

Times Past

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Storrington & District Museum
Preserving Yesterday for Tomorrow

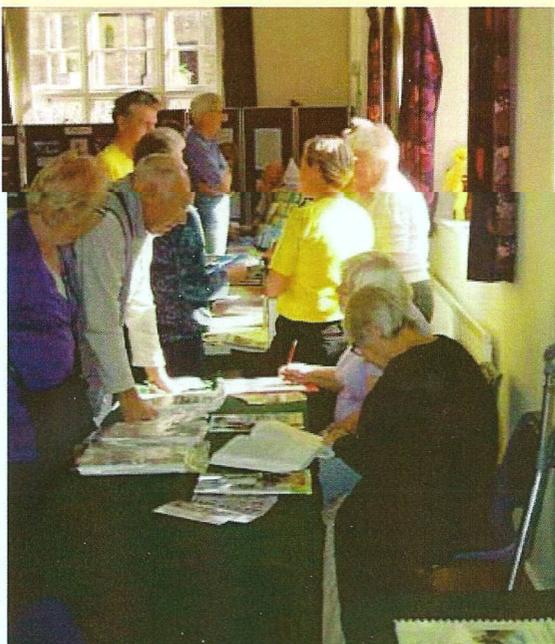
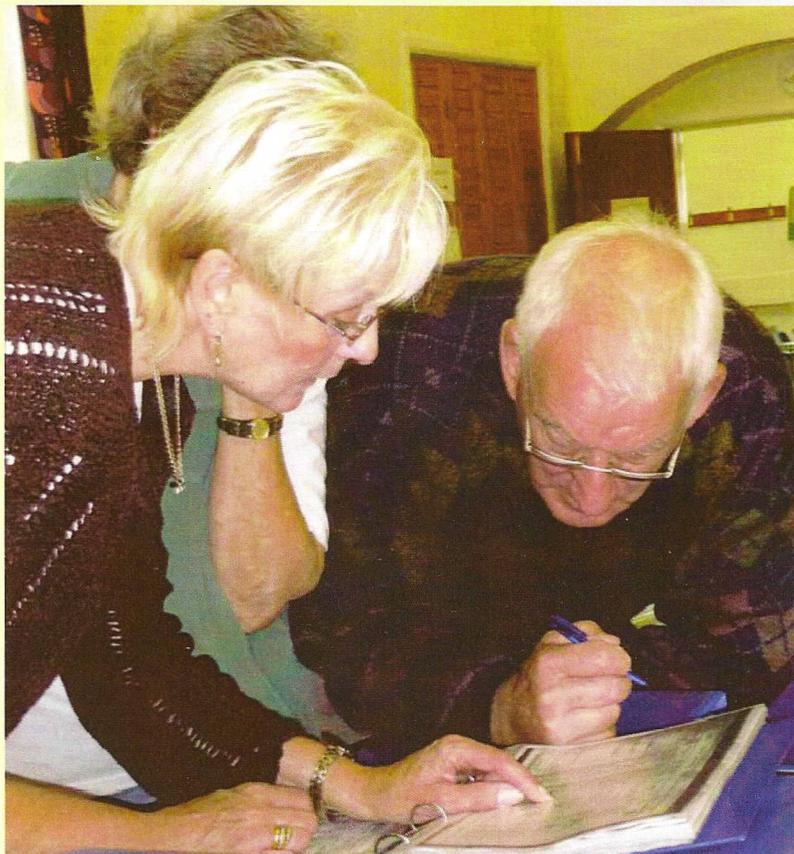
From the Chair

Meg Everitt reflects on an eventful Summer for the Museum

Historical Outings

On a very wet Friday in July, a party of Southwater University of the Third Age was taken on an historical walk around Storrington. With the help of old photographs and archives from the Museum's collection, we saw how the street scene had changed during the last 150 years, heard stories about some of the most important residents and buildings, and then visited St Mary's Church, where the Rev. M. Acheson gave a talk on its history.

For another summer outing, about 35 of us met at Barns Farm, Sullington to hear from Robin Milner-Gulland about the ancient boundaries of Washington. Robin gave an introductory address, then we walked a short distance under the lee of the Downs to a spot where there was an overgrown earthwork between the fields. Here he gave a wonderfully



interesting account of this structure, it having been recorded in two Saxon charters as part of the parish boundaries of Washington. Robin talked of the importance of parish boundaries and the remaining other traces that he has discovered. We finally returned to the farm, 'rotated' into our cars and went round to Gina and Roger Wilmshurst's for a very welcome glass of wine in the sunset; it made a delightful evening.

Joan's walk and talk on Storrington's Church Street area and St Mary's Church was another successful occasion. 12 people attended, meeting at the Old School where Joan had a display laid out. On our return to the Old School, tea and cakes were served: a very sociable occasion.

Above and left:
Scenes from the
Family History Day .



Above:
Photograph of Mr Waller, headmaster of the Old School, kindly donated by Jean Waller.

A Day for the Family

Our third Family History Day was held at the Old School on Sunday 4 October. This year Old School pupils were invited to come along and bring any memorabilia to add to the Museum's archives. I would like to thank the Sussex Family History Group, Malcolm Lindfield with his family archive, Marion Woolgar and Joan Ham, who were all available throughout the day to give advice. There was a steady flow of people throughout the day doing research and then enjoying the excellent refreshments provided by Cindy Waters, Gena Grenney and their helpers. A display on the Old School was mounted, and this attracted past pupils of the school who brought stories, photos and other memorabilia. We were able to add to, as well as to correct, names on some of our photographs. A very worthwhile day. The Museum would like to produce an oral history of the Old School and twelve past pupils signed up to this.

Changing Faces

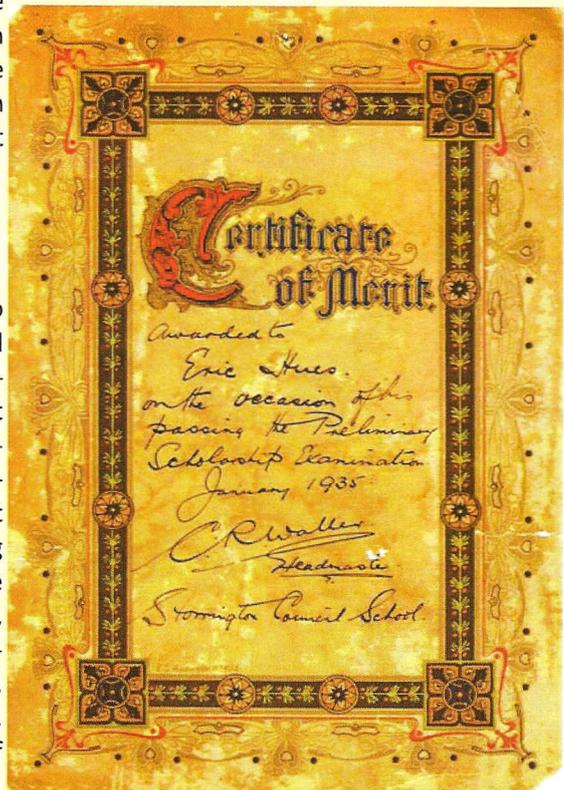
Gina Wilmshurst has unfortunately had to stand down as our Curator. Gina has worked tirelessly and been an ambassador for the Museum from its beginnings. She was Assistant Curator and Programme Secretary before taking over as Curator in 2007. With her background in the antiques business, she brought an invaluable knowledge and understanding of archives and artefacts to the Museum. She and Roger have hosted Stewards' Lunches, many other Museum social events and sub-committee meetings at their lovely home, Sandhill Farm in Washington. Thank you, Gina, for all you have given to the development of

Right:
Certificate of Merit awarded by Mr Waller.

the Museum. Gina will continue to represent Washington and we hope to see her at all our important functions. Sue Setford and David Bussey are the new Curatorial Team and they are looking for another person to join them.

Pauline Archibald has pleaded age and long service as Programme Secretary and has asked to be allowed to stand down. Pauline took over from Gina when she became Curator. She has overseen and organised many successful talks, outings and hosted the Stewards' Lunch for the last three years at her beautiful home in West Chilton. A great diplomat and a lovely lady, Pauline, we will miss you. I am pleased to report that Rene Harwood is now organising the Winter Lecture programme and poster distribution. Cliff Wilks is organising the Christmas Supper. As you know, we have been without a Secretary since March: I am pleased to announce that Patricia Wilks has agreed to take on this task. She took over the running of the Stewards' list in April and is doing a really magnificent job there; thank you Patricia.

Next April the Museum will celebrate its tenth anniversary, and Jeremy Knight, Curator of Horsham Museum, is giving of his time to advise us on the best way forward for the Museum for the next decade. A date for your diary: Sunday 9th May, a civil service in St Mary's Church followed by lunch in the Old School to celebrate our anniversary.



Memories of the Pond School and Miss Yeats

Gillian Dodds looks back to her school-days

When I left the Pond School Miss Yeats, the school's owner and only teacher, gave me a book with the inscription:

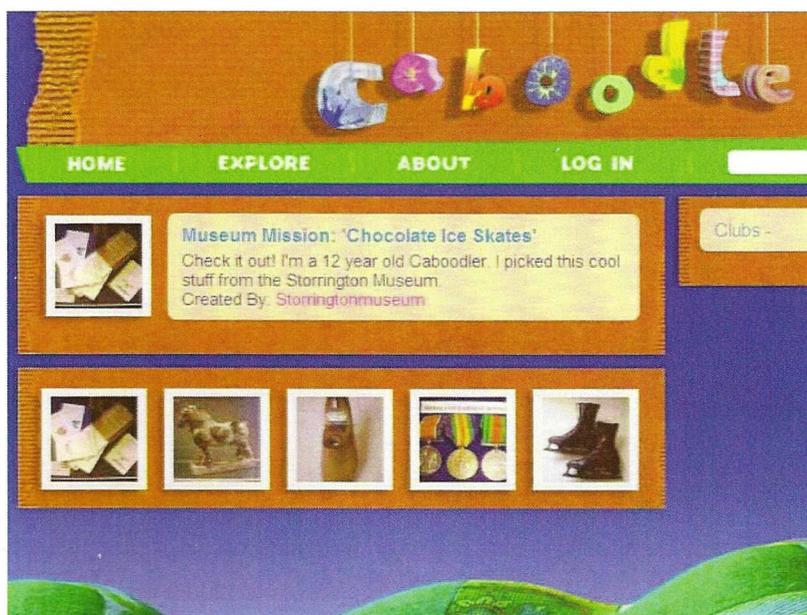
*To Gillian from B Yeats
with love and best wishes
September 1952 to December 1954*

*'Play up, play up and play the game'
Motto of the Pond School.*

The book was *Letters to Channy*, published in 1933, made up of letters from a Mother to her son, as she travelled the world for nine months with her husband on an educational study tour. Miss Yeats had obviously realised that this was a book that I would enjoy as she had fostered a thirst for knowledge within me, particularly about other countries and their inhabitants. I remember listening to adventure stories about a little African boy called Fuzzy Wuzzy. No one would dare to use a name like that now, of course, but when Miss Yeats was a child she must have heard stories (and read Kipling's poem with the same title) about the Hadendoa tribe, fierce warriors with fuzzy hair, who caused the British army problems in the Sudan.

The Pond School was housed in a room upstairs in Storrington Village Hall, opposite the flat occupied by the caretakers, Mr and Mrs Joe Page. It wasn't a very big room and some of the space was taken up by billiard tables, so it wasn't like a normal classroom. The lack of space didn't seem to matter and Miss Yeats limited the number of pupils she took, never more than six whilst I was there. She was by then already an elderly lady, probably almost seventy, but so full of enthusiasm and life.

The school was open in the mornings only, although I remember having homework which involved listening to BBC Radio's programmes for schools and drawing pictures about the stories I heard. In spite of her age, Miss Yeats used to take us out into the meadow behind the Village Hall for games and, in the summer, we also went on trips out. I remember her



once taking us for a picnic in Parham Park and on the bus to Potter's Museum in Bramber.

My parents felt that I should move on after my seventh birthday as they were concerned that I didn't have enough social contact and that my education might not be broad enough. They need not have worried about the latter as I found I was way ahead of children of my age at the village school where there was not the same scope for small group teaching. Miss Yeats wanted me to stay on though as she had decided it was time I started learning French and, being a very determined lady, she tried hard to talk my mother round. I was always very interested in the books she had in the schoolroom, none new and some quite ancient, but all full of interesting pictures. The French book she had lined up for me was particularly enticing and was beautifully illustrated. Maybe my foreign language skills would be better now had I stayed on! Certainly I look back on my time with Miss Yeats as my happiest schooldays.

Above: Image taken by a 12-year-old girl taking part in the Storrington Caboodle project. 'I really enjoyed the Caboodle mission, it's great finding out about new objects.'

Courtesy Mark Slawinski.

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

EXHIBITIONS:

DECEMBER 2009-JANUARY 2010: IN THE POST

FEBRUARY-MARCH 2010: THE GIRL GUIDES, A CENTENARY DISPLAY

APRIL-JUNE 2010: STORRINGTON MUSEUM, THE FIRST TEN YEARS

SUNDAY 9 MAY: CIVIL SERVICE AT ST MARY'S CHURCH FOLLOWED BY LUNCH IN THE OLD SCHOOL.

Miss Yeats the traveller.

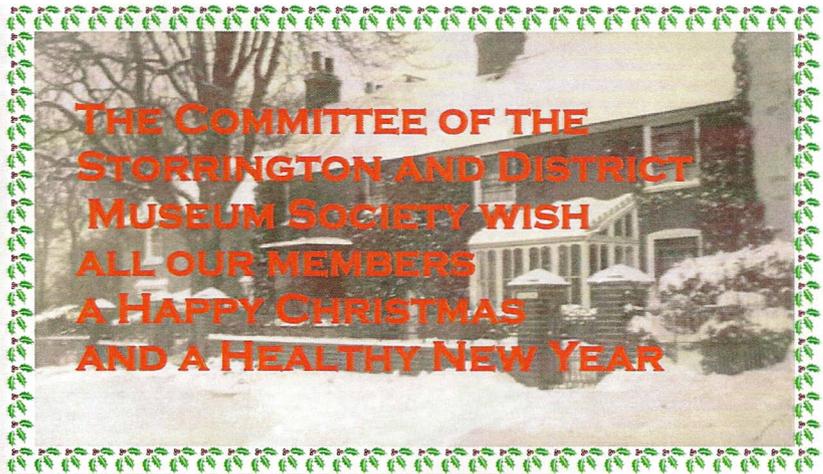
Some of Miss Yeats's recollections from visiting Canada — see previous article. (Provided by Joan Ham)

When I first arrived in Canada in the spring of 1912, there was no normal school session so I was allowed to teach in an ungraded school on a permit in the province of Saskatchewan. I had permission to visit a 'public' school, equivalent to our grammar schools, to observe methods etc. After doing so I suggested telling the class a story while the teacher put up her feet. She gladly consented.

Next day I was stopped in the street and asked, 'Are you the Miss Yeats that tells stories?' (To tell a story in my home meant to tell a lie.) I thought that is a nice reputation with which to cross the Atlantic.

As I was certain I had failed in the final arithmetic examination, 'the almighty dollar' being a very important subject, English students were welcomed at the normal school and we were told we had an aesthetic streak in us, which the Canadian staff liked. I asked the Vice-Principal when I should sit for the exam again. He passed my enquiry on to the Principal who came to me. 'Do you think we should ever fail you when you can tell stories as you do?' We had cooking lessons at the Normal and one afternoon the mistress paired me off with another English student, a B.A. of Manchester. It was very unfortunate as neither of us knew anything about cookery. We could choose our own recipe, follow it, and then, after the mistress had examined it, we could eat it or take it away with us. The B.A. chose Manchester pudding. Later we were called up to show it but alas, we had eaten it!

My companion co-cook made me go up empty-handed, but with a full tummy to confess. How I wished the floor would open. 'But you put it in the oven?' I was asked. I mumbled, 'No, we did not know we had to.' Next morning the Principal of the normal school greeted me with, 'So I hear you are cannibals in England, you eat raw food.'



In the NW one agrees to keep the school open until it becomes too cold for the pupils to attend. That time had come and I was due in Saskatoon to attend a normal school session for teachers if their qualifications were not recognised in Canada. The Highbury High School in London where I trained and obtained a Cambridge Teacher's Certificate, was not. Neither were an M.A. of Oxford's who sat in front of me at normal school. I had expected to go by rail to Saskatoon where a room had been obtained for me but luckily two Danes were having the evening meal with us, and I still remembered two Danish words 'vasco' and 'sulteto' meaning 'please to' and 'jam'. They were so pleased to hear them, for they could speak little English, and to meet someone who had stayed in their country with a Danish friend, that they offered to drive me to Saskatoon the next day as they were going to bring out a load of coal. I sat at the back of the wagon-box on my trunk with a flask of tea. It got colder and colder and then a blizzard started and I handed my flask to the cold drivers.

When we neared Saskatoon the Danes stopped the horses for me to ask a passer-by where Albert Avenue was but my jaws were so stiff with the cold that I could only pull faces at them. No words would come and he indignantly walked on. where Albert Avenue was but my jaws were so stiff with the cold that I could only pull faces at them. No words would come and he indignantly walked on.

Above:

Rose Cottage, West Street, Storrington, 28 December, 1908.

Below:

A further image from the Family History Day.



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