

# Newsletter Number 16



## Heritage Open Days

Heritage Open Days is England's largest festival of history and culture, bringing together over 2,500 organisations, 5,000 events and 40,000 volunteers. Every year for four days in September, places across the country throw open their doors to celebrate their heritage, community and history. It's your chance to see hidden places and try out new experiences – and it's all FREE.

Winchcombe Museum is taking part in the National Heritage Open Days. Anne Crowe, Museum Curator, has organised the entry and the museum will be open from 10.00 till 16.00 on each of the days 7, 8, 9 and 10<sup>th</sup> of September 2017. Entry will be free on these days. At 14.00 each day there will be a free talk. Search the Heritage Open Days website for full details. If you have any difficulties use the full address: <https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/visiting/event/winchcombemuseum>. For all the events in the area in and around Winchcombe search 'Heritage Open Days' and put in your post code.

The museum is found at The Old Town Hall, High Street, Winchcombe, GL54 5LJ and stands at the central crossroads of the town.

Buildings that will be open in Cheltenham include:

All Saints Church	B & G Archaeological Archive	Cheltenham College Chapel
Cheltenham College Thirlestaine	Cambray Baptist Church	Cheltenham Ladies College
Cheltenham Masonic Hall	Cheltenham Minster, St Marys	Cheltenham Playhouse
Cheltenham Synagogue	Cheltenham Town Hall	Christ Church, Malvern Road
Dean Close School	Holst Birthplace Museum	Parmoor House
Pittville Pump Room	Prestbury United Reform Church	St Peters Church, The Rock
Sandford Park Lido	St Andrews United Reform Church	St Christopher's Church
St Gregory's Church	St Stephens Church	University of Glos., The Park
The Wilson	Plus many talks, guided walks and an exhibition.	

Search Cheltenham Heritage Open Days and click on the brochure for details.

## Shoe Box Time

In response to Newsletter 15 our correspondents from Shropshire, Gerry and Sue Whitby sent me two postcards from Broadway. They had found these postcards when looking through two shoe boxes of their aunts. Whilst the post card does appear to be less popular these days, with digital image attachments to emails on the increase, they are still valuable and worth saving in those shoe boxes. The images are usually taken by professional photographers and are outside the range of our everyday cameras. On the reverse they tell the date and even a message of some importance. So let's get a free shoe box, save the cards and donate it all to your local museum in your will.



Here is one of the postcards sent from Shropshire. The car in the middle may be an MG but what of the other two cars? Could the one on the right be a Vauxhall? The suggested date is 1936. Suggestions welcome.



And the same scene in July 2017.

## Successful Outreach Meetings

One of the policies that the Museum is being encouraged to follow is called Outreach. Instead of visitors coming to the museum, one of the volunteers brings items to a meeting of interested people. This year the museum has already enjoyed an afternoon and evening visit to two organisations. In March one of the team booked out 10 interesting objects from the museum. These were shared with a retired tenants group during afternoon tea at Stanway House. Cheryl Keyte was in the Chair for this meeting and two visitors from the Gloucestershire Rural Community Council were present. The most discussed item was a Ration Book from 1944. Members were surprised that the daily tea ration during the Second World War was about the equivalent of 2 tea bags per day [though of course they did not have tea bags in 1944]. One member demonstrated the use of a button hook whilst another solved the identity of a folding boot remover.

The second meeting was at the invitation of the chair, Sue Hughes, of the Gretton Branch of the Women's Institute. Members worked in pairs to explore the purpose of 12 items from the museum. With great imagination members agreed that the circular wooden horse shoe was a hat stretcher, everyone knew the police truncheon, many recognised the Edwardian visiting card holder and a few were on the right track with the replica medieval watering can. The child's shoe last evoked detailed memories from two members. They recalled their visits as small children to grandad's workshop at the end of the garden where they were allowed to arrange the many shoe lasts in increasing size order. This provoked many memories of grandparents and changes seen today in the way that jobs and household duties are performed. There was lots of laughter and chat during the evening. If your local group would like an Outreach afternoon or evening then let us know at [john@hancojohn.plus.com](mailto:john@hancojohn.plus.com).

### **A splendid piece of research**

Many of us would like to undertake a piece of local historical enquiry. It might be to find your ancestors, to discover the story of your house, to trace the way in which your area has changed or to understand some major event. Carol Harris, one of the museum volunteers, has a passion for Winchcombe history and she became interested in and curious about the men named on the war memorial on Abbey Terrace. She has written up her work in an unpublished volume called 'Beyond the War Memorial'. There is a copy in the museum for you to consult. It seems that unlike some other towns Winchcombe did not record many details at all of those who died and are recorded on the memorial. I am not going to spoil the story that Carol tells but I wanted to share with you some of the challenges she faced in completing her task. It's a remarkable piece of work. I do hope that this account will encourage readers to keep going with their own enquiry as well as coming to the museum to read Carol's piece.

Carol writes:

There was no national policy about the setting up of war memorials - each town, village, organisation or church decided for themselves, chose the design and raised the money. Many locally, including Winchcombe, were put up by the stonemason's company Boultons, from Cheltenham. Winchcombe was very slow to organise and set up the memorial here - many locally were established much earlier.

In Winchcombe only initials are given on the memorial with no other information at all and there were a few mistakes. Many memorials give more details. It is possible that there are mistakes in the research - any further details are always welcome. Still some work in progress!

So far no document has been found giving details about the setting up of the memorial, how, and which, names were decided. Only those who died as a result of war were included.

'Winchcombe' here was taken to mean the Winchcombe church benefice - i.e. Winchcombe, Sudeley, Gretton and Stanley Pontlarge. Some men had other connections and are also listed in nearby villages.

Few are identified as local men by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission [CWGC]. Thus the first problem was to identify exactly who was 'named'. One name was wrongly spelt on the GWGC Memorial at Le Touret, (Paker, not Parker) corrected by information from local sources. On the whole the Commission went to great lengths to identify those who died even if their bodies could not be found or identified. Four were omitted from the CWGC list because they died after discharge because of illness or disability.

A few more who had connections with Winchcombe - e.g. born here - were not on the memorial but were included in the research.

A few men were known locally by their middle name, whereas the army recorded them by their first name. e.g. locally Wincel, but by the army, Arthur Wincel.

The memorial was unveiled on August 4 1920 - names added later had to be included on a separate panel - they include a man who died in 1922, two whose family had moved away but

who seem to have wanted them to be included in the memorial here, a local man who seems to have been 'forgotten', and after many years, a man who died visiting his brother here just after the war, who is buried in a non-GWGC grave in the cemetery.

There are far fewer names from the Second World War - and they are generally easier to identify. One though, Tony Carter, may never have been identified had it not been for a chance phone call to the museum, from the son of the pilot of the plane in which he was killed, and the wonderful volunteer who got his phone number!

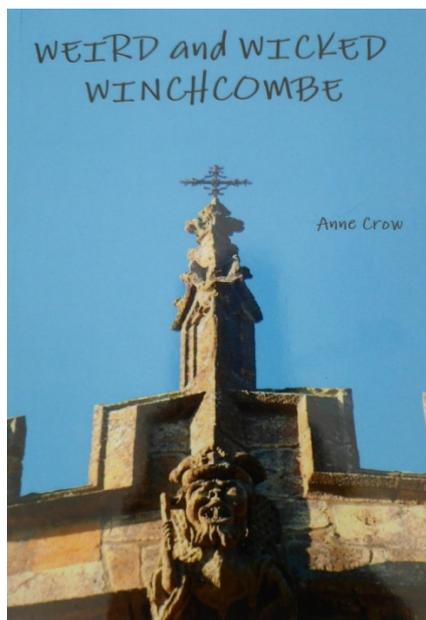
Despite all of this Carol Harris lists all the War Memorial names with details of their date of death and place of burial or record. For all of these men there is a detailed biographical account of their family and background. This is research of the highest quality with great attention to detail, amazing energy to uncover the truth and fantastic in-depth personal knowledge. We offer our thanks, gratitude and respect to this amazing researcher. Do come to the museum to inspect this volume. I do hope you feel inspired or re-energised to start that historical enquiry you had in mind.

### **The mystery of Stumps Cross.**

The Stumps Cross monument is scheduled under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act of 1979. It is in the parish of Stanway. It was scheduled in December 1996. If this is the case where is the cross?

Wayside Christian crosses were erected in the medieval period from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. They reassured those who passed of the Faith and also acted as way markers. They linked settlements or routes with a religious function. There are 350 of these crosses in SW England and the North York Moors. They usually take the form of a Latin cross sometimes with circle or a figure of Christ. Records tell us Stumps Cross, Stanway near Winchcombe has a broken shaft with elements of the cross missing. The location is said to be original. Let's find the remains and take some photographs. Maybe restoration is a possibility.

### **Museum Books for Sale**



To help with the running costs of the museum a number of books have been commissioned and printed. *Weird and Wicked Winchcombe* is written by the Curator Anne Crow.

The book is available by calling at the museum or the Winchcombe Tourist Information Centre. The cost is £7.00. If you would like to receive a copy by post then call 01242 602571 and order a copy. Postage costs £1.50.

In future we will advertise other books that are available for sale from the museum. We are sure you will enjoy the read and you will know that you are helping the museum raise funds so that it can look after the collection of items it holds.

## **Winchcombe University of the Third Age (U3A) History Group is formed**

Carol Harris writes:

The local U3A history group has started - we have had two preliminary meetings and plan to meet on the first Monday in the month at 2.30pm in the sitting room in the St Peter's Centre - the bungalow across the churchyard from the church. We realised that this did not suit everyone and suggested an occasional Thursday morning meeting as well to allow others who are interested to join in. With a mixture of old and new residents the first meeting on August 7<sup>th</sup> was an illustrated talk on the general history of Winchcombe. Some members have already done some pieces of research which they can share and others are keen to use the wide variety of local sources to find out more about things that interest them. Anyone is welcome to join and share what we have learnt.

John Hancock

[The Winchcombe Town Trust, Registered Charity No. 234734]