

FRIENDS of HENFIELD MUSEUM

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Members' Update - a 2022 Retrospective

Greetings! This year marked a bit of a return to normality for the museum, with projects ongoing and the museum able to re-open its physical doors. Work continued on a variety of interesting projects, reviewed below in no particular order.

- Publications: *A History of Henfield High Street from the 1800s to the Present-Day.*

Production of this book was funded and worked on by a Friends subcommittee. With content from Aug-Sept 1921 Parish Magazine articles by John Challen covering 19th century history, the Curator has drawn on his own decades of recording the High Street to bring the story to today. We are very pleased to say that we have sold over half our print run as of writing!

A Tour of Our Commons. We have also reprinted our previous 2017 publication - for the 3rd time - which is also continuing to sell well, alongside the new book.

The new series of six digitally restored and colourised wintry scenes from Edwardian Henfield. There have been some delays with setting these for print, but in progress.

- Funding of acquisitions: a rare early print of St. Peter's – Henfield Church, 1820, by the unknown 'MS'. Shown at our autumn talk and now on display in the museum, it generated much interest. Only two or three earlier images of the church are known. Additionally, a locally found late Bronze Age horde including palstave axe was, on which more in 2023.

- Museum website: we continue to fund the site hosting and produce content as time permits. Highlights this year included new blog articles, a new 'Royal Celebrations' page accompanying the Jubilee fancy dress competition, additional Henfieldians Past (with thanks to our additional contributors and researchers), costume features and restored images. A feature article on the 'Wilberforce Waistcoat' was also published to the Museum Crush website/email list. Numbers of digital visitors remain high - from Jan-Dec, there were 4103 visitors and 11201 page views on the museum website. The museum's Google sidebar had 948 engagements this year (itself directing 332 clicks onwards to the website).

- Social media: efforts here continue – as of writing, the museum Facebook has 938 followers, the most popular posts reaching over 9000 people/over 500 direct engagements with posts. Twitter has 197 followers and the most popular month over 1500 impressions. An Instagram page was started this summer, currently at 76 followers. Please do follow along if you use any of these sites.

- **Contactless payment system:** an important contribution, this system we previously funded is now working well in the museum, at events and through the online giftshop. A large proportion of purchases this year have used it, with £721.50 via 53 transactions, coming in particularly useful at the November Charities Fair. Several museum volunteers have been trained in its use, with detailed usage instructions living on the museum desk.

- **Museum digitisation project:** the Friends contributed funding evenly with the Parish Council (with a smaller chunk also coming from the Henfield Arts Society) for Stage 1 of this project, ~ 3000 images being digitised. Stages 2 (of further scanning) and & ultimately 3 (public availability via online portal) are currently under discussion at museum committee.

- **Local archaeological survey:** research and contribution of funding was provided. With thanks to the landowners for access, a non-invasive survey of land near the Common by magnetometer was completed in February. Some likely prehistoric site features were confirmed and the resulting report has been accessioned to the museum collection where it will provide a basis for study and any future excavations at the site.

- **Talks:** an autumn talk on Dialect with guest speaker Amy Stone was well attended, as was the Christmas party (thanks to all who helped organise), which included a talk by the Chair on vignettes of Henfield History followed by a main presentation and talk on new images of the village shown by the Curator.

- **Project Arborea (The Trees of Henfield):** submissions are gradually being received, added to the website and posted to social media. A record was also made of losses caused by Storm Eunice early in the year, which will ultimately have its own webpage. Of particular recent note was the kind donation and planting this autumn of two new giant redwoods/Sequoia Giantea to replace William Borrer's original at Barrow Hill/Mill Drive lost after a lightning strike in 2009 (more information to come on these!).

- **Digital restoration of photographs and paintings:** ongoing, with images selected from the main and Marjorie Baker collections featuring on the museum website & social media.

- **Student volunteer:** this year the museum was happy to host a student work experience volunteer; Lily Jackson-Brown, in her second year of an Ancient History & Archaeology degree at Newcastle University. With the project led by the Friends Chair, introductory sessions were also held with the Curator Alan Barwick and Costume Curator Stephanie Richards. Projects worked on included heritage trails and archival research at the Keep - on local social history, William Borrer and the Nep Town sandpit - in tandem with the creation of future 'then and now' digital content.

- **Oral histories:** interviews have restarted post-Covid, although more interviewer volunteers are needed (let us know if you fancy it). It is hoped that time can also be dedicated this year to the intensive task of processing, editing and publishing of some existing recordings. This year we also engaged with the University of Leeds' dialect survey, inviting members to complete survey forms and attend a talk by our area's Engagement Officer Amy Stone. You can visit dialectandheritage.org.uk to contribute to the survey if you have not yet done so.

- **The Roving Display Case and other displays:** the '*What's in the Kitchen*' display was kindly hosted by a number of venues this year in addition to the museum – the Henfield Haven, Henfield Library, Red Oaks, and the Evangelical Free Church, with a good number of positive comments left. Our new roving display for 2023, '*Henfield's Nonconformists - a Tale of Religious Freedom*', has recently opened at its first venue, the Evangelical Free Church – do pop in to look. We also suggested and contributed to a WW2 display/social media coordinating with Henfield Theatre Company's recent D-Day set play, '*Pressure*'.

- **A Favourite Object:** several more submissions have now been added to the website and shared on social media. Please do submit a favourite object of yours if you haven't yet done so (forms/info available in museum and on the project webpage).

- **Henfield Heritage Trails:** in collaboration with the Campaign to Protect Rural Henfield, a new display board was added on the *River History and the Rise of Henfield* Trail at Rye Farm. Work is now beginning on the historical research for the next of the new Parish Council trails.

- **Henfield Village Photo Boards:** initial work has begun on display boards to be put up in the village. It is planned that these will feature historic views of the village and notable Henfieldians.

- **Other Research:** various pieces of in-depth research have been undertaken in relation to projects above and as a result of museum enquiries. This includes work on Shermanbury Place, historic signage, Henfield's sandpits, local family history and famous figures. Some will appear as part of projects above, on the blog or the *Local History Research* webpage.

Funds at year end stood at £3,898.64 with a £146.12 surplus. Our membership stood at 85. We were happy to have had David Smith join our committee this year – we invite you to give it a go! (Committee meets every two months). The Curator is also currently looking for volunteers to mind the museum for two-hour slots on the 2nd Friday or 3rd Monday of the month. Submissions for future newsletters would also be most welcome.

We very much hope that you will continue your membership, spread the word of our work and continue to highlight Henfield history - we look forward to seeing you at the AGM in April (likely *Wed 19th*).

With kind regards and the best wishes for 2023,



Robert Gordon (Chair)

On behalf of the Friends of Henfield Museum Committee

Moments from 2022



Acquisition: Henfield Church, Sussex (MS, 1820)



Arborea: the donors (the O'gormans + Friend Christophe), the Chair & the two new giant redwoods/Sequoia Gigantea, Nov 2022



The final demise of the oak south-west of Rye Farm after Storm Eunice, Feb. 2022



Roving Case - The new 'Henfield's Nonconformists' display goes in at the Free Church, Jan. 2023, with the Chair, Curator and Pastor Andrew Lawton



Student volunteer Lily Jackson-Brown with Costume Curator Stephanie Richards and with Curator Alan Barwick by the new River History heritage trail Rye Farm sign, Aug. 2022



Janet King and Rose Sharp prepping and serving libations at the 2022 Christmas party



Dave Smith & Alan Barwick at the museum table at the Charities Xmas Fair, Nov. 2022



A Friends committee meeting - at the Henfield Club, Sept. 2022 (minus the Chair & Treasurer): L-R Peter Bates, Alan Barwick, Leo Jago, Dave Smith, Rose Sharp



Research at the Keep archive, Sept. 2022 - Lily reads William Borrer's 1831 diary and the writer an Edwardian Brighton Works committee minute book re. the Nep Town sandpit

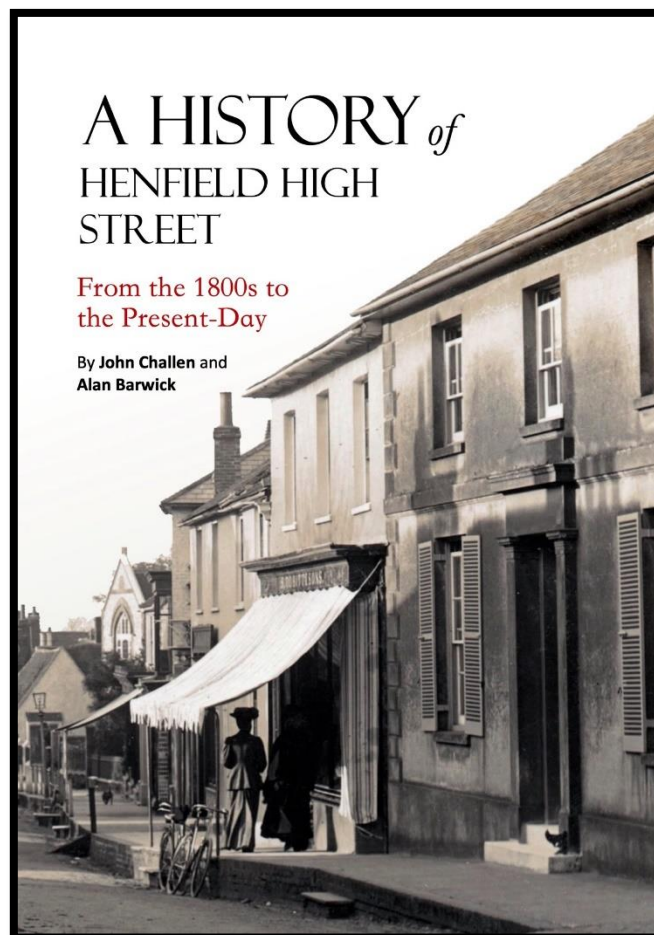


The Summer Jubilee fancy dress competition in June, with commemorative medals awarded by the Costume Curator. Clockwise from left: adults' competition entrants, Friend Eddie Colgate with his flowerpot prize, judges and competitors. More on the 'Royal Celebrations' webpage.





Magnetic survey near Henfield Common, Feb. 2022



Published! A History of Henfield High Street: From the 1800s to the Present Day

Finally, a little further back...



Mr. Herbie Browning with horses at Springhills, 1929



A digitally restored photo of Henfield High Street c. 1870s. As seen on the sign, the Plough's landlord at this time was William Hill, a 'licensed victualler' in his 60s who lived there with his wife Ann and two children. The shop next door appears to host a barber's pole. Furniture is piled up outside a shop at middle left, with the old gabled Bell Tavern and shops/cottages on the corner of Church Street still standing in the background