



NEWSLETTER

No. 94

SPRING 2019

www.dacorumheritage.org.uk

'VICTORIAN DAY' WORKSHOP AT VICTORIA SCHOOL

Our Education team were pleased to be invited to Victoria School in Berkhamsted recently to show the pupils what life



was like at school in the days of their forebears. For the pupils in Years 1 and 2 that most likely would have been their great, great, great grandparents!

Our terrific volunteers dug out their Victorian style clothes from the back of their wardrobes. We met many girls, boys and teachers also dressed in their Victorian best when we arrived at the school.

Pupils were reminded that boys and girls would have been taught separately and some lessons would also have been very different. We recited the alphabet, written in very neat but curly handwriting from the

blackboard, looked at photographs from opening day at their school and saw that some of the photographs showed rooms in their school that have things that have not altered.

Then it was time to line up and go to visit the three activities. Each group spent time handling Victorian objects, dressing up and learning what life was like for Victorian children. The pupils learnt much to their surprise that they had to go to work doing jobs such as climbing chimneys or plaiting straw; also learning about differences in money and household objects. By the end of the session, each pupil had made a thaumatrope which, when twisted, gave the illusion of a bird in a cage.

Many thanks to our 'Victorian time travellers' for their willingness to enter into the spirit of the Victorian era. We look forward to repeating this fun and educational workshop at other schools in the locality in the future.

If you are a teacher and would like to be added to our mailing list for museum resources for school, please get in contact (see below).



Anne Anderson (Education Director) & Nina Glencross (Collections Manager)

Images: Top: Anne acting as a Victorian school mistress. **Lower:** Brian with an enthusiastic group of Victorian children.

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THE FARMING CALENDAR – SPRING & SUMMER

From the dawn of agriculture well into the 20th century, the cycle of the farming year was crucial to whether or not there was going to be enough to eat for the coming year. Although connection with the land was gradually being lost in the towns and cities, rural areas kept alive the customs and traditions associated with the farming calendar. This often tied in with religious traditions - and this was certainly true in much of Hertfordshire.

Plough Sunday. The first Sunday after Twelfth Night marked the beginning of the farming year. On this day, church ceremonies would be held to bless the ploughs of the parish. This was practiced as recently as 1956 at Flamstead Church, where the blessing given was:

*“God speed the plough - the plough and the ploughman,
The farm and the farmer - machine and beast and man.”*



St. Agnes Day. On St. Agnes Day, 21st January, a ceremony would be held in the churches to bless the sheep. Since lambing would soon be approaching, the ‘Blessing of Sheep’ was of great importance. However, this didn’t extend to black sheep, which were considered unlucky. The phrase “to send a black sheep” meant to wish someone misfortune.

Good Friday. Among the most important days in the Christian calendar, it was vital for people to be free to go to church. In Aldbury, it had long been the custom for farmers to send all their workers to church - on full pay.

St. Servatius Day. May 13th was Old May Day prior to the lost days caused by the reformation of the calendar in 1752. This was the day for turning cattle out into pasture, and it was believed that doing it on St. Servatius gave better milk yield. It also marked the point at which sheep-shearing was allowed to begin, presumably because the sheep no longer needed the protection of their winter coats. This is borne out by the saying:

“Who shears his sheep before St. Servatius Day, loves his wool more than his sheep.”

Whit Sunday (Whitsun). Also known as the feast of Pentecost, takes place theoretically fifty days after Easter Sunday (technically forty-nine, which is fifty days counting inclusively in the old way). The name Whitsun derives from “White Sunday”, because children and unmarried girls wore white. It was traditionally a time for fairs to be held. Two notable examples in Hertfordshire were the Cattle Fair at Berkhamsted and the Sheep Fair at Hitchin.

Nicholas Blatchley, extracted and edited from ‘Herts Memories’ website (article posted November 2017)

Image: Top - Plough displayed in St. Leonard’s Church, Flamstead during the 2018 Scarecrow Festival. Caption on the plough – ‘This 19th century plough was made in Hemel Hempstead and was given to Flamstead Church in 1937 by Frank Cotton, who learnt to plough with it as a boy within Flamstead Parish. The plough is blessed in the church every Plough Sunday (Sunday after Epiphany). **Lower** – ‘Berkhamsted Town Hall and Market’ tinted post card, published by Rush and Warwick, from the Berkhamsted Local History & Museum Society collection, cared for by DHT.



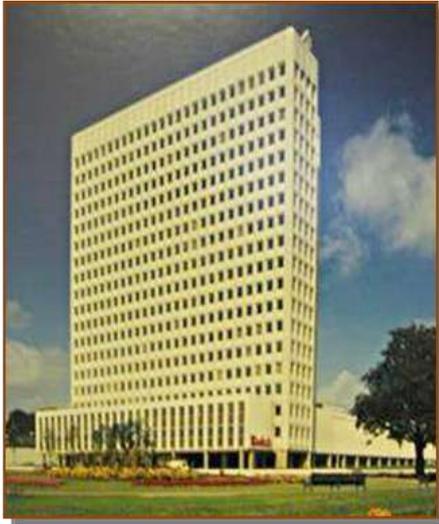
KODAK'S HIDDEN HISTORY

We have some very exciting news! We are delighted to announce that we have just received a grant from SHARE Museums East for a project exploring Hidden Histories. The title of our project is 'Underexposed: A Hidden History of Photography In Dacorum'.



Despite the fact that Hemel Hempstead was once at the centre of Kodak's operations, practically nothing is known of this association today, and younger generations, are oblivious to its history.

Our project will involve research into how Kodak sparked questions on the New Town, industry, gender, and changes in photography. It will explore the experiences of the people that worked at Kodak and their reminiscences of working in the New Town of Hemel Hempstead.



One aspect that we are particularly interested in exploring is the role of women in Kodak, and their experiences of working in what would have traditionally been a male dominated industry. This project will also explore the demise of film photography in a digital age and will consider its long-term consequences.

In the run up to the exhibition we will hold various pop-up events such as art workshops in Berkhamsted Arts & Crafts shop and Hemel Hempstead library. Our research and events will culminate with an exhibition in an empty shop in the Marlowes Shopping Centre, Hemel Hempstead in October.

As part of the project we would like to hear from people who worked at Kodak, so if you worked at Kodak, or indeed know anyone that did please get in touch. We would be delighted to hear from you.

Zara Power, Museum Support Officer, Dacorum Heritage Trust

Watch our short film about the project - <http://www.dacorumheritage.org.uk/dht-news/dht-awarded-funding-for-2019/>

Image: Kodak Building taken by a member of the Hemel Hempstead Photography Society.

DHT ANNUAL PUBLIC MEETING

We held our inaugural Annual Public Meeting on Wednesday 27th February at The Forum in Hemel Hempstead which was well attended. The first presentation was given by DHT's Chairman, Roger Hands, who delivered an informative presentation covering DHT's origins, aspirations and future plans. The presentation was accompanied by a specially produced 'Chairman's 25th Anniversary Report' to celebrate the Trust's quarter century.



Our curatorial team, Nina and Zara, presented an illustrated review of our activities during 2018. The highlight was our most successful exhibition so far; 'Commemorating Peacetime in Dacorum' celebrated the end of the Great War, with funding from Berkhamsted Lions and the Heritage Lottery Fund. We looked at how the 'war to end all wars' impacted the ordinary people and the changing role of women, together with commemorating the lives of the fallen within the Borough. The exhibition featured a unique art installation of 1,089 origami doves folded by members of the public at workshops and other community events.

Roger Hands then presented a financial summary of the company, followed by a short question and answer session.

Lastly, the audience enjoyed a screening of 'New Towns, Our Town – Stories on Screen'. In partnership with the Independent Cinema Office and a successful Heritage Lottery Fund grant, a compilation of films from the early days of the New Town was created. The following archive film featuring footage from 1951-1962 as follows:

Home of Your Own (1951). The Development Corporation commissioned this film to promote the brand new town to more people looking to move from cramped London housing to start a whole new life. Famous character actor, Harry Locke played the lead as a bricklayer who passed through Hemel Hempstead by chance on a worker's outing and was taken with the whole idea. He returned home to persuade his wife.

Hemel Hempstead During the 1950s. Featuring extracts from:

Here & There (1954). An insight into Hertfordshire as seen through the eyes of a local cine enthusiast 'Mary'.

Around & About (1959). Extracted from full colour footage by John Chear (amateur filmmaker). 'Round & About Herts and Beds' a leisurely tour of public spaces featuring the citizens who inhabit them during the hot summer.

Hemel Homestead (1957). This film was produced by the Dexion company, seeking to assure its staff that a new life for their families outside London was a step into a modern age. Relocating a whole company and its employees from post-war London to the state-backed 'New Town' redevelopment of Hemel Hempstead is daunting for all involved.

Disappearing Britain (1959). A new decade approaches; the landscape in and around Hemel Hempstead is changing forever. The leafy suburbs being replaced by asphalt as the first section of the M1 motorway opens. This film depicts a journey along the recently opened M1, filmed by a passenger in a moving car. Conspicuously free of heavy traffic the motorway is a far cry from the M1 witnessed today – no speed limit, no central reservation and no lighting.

New Town from Old (1962). Produced by the Hemel Hempstead Development Corporation, this is an update on how Hemel Hempstead has grown up "one of the eight new towns around London". 'New Town from Old' can be located on the BFI website - <https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-new-town-from-old-1962-online>. Some areas are unchanged whilst others are completely different over half a century on. You can view this great little film and even if you don't live or work in Hemel Hempstead you will enjoy seeing how Marlowes or Maylands Avenue looked in the early 1960s. You can also view the other short films on BFI Player, we think you will enjoy them.

CURATOR'S CORNER

Hidden Histories 'Underexposed: A History of Photography in Dacorum' Project. Help us to tell the 'Kodak Story'. We would be delighted to hear from you if you worked at Kodak or know anyone who did, and would like to share your story with us please contact Nina on info@dacorumheritage.org.uk or 01442 879525.

For the latest project news see our website, and follow the hashtag #DHTunderexposed on social media.

'New Towns, Our Town – Stories on Screen'. Working with the Independent Cinema Office on a Heritage Lottery Funded project, which focuses on the UK's first four New Towns Stevenage, Crawley, Harlow and Hemel Hempstead. There have been screenings of a collection of contemporary and unseen footage of the local area featuring Hemel Hempstead New Town. If you would like to take part in telling your stories of the early New Town we would love to hear from you contact Nina for further information info@dacorumheritage.org.uk or 01442 879 525.



We are Recruiting. We have a Board vacancy for a Fundraising Director, if you have the skills and experience, particularly with a small charity and would like to help us by volunteering, please contact us on info@dacorumheritage.org.uk or 01442 879 525, we would love to hear from you.

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