



# Newsletter Autumn 2014

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TEAROOM ORGANISER

John Claxton 874330

SHOP

Judy Wood Rogers 874641

GROUP BOOKINGS

Kathy Morris 875681

VOLUNTEER CO-ORDINATOR

Andy Simey 876649

SECRETARY

Jan Betteridge 876339

## Museum News

What a marvellous summer we have had! Although visitor numbers are slightly down, the Tea Room staff have coped with some very busy afternoons. Perhaps with such good weather this September, people are doing more outdoor activities rather than museum-going.

Another highlight has been our Members' Evening, so well organised by Rosalind Beetham and Myra Green. Caradoc Doy talked to us about the Lobb brothers who were plant hunters for Veitch Nurseries. Caradoc was among friends, as he has been an advisor to our Garden Team and helped develop the new boards about the Veitch family in our Riverside Garden.

William Lobb collected in South America and the North American Pacific coast and his most famous find was the *Wellingtonia*. His brother Thomas travelled to India and South East Asia and discovered the Blue Orchid. Caradoc has contributed to the recently published book 'Blue Orchid and the Big Tree'.

Another highlight has been our Mapping Topsham Exhibition, spread over the History Room and the Tea Room. So many ways of viewing Topsham — and so much skill and artistry. It has been one of those exhibitions that has grown, with new exhibits being added since it first opened. Our thanks to all involved.

We've all been excited about HMS *Terror*, built in Topsham in 1813. Our newly acquired, excellent model of the ship has created interest since the start of the season and we now have a booklet on the *Terror*, telling its story as a warship and subsequently as an Arctic exploration vessel. We were aware that the Canadian government has been searching for the *Terror* and her sister ship *Erebus* and to our joy, news suddenly arrived that one of the ships had been found. It even made the ITV regional news and Jenny Pearson was interviewed and did us proud. So David Clement's talk was awaited with heightened interest!

*John Dunsford*

## World War One Remembrance

On 8-12<sup>th</sup> November an exhibition will be held in St. Margaret's Church featuring personal family stories from World War One. The Museum has supplied information and support for this exhibition. Research is already under way for a major exhibition at the Museum in 2016 to pay tribute to all Topsham residents who served in the First World War and to acknowledge the contribution and sacrifice made by small communities such as ours.



VA Hospital, Riversmeet Terrace

The plan is to mount an exhibition of images, memorabilia and biographies of as many of the men and women from the town who served in the war, in any capacity. We will not forget those who died and are commemorated on the War Memorial and in Peter Dunscombe's book. We hope that in the run up to 2016 we can bring the community together to discover stories about their relatives, neighbours and ancestors and forge new relationships for the future as well as creating a legacy of documents and photographs to contribute to the national archive. There must be many fascinating and moving stories which deserve to be recorded. So your comments, contributions and information are welcome, as always. Please contact Marian Grimshaw or Rosemary Hatch at the Museum if you can contribute to this important project.

## Christmas Market



Seven Topsham Sailors, HMS Challenger,  
1914

We hope that you'll soon be thinking of what to buy your friends and family for Christmas and that we will be able to help you at our annual Christmas Market in Matthews Hall on 20th November, 10.00-12 noon. You may not have been able to get to the Museum Shop lately but you will have the opportunity to see their range of lovely gifts. We have also again managed to line up some interesting stalls to help you solve all your Christmas shopping problems. Please do bring along your family, friends and neighbours for a coffee, a mince pie and a chat—we would love to see you!

*Jennifer Bliss*

## Museum Christmas Lunch



Tickets for Topsham Museum's Christmas Lunch are now on sale. Last year's meal in the Malthouse at The Globe Hotel, Topsham was deemed a success, so we have booked with them again for Monday 8<sup>th</sup> December (12.00 for 12.30 pm). Tickets are £20 each which covers the cost of two courses, coffee and mince pie plus a contribution towards a tip for the staff at the Globe.

You can choose from: Traditional Butter Roasted Turkey, Slow Cooked Devonshire Beef Blade, Poached fillet of Plaice or Walnut and Gorgonzola Tortellini (V). For dessert, a choice of Traditional Christmas Pudding, Glazed Vanilla Crème Brûlée or Winter Spiced Poached Pear. If you prefer a selection of West Country Cheeses there is a £2 supplement. More details about the menu can be obtained from the Globe Hotel.

A small selection of wines and soft drinks will be available for purchase from the bar in the Malthouse. For a wider choice the main bar in the Hotel will be open. No drinks are included in the ticket price, so please make arrangements amongst yourselves for any wine before or with the meal. Experience has shown that it is less expensive to share the price of a bottle than to order glasses of wine individually!

Tickets can be obtained from Judy Sugden who can be contacted on 01392 874124. You will need to pay for your ticket in advance and will also need to let Judy know your course selections.

To avoid disappointment, please don't leave booking too late as places always go quickly.

*Jan Betteridge*

### Tea Room



A delicious cream tea!

With the end of the 2014 season nearly upon us, the hardworking tea room volunteers are looking forward to a well-earned break.

225 pots of cream have been obtained from local (and not so local) retailers and served with over 2,000 scones, all home-baked by volunteers, and topped off with the contents of 130 jars of raspberry jam. 230 cakes have been baked, decorated, frozen, defrosted and cut into slices to whet the appetites of visitors. This year coffee and walnut cake outsold the others but lemon drizzle came a close second. Fruit cake (never frozen!) started to catch up towards the end of the season but unfortunately demand out-paced supply! Over 300 of our home-made flapjacks and shortbread slices added variety to the tea room offering, as did the new ice cream tubs—over 600 were sold. Honeycomb proved to be the most popular flavour!

575 pints of milk have been carried through the streets of Topsham to keep the sales of tea and coffee going. Over 4,000 teabags and 600 individual coffee filters have so far been needed to satisfy our visitors' thirsts.

The hard work serving our visitors with teas this season has so far

produced more than £11,000 surplus over expenditure all of which helps to keep your Museum running and carrying on its work contributing to the local community.

*John Claxton*

### Photographs of Follett Road and memories of past inhabitants



Back Street, Topsham

Another photograph taken by Cecil Holman (1877-1958), is of 'Back Street Topsham', what is now Follett Road and taken in the early 1900s. Back Street is a nickname for what was then known as Higher Passage Lane, leading down to Ferry Road.



There is also a close-up (shown left) also from the Cecil Holman collection, taken around 1900. The wooden gates/doors appear to be what is now the entrance to Eleanor's Bower.



Tom Tapper's Cart

Tom Tapper used to live in Follett Road in the early 1900s and was the licensed carrier for the station. He also sold fruit, vegetables and eggs from his house and had a field on the Exeter Road where he kept a lot of poultry. He had arranged for blood and offal from the slaughterhouse at Halwill Junction (near Okehampton) to be sent down by rail to Topsham to spread on his field as fertiliser. Morice Parsons recalled that "there was no vegetables anywhere that could touch Tom's"!

The photograph on the left shows Ailwyn Elson on his Uncle Tom's cart.

Roy Wheeler remembered Mr Tapper taking down apples down to the cider factory in the Strand when he was a boy. He and his friends used to slash open the sacks behind Tom's back and steal apples from the cart!



Tapper's Close near Topsham Station is named after this family.

This photograph shows a similar view of the upper part of Follett Road, taken in 2002.

*Catriona Batty*

### Volunteers required!

If any member would like to help in any way do please get in touch with us. There are a lot of varied and interesting ways of assisting and working as part of a friendly team!



## Last Lunchtime Lecture of the 2014 Season:

29 October, 11 for 11.30



David Clement and John Dunsford  
September Lunchtime Lecture

### *Cess Pits, Cemeteries and Sewers: being an archaeologist*

**Speaker: Dr Peter Marsden**

Dr Marsden is a professional archaeologist, historian and author, now retired and living in Exeter. He was previously the City Archaeologist at the Museum of London. He was awarded a Doctorate in Archaeology from the University of Oxford and is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London.

## Membership Notes



Head Stewards Lunch

- ◆ If you have forgotten to pay your subscription this year, please send us your payment now
- ◆ Please let us know if your email address has been changed so that we can keep our membership records up to date
- ◆ And if you are reading this newsletter at a friend's house or over someone's shoulder, please do consider becoming a Member yourself, the subscription is only £10 a year or £15 for a couple

## Last chance to see....

### **Mapping Topsham Exhibition: Closes on 30th October**

Traditional and innovative maps of Topsham depicted in different media—paint, collage, embroidery, tapestry. There is even a fascinating Topsham “Underground” map on show in the Tea Room. Copies of the design are now available as postcards and tea towels to purchase from the Museum or our online-shop.



Caradoc Doy & Margaret Wilson at the  
Members' Evening

### **New Display in the Sail Loft**

There was great excitement on 7th September when Parks Canada announced that the wreck of one of the Franklin Expedition ships had been discovered. The Museum had just completed the final displays to enhance the model of HMS *Terror*, built by Geoff Harvey, on show in the Sail Loft, when an ITV News team came to the Museum to film the model. However, it was announced recently that divers' investigations showed the wreck was in fact her sister-ship HMS *Erebus*.



The new displays about HMS *Terror* were installed on 14th October (left) and tell the fascinating story of her voyages. We also have the Davy memorandum book on show. In this there is an entry recording that *Terror* was built here in Topsham.

Do come in before the Museum closes and admire the new layout!

*Rachel Nichols*

## Topsham “Underground Map”

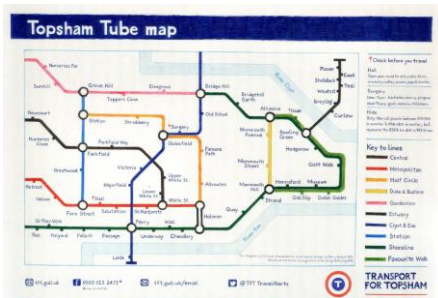
Using a design reproduced from one of the popular entries in the current Mapping Topsham Exhibition, tea towels and postcards are now available from the Museum Shop & the online e-shop.

## This Winter....

We hope to repair some of the windows and the re-decoration programme will extend to another room in the period house. Meanwhile hard work is in progress to extend the internet cabling and update our electrical systems.

## Forthcoming Events/Dates for your Diary

- Lunchtime Lecture—29 October, 11 for 11.30 a.m. at the Museum
- 30th October —Museum closes for the winter
- Christmas Market—20th November, Matthews Hall, 10-12 noon
- Oboussier Lecture—20th November, Matthews Hall, 7 p.m.  
Isambard Kingdom Brunel by Brian Portch
- Christmas Lunch—Globe Hotel, 8th December, 12 for 12.30
- 1st April 2015—Museum re-opens



Summer holiday activities for children (above)  
and the Draw at Town Fayre (below)



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