



Preserving Royston's Heritage

**2013-2014**

Message from the Chairman,

I thought last year was a busy one for the Society and yet the past twelve months have been busier. We have now established sub-committees, now including a research team which is currently engaged in great things as you will read elsewhere in this news sheet.

I am particularly grateful to our new committee members, Rosemary Bateman Denise Ford and Pam Wright who along with existing members have taken on some daunting tasks. They are already making great progress.

Looking ahead, the Society will be celebrating its Golden Jubilee next year and there are tentative plans as to how best to mark this historic occasion.

We should be proud of our Society, which is one of the best supported in the town, if not the best. The interesting lecture meetings continue to be well attended. The excellent speakers deal with a wide variety of subjects for which we appreciate and thank our Treasurer, David Allard for making our lectures a wonderful experience.

Neville Chuck

**An Appeal to all our Members**

Please help us to remember those who gave the ultimate sacrifice. The society is appealing to members who have links to Royston and its surrounding villages and whose relatives served their country in The Great War, 1914-1918.

Do you have any memories passed down by your families, mementos, for example, embroidered cards that the soldiers sent home or photos of the soldiers, people who served on the home front in agriculture, industrial and voluntary work to those who nursed the injured at the local hospitals. The Society will be creating a display to honour and commemorate the First World War and remember those who served from Royston and the surrounding areas.

If you would like to make a contribution to this project, Shirley Thrussell, our Vice President would like to hear from you. Call her on 01763 242002. Thank you for your support and help.

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Stacy Leigh-Ross, an artist commissioned by J D Wetherspoons was asked to create a mural depicting the story of the Manor House restaurant in Melbourn Street. Her research into this project provided a wealth of historical information and the society has now asked her to compile the story of the Manor House, its development and the families who lived there. A booklet with the history and her sketches is being developed and it is hoped will be ready to be published by the end of 2014.

A revised 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Royston Cave by Joseph Beldam is being published again with a Preface by Peter Ketteringham.

Committee members who provided the research in support of the recent 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the War Memorial publication, concluded that there was much about Royston and the surrounding area that needed to be recorded, archived or published. A Research Team within the committee has been formed, comprising six members, who will undertake to fulfil the task of recording the history of Royston and the surrounding area.

The team is now working on the following. To commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the History Society in 2015, a publication is in production with a working title the History of the Society in the last 50 years. Some of the projects that are in the research programme are local philanthropists, the workhouses and the hospitals. Using the recording equipment provided by the History Society for the Royston Museum, Royston residents will be asked to record their memories of the town. Members of the History Society who wish and would like to make a contribution to any of the above projects are welcomed and are asked to contact the History Society or speak to a committee member on our lecture evenings.

## From the Museum Curator

The museum had a very successful 1940s Christmas event in December. We had over 150 people through the doors on the day. There were lots of happy faces and fantastic comments from people who visited. This concluded a great year.

So, 2014 - we have a full calendar of exhibitions, featuring some regular exhibitors and some artists showing at the museum for the first time.

We look forward to a full year of events and monthly workshops, activities and trips for our Youth Members as well as building on the success of last year's Young Curators with the Royston Arts Festival.

For further information on what goes on at the museum, or to get involved please contact Curator, Sarah Russell on 01763 242587 or email [curator@roystonmuseum.org.uk](mailto:curator@roystonmuseum.org.uk)

## Royston Cave

The Cave Christmas candlelight opening went very well with over 130 visitors enjoying the experience over a period of two and a half hours.

In general we had a very good year in 2013 with around 2,800 visitors and we were only forced to close for one day as a result of a burst water main outside the Chinese Takeaway opposite.

Water has in fact been a bit of a theme since August last year as we have had three water leaks thanks to Affinity Water's pipes bursting.

Although these leaks are all repaired now, we are still getting some water in the tunnel as a result of either waste water seepage or poor rain water drainage – we are not sure which and this is the subject of an ongoing investigation.

The issues affecting the Cave some years ago – worms, vibration and flooding are now under control and we are expecting the final conservation report in the next month or so.

The Cave DVD has generated a lot of interest and is selling well (if you haven't got your copy yet it costs £10 and is available from the Society, the Cave Shop, the Museum and the Library). The new voiceover in the Cave is also an improvement that visitors have commented on. As always we

are looking for help with guiding so if anyone has a few hours to spare over the summer please contact me – James Robinson – on 01763 243204 and I will explain what's involved. The work is paid but can be done on a voluntary basis if required.

For further information contact James Robinson on [james@robynson.plus.com](mailto:james@robynson.plus.com)

## Dates for your Diary

### May 5th - May Fayre

The society will be there with a display and publications for sale.

### May 8th - Annual General Meeting

### 28<sup>th</sup> June – Outing to Wandlebury and Kentwell Hall

The Society outing this year is to Wandlebury and Kentwell Hall. For further information on cost and availability contact David Allard, Treasurer. For those who have already booked, we look forward to seeing you on the coach.



## Lavenham 2013

**October 2nd** - Our new season starts with an illustrated presentation on the Woodhall and Abel Smith Family with Dorothy Abel Smith MBE

The Royston & District History Society also produces various publications on local history ranging from architecture, folklore, biographies of famous Roystonians and other subjects of local interest.

Useful websites:

Royston and District Museum and Art Gallery  
[www.roystonmuseum.org.uk](http://www.roystonmuseum.org.uk)

Royston Cave  
[www.roystoncave.co.uk](http://www.roystoncave.co.uk)

Royston & District Local History Society  
[www.roystonlocalhistory.org.uk](http://www.roystonlocalhistory.org.uk)