

Elstree & Borehamwood Museum

Friends Newsletter

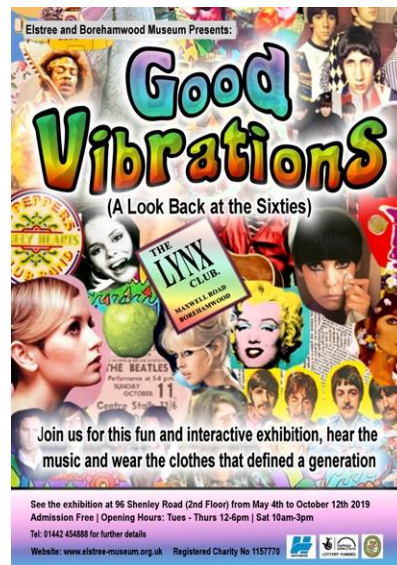
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GOOD VIBRATIONS

(A Look Back At The Sixties)

Our new Exhibition will have just opened when you receive this Newsletter, so you can be one of the first to step inside and revisit the 60s with us. We have recreated the local youth club and music venue called The Lynx. The building is still being used as a community hub in Maxwell Park and although it has been completely redecorated inside the layout is still the same.



We have transformed our small museum space and used the original artwork and designs from the Club to reproduce the Lynx. To help with the atmosphere of the time we are playing some of the music made by the bigger bands who played in the club and by local musicians. We have a stage and the opportunity for youngsters to dress up in 60s' clothes and hairstyles. And all round the walls are panels and collages telling the story of the 60s' scene in the area and the Lynx itself, and how today's world stars played in Borehamwood when they started out.



Mods & Scooters Outside The Lynx

Round the corner from the club area is a record shop, an important focal point for teenagers in the 60s after the youth club and coffee bar. Of course every record shop had a listening booth and a record player and so we have both, along with a selection of 45s and LPs. There is a 60s Timeline to give the wider context, and panels devoted to fashion and hair styles and to Elstree & Borehamwood in the period. Lastly there is a Memories Board so you can add your thoughts about this fascinating decade.



The Beatles with Morecambe & Wise at ATV Elstree

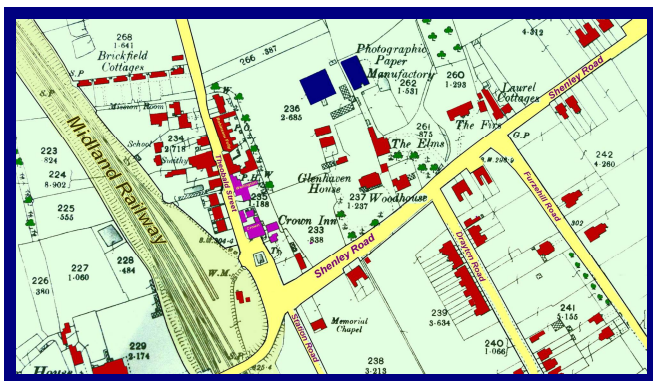
Do hope you can drop by and jog a few memories, or see what you missed!

THE 'TRAGICAL DISCOVERY' OF SARAH BAKER

Towards the end of last year the Museum had a visit from Catherine Jardine who was researching the life of her grandfather, William Wemyss. Volunteer John Woolston picked up her query and his research revealed this terrible story which was national news at the time.

Mrs Sarah Baker was Secretary and organiser of The Imperial Colonial Club at 84 Piccadilly. She was described as 'living apart from her husband George' at the time. The full story of her demise was revealed at her inquest on 31 August 1910 in Boreham Wood. William Stuart Wemyss, an artist from Australia living in London in Clifford's Inn, gave evidence that he first met her in 1898 when she bought one of his pictures for the Club. She advised him to draw for The Imperial Review which he did, and she purchased the originals, and they dined at the Club on more than one occasion.

When in June 1900 the company owning the Club was failing, William helped Sarah purchase a debenture, and she continued to run it with his assistance. And then in August 1909 they started living together in Shenley, and the next month they rented The Elms in Boreham Wood. For the next few months she still lived at the Club and came up to Boreham Wood for the weekends.



The Elms shown on the 1898 map

All we know about The Elms is that it was the home of James Wellington, one of the founders of Wellington and Ward, and was on the site of today's Boulevard. In the maps of the time it is a substantial house, and does not fit the descriptions given in the inquest. Whether there was another house called the Elms in the area, or whether Sarah and William rented a smaller outbuilding in the grounds is unknown. The only photo we have is certainly not contemporary with the events of 1910.



The Elms, date unknown

In early 1910 Sarah started living permanently with William in The Elms and commuting daily to Piccadilly. On 29th August at about 7.00 am William discovered Sarah absent from the bedroom and had locked herself in the bathroom. She said she was unwell and William left a cup of tea outside and asked after her a number of times. About 9.15 he heard noises from within and being concerned accessed the bathroom via the window where he found Sarah lying distressed on the floor with her clothing covered in blood. Although he tried to revive her he did nothing until midday when he asked a 'passing' policeman to fetch a doctor.



Daily Mail

At this point Dr Martin gives evidence that he found a fully formed female child deceased in about 6 inches of bath water, and that Sarah had recently given birth. William helped the doctor carry Sarah through to her bedroom but she died about 45 minutes later. The jury's verdict was that both deaths were the result of the lack of care and that William should be severely censured for not obtaining medical help earlier, which the coroner, T.J.Broad, duly did.

Although reported in the Daily Mail (on the left), and arousing interest in Australian and New Zealand newspapers, we know little else about this story. We know that Sarah and child rest in All Saints Churchyard in Shenley Road, but we don't know what happened to Wemyss afterwards. It doesn't appear he became a professional artist because his work is not listed anywhere I could find, and we have nothing more on the story in the Museum archives, and certainly no images of William or Sarah. Maybe his

grand daughter's research will turn up more.

[As an aside, in case you recognise the unusual name 'Wemyss', pronounced 'Weems', which originates from a Scottish clan, Sir Rosslyn Weymss was the senior British negotiator at the Armistice in 1918. No relation to William I presume].



TWO NEW FRIENDS EVENTS!

Maureen has been very busy organising events for us. The last two in December and February were both film related which is hardly surprising given the importance of the film business to this area and its history.

PAUL WELSH & S.O.S.



In December local celebrity, film historian and excellent raconteur, Paul Welsh, spent an evening with The Friends. Linked to the recent exhibition concerning his successful efforts to *Save Our Studios*, it was a chance for us to hear first hand how he and a dedicated team had managed the seemingly impossible task of ensuring Elstree Studios did not become more supermarkets and blocks of flats. To undertake this enterprise, with no financial backing and against heavyweight business interests, and then succeed against the odds has become a key event in our local history. Dave Armitage

introduced Paul and told how well the Exhibition was progressing. Paul spent some time explaining how the campaign worked out and what was involved. Then Maureen used the rest of the time asking Paul about the films and stars he had met and interviewed over the years. Many a fascinating story was heard before the tea and biscuits.

JOHN SCHOONRAAD & IS IT REAL?



In February John Schoonraad visited us for an evening of special effects. Although his name is not that well known outside of the film industry, his work is familiar to any film-goer who has seen strange happenings on screen – ghosts, werewolves, aliens or battle scenes with exploding bodies and carnage. Someone has to create all these special effects, and, if it involves bodies, then you can bet John is involved. He started as a plasterer 40 years ago and after moving to Borehamwood got a job at Elstree Studios where his talent led him to creating 'lifecasts'. If an actor had to perform a dangerous stunt, or to lose a limb or head, then he would make a cast of them from life which could be used for any sort of stunt. Once it was all down to silicon on the skin to make a cast which took a long time, but now it's done by laser scanning, which is quicker and cleaner.

His latest work is in the medical sphere where he uses silicon to create babies at different stages for teaching, and he passed a "baby" around for us to see his creativity.

A fascinating evening for anyone interested in films – the next time you see Saving Private Ryan you will know that John is in there pumping blood out of his lifecasts. More details can be found on his website, <http://lifecast.co.uk/>

Look out for a new Friends event to tie in with our Good Vibrations Exhibition. Details to follow.



Elstree & Borehamwood Museum

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Instagram :

<https://www.instagram.com/ebwm2007/>

Trip Advisor : <https://goo.gl/RTbKQi>

Open : Tues, Wed & Thurs : 12pm - 6pm

Sat : 10am-3pm

Supported by : Hertsmere Borough Council

Elstree & Borehamwood Town Council

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