

FRIENDS OF GUILDFORD MUSEUM

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 1998



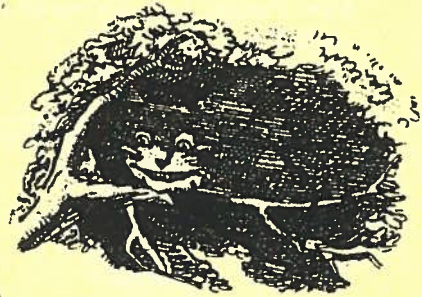
issue 7

The Wonderland



Postage-Stamp Case

Invented by



Lewis Carroll
MDCCCLXXXIX

From the Editor

On the 30th July 1829 a Roman pavement was found on Broad Street Common, Worplesdon. This was discovered by some labourers who were employed to dig stones on the common for the repair of the highways. An area close to this site has recently been subject to an archaeological excavation, under the direction of Surrey County Council Archaeologist, Rob Poulton and I hope to include a report on this work in our next edition. When I spoke to Rob at the beginning of November he said he needed about a fortnight to complete the work but at that time he said the recent rain had caused the whole site to be flooded with water! This is perhaps not surprising since the original report in 1829 tells us that the soil "is a strong clay and very wet in winter".

On page 13 I give a light hearted account of a live outside broadcast I was involved in for local radio. It does however make you appreciate the skill of those at the studio who have the task of fitting this into a running programme.

At the moment the Lewis Carroll gallery at the Museum is undergoing a revamp with some new cases being fitted. A Victorian church pew for the gallery has been kindly donated by Pew Corner Ltd. So make certain you visit the displays in the New Year

COMMITTEE FOR 1998/9

Chairman	Heather Anderson
Vice-Chairman	Bill Bellerby
Treasurer	Tim Bryers
Secretary	Derek Somner
Curator	Matthew Alexander
Visits Organizer	Peter Hattersley
Museum Volunteer Organizer	Marjorie Williams
Editor	Eric Morgan
Maureen Newman	Jennifer Powell
Richard Sinker	Sheila Stirling

FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

When I first became involved with the Friend's of Guildford Museum one of the first things that struck me was the enthusiasm and many diverse skills of the members of the Committee. Looking back at the way the programmes have developed each year I am amazed at what has been achieved. Not only has a lot of money been raised for the Museum, which has enabled Matthew to find and buy fresh exhibits but we have had a lot of fun and friendship doing it. None of this would have been possible without the days and weeks of highly skilled and freely given work of our members. I would like to thank them all on your behalf and send you all my very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Heather Anderson

On March 27th 1999 the South East Region of the EMBROIDERY GUILD will be holding an exhibition at Charterhouse School between 10am and 4pm. The Museum will be displaying some items from its national collection of needlework. Mary Alexander will be in charge of the exhibit and she is looking for two or three people to assist her on the day, either for part of the day or the whole day. These exhibitions are always interesting to be at and provide you with the opportunity to visit the other exhibits as well. So if you can assist Mary please phone her at the Museum on (01483) 444750

NEW MEMBERS

We are delighted to welcome the following new members to our Association

Mrs Pat Aberdeen

Mrs S Chilcott

Ms Jane Hicks

Mr Brian & Mrs Sue Kethero

Dr P S McClure

Mr M F Plant

Mr Colin & Mrs Imelda Pye

Secretary's Letter

Allowing for members who did not renew this year our membership is, with the addition of new members, currently at 220. This total includes 4 life members.

By the time you receive this newsletter the interactive computer should be installed at the museum together with a basic working programme. I have been most disappointed in the lack of time I have been able to find to work on this project but hopefully shall be able to add visual segments on a regular basis and edit the existing in response to suggestions.

Our mid-year accounts show a healthy surplus for this year of £1,500.00 which have mainly been derived from our social events and donations received from some visitors on guided town walks. The latter is indeed a fine reflection of the quality of the the tours given by our team of guides who turn out in all weathers to lead these walks and to Marjorie Williams who organises the schedules. Our thanks and appreciation to all involved.

Since last July we have enjoyed coach outings to London,Salisbury,Battle and Canterbury plus 4 Surrey village & town guided tours. Marjorie organised her ever popular quiz evening, we had an excellent talk on the defence of Rorke's Drift and Jill Buist treated us to a most enjoyable 5 mile guided walk which included Henley Fort. With one exception, all these events produced funds to add to the Friends' account and we thank everyone who supported these outings. We are most grateful to those members who contribute their time arranging these events and once again I must particularly thank Peter Hattersley who has played such an active part in organising the coach outings and village tours. During the last few months Peter has been busy working on the programme of events for next year and we have enclosed the finalised list with the newsletter. There is a wide range of events to suit most interests so make notes in your diaries and send in your reservations. Provision has been made to accept post-dated cheques if this method of payment is preferred.

No doubt it will be noticed that the same few members are involved in providing us with our series of events and I wonder if perhaps some of you have ideas of your own which you would like to arrange. Help would be given if required. there are some functions at which we offer refreshments and we would like to form a small group of volunteer 'caterers' from whom we could request the help of two or three people to assist at any of our social events such as the AGM and the quiz evening. No cooking involved, only the purchase and setting out of the nibbles, serving the drinks and, of course, helping to clear up after the event. Please contact me if you are interested in any of these ideas.

I thank everyone for their support in the past and wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Derek Somner
Hon. Secretary



(01483) 539447

To join the FRIENDS OF GUILDFORD MUSEUM, please send a cheque with the appropriate subscription to
Mr T.C.Bryers, Friends of Guildford Museum,
2 Southbury, Lawn Road, Guildford, GU2 5DD

Subscription rates for 1998/9

Individual	£5	Family	£10	Under 18's	£2
Corporate	£25	Individual Life	£100		

Please make cheques payable to

FRIENDS OF GUILDFORD MUSEUM

The Curator's Column

The Friends have recently helped the Museum to acquire two very important additions to our collections: a silver penny of William the Conqueror and a Wonderland Stamp Case, invented by Lewis Carroll. These are described elsewhere in the newsletter, but I would like to express my own gratitude to the Friends for making these acquisitions possible.

Mary, John Boas and myself have been involved with students at the University of Surrey's Civil Engineering Department in preparing proposals for the restoration of the castle keep. The installation of a roof, floors and public access poses many technical problems, given the sensitivity of the ancient fabric and its prominent position. We hope the solutions that will be proposed will meet the approval of English Heritage, and be eligible for Lottery funding.

You will no doubt have read in the local paper that the Queen's Regimental Museum is likely to move into the Centenary Hall in Chapel Street, when the Guildford School of Acting moves out in 2000. I welcome this and look forward to co-operating with the Queen's Museum (whose Curatorial Advisor I have been for the last six years). The Regiment was formerly based at Stoughton Barracks, and many thousands of men from Guildford and West Surrey served in its ranks. Indeed, some 19,000 were killed in the wars this century. Whatever one feels about this loss of life - and whether it was futile or not - military museums like the Queen's do not glorify war. What they do uniquely well is to record a major element in our history.

Matthew Alexander,
Curator,
Guildford Museum

Surrey Young Archaeologists Club

The club has begun its autumn programme of events with a trip to Brooklands Museum. It was very successful, not only because there is so much to see and do there, but also because of our superb guide, Ian, who made us very welcome and gave us a guided tour of the enormous site. The YAC's especially enjoyed the motor racing section; the aeroplane hanger, which contained a Harrier jump-jet and the Wellington Bomber rescued from Loch Ness. They also liked being allowed to go into the cockpit of the Britannia aircraft, and were amazed at the flimsy nature of materials which made up some of the early aircraft. The ingenuity of engineers such as Barnes Wallis was made clear by our guide, and the fact that everything on show had a particular connection with Brooklands motor or aviation history made this a visit the YAC's will remember for a long time. It also has a very nice cafe and shop, which Sue and I appreciated at the end of the visit!

Next month we are off to Burlington House for the annual Young People's Lecture; this year the subject is "Bringing the passed to life", which we hope will be as good as previous lectures have been.

We had a steady increase in membership throughout last year, rising to a peak of over 90. Renewal time always thins out membership, which then picks up as the year goes by. As we already have about sixty renewals, we anticipate another year with record numbers. Of these, about 30 or so are active members, coming to meetings during the year. Others tend to pick and choose sessions according to their particular interests: it is fortunate that all members don't decide to come to each session!

Those who went on the dig this year enjoyed the experience immensely, and Sue and I were pleased to hear that they had behaved well and made a good contribution to the excavation.

We are also pleased that one of our senior members, Robin Pearce, has agreed to join our committee, and should be taking part for the first time in the November meeting. We thought that it was time we heard the voice of the members, and Robin has been with the Club for a number of years, always keen and willing to help.

Christine Hardman

The Club is Jointly funded by Surrey Archaeological Society and Guildford Museum

The Wonderland Stamp Case

This is the second item purchased recently by the Friend's for the museum. On July 2nd 1890 Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) published his invention "The Wonderland Stamp Case". This consists of a holder with pockets for stamps of eleven different values between a halfpenny and a shilling. The holder slides into a cover. This is decorated with a coloured illustration of Alice holding the Duchess's Baby ("An entirely new combination, by the way: it doesn't occur in the book", Carroll tells us). On pulling out the holder we see the picture has been transformed to Alice holding the pig ("if that doesn't surprise you," remarked Carroll, "why, I suppose you wouldn't be surprised if your own Mother-in-law suddenly turned into a Gyroscope!"). On turning the case over we find that a complete Cheshire cat turns into a grinning head without a body. Accompanying the case is a miniature pamphlet entitled "Eight or Nine Wise Words about Letter-Writing". Dodgson is credited with writing over 103,000 letters so is well qualified to give advice. Not only is his advice useful but it is entertaining as well.

He says this about the case itself. "This Case is *not* intended to carry about in your pocket. Far from it. People seldom want any other Stamps, on an emergency, than Penny-Stamps for Letters, Sixpenny-Stamps for Telegrams and a bit of Stamp-edging for cut fingers (it makes capital sticking-plaster, and will stand three or four washings, cautiously conducted): and all of these are easily carried in a purse or pocket-book.

The Wonderland

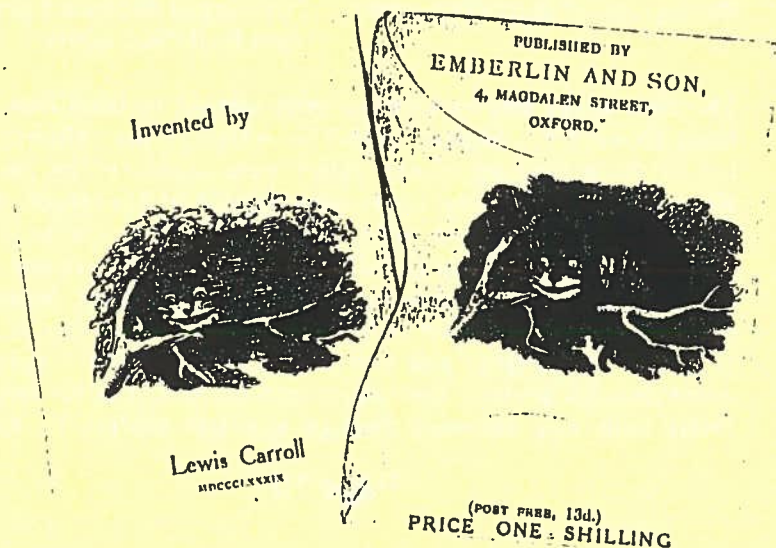


Postage-Stamp Case

No, *this* is meant to haunt your envelope case, or wherever you keep your writing-materials. What made me invent it was the constantly wanting Stamps of other values, for foreign Letters, Parcel Post, &c., and finding it very bothersome to get at the kind I wanted in a hurry. Since I have possessed a "Wonderland Stamp Case", Life has been bright and peaceful, and I have used no other.

The "Eight or Nine Wise Words" runs to five chapters and thirty-five pages! In chapter two "How to begin a Letter, this advice is given.

"Address and Stamp the Envelope. 'What! Before writing the Letter?' Most certainly. And I'll tell you what will happen if you don't. You will go on writing to the last moment, and just in the middle of the last sentence, you will become aware that 'time's up!' Then comes the hurried wind-up -- the wildly-scrawled signature -- the hastily-fastened envelope which comes open in the post -- the address, a mere hieroglyphic -- the horrible discovery that you've forgotten to replenish your Stamp-Case -- the frantic appeal, to every one in the house, to lend you a Stamp -- the headlong rush to the Post Office, arriving hot and gasping, just after the box has closed -- and finally, a week afterwards, the return of the Letter, from the Dead-Letter Office, marked 'address illegible'".



The GUILDFORD PENNY

Guildford Museum has recently acquired a coin of William I - the Conqueror - which was minted in Guildford between 1072 and 1074. A few years ago we bought a later coin of William, minted in 1086, but it is good to have another coin from earlier in the reign and of a different type. The new coin is described by numismatists as the "two sceptres type", as the king holds two sceptres. It is made of silver and weighs 1.23 grams. The main interest for us, of course, is that the coin was minted in Guildford. On the front of the coin is a portrait of a King (not a true likeness of William I but a drawing that could be reproduced simply by the mint with their crude equipment). On either side of the head are two sceptres. The sceptre on the left is surmounted by a cross while the one on the right has three small balls like an inverted pawn brokers sign. The Kings name is inscribed around the edge in latin. On the other side or reverse is a cruciform, although it looks rather like a snowflake since it has eight arms. In addition to giving the name of the town, the inscription tells us that the name of the moneyer or official responsible for the coin is SERIC.



Photograph of Guildford penny

Drawing of William I penny
(not Guildford mint)

The first coins known to have been minted in Guildford are of King Edward the Martyr 958-978, although the reforms which led to the setting up of new mints were organised by his father King Eadgar. Very few coins were minted at Guildford, perhaps because it was a small town, though this does not necessarily follow. This means that Guildford coins are very rare and we are lucky to have a few examples. We now have seven: Aethelred II (the Unready), Cnut, two of Edward the Confessor, one of Harold II (killed at Hastings and two of William I. All the coins have come through dealers; none have been excavated in the town. The latest coin was obtained through a postal auction in America.

latest coin was obtained through a postal auction in America. This meant that we had to submit a bid by post without knowing who else was bidding or for what sums. The estimate seemed low but we chose a suitable figure and were surprised to find that we were successful. We would like examples of all types of coin minted in Guildford but this will take a long time to achieve, if ever we do.

We do not know where the mint was but this is true of most towns. Everything to do with minting coins was strictly controlled so we are very unlikely to find evidence such as dies or coin blanks. Even tiny scraps of silver would be saved.

We are very grateful to the Friends for giving us the money for this important new acquisition.

Mary Alexander (Guildford Museum)

I thought you might be interested in the following general information on pennies which has been extracted from coin publications - Ed.

In the late Anglo-Saxon period most fortified towns were allowed a mint and in all some seventy mints were active in England about the middle of the 11th Century. The silver penny was first minted at Canterbury, probably in 760 for King Offa of Mercia. It was then known as the *denier* after the Roman *denarius* (hence the *d* in *l.s.d.*) and for nearly 500 years was the only coin struck in England. The coins were made by placing the silver blank between two metal dies and striking the top die with a hammer so that the detail from the dies would be impressed on the blank. By law, the face value of the coin corresponded to its precious metal content. There were 240 pennies to the Saxon pound weight of silver. To guard against a dishonest mint or to ensure the coin was genuine the name of the man responsible for the coin and its weight (moneyer) was stamped on the coin as well as the name of the mint. In the reign of Eadgar (959 - 975) the royal portrait now became a regular feature and the other side or reverse normally have a cruciform pattern. This pattern enabled the coin to be broken accurately into "broke money", halfpennies and quarterpennies or farthings, a practice which continued until 1279. Hence the use of the word "broke" in relation to money problems. The dies for the provincial mints were usually made by the London mint.

Museum Talks and Exhibitions

Experience the workmanship and thrill the craftsmen must have enjoyed in their finished product at a handling session on decorated medieval floor tiles. This will take place at Salter's in Castle Street on the 13th and 14th of February 1999 between 10am and 4pm. Tickets £5 from the Museum.

The series of lectures in aid of the Museum's Excavation Unit have proved very popular and the only remaining lecture for which tickets are available is on 11th March when Clive Orton of the Institute Of Archaeology , London will be speaking on "Great Lord Novorod"

On the 9th March 1999 at 7.30pm (provisional date) the Museum will be making a contribution to the towns Woman's Festival in the form of a talk by Joan Mant and Jenny Overton on suffragettes. This will take place in the Guildhall. Please check the date and details in the festival programme.

During Science, Engineering and Technology week 12th to 20th March 1999, it is intended to mount an exhibition in the Museum on the theme of "Energy".

National Museum Week will be held from 15th to 23rd of May and has the exciting theme of "Treasures, Food and Travel". The display will be linked with Guildford House so make a note in your diary and look out for further details nearer the time.

The theme of next year's Young Archaeologist's Day will include both Saxons and Romans. These days are always full of exciting displays so make certain you call in some time during the day. It is usually held in Castle Cliffe Gardens from 10am to 4pm and will be on July 3rd 1999. More details in the next newsletter.

Lewis Carroll in Three Minutes or Less

One afternoon back in September I received a telephone call . Could I meet a radio outside broadcast car on the Thursday morning to talk about Lewis Carroll? "Well", I said, "I'm not an expert on him . I just like him" and I proceeded to mention one or two things about him. That's fine the girl on the other end said, we're doing a morning on authors in Surrey and we would like you to go on at twenty past eight in the morning. Where shall I meet you I asked. Oh! we'll park the van outside Lewis Carroll's house the voice said. No you won't I shouted, not unless you want to write the van off in an accident. So we decided to meet in Quarry Street, which is still very close to the house. On the Thursday I left home early and was parked in Guildford by ten to eight. I switched on the radio, "We are now going over to our reporter who is with the commons ranger at Odium", it blared out. If that is the same reporter who is meeting me, I thought, then I'm in for a long wait. The traffic news told me there was a hold up on the Hogs Back nevertheless at eight o'clock I put my gloves and hat on for it was a cold September morning and after five minutes walk I reached the Museum in Quarry St where I was to wait. The time passed fairly quickly as I watched people arriving to unlock various offices along the street and then at eighteen minutes passed eight a small white van sped round the corner and stopped a short distance from me. A pole about 4inches diameter and three feet high stuck out of the roof. A young woman jumped out of the van and collared a passer-by. As I dashed over I could hear her asking for instructions to the castle. That's a good start I thought, as I was told to meet her in Quarry street and for fear that she might disappear as fast as she arrived, I shouted "It's me you want". "Mr Morgan" , she said, "Yes" I replied, "park over the other side of the road" and with a quick thanks to the passer-by she drove quickly to the parking spot with the aerial starting to rise. She was out of the van in a flash and as the rear doors were opened they revealed the transmitter. Well, it looked like a piece of laboratory equipment made years ago, I certainly haven't seen anything like it for about thirty years . Here we were outside the museum and this piece of equipment looked as though it ought to be inside it. She switched it on and made contact immediately. They could hear us O.K. but if we could get the aerial up higher they would be pleased. Up went the aerial until it must have been twenty or thirty feet above the van. "Someone's speaking from Leatherhead now and your on after them," she said. Not bad I thought, barely three minutes after the van arrived and were ready to go on the air."You've got one minute and twenty seconds" I was told, "Just time for hello and goodbye" I said , she grinned back at me and said "that's right". "I've only got one pair of earphones", she said as she firmly clamped them on her head, "you can listen in on the mobile, here it is".

(Continued bottom page 15).

JAMES PRICE

Inside Stoke Church, Guildford, above the south door is a memorial to James Price. He was born in London in 1752 and was the son of James Higginbotham. Price presumably came to Guildford, after attending Oxford University, to set up a laboratory in the parish of Stoke. The parish of Stoke extended right to Guildford Town and included part of the Upper High Street and it is here that it is thought James lived. In 1781 a relative bequeathed him a fortune on condition he changed his name to Price. James was no mean chemist and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society the same year. The following year Price claimed he could do what no alchemist had done before, namely, he could produce gold from mercury. He decided to repeat his experiments before invited audiences. Seven such experiments were carried out between 7th May and 25th May 1782. Price placed some white powder in a crucible with fifty times its weight of Mercury. On heating this mixture with a borax flux and stirring with an iron rod, silver was produced. A similar experiment but using a red powder appeared to produce gold. The gold and silver were assayed, found genuine and shown to the King, George III. Price published the results and the book ran into a second edition within a few months. In the preface to his book he states that his stock of powder is exhausted and the cost of replenishment would be too great in labour and health for him to undertake it. This must have been like a red rag to a bull to his colleagues. Ever since Robert Boyle, who died almost a hundred years earlier, scientists had been sceptical of alchemists and the scientific community responded to Price's book with multitude of letters and publications criticising his work. The Royal society felt they had to intervene and their President, Sir Joseph Banks reminded Price that his own reputation was at stake as well as that of the Society. Under pressure from all sides, Price had little choice but to repeat the experiments. He returned to Stoke in January 1763 to prepare the powders but when six weeks later he still had not produced them his friends began to desert him. Six months later, Price invited the Royal Society to witness his experiments. Three members arrived at the laboratory in his house at Stoke during the first week of August. While they were examining his equipment, Price committed suicide by drinking a glass of prussic acid which he had distilled back in March.

Was James Price mad? He certainly had no financial worries and

little need of gold for he had an income of £120 a year and over £10,000 in capital. A law had also been passed a hundred years earlier that if alchemists ever produced gold it was the property of the Crown and to be used for coinage. So there was little to be gained financially if his experiments had been successful. He did at one time suggest his original experiments may have been carried out with mercury containing gold as an impurity and that heating this with other chemicals had merely extracted the gold. If he felt this to be the case then why did he continue to deceive people? Was he too proud to admit it? The inquest brought in a verdict of insanity which is just as well for he would never have had a memorial in Stoke Church if it had been suicide. His epitaph ends with a latin inscription which translated reads " Oh! What a mistake!" - Eric Morgan.

(Continued from page 13)

There was certainly a noise coming out of the mobile I'd been given but it was hardly intelligible against the traffic noise . "I can't hear anything on that" I said as I put it down in the back of the van. It was about twenty seven minutes past eight now. "They have decided to put you on after the news now, you will then have three minutes". "Good" I replied. "They've announced you, as soon as they've read the headlines you'll be on". Without any warning the reporter uttered "I'm standing here in Quarry Street Guildford with Mr Morgan who is a tour guide for Guildford, so Lewis Carroll knew this town well ?". "He certainly did" I replied " and we are standing outside one of the houses he used to stay in when the Chestnuts was full up. When his father died he had to find ". At that stage my voice began to falter. Unknown to the reporter who faced the other way, a large pantechnicon was making a difficult manoeuvre and had attempted it several times, this time it really was close to the recording van and I just hoped it would stop . I quickly recovered and continued "a house for his seven sisters and he decided on the Chestnuts just round the corner from here through the castle arch." What buildings can people see today that Lewis Carroll would have known ?" "Well many but in particular the Abbot's Hospital". The reporters hand had been frantically waving as I said this. "Thank you Mr Morgan and back to the studio". "That was absolutely great" she said as she wound down the aerial. As she sped off down the road I thought to myself if that was three minutes then the studio clocks must run on rocket fuel.

Make a note in your Diary

Events 1999

Sunday 24th Jan 2pm	Tour of Horsley Towers
Saturday 13th Feb 12 noon	Skittles, Grantley Arms, Wonersh
Thursday 18th Feb 9am	Windsor and Runnymede
Saturday 20th March 9am	Geffrye Museum & Museum of Childhood
Friday 16th April 9am	Kew Gardens & Public Record Office
Thursday 22nd April 2pm	Peper Harrow
Wednesday 12th May 6.30pm	Mount Browne
Saturday 22nd May 8.30am	Rye and Dungeness
Thursday 27th May 7.30pm	AGM
Thursday 17th June 9am	Thames Barrier and Greenwich
Tuesday 22nd June 2pm	Surrey Villages - Gomshall
Wednesday 14th July 10.30 am	Surrey Villages - Shamley Green
Thursday 29th July 9am	Winchester Cathedral
Wednesday 18th August 10.30am	Surrey Villages - Shere
Thursday 30th September 9am	Whitehall
Thursday 1st October 2pm	Surrey Villages - Witley
Saturday 6th November 9am	Fishbourne and Chichester

Full details of these events can be found on the sheet circulated to members.

Tickets are obtainable from Derek Somner,
18 Abbot Road, Guildford GU1 3TA



(01483) 539447

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