



ROYSTON & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY ANNUAL NEWS SHEET

Preserving Royston's Heritage

2011-2012

Message from the Chairman

Our membership is slightly lower than last year's. However, the number of people attending the lectures is very encouraging and the turnout often amazes many of our visiting speakers, who have been outstanding

At the end of our 2010 -2011 season, committee member Stan Ralls stood down. All publications that have been on sale on lecture nights and at the museum would not have happened without Stan's hard work, research and contribution. Also the committee wishes to thank his wife Jean who supported Stan over many years and together produced many fine publications. Thank you Stan and Jean.

I would also like to welcome to two new members to the Committee. Joyce Ruffer, who has just completed her first year as secretary, and our recent recruit Graham Hayes.

All committee members give their time free and work hard to ensure that the membership is catered for. Should anyone from the membership wish to be part of our team, please come and see me.

Neville Chuck
Chairman, May 2012

Royston Cave opens to the public again on Saturday April 7th after its usual winter closure. People often ask why the Cave has such a limited season and short opening hours and this is almost entirely due to the need to protect the Cave from overuse and too much exposure to light.

The Cave has a very fragile environment that is sensitive to moisture and light and too much exposure to both elements causes changes in the chalk. Moisture from the atmosphere and even from the breath from visitors causes the chalk to expand and contract as it gets wet and then dries out. This in turn can cause the carvings to crack

and bits may fall off. Of course this doesn't happen overnight but over a long time period.

Long periods of exposure to artificial light also can cause various spores to bloom creating unsightly grey and green patches that can obscure some of the carvings and ultimately, if left untreated, damage them. So just like many National Trust and English Heritage sites, the Cave is put to bed in winter.

However, despite all this, the Cave is in great shape thanks to the recent conservation programme. It currently has a largely stable atmosphere, a newly cleaned base – some of you may have read about this in the papers and the new carvings the cleaning revealed and the carvings themselves have all been examined and stabilised where necessary.

The Cave has also been visited by an expert in costume and armour who we are hoping will shed some light on the mystery of when the carvings were made (though why they were made will probably still remain a mystery).

Once we get the expert report we will bring you up to date on his findings.

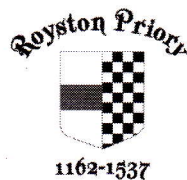
This year we have more schools visiting than ever which is part of the Society's aim to encourage young people to take pride in their town. Pre-booked visits to the Cave are free for Royston schools and subsidised for schools outside of Royston.

We hope you will be able to visit us in 2012 – our opening times are 2.30 to 5.00 (last entry 4.30) Saturday and Sunday Easter to end September and Wednesdays in August – and don't forget we are one of the few places that still give accompanied children free entry.

For further information contact James Robinson on james@robynson.plus.com

2012 is a year of celebrations with The Olympics, Queen's Diamond Jubilee and Royston's 850th anniversary of the founding of the Royston Priory. To mark these events the museum has received grants to assemble a special exhibition about the Priory, the Olympics and the Jubilee which will go on display from the Jubilee weekend (June 2nd) until September 22nd.

The Friends of the Museum have invested and produced a mug to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee and the founding of the Priory. The mug, priced at £5.95 is only available from the Museum with all the profits going to the Friends.



Carole Kaszak
Curator, Royston Museum and Art Gallery

The 2011-2012 season began on the 8th October on the Olympics in London 2012 an illustrated presentation with John Fuller. The talk provided an insight to the legacy of the games for the County of Hertfordshire.

3rd November, James I and Hertfordshire, presented by Dr. Alan Thomson.

December 1st Twenty years on the streets of Cambridge. The evening concluded with refreshments and mince pies and our Christmas raffle raised £83.00. Our thanks to all our members and visitors.

January 5th. My Mountbatten Years: In the service of Lord Louis by William Evans

February 2nd The Life and Times of Tommy Atkins – The British Infantry in North West Europe 1944-45.

March 1st. Royston History on your computer – the library on your laptop with Mike Petty.

April 5th. History of Duxford Airfield by Les Millgate

This year our Annual General Meeting is on 12th May and will be followed by a talk on the story of Isambard Kingdom Brunel: A Travelling Theatre Presentation with Geoff Hales. Our evening will be completed with buffet and drinks prepared by the committee members.



Group outing to Warwick 2011

The Society outing this year is on 9th June to the city of Stratford upon Avon. There is much to see and the choice will be yours. For further information on cost and availability for this trip contact David Allard, our Treasurer. For those who have already booked, we look forward to seeing you on the coach.

The Royston & District History Society also produce various publications on local history ranging from architecture, folklore, biographies of famous Roystonians and other subjects of local interest. Publications are available to purchase at the Museum, the Royston Cave Bookshop and at all History Society lectures.

The new season of lecturers start on the Thursday, 4th October with a group presentation by Ancestral Voices on The Time Traveller: Daniel Defoe's travels through East Anglia

Useful websites:

Royston and District Museum and Art Gallery
www.roystonmuseum.co.uk

Royston Cave
www.roystoncave.co.uk

Royston & District Local History Society
www.roystonlocalhistorysociety.co.uk

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