



Uckfield & District Preservation Society

Reg. Charity No: 1102573

NEWSLETTER

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A Happy New Year to all our members and a warm welcome to New Members Mr and Mrs V. Oliver, Mr & Mrs J. Burch and Mr & Mrs V..J. Sutcliffe. Once again we have a very busy and interesting year ahead of us. With big projects in hand at both Bridge Cottage and Nutley Windmill, we are seriously looking for more volunteers to help us with our growing workloads. The Local History Group would very much welcome a friendly person to organise bookings from our list of speakers for our Talks Programme starting from June/July 2011. As you will see from the following articles these talks are very much enjoyed and supported by many local members. If you are interested, handy with a keyboard and comfortable with the phone, please call me to talk about it. Day or evening 01825 732924.

*Margaret Mugridge,
Membership Secretary*

Nutley Windmill

We at Nutley Mill would like to wish everybody a Happy New Year.

As the new season of open days approaches, I thought I would inform you about some of the projects we have been working on over the winter:

The biggest one of these is the work on our horse gin. For those of you who don't remember what a horse gin is, here is a quick reminder. The name Horse Gin is derived from horse engine and is a set of gears that are powered by a horse walking round fixed to the gin. This was then used to power other equipment. We are lucky to have been lent a wheat thresher, this is used to remove the wheat from the harvested wheat stems. We hope to have both of these working on open days. We will not have a horse, but we hope visitors will enjoy working it by hand! Last year we acquired a mortising machine. This is a hand powered device that cuts mortise holes in timbers, a sort of mechanical chisel. We have spent many months cleaning it up and will have it on display at the Mill. It will be as a static item, as by its nature it isn't safe to allow visitors to operate it, although on special open days it may be demonstrated.

Another exciting thing is that from Brighton Museum we have purchased a copy of a painting showing a post mill being moved from Regency Square to Dyke Road on the 28th March 1797. We bought a digital copy of this painting and then asked the Mike Harvey-Penton Gallery, currently in Bridge Cottage, if they could print it and frame it. They also did a lot of digital restoration to the image, repairing the damage that the painting had acquired over the past 210 years. They were able to bring out a great deal of detail in the picture that was hidden in the original image.

As well as the above, we have been carrying out general maintenance on the Mill. So why not come along on one of our

open days "have a go" with the horse gin, look at the mortising machine and admire the painting? The first opening dates and times will be:

Sunday 27th March and Sunday 24th April
14:30 to 17:30

We are also open most Wednesdays from 11 a.m. to about 3 p.m., weather and work permitting and subject to change without notice.

Where are we?

Nutley Windmill can be found just north of Nutley Village, turn on to the Crowborough Road and proceed for one mile. Park in the first car park on the left, the Friends' Clump Car Park just after the cattle grid, walk to the rear of the Car Park and follow the footpath to Nutley Mill. On open days there are sign boards to indicate the car park and Mill. Nutley Mill map reference TQ 451291.

Robert Pike

Bridge Cottage Heritage Centre

Work continues behind the scenes and we are beginning to attract more attention and offers of support. The "Sponsor a Tile" scheme is moving forward, a new website is planned and the next practical step is to investigate the archaeology. (See the notes elsewhere for more of these developments and a request for help).

A key part of the future use needed to attract funding and involve local people in the finished building is the potential educational role of Bridge Cottage.

Classes from two local primary schools, Holy Cross and Rocks Park, have recently visited. The Rocks Park Year 5 class were studying Uckfield and looking to the future. A guided walk from their school down the High Street to Bridge Cottage was a great way of appreciating how the town has grown and changed over the centuries, seeing different styles and ages of old building. They also looked at old maps and pictures of the town provided by the Society.

Also connected to this education theme we had a meeting with Martin Patterson of Hands on History. Martin provides "hands on activities" covering a wide range of historical periods, they can enable adults and children to dress as Roman legionaries, medieval knights or Napoleonic soldiers and also have many relevant craft activities. Martin has offered to help us set up and run education activities appropriate to Bridge Cottage as well as offering expert advice on marketing.

If you want to get involved with these education ideas or any other part of this exciting project, please get in touch.

Bridge Cottage continues to be open Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays with the Mike Harvey-Penton Gallery and we are very grateful to Mike and Liz for all their support of the project.

Andrew Ledward

The Harvey-Penton Gallery At Bridge Cottage

You cannot imagine, or perhaps you can, our happiness when, after approaching the Preservation Society, they agreed for us to use the Cottage as a gallery for 3 days per week. For a local photographer the venue lends itself perfectly to displaying framed, mounted, canvas prints and greetings cards of the local area. It has turned out better than we dared hope.

There is something about Bridge Cottage, and when we open the doors on a Thursday morning and step inside the building you can feel the warm, friendly embrace of the building, almost like a presence there. Many old buildings feel cold and austere, but not Bridge Cottage.

The most wonderful aspect of opening the gallery on Thursdays, Fridays & Saturdays is meeting so many local people and visitors to the town. Local people are thrilled that Bridge Cottage is open and being used, often coming in to share memories of days gone by. Others have never been inside the Cottage and are amazed by the character, atmosphere and architecture. Indeed we have had a number of people, with skills such as blacksmithing, who have shown great interest in becoming involved in the restoration.

During our opening days we also enjoy being involved in fund-raising for the restoration fund, be it selling a souvenir, persuading people to sponsor a tile, handing out publicity leaflets, or promoting a forthcoming event. We can't wait to see the Cottage transformed once the restoration is complete. Some loving TLC is just essential to return the building to its former splendour. The Cottage deserves to be the central attraction of the town. It is also great to know that the residents of Uckfield really support the preservation and restoration of this old building which is so unique to the town.

As the days grow shorter and the weather gets colder, we have been taking advantage of the glorious fireplace with a welcoming log fire and many visitors stop to sit down and warm themselves. A log fire always seems to be the place where people reflect while watching the flames darting around the hearth. As mentioned earlier, since opening up in Bridge Cottage we have heard some wonderful stories of times gone by and it is very easy to sit in a chair by the log fire and think about previous occupants and the lives they led and wonder about how the building has survived for over 500 years. It's often said but 'if only the walls could talk!'

At the end of the day, once we've doused the fire and locked the doors we always say Thank you Bridge Cottage as we make our exit. It's silly, but to us Bridge Cottage is more than just an old building; it has its own personality.

One thing's for sure, you'll always find a warm welcome to the Cottage and a supply of jelly babies for the younger visitor!

Liz and Mike Penton

Holy Cross School Trip to Bridge Cottage 10th November 2010

As I am a member of the Uckfield and District Preservation Society and help out at Holy Cross School, the teacher, Mrs. Carole Robertson, asked me if I could take classes around the historic Bridge Cottage.

On Monday 18th October 2010, the two classes (Panda and Kangaroo) consisting of about forty children aged from

four to seven years, assisted by teachers and staff, made the short trip from Holy Cross School to Bridge Cottage.

Hopefully, I was about to give the right answers to the children's questions!

As the children were mostly very young, the questions were mainly about the large chimneys and the open fire in the Hall, where smoke went up and out through a gap in the roof. Wattle and daub walls also seemed a fascination for the youngsters.

The trip went well and the children enjoyed it, as I hope the school staff did. As this was an educational trip, I do hope when we get our grants in the future, we make our 'jewel in the crown' which is Bridge Cottage a 'must see' for schools. The Education Authority, I am sure, would welcome the well run project Bridge Cottage could become – maybe rivalling the Clergy House at Alfriston?

Jim James

Pupils' Comments

On Monday we went to Bridge Cottage. We saw a really big key and a very tall chimney.

Jessica aged 6

On Monday we went to Bridge Cottage and saw a big cottage! Do you know how old Bridge Cottage is? It is 600 years old.

Courtney aged 6

On Monday we went to Bridge Cottage and saw fascinating things. We saw a large key and we saw a big lock too. Then we saw a thing that was made of horse and hair and mud and poo. Then we went to see up the chimney and the bread oven. Finally we went back to school and did some learning and playing.

Katie aged 7

Local History Meeting - Friday 1st October Glenda Law on "Street Furniture"

Glenda Law, a well-known speaker to Uckfield groups, kept us enthralled throughout with her colourful and varied slide display of street signs and furniture. During the course of the evening, we were able to view a fingerboard milepost in Cornwall, beautifully painted village signs in Norfolk, a toll house tariff board, a Roman milestone, cages to hold prisoners, moving figures on clocks (e.g. at Abinger, Surrey) iron railings (many were melted during World War II for making bombs) and quaint door knockers.

Within or near the parish boundaries of Uckfield there are 5 "Bow Bells" mileposts, indicating the distance from Bow Bells in London. These include one near the junction of the High Street with Bell Lane (43 miles) and another by the junction of New Road with Lewes Road (44 miles). The "Pelham Buckle" on signs immediately to the south of Uckfield indicates signs erected on lands formerly owned by the powerful Pelham family. Mileposts are still to be traced continuously from East Grinstead (30 miles from London) to Hailsham (56 miles). At the Corn Exchange, Bristol, money was exchanged "on the nail", a short post which may still be seen. Letter boxes with the letters "VR" (dating from the reign of Queen Victoria) are still evident in some areas. Our speaker also spotted one at Maidstone with the inscription "Ed VIII"

(Edward VIII) on it. Several of these were erected at the time of that monarch's accession and hastily withdrawn soon after his abdication. One post box was spotted in the shape of a Doric pillar and another hexagonal in shape.

Trade signs may still be seen in many parts of the country. These include the three golden bells of pawnbrokers' shops, chemists' pestles and blue glass jars, and butchers' cattle signs. A golden boot was originally the sign of a Russell's (later Russell and Bromleys') boot and shoe shop (One was still prominent in Uckfield at the turn of the last century). Insurance companies (e.g. the Sun) employed fire brigades to extinguish blazes in their own insured properties.

At the end of the evening, our curiosity had been aroused as to other examples in our own area. Several of these may be seen near the Station and on the Victoria Pleasure Ground. How many more can we spot further afield?

Peter Ferguson

Local History Meeting - Friday 5th November Don Dray on 'The Sounds and Songs of World War 11'

Once again Don Dray delighted us with another of his seamless recordings – this time bringing us the 'Sounds and Songs of World War II' with his own commentary skilfully interspersed between the many musical items.

Following the outbreak of war in September 1939, young men were conscripted or volunteered for the Armed Services. Gracie Field's number "Wish Me Luck As You Wave Me Goodbye" kept everybody in a cheerful mood. School pupils were evacuated from London at a time when "The Lambeth Walk" was popular. Bands such as Harry Roy's continued to play at the clubs, boosting morale with items such as "You Are My Sunshine". However, Flanagan and Allens' forecast that we were going to "Hang Out the Washing on the Siegfried Line" prove to be far too optimistic when what remained of the British Expeditionary Force was evacuated from Dunkirk. By August 1940 the Battle of Britain was well under way. Our fighter pilots' gallantry was subsequently praised by Prime Minister Winston Churchill when he acknowledged that "Never in the Field of Human Conflict was So Much owed by So Many to So Few". Florence Desmond's "Shelter Song" reminded us of the privations suffered by Londoners and other cities during the Blitz.

In December 1941 the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour brought the Americans into the War against Japan and her Allies, including Germany. American troops arriving in Britain brought with them numbers such as the "Bugle Boy Rag" and "In the Mood". Glen Miller and other American bands became very popular, and the Americans delighted the girls with their jiving and jitter bugging. By 1942 Sir Arthur Harris was sending our bombers to carry out retaliatory raids on the factories of the Ruhr. Those crews who survived were often "Coming In On a Wing and a Prayer". Some of the cinemagoers admired Betty Grable's invitation to "Put Your Arms Around Me Honey" and dance halls resounded to such melodies as Ann Shelton's "Lovely Weekend". The tide of the War was now turning, when Montgomery's 8th Army drove Rommel out of North Africa. On 6th June 1944 the Allied Armies invaded France, leading subsequently to the German defeat and Hitler's suicide on 30 April 1945. Vera Lynn reflected the mood of the country in her "White Cliffs of

Dover". Many people were "Lit Up When the Lights (went) up in London" on VE Day. VJ Day followed on 2nd September.

Peter Ferguson

Local History Meeting - Friday 4th February Mick Harker on 'Views of Uckfield Past'

It was almost "standing room only" in the Ashdown Room of Uckfield Civic Centre on February 4th when Mick Harker presented "Views of Uckfield Past". His large audience thoroughly enjoyed a visit to old Uckfield as seen through the lens of 20th century photographers.

Starting at the top of town, where traces of medieval buildings have been discovered in the oldest part of Uckfield, we followed the High Street and its old shop fronts, past the crossroad marking the old east to west main highway. Outside "The Maiden's Head" stood the last horse-drawn coach from London; further down came the old Public Hall, now the Public Library. The beginnings of change could be detected but there were still many fine trees to our right as we followed the High Street down to the railway, passing on the left the main shops of old Uckfield with the windows full of goods and the shopkeepers in view, inspiring comments and contributions from some of the audience on the way.

Mick's old photographs reveal much of the lives of ordinary people and of old Uckfield itself. Pictures of the railway elicited many comments and memories – it was in this area, before the bridge over the main road was removed, that photographers could obtain unobstructed views of local events such as the 1911 Coronation processions and celebrations.

Only a week later came the plane crash – a "canvas and wood" airplane from Shoreham was running out of fuel and the pilot, Gordon England, attempted to land on a grassy patch in Uckfield but broke a wing. The photograph reveals the damage and the awestruck youngsters looking on. The pilot drove off for fuel and repair material – and by the next day the plane was as good as new and took to the air again, watched by hundreds of townsfolk. All this was preserved by the camera one hundred years ago, and in addition Mick's audience were able to examine his own special souvenir of this event - a framed piece of aircraft canvas, signed and dated.

Other photographs showed the collapse of a road bridge and the damage it caused at the railway station; parades coming down the High Street, with only the occasional car to be seen; floods, of course, and very early pictures of Bridge Cottage. Later pictures showed the changing High Street just pre-war; old delivery carts, shop fronts showing changes in trading; the several breweries that existed; and traders' names, some recognised as old, some newer. Away from the High Street there were glimpses of Church Street and the old partly demolished building on the corner which had once been a court house. A detour to Browns Lane showed Uckfield House, home of the Nevill family, sold with its lands to become a 20th century housing estate.

A small number of very careful photographers took many pictures in those early days and they have been preserved, many of them in the form of postcards, to provide a valuable source of historical information and to delight collectors and those of us privileged to see them. Mick's audience responded with comments and information of their own and enjoyed all the stories and views of Uckfield that he had provided from his own collection. "Just a sample" he told us – so more to come?

Joyce Kirk

STOP PRESS**Progress on the Bridge Cottage Restoration Project**

The **Sponsor a Tile** campaign for Bridge Cottage is making progress! Since its launch in the Summer there has been a steady flow of sponsorship forms to the Treasurer. So far we have probably covered around 700 of the 1700 tiles, so there is still a chance to sponsor a bit of this unique history.

Each tile can be sponsored for £1.50 and sponsorship forms are available at Bridge Cottage or from the Treasurer.

Mind the Hole! One of the requirements of the permissions we have for our Bridge Cottage restoration project is to undertake an archaeological dig of the floor prior to the installation of under floor heating.

In preparation for the full dig, a number of pilot holes will be dug in the two ground floor rooms in January to ascertain what is under the brick floor – this will then allow a price to be given for undertaking the full dig.

We would like to carry out this full dig before the main project starts to make sure there are no nasty surprises in store for us. Watch this space for more details of the full dig, hopefully later in the summer.

New website. To let people know what is going on at Bridge Cottage we are commissioning a new website just for that site. It will have links to our main UDPS site, but we hope it will allow people to find the project much more easily. There will be full details on how to find the site in the next edition of the Newsletter.

An opportunity. Are you good at filling out forms? Can you write a concise story in 200 words? Do you have an expertise in writing applications for bids or grants? Would you like to be involved in raising funds for an exciting community project? If you can answer YES to any of these we would love to talk to you about joining a **'make it happen'** project team! Ring 01825 765684 for more details.

Diary Dates March to May 2011

Friday 4 th March	Local History Meeting – talk by Jim Hatfield “Sentinel Steam Wagons”
Sunday 27 th March	Nutley Windmill Open Day
Friday 1 st April	Local History Meeting – talk by Chris McCooey “Scandals: Sensational, Salacious and Sad”
Sunday 24 th April	Nutley Windmill Open Day
Friday 6 th May	Local History Meeting – talk by Melvin Smith “Old Rural Days”

Saturday 14th May
and Sunday 15th May

Nutley Windmill Open Days
12 noon to 5 30 p.m

Local History Meetings are at 7 30 p.m. in Uckfield Civic Centre

In addition to the above openings, the Mill is open on the last Sunday of the month from March to September inclusive plus the late May and August Bank Holidays, and the National Mills Week Weekend.

Opening Times 2.30 – 5.30 p.m.

Entrance FREE - Donations welcome – Parties and Schools by arrangement

The Mill is open most Wednesdays throughout the year when work parties are in attendance – 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. For further details please ring 01435 873367

Bridge Cottage Heritage Centre

Currently Open Thursdays – Saturdays inclusive.
Party – School visits please telephone 01825 763754

Charity Shop**1, Post Office Court Uckfield**

Open 9.00 – 4.00 p.m. Mondays
9.00 – 5.00 p.m. Tuesdays to Saturdays

Donations of clothing, bric-a-brac, toys and books are always gratefully received

Newsletter contributions from members and others, either articles or letters, are always welcome, and should be sent until further advised, to Membership Secretary Margaret Mugridge by email to: m.mugridge@hotmail.co.uk or by post to:

Margaret Mugridge The Firs, Coopers Green, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 3AG.

Deadline for May News Letter, Thursday 12th May.

Please note: Comments published in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of the Society.

