

Elstree & Boreham Wood Museum

Friends Newsletter May 2013

Issue Number 2



A New Museum : Latest Developments

The Elstree and Boreham Wood new museum development is moving ahead at speed. As fast as the steel framework goes up at 96, Shenley Road, things are also gathering pace at the current museum location of 1, Drayton Road.



Under construction March 2013

Displays about the new development have been put together by volunteers and have been on show in the local library for two weeks. These generated a good deal of interest among the local community and as a result many people came forward to offer their services as volunteers.

The museum now has six more volunteers who have taken on roles such as volunteer co-ordinator, marketing, fundraising, and project work, to name but a few. We are still looking for oral history volunteers to transcribe interviews with local residents and those who worked in the film and television industry.

If you have a couple of hours to spare, a laptop, and would be willing to work from home or at the Museum, please do let us know.

A Designer, Mike Oakenfull, from Quercus Design, has been appointed for the new Museum development.

He consulted with the volunteers on concept designs for the initial Heritage Lottery bid, so he knows everyone well and has the advantage of hitting the ground running – which is great, considering the tight timescale of the project. We will also be working closely with Elstree Screen Heritage to integrate them into the new Museum.

The next stage is to recruit a web designer for a brand new Museum website and also a Freelance Community Learning Officer to develop the education and outreach.

If you know of anyone who might want to train to be a Steward for front of house, do come and see us. We are looking for people who want to stay right through the development and carry on working in the new Museum at 96, Shenley Road. Exciting times! Join us!

A huge thank you to all who helped prepare and submit our application for a Heritage Lottery Grant. Thanks to your splendid effort we have been granted the full amount of £98,000.



Thanks to all who have signed up to receive the newsletter by e mail. If you would like to help us save money in this way e mail your details to friendsofeandbwmuseum@hotmail.co.uk

The Changing Face of Local Pubs

The pub was, and still is in some areas, one of the great institutions of British society as a centre for community life. However they have been in decline since their peak in numbers in 1869, a trend that continues today.

Elstree Village once boasted around seven pubs in the main street, today just one survives, **The Plough**, (now known as The East Restaurant.) It was called The Swan in the mid 17th Century and acquired by Thomas Clutterbuck, brewer of Stanmore, just before 1816. The present building dates from 1830/40 and in the 1930's, when under contract at the film studios, Alfred Hitchcock was a regular patron.

Elstree was a popular stop over along Watling Street on journeys to and from London. A victualler's billing of 1756 stated that the White Horse had two beds and five horses, the Plough one bed and one horse and the Green Dragon one bed and no horses. By 1833 four major stage coaches called at Elstree daily.

The Red Lion Hotel, a timber framed building, in Elstree High Street, was first mentioned in 1656. It stood on the East side of the High Street on the corner of Barnet Lane. In 1833 it was run by John Billings (born 1809) who was described in 1839 as a 'coachman running the posting house'.

By 1845 he was known as a 'coach proprietor' his license allowing him to carry four inside and five on top. The route was London - Edgware - Shenley Hill, a distance of 17 miles. It departed from Blue Posts Holborn at 4 pm, Shenley at 8 am, the journey time being 3 hours!

John retired to be a farmer at aged 71, the 1881 census shows him and his wife Sarah at 'Smug Oak Farm' Frogmore, Herts, employing four men to manage 168 acres.

He died in 1885, and the Red Lion was demolished in 1934 to make way for improvements to the dangerous corner at the junction of the High Street and Barnet Lane.



Red Lion circa 1900

At Nos. 12-15 The High Street stood a long, timber framed building dating from c1500, although there was an inn there as early as 1656, No 12 was separated from the others, faced in brick and called **The Green Dragon** during the 18th Century. By 1939 it had reverted to retail but survived the demolition of Nos. 13 - 15 in the late 1960's.

The White Horse, on the Little Stanmore side of the village, was in existence in 1756, but ceased to be an inn on 1838.

The site of **The Holly Bush** has been occupied since at least medieval times, with the present building dating from around 1450. The first reference to it as an inn was in 1786, when it was also owned by Thomas Clutterbuck, and managed by a John Green. Sadly it too has recently closed.

The Artichoke, a short distance from the junction with Allum Lane, is first mentioned in 1750 when it was kept by Philip Cogdell. It was here that a number of inquests took place including that of William Weare who was murdered in 1823. The Birmingham to London stagecoach stopped here twice daily in the 1830s. It too has recently ceased to be a pub and is now the area's first Shtiebl, - a Jewish education and community centre.

At the turn of the 20th Century Boreham Wood village which was mainly centered around Theobald Street had only two pubs, the Wellington and the Crown, although there were several in nearby hamlets. The Red Lion, Shenley Road and The Elstree Way Hotel were built around 1935 - 36 and the post war housing estates included several new pubs. The Elstree Way Hotel was demolished in the 80's to make way for new road layouts; the Red Lion survives as a McDonald's restaurant.

The Wellington, in Theobald Street, dates from at least 1851 when it was known as the Jolly Steamer. It was renamed The Wellington by 1890 and the present pub dates from 1908.



*The Wellington
circa 1903*

The Crown, at the corner of Shenley Road and Theobald Street, was originally located a little further down Theobald Street in a timber framed building c1600. It was another premises owned by Thomas Clutterbuck in 1786. In the mid to late Victorian era a new yellow brick building was constructed in front, this is still in use as offices today.

By 1910 The New Crown Hotel had been built at the current site and it too was the haunt of film stars, In the 1930's Danish actor Carl Brisson lived at 'Ten Trees' Theobald Street and would often entertain fellow imbibers there in after-hours sessions lasting well into the night - one fan was the local policeman!

It has had many changes of name and fortune in recent times but reverted back to being called The Crown in 2000. It is now closed with its future uncertain.

The Mops and Brooms/Lord Nelson

Nelson Cottage, Well End, is a two storey two bay timber framed house dating from c1600. It became a beer house in 1841, was bought by Hertford Brewers McMullen's in 1912 and was known as the Lord Nelson. It closed in 1932 and the building reverted back to a dwelling house, McMullen's building the new Lord Nelson on an adjacent plot of land.



*New Lord Nelson
circa 1934*

For some time the pub had been affectionately known by locals as 'The Mops and Brooms'. The name supposedly derived from a fight between gypsies, farm labourers and poachers who frequented the pub and who used the travellers wares of mops and brooms in a mighty punch up!

When McMullen's decided to officially change the name to The Mops & Brooms the original sign, a portrait of Lord Nelson, was replaced by one depicting the fight. The old sign now hangs over a fireplace in the pub.

Museum 'On The Road'

You may have seen a small exhibition promoting the Museum around the town in recent weeks. As well as the two week display at Borehamwood Library we also took our 'Road Show' to The Metro Bank in Borehamwood Shopping Park over a very snowy weekend at the end of March. Despite the atrocious weather the displays were well received and much interest shown. We hope to be popping up in many other venues over the next few months so look out for us. Be sure to come and see our display at **Families Day in Meadow Park on Saturday 29th June, 12-5pm.**

MESSAGES BY POST

For most people, using the postal system in today's technological age is not an option when wishing to convey any news or opinions and we can choose between an instantaneous text, email, tweet or even telephone.

In comparison, 100 years ago, the first three methods were inconceivable. The telephone was still very much a new invention and not something one expected to find in an ordinary household. Less than 30 lines were connected to businesses or private subscribers within the Elstree and Boreham Wood area in 1909 and the latter only in the larger private residences. Telegrams were only used for emergencies. So when wishing to send a brief message, the average person would commit it in writing, perhaps to the format of a postcard. The postal system of the day was first class. Collections were frequent - 4 or 5 a day - and delivery swift.

Shenley Real Postcards made in Boreham Wood by Percy Redjeb between 1907-1912, played their part in this vast traffic of paper communication. Reading some of the messages they imparted reflects a distant and uncomplicated way of life.

In 1910 a message on one particular card was sent by a lady called Etty from Great Yarmouth to her parents living in Boston,

Lincolnshire. It featured a simple homespun design of greetings in Redjeb's own style portraying a photograph of a famous actress of the day, Nina Severing, surrounded by sunflowers and shamrocks. Etty wrote:

Dear Mother and Father.

A line to let you know we received the fish and shrimps and you can guess how we felt. I could just picture Dad cleaning them. Well he knows they will be a lot better because he sent them. Etty

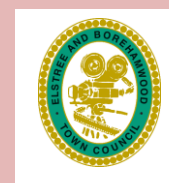


It remains a puzzle as to why it was considered viable to send fish and shrimps a hundred miles away to someone in Great Yarmouth, itself a major fishing port. There again, did they really arrive by post? The answer is, possibly, yes, as a few years later many families were to post food to their men serving in the First World War. One Boreham Wood soldier in receipt of cakes, biscuits and meat pies from his wife, wrote to request she omitted the meat pies in future after discovering they were more than unsafe to eat after a

period of several days!

So, perhaps, it was simply Etty's Dad spoiling his daughter, the way they did in 1909. Having said that, he must have been a busy man, as Etty was one of 18 children -12 of them girls.

Elstree & Boreham Wood Museum
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Open 11am – 3pm Thur, Fri & Sat

**Supported by Hertsmere Borough Council
Elstree & Borehamwood Town Council
The Heritage Lottery Fund**

Registered charity No 10900848