and Supporters of the Charity, many of whom enclosed a contribution.

The Institution of this Charity in 1905 had between 130 and 140 members.

Their work had provided help for 19,000 people since 1872, the majority having been cured.

Lady ffolkes was presented with a **Silver Trowel** by the Architect Mr A.P. MacAlister (we are still looking for that ?) and an **Ebony Mallet** by the Builders, Messrs Clarke & Son.

With these implements she laid the Stone. Interestingly, the first cot in the Children's home was named 'Prince Edward's Cot' (by permission of HRH).

If you would like to know more, after we have reopened the Heritage Centre, please ask one of our volunteers to dig out a file of information on the Children's Convalescent Home from our archive store for you.

The Mallet was seen by one of our Committee members (Tony Armstrong) on Ebay in early 2019, he was able, successfully, to bid on it on behalf of the Society and it is now on show in one of our glass cabinets, **(pictures below)**.

Thank you to Tony Armstrong for all his work in getting the story together,





The Foundation Stone located between the front entrance doors to the former Council Offices.

HUNSTANTON GARDENS

A NOTE RECEIVED FROM CHRIS DURHAM – BCKLWN RE GARDENS

Flower beds

We, as a Borough, will be planting out all bedding within our formal gardens (including the Esplanade).

At present there will be no hanging baskets or street floral decorations / planters until the situation improves.

The adopt- a-bedders are allowed to tend / maintain their beds as part of their daily exercise, but the guidelines to social distancing must be adhered to and the advised time to spend is 1 hour to 1-30 mins max.

Maintaining their bed would class as their one daily exercise for that day.

My grounds staff will provide a basic level of grounds maintenance according to their time and availability.

Grounds maintenance is a discretionary service, as such my staff are classed as key workers and could be deployed at any time to other alternative duties.

But we will do all we can within the current situation to provide a level of service.

With Thanks

Chris Durham

GARDENS MAINTAINED BY THE CIVIC SOCIETY

You may, or may not, know that we help maintain some of the gardens around Hunstanton including – the beds outside the Heritage Centre, the Railway Garden by the Coal-shed Gallery, the St Edmund's Chapel (ruins) Gardens and the Sign-Post Garden just past the junction of Lighthouse Lane with Lighthouse Close. If anyone would like to spend a bit of their daily exercise to take a trowel or fork and a black bag occasionally to weed these gardens, this would be greatly appreciated. The Sign Post garden in particular needs attention and we need to keep on top of those pesky fennel seedlings which hide everywhere in the St Edmund's Garden. Please contact Margi Blunden on 532223 who is coordinating this.

Andrew Murray reports that he has been able to spend some time re-doing some of the paintwork on the **Mercy Gray shelter** near the sign post garden. Feel free to go and admire it; just don't sit on any wet paint!

This 'funny' has been provided by one of our members

It is with great sadness that I have to mention the loss of a few further local businesses around our Town. The bra manufacturer has gone bust, the specialist in submersibles has gone under, the manufacturer of food blenders has gone into liquidation, a dog kennel has had to call in the retrievers, the suppliers of paper for origami enthusiasts has folded, the Heinz factory has been canned as they couldn't ketchup with orders, the tarmac laying company has reached the end of the road, the bread company has run out of dough, the clock manufacturer has had to wind down and gone cuckoo, the Chinese has been taken away, the shoe shop has had to put his foot down and given his staff the boot and finally the laundrette has been taken to the cleaners!

TILL NEXT MONTH