



FRIENDS of HENFIELD MUSEUM

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Membership Update – a 2021 Retrospective

Despite another lockdown year, the Friends have been busy! Here in brief are a selection of the main projects that we've been working on or have contributed funds to.

- ***A History of Henfield High Street from the 1800s to the Present-Day***: coming soon! We have been proceeding with work on the successor to our still very popular 'A Tour of our Commons' book. This new history of the 20th century High Street by Curator Alan Barwick complements an early 20th century account by John Challen in the Parish Magazine telling of the 19th century 'Main Street'. Numerous photos from the museum collection will be included. Look out for it this spring!

- **The Museum website**: as well as funding, updates to our digital windows on the world have continued apace, amongst which are new blog articles, costume pages, image galleries, entries to Arborea, Henfieldians Past, a local history research page and online gift shop. From Jan - Dec 2021, there were over 2,500 unique visitors with over 7000 page views. Visitors hail from across the UK and elsewhere, with the U.S being the second most common source. The museum's Google sidebar (the first thing many will see when searching) has also had over 500 engagements since July 2021.

- **The contactless payment system**: previously bought by the Friends and very successfully put into first use at the Christmas Fair in the Henfield Hall in December. It works in concert with the website gift shop system.

- **Museum digitisation project**: we have collaborated and will provide around half of the funding for this essential project scanning prints from the collection. It is hoped as a later Stage 2 to add these to an online catalogue/ordering/printing system to make them quickly and easily available for people to purchase as prints.

- **Research and contribution of funding for a local archaeological survey**: in concert with the Parish Council, we will be providing half of the funding for a magnetometry survey of some sites of interest in the parish, ranging from the Mesolithic to Roman eras. Dependent on the results, future excavations may result – watch this space!

- **Project Arborea:** many local trees (and some from afar!) have been submitted and highlighted on the Arborea website pages. Please do send through an impression - written, visual, audio - of a favourite local tree if you haven't. Or, take a walk and seek some out!
- **Greeting cards:** a new series of six digitally restored and colourised wintry scenes from Edwardian Henfield have proven popular online and will be printed for sale this year, so take note for a hopefully more celebratory Christmas 2022!
- **Digital restoration of photographs and paintings:** work continues, with images selected from the main and the Marjorie Baker collections. These then feature on the museum website and social media accounts.
- **Social media:** we continue to build the museum's accounts. 81% of visitors come from the U.K, with the U.S. and Australia in 2nd and 3rd positions. Posts range from photos, object highlights and articles to Costume Curator Stephanie's fashion features. The Facebook page currently has 793 followers, with the most popular post of 2021 reaching over 15,000 people with 200 reactions. Work has also increased on the Twitter page (176 followers and over 20,000 post impressions).
- **Funding of museum acquisitions:** following up on previous acquisitions, in 2021 we funded the purchase of two 17th century Henfield trade tokens.
- **Oral histories:** while Covid put face to face sessions on hold, we recently held our first Zoom recording with a former Henfield resident who now lives in Canada and had been following our online activities.
- **The Roving Display Case:** once more venturing out after Covid lockdown, having recently visited Red Oaks Care Home to positive reports. Currently featured is '*What's in the Kitchen?*' - a display of historical kitchen objects.
- **A Favourite Object:** additional entries have been received and additions to the project webpage continue. Have you chosen one of your favourites from the museum collection to submit yet? Please do if not!
- **Henfield Heritage Trails:** the Friends Chair and Curator contributed the text for the newly completed Three Parishes Trail, featured on the Hidden Henfield website.

Funds at year end at £3752 with a £766 surplus. As for our membership, we currently stand at 76 members. We very much hope that you will remain one - and spread the word of our work in 2022!

With kind regards and best wishes,

The Friends of Henfield Museum Committee