



# NEWSLETTER

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[www.dacorumheritage.org.uk](http://www.dacorumheritage.org.uk)

## COMMEMORATING PEACETIME IN DACORUM

**“The air is electric with the glad tidings of a great joy”** *Gazette 9<sup>th</sup> November 1918*

In January DHT heard exciting news from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) that we had been successful in our application to secure funding for our WWI Project ‘Commemorating Peacetime in Dacorum’.

HLF project funding was made possible by all the National Lottery players across Britain. The project will focus on gathering information about local people and their stories. One of the areas of research DHT will undertake will be the contribution women made to the First World War, as this is currently under represented.

DHT will host exciting art workshops and object handling sessions using the First World War as inspiration. We will create a collaborative art installation to highlight the signing of the peace treaty of 1919. This will involve folding and hanging



origami doves. 1,035 doves will be created to remember and represent each fallen name on the war memorials across the Borough of Dacorum.

The art installation will be exhibited within an empty shop unit at The Marlowes Shopping Centre in Hemel Hempstead, later in the year. This will be part of this year’s major pop-up exhibition.

Nina Glencross, our Collections Manager, commented on the award. “We are thrilled to have received the support of the



National Lottery and are looking forward to interpreting and presenting this subject, in a unique and memorable way.”

If you would like to send us details of the contribution your family made, or, have any questions about the project, please email us at [ww1@dacorumheritage.org.uk](mailto:ww1@dacorumheritage.org.uk)

Come along to our events and make a dove or two, or, maybe even a flock! Everyone can contribute to our art installation. Events are listed at the end of this newsletter, for more information on our website and social media.

We hope you have a chance to fold a dove with us, or, get involved with this exciting new project. Link to a short film on our website: <http://www.dacorumheritage.org.uk/dht-news/commemorating-peacetime-in-dacorum/>

**Images: Top** - Volunteers Janet & John (in costume) outside St. Peter's Church, Berkhamsted during our pop-up event in March. **Left** - DHT Chairman, Roger enjoying some creative origami with costumed volunteer John. **Right** - Abi with a young family - folding fun for everyone.

### THE DACORUM HERITAGE TRUST LTD.

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## BOVINGDON AND THE 1964 WINTER OLYMPICS

Have you ever wondered how the Bobsleigh Inn on Box Lane, Bovingdon got its name?

Some parts of this large house date from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, It has been a popular hotel and restaurant for many years. Previously it was the Bovingdon Country Club until 1964. Then Tony Nash, the son of the owner, was part of the gold medal



winning British two-man bobsleigh team at the Winter Olympics at Innsbruck in Austria. It was renamed the 'Bobsleigh Inn' in his honour. We thought this was an interesting fact in this Winter Olympic year.

The sport of bobsleigh came into being when British holiday-makers created the legendary Cresta Run at St. Moritz in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The two-man gold won by Tony Nash and Robin Dixon in 1964 at Innsbruck remains the UK's only Olympic title in the sport.

It was in St. Moritz that Dixon, also a

talented sprinter (later to become Lord Glentoran), was introduced to the sport in the late 1950s. While Nash, who started out as a racing driver (much to his father's chagrin) made his first contact with bobsleigh in Switzerland. In 1960 they joined Henry Taylor's four-man British team, with Nash taking up driving duties after Taylor, who also raced a Cooper Climax in the Formula One world championship, was injured in a race.

Nash and Dixon then paired in the two-man bob, lugging their equipment around the Alps in an old Land Rover. They soon began to make a name for themselves, enjoying solid progress thanks to the friendships they struck up with the great Italian bobsledders of the time, among them Eugenio Monti. In 1963 the British tandem won world bronze in Innsbruck, at the official opening of the Igls track that would host the Olympic competition the following year.

Innsbruck 1964 marked the return of bobsleigh to the Winter Games, the sport having been omitted from the programme at Squaw Valley 1960. The Igls track was the first to stage an Olympic bobsleigh competition on artificial ice. It measured 1,506 metres long, comprised 14 turns and boasted an average grade of 9.2 percent.

The two-man bob competition got under way on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1964. The Canadian team had the fastest first run, some 0.38 seconds quicker than Nash and Dixon in second, who moved into the overall lead after finishing just behind the Italians Monti and Sergio Siorpaes in run two. The opening run of the second day saw the Britons drop down to second, at which point they discovered a mechanical problem, a rear axle bolt on their GBR-1 sled having sheared off. Without a spare to hand, Nash and Dixon promptly received assistance from Monti, who had no hesitation in sportingly lending them one of his bolts.

Their sled repaired, Nash and Dixon went fastest in the fourth and final run to win gold by a mere 0.12 seconds from Italy's Sergio Zardini and Romano Bonagura, with Monti and Siorpaes collecting bronze behind them. "Nash didn't win the gold because I gave him that bolt but because he was the fastest," said Monti, who received the Pierre de Coubertin medal for his heart-warming show of sportsmanship. "It was more than deserved," said Nash, who teamed up with Dixon again to win the 1965 world title. "He [Monti] was a wonderful man and a great friend. In fact, all the Italians were our friends."

Text (edited) from an article from IOC News (February 1964)

*Image: The Bobsleigh, Box Lane 2017.*

## CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE & WORK OF GORDON BENINGFIELD



BENINGFIELD  
2018

**2018** marks the twentieth anniversary of the untimely death of local artist, Gordon Beningfield. Over the last couple of years two local Beningfield enthusiasts have been working with a number of local and national wildlife and conservation organisations to offer a variety of events to celebrate the natural beauty in Gordon's works. He was surely one of Britain's most well-known and talented wildlife and countryside artists. The events will get you closer to the stunning wildlife he loved so much and to celebrate his life, work and important legacy.

Great Gaddesden Church will be the centre of activity in June, the events are as follows:

**Friday 15<sup>th</sup> June** (19:00–22:00) St. John the Baptist Church, Great Gaddesden. Ticket only reception & talk by Beningfield's close friend and 'The Nature Man' Dennis Furnell. Tickets via Peter Diggle (01442 231628) or Peter King (01442 256556).

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> June 'Big Wild Weekend'** - Flower festival, guided walks and lots of family activities.

**Flower Festival** celebrating Beningfield's English countryside at St. John the Baptist church Great Gaddesden. The church will be open Saturday 10:30-4:30. Sunday following the morning service 11:45-4:30.

**Wildlife of the River Gade** – Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust 30 Days Wild – family fun activities exploring the water meadows alongside the River Gade.

**Guided Walks** by the Water End & Upper Gade Valley Conservation Society. Walk will start at the churchyard each day at 14:00; sign up in the gazebo on the day. Walks will be 1-1.5 hours, highlighting the local wildlife and landscape much loved by Gordon Beningfield. Each walk will end back at the church, where cream teas will be available. [More details](#)

Come and see **Redbourn Museum** and **Pitstone Rural Life Museum** displays on countryside living in days gone by.

**National History Museum** (NHM) in Tring will host a weekend of special events from Friday 6<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> July. See link for more information: <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/visit/tring/exhibitions-at-tring/beningfield-2018-events.html> These include:

**Free Pop-up Exhibition of Gordon Beningfield's Work** – A fantastic opportunity to view rarely-displayed original artwork and discover the man behind the brushes.

**Butterflies & Wildlife Art** – an evening talk 6<sup>th</sup> July 19:00-21:00. Tickets £9 (incl. glass of wine). ***'Making a difference for butterflies: how we can meet the challenges they face'***. As Butterfly Conservation celebrates 50 years, join Jim Asher, Chair of Butterfly Conservation, to explore what has changed and why butterflies matter in our landscapes. ***'Nature in art: inspiring wildlife illustration'*** Carol Roberts, wildlife artist and illustrator. Advanced booking essential for this double-bill of talks for adults. Tickets from NHM 020 7942 6163 (Mon-Fri 10:00-16:00).

**Wildlife Super Saturday (7<sup>th</sup> July 10:00-16:00)** – Drop in for a free fun day out for adults and families in and around the Museum's grounds. NHM and other wildlife organisations to create a day of activities, walks, stalls and games.

**Friday 14<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> September** - Celebration of Gordon Beningfield's work with the Box Moor Trust. More information to follow nearer the time.

## WWI - 100 YEARS ON – THE GAZETTE WAR REPORTS

**W**e found an interesting Royal Naval Air Service story in the Gazette. This was days before the RNAS merged with the British Army's Royal Flying Corps to form a new service – the Royal Air Force.

Gazette published 6<sup>th</sup> April 1918. **AEROPLANE ACCIDENT – GALLANT AIRMAN'S DEATH**

At the West Herts Hospital, Hemel Hempstead, on Thursday last week Mr. Lovel Smeathman held an inquest on the body of the airman who died in the institution as a result of injuries received in an aeroplane accident at Berkhamsted the previous day.

Mrs. Maud Wimbush, wife of John Ewart Barnes Wimbush of Kensington, identified the deceased as her son, Flight Lieutenant Lea Ewart Barnes Wimbush, aged 19 years. He had been an instructor at an aerodrome for eight months, and in the air service a year and eight months. He was a very experienced pilot. Deceased had a brother at Berkhamsted School, and he said that one day he would fly over Berkhamsted.

Mr. John S. Morgan, a schoolmaster at Berkhamsted School, said he was on the school playing fields, Chesham-road, with the boys on Wednesday afternoon. Just before three o'clock he saw a triplane come from the direction of the town. The airman did some loops and some very fine stunts, and the machine came very low, but he seemed to have complete control. After doing three "spirals" the machine nose dived, but did not crash down. It "bumped". It looked as though the airman lost control. He made a desperate attempt to recover when near the ground and nearly succeeded. Witness was within 100 yards of where the machine fell, and ran up to it at once. He got the pilot out and sent for the doctor and the police. He was bleeding freely from a deep wound in the head. The deceased's brother was on the field at the time. Dr. Arnold arrived, followed by Dr. Bontor, and the deceased was taken to the pavilion on the stretcher, and afterwards to the hospital. The deceased evidently came to Berkhamsted to show his brother his flying.

By the Forman: It was not ordinary flying; the deceased was giving a display. Wing Commander C. F. Kilner, R.N.A.S., commanding officer of the deceased air station, said the deceased was very experienced, both in active and instructional service. He did a lot of cross-country flying. Between four and five o'clock he was informed of the accident by the police. The deceased had flown the same type of machine for 18 months, and was wounded in a fight with a German machine in France while flying a similar machine. He was a very fine pilot, and a splendid fellow, and quite accustomed to doing the stunts referred to by the last witness. His theory was that the deceased misjudged the height he was flying at and "straightened out" too late. Witness had examined the machine, and found all the controls still intact and correct.

Dr. Bontor, Berkhamsted, said he was sent for about three o'clock, and saw the deceased in the pavilion. His head was badly damaged; his hip dislocated, and his leg fractured he was taken to the West Herts Hospital. Here the witness operated on him as the only chance of saving his life. He stood the operation well and seemed to improve, but did not regain consciousness, and died at 5.20 on Thursday morning. Death was due to the injury to the brain. A piece of skull, three inches long, was driven into the brain, his head had evidently struck some hard sharp edge.

Wing Commander Kilner on behalf of himself, his officers, and men, expressed his deep regret at the occurrence. All felt the loss of the deceased most deeply, as he was one of their best fliers. The Coroner said all would join in an expression of deep regret at the country's loss of such a valuable young life, and their deep sympathy with the bereaved relatives. No blame apparently attached to anybody. The jury endorsed the Coroner's remarks, and returned a verdict of "Accidental Death".

**Image:** Flight Lieutenant Lea Ewart Barnes Wimbush, Royal Naval Air Service Instructor. Public domain.



## INTRODUCING ZARA

At the beginning of the New Year DHT were delighted to welcome Dr. Zara Power as the newest member of our team.



As many of you will know I have recently been appointed as the part-time Museum Support Officer here at DHT. Having grown up in the world of antique dealing I have always been curious about the past and the ways in which even the most seemingly humdrum objects can evoke a variety of lives and attitudes. My childhood interest in the topic of material culture developed into a career, which has seen me work in both the museum sector and academia.

Having completed a B.A. in History at the University of Limerick, Ireland, I went on to undertake an M.Phil at Trinity College Dublin. I subsequently undertook an internship at the National Museum of Ireland where I acted as a research assistant to the Keeper of Antiquities. Whilst working with the jewellery collection, I became interested in the topic of personal adornment in early modern Ireland and consequently undertook a Ph.D. on the topic. During my studies I continued to work in the museum sector, namely in the Hunt Museum, Limerick. I concurrently lectured on the topic of material culture at the University of Limerick.

Having lived in the local area for the last two years I have developed an interest and appreciation for the rich heritage of Dacorum and am delighted and excited by the prospect of inspiring a pride in the history and culture of the area through exhibitions, events, education and outreach activities.

I am delighted to join the team at The Dacorum Heritage Trust and am really looking forward to learning more about the collections and to getting to know everyone involved with DHT.

*Zara Power, Museum Support Officer, The Dacorum Heritage Trust Ltd.*

## CURATOR'S CORNER

**The Bury Museum Project.** We are delighted to announce that our Collections Manager Nina Glencross has been appointed by Dacorum Borough Council as DHT Project Manager. DHT are now jointly working towards an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund later in the summer. Meanwhile with the extra work involved, Nina will be based at The Forum in Hemel for one day a week for the immediate future. It's a very exciting time for all concerned.

**Newsletter Mailing Lists.** Whether you receive your DHT newsletter via post or email, as from 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018 if you have not opted into our mailing lists you will no longer receive our newsletter, invitations to events or exhibitions. We need to comply with the EU General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), which will mean changes to our mailing lists.

**Heritage Hub wins National Lottery Support.** Berkhamsted Local History & Museum Society (BLH&MS) has received a £60k grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to explore innovative options for a Heritage Hub and Network in Berkhamsted designed to appeal to all ages; working closely with local schools and community groups. To explore how the large collections of mainly locked-away historic memorabilia can be used to bring the many stories of our past to life.

Mary Casserley, Chair of BLH&MS, said: "We are absolutely delighted that the National Lottery has chosen to support our project, amongst strong competition. This funding means we can access expert help to explore the potential for using new technology, assess costs and the feasibility of investing in new learning resources, and to develop innovative ways of involving many more people in bringing our local heritage to life. We welcome all your views and ideas!" To read the full article see the link, please keep checking our website over the coming months:

<https://berkhamsted-history.org.uk>



**New Heritage Centre at The Bury, Hemel Hempstead.** Please visit our website and fill in the online survey <http://www.dacorumheritage.org.uk/dht-news/survey-for-a-new-museum/> before the closing date on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> May its open to everyone, so hurry we want your views.

**Legacy Giving.** Please remember to include a bequest to The Dacorum Heritage Trust Ltd. when you make or revise your will. To safeguard the collections for future generations. Link [www.dacorumheritage.org.uk/support-us/legacies/](http://www.dacorumheritage.org.uk/support-us/legacies/)

***The Museum Store is open by appointment only. For enquiries email Nina our Collections Manager.***

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