



Preserving Royston's Heritage

2014-2015

Message from the Chairman

The Society has now entered its Jubilee year. I am indebted to the work of the committee and its sub-committees for what has been achieved during the past year. A new edition of The Royston War Memorial has been published, Beldam's The Royston Cave has been republished and a new edition of the Inns and Public Houses is due out at any moment.

Cllr Vera Swallow as the Town Council representative has joined our committee. Martin Kaszak has succeeded Betty Skyrme as a Trustee of the Cave. A new Research Group has been set up and a number of projects are in hand.

Sarah Russell who after nearly two years as Curator of Royston Museum, has now taken a similar post at St. Ives. I am pleased to report that Jenny Oxley is now the Curator and I and members of my committee are looking forward to a good working relationship with her for some time to come.

Royston's unique Cave has continued to attract visitors from far and wide during the past year, thanks to James Robinson and his team of Cave Guides.

Yolanda Hayes is not seeking re-election. Our thanks go to her for producing the Society's annual News Letter. This task has now been kindly taken over by Rosemary Bateman.

Museum Trustees

Two long serving Museum Trustees, Peter Ketteringham after some 31 years service and Mike Lawrence after at least 20 years, both with much devoted service, have recently stood down. The Royston and District Local History Society's committee is pleased to announce that it has appointed Martin Kaszak and James Robinson to succeed them. The other trustees, Peter Franks, Jenny Smith and Philip Smith will continue to serve in this capacity.

Golden Jubilee

This year is the Society's Golden Jubilee and on 7th May a celebration to mark the fifty years is being held at The Old Bull Inn, Royston with a Buffet Reception at 8 pm following the Annual General Meeting. In addition to members a number of special guests have been invited and a Golden Jubilee Cake will be cut.

Neville Chuck

From the Museum Curator



I started as Curator of Royston Museum on the 2nd March, previously as Curator of Welwyn Hatfield Museum Service for six years. Born and raised in Yorkshire and having worked in different areas of the country, I settled in the Royston area 8 years ago. I am thrilled to be running my local museum.

With over 10 years museum experience, encompassing everything from collections management, exhibitions, events, heritage projects and working with schools and community groups. I have revamped museum displays put collections online, created hands-on exhibitions and events and always involved the local community.

I became involved in museums and heritage at an early age, having joined the Young Archaeologists club in York and volunteering in local museums. I achieved a BA in Archaeology and History at the University of Nottingham and went on to gain an MA in Museum Studies with distinction from the University of Newcastle. In 2010, I became an Associate of the Museums Association (AMA). I currently mentor two volunteer-run museums in Hertfordshire, in addition to my new role as Curator enhancing my wealth of experience and knowledge.

In my first few weeks, I will be consulting with the Museum's stakeholders and the local community and will review the current setup. The overall aim is to improve the quality of the services the museum provides and to make it more firmly rooted in the community. To put on fun activity-based events to attract more children and families, develop the research service further, improve the collections care through improved storage and digitalisation and re-launch the schools and outreach programme.

If you are interested in volunteering at the museum; exhibiting artwork, delivering craft workshops and



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events, undertaking school visits or holding events with us, please contact Jenny Oxley.

Tel: 01763 242587

email: curator@roystonmuseum.org.uk

Royston Cave

Yet again we had a fantastic Christmas candlelight opening with 100 visitors plus, enjoying the experience over a period of two and a half hours.

In general we had a very good year in 2014 and visitor numbers were around 10% up on 2013 with around 3,000 visitors from all over the world.

We received the final conservation report this year which gave the Cave a clean bill of health and showed that it is in great shape for the years to come. Of course we can't become complacent so we will continue to monitor conditions in the Cave on a weekly basis.

The Cave Trust also received a report from Philip Lankester (former curator of the Royal Armouries) about dating the Cave which they had commissioned earlier. Interestingly, his research suggested that the carvings were probably made in the late C14th or C15th which, if this is correct, makes them much later than was originally suggested.

The Cave DVD continues to sell 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).

As always we are looking for help with guiding, so if anyone has a few hours to spare over the summer, please contact James Robinson who will explain what's involved. You can choose either to be paid or to do it on a voluntary basis.

We hope to see some of you down the cave this year.

For further information contact James Robinson james@robynson.plus.com Tel: 01763 243204

Dates for your Diary

7th May – Annual General Meeting and Golden Jubilee Celebration

13th June - Outing to Cressing Temple Barns and Paycocke's House.

The Society outing this year is to Cressing Temple Barns and Paycocke's House. For further Information, on cost and availability, contact David Allard, Treasurer.

If you have already booked, we look forward to seeing you on the day.



Kentwell Hall 2014

1st October – Our new season starts with an illustrated presentation on "Kelshall Past" with Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews.

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 & District Museum & Art Gallery
www.roystonmuseum.org.uk

Royston Cave
www.roystoncave.co.uk

Royston & District Local History Society
www.roystonlocalhistory.org.uk