

FARMLAND MUSEUM TODAY



A Newsletter from all involved at the Farmland Museum

The Farmland Museum, Denny Abbey, Ely Road, Waterbeach. Cambridge. CB25 9PQ.

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DENNY RETURNS TO THE 1940's FOR LATE MAY HOLIDAY



Once again, the 1940's event saw re-enactors depicting the rôle of American forces in defence of the UK and Europe. Needless to say those present were fascinated by this robust and rather noisy activity. This year they brought with them some colleagues representing members of the third reich to introduce some element of wartime violence. Needless to say these 'Nazis' did not fare well but visitors were greatly entertained by the well rehearsed 'war games' from the time... well, maybe well rehearsed..



You see what I mean.....?



Guess whose body is being carried away... yes it is the 'baddie'...



...possibly to be given attention by this 'District nurse' from the period.



Interestingly some authentic war years cake recreations were made available and dispensed by Ann Wise (Museum Manager) with the inevitable 'cuppa' - which I suspect lacked authenticity (well, were teabags a feature of wartime refreshments? Not according to my memory.

These small arms (right) look very much like the real article though.



Camp Denny? Where else would you find rubber "barbed wire?"

A WORD FROM THE MANAGER

Dear all

Its been another busy summer at Denny! As this bumper edition of the newsletter shows we ran quite a few events, and experienced extreme weather.

The school holidays for us started on Thursday 26 July - CHILDREN'S ARCHAEOLOGY DAY! It was hot, we were busy, families enjoyed themselves and we sold lots of ice cream. We were so busy that no photographs were taken which is a shame. Throughout August we ran the Family Activity Afternoons on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Every year we are funded by the Cambridge University Museums through their SUMMER IN THE MUSEUMS project which combines all the children's Holiday activities being run by museums in and around Cambridge. The organiser has told me that this year's events has been the best yet - more events on offer and more creative activities. We owe Ros Wright a big thank you for overseeing this summer's activities with help from volunteers Levi and Ann. Emma, Bethany, Jane and myself helped at several of the sessions. I can now make straw dollies!



By the time you read this Bethany and I will have spent the day at Shuttleworth (near Biggleswade). We were invited to provide some activities at their Heritage Air Show which featured many of their agricultural machines as well as planes from the collection. The following week Emma and Jane spent the weekend at the Haddenham Steam Rally with an activity table. In October we'll have a stand for 3 days at Ely Cathedral as part of the cathedral's Harvest Festival. We're very lucky that many organisations invite us to participate at their events. We do the same and this year welcomed back the Woodland Trust and the Raptor Foundation, and said a big hello to the RSPB who have been at two of our events this year. We're expecting the WWF to join us on Heritage Open Day for the first time and could be the start of another beneficial partnership.

I enjoyed working on the CHIVERS OF HISTON exhibition. It is on until 28 October in the Cottage Gallery. The packaging borrowed from the Museum of Cambridge is fantastic!

All best wishes Ann

THE TRUSTEES REPORT - By Dr.Jane Williamson Chair of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees has gained two new members recently both of whom come with very useful experience and knowledge. One is a Landbeach resident and has experience of management and of project management as well as many other skills. Mike Peirson lives further afield but works at the IWM at Duxford and has experience of marketing, and of working with volunteers as well as a having background in agriculture. This means we now have two Trustees who work at the IWM as Vickie Williams is also there and it is really helpful to have their insights and experience.

Dorothy Betts another long serving Trustee stood down in July she was a very loyal and committed trustee who, as a retired headmistress, was able to give the museum some valuable support. We shall miss her input and hope that she will enjoy having a bit more time to herself.

In May, Peter Johnson, who had been our loyal and supportive District Council representative for about 12 years, left the council; his role has now been taken by Councillor Anna Bradnam who is District Councillor for Waterbeach, Landbeach, Milton and Chittering and County Councillor for our villages as well as Fen Ditton and Horningsea.

Steve Archer and Caroline Hunt (Vice Chair of Trustees) are regular members of the Wednesday volunteer team and it is really good to see more interaction between volunteers and trustees. Steve and Mike Peirson organized a very good brainstorming session one Wednesday morning when volunteers put forward their ideas for the ways the museum could be improved and developed both in the very short term and over the next fifteen to twenty years. There were some very good ideas, which will feed into both our short term business plan and into the Master Plan which is very slowly taking shape. It prepares the way for the defining the role of the Farmland Museum and Denny Abbey as an important asset for the New Town next door and other newcomers to the region. We would love to hear from our readers their thoughts about how the Museum and Abbey could develop in such a way that it maintains its unique sense of continuity with the past and its sense of peace and isolation in this increasingly busy world. What do you think we could do to help a growing 21st century audience, many of whom will be new to the region, feel a sense of ownership of this glorious place. Send your thoughts to jane275@btinternet.com and I will pass them on to Steve.

Education

We were very busy before the summer holidays with visits to the Museum by two groups from Romsey Mill Pre-school, a children's Art Club and several language schools. Ann also went out and spent a lovely morning at Kings Hedges School talking about Life In The Fens.

Now that the holidays over we have several bookings which we are finalising including 75 children from Burwell who are coming to do Wash Day with Ann.



FAREWELL TO THE FRIENDS

Sadly the Friends of the Farmland Museum took the difficult decision to close last year.

Over the years the Friends have managed to raise funds for the Museum to purchase items on its Wish list and funded the restoration of the Grey Fergie Tractor that now stands again in front of the Grain Store. In total over £30,000 was raised.

Here are just some of the photographs of the Friends from the Museum's album.



As there was a residue of funds, which under the Constitution of the Friends of the Farmland Museum may be directed to another charity if one closes the Friends Committee decided to donate it to the Farmland Museum to be spent on improving displays, visitor information and interaction - but not on everyday expenses, as that was never the intention when the Friends Charity was set up. The Friends fundraising was for the enhancement of education of Fenland Farming and improvement of the visitor experience.

In the final letter from the last remaining members of the Friends Committee - Robert Stripe, Ros and Adrian Wright wrote:

"..The friends are pleased to be handing over the sum of four hundred and eighty-three pounds and seven pence (£483.07) to the Museum as the last of their funds held and wish the museum all the best for the future regretting they are not able any longer to support the museum financially with an Average of £1,5000 each year."

Everyone at the Museum thanks the Friends for their hard work and commitment to supporting the site over the years. We hope that one day like a Phoenix rising from the ashes the Friends of the Farmland Museum will reform and continue to play an important role in the Museum's activities.

OUR “FERGIE”

- by Steve Chambers.

Part 2: The concluding part of Steve Chambers explanation of the recent renovation work on the Museum’s iconic exhibit.

Our Fergie is an early example of a TE20 and was manufactured in 1950. We have no knowledge of its working history (if anyone can tell us more we would love to know) but do know it was presented to the Haddenham museum as a non-working static exhibit. When the collection was transferred to the Denny Abbey site Fergie naturally came too and took pride of place in the circle at the entrance.

Over the years weather took its toll on the tractor and in 2011 the museum staff decided Fergie needed a face lift. The tractor was moved into the workshop ready for strip it down, clean and paint and to see whether it would be possible to get the tractor running.

The strip down revealed a lot about our tractor. Firstly, it had had a hard life, many parts such as the crankshaft were severely worn and beyond repair. The engine oil sump was full of congealed oil that had to be removed. Many parts were not standard as per the book for example the distributor was a type used on an MG Midget and not the specified type at all! Most interesting was that the cylinder head had been spaced off from the engine block using 6 head gaskets rather than the normal single gasket



suggesting the engine had been modified to run at lower compression possibly using paraffin instead of petrol.

Reassembly of the tractor commenced but unfortunately we encountered many problems. Parts were ordered but because our tractor was not standard some parts would not fit. Having removed the 6 head-gaskets reassembling with a single gasket meant the valve stems were too long and needed modifying and so it went on. Refurbishment was slow, by the summer of 2017 we realised that given the time and the resources available the goal of getting the tractor operational again was probably over ambitious. Together with the Trustees we decided that due to the additional time, skills and cost required to get Fergie operational together with the ongoing running costs and the safety implications of having an operational agricultural vehicle in the

museum, a cosmetic refurbishment was the best option.

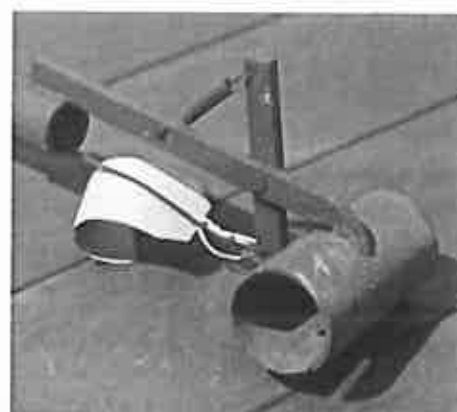
Fergie has now been reassembled, repainted and repositioned at the museum entrance under its smart new winter cover ready to show off its new splendour for the

2018 season.

The main sources for information about Harry Ferguson and tractor design and development of tractors were “Iron Harvests of the Field” by Peter Dewey published 2008 and “British tractors for World Farming” by Michael Williams published 1980.

EMMA’S MYSTERY OBJECT

I am given to understand that the object featured in this issue is a mystery to Emma (Denny’s Mistress of mystery) herself. However I am convinced that I know what it is - I could be wrong mind you - but what do you think this is?



STEAMPUNK AT DENNY 2018

So, what exactly is 'Steam Punk?' Well I did ask this question of one stall holder but the response was akin to asking a waffling art critic his assessment of some obscure art movement. Words followed freely but did not, to me at least, make total sense. Listening between the lines I gathered that it was a style of dress and decoration based loosely on the 'Goth' movement and that the 'steam' part related to the Victorian age of steam with a large element of heavily developed eccentricity. One thing is for

certain, these people love dressing up and have an obsession with ineffective goggles. I did speak to several others and found them quite charming but equally unable to convey to me their ethos or 'raison d'être' but they all revelled in their sense of the visual absurd. Maybe we should all find room in our lives for more of this but if you missed the event this year, may I suggest that you make an effort next year? It really is a good natured event with a real difference even if you may be left very, very puzzled at the end!



Very few of the Steam Punks were hatless you will notice.... or goggleless.



Enjoying the Denny sunshine and why not? ...and speaking of hats, here (above right) is a good one to have in an emergency. Where is the tonic kept though? They even had a hat race - see two of the contestants (right) - and yes, they were self-propelled... but not by steam!



PLEASE SUPPORT THE FARMLAND MUSEUM

Grant funding for independent museums such as ours is increasingly hard to find. We are very grateful to South Cambridgeshire District Council for continuing to provide a small grant each year and our partnership with English Heritage means that some costs are shared with them. However, to keep the museum affordable for our visitors we still need extra income.

Raising this extra income is essential for our survival

Here are some things you can do. The first two cost you nothing

- Tell your friends about us - we always need more visitors
- See www.easyfundraising.org.uk Many retailers make a small contribution if you purchase from them on line and these small contributions mount up.
- Buy small gifts in the shop for Christmas or birthday presents
- Put a donation in one of the collection boxes when you visit, even loose change adds up.
- Make a donation on line. See <https://mydonate.bt.com/charities/thefarmlandmuseum>. If you are a uk tax payer every £1.00 becomes £1.25 for the Farmland Museum

The Farmland Museum and Denny Abbey are a unique cultural, educational and recreational resource for people living in Cambridgeshire and beyond. Please help to support it

SURPRISE, SURPRISE!



Walking round the museum site during the Steam Punk event, I was stopped dead in my tracks at the rear of the small pond area behind the education block by this flowering Corncockle (*Agrostemma githago*), clearly part of a wild flower cornfield annual mix seeded by the Museum. This is a 'poisonous' weed of earlier cornfields (as were the prolific accompanying Poppies), now very rare in the wild. During my lifetime of professional interest in wild flora, I have only noticed this plant growing 3 times - once in the wild and now twice under cultivation. It just goes to show that there are always some surprises at the Farmland Museum if you keep your eyes open. Well done for the Museum in helping to save this species from total UK extinction. *(Museum, please lightly rake over that area after flowering during the autumn to encourage natural re-generation, by soil disturbance, for all annuals.)*

COUNTRYSIDE PAST & PRESENT - Sunday 8th July.

Well, one aspect of this event was very obvious... it was H-O-T! Ornithological welfare was obviously a high priority with both the RSPB and the Raptor Foundation represented.



Ros Wright was again into 'botanicals' offering bespoke pot pourri opportunities whilst Mike Ruff entertained in the cool stone barn. However, my pick of the photos taken showed the cattle in the adjoining field also feeling the heat and seeking shelter where ever they could find it!

Those who recall Denny under wildly differing weather conditions.. bask in this!



BACK TO THE MIDDLE AGES - August Bank Holiday

The weather forecast for the Bank Holiday weekend was dire and for once it was correct - it was very very wet!

Would the Companie of the Silver Arrow back out at the last moment?

Would any visitors turn up?

Thankfully the group didn't pull out and visitors turned up! Phew!

Sunday was the wetter of the two days but much to everyone's delight some very hardy visitors turned up to enjoy what the Museum was offering.

The camp site for the Companie of the Silver Arrow was behind the Abbey within the walled area, however the walls were no protection for the wind and one of the small tents collapsed. Luckily they were able to dry out in the Education Room overnight.

We were so pleased to have 'better' wetter on the Monday and more visitors ventured out.

As well as the camp the Museum Team based themselves in the Stone Barn. Young visitors could make a crown and meet Alex the Anglo-Saxon.

Despite the weather the feedback from visitors was very positive! Understandably we didn't get to take many photographs!



On Facebook:

".. we had a fantastic day . our first experience today and despite the weather we all had a great day. would recommend this place to anyone .suitable for families and children young adults with special needs or mobility problems. we could have spent all day exploring .we will be back .."

P.Trucks (26 August 2018)

FREE EVENTS AT DENNY



The Farmland Museum & Denny Abbey

Explore the site for free!
Sunday 16 September
11am - 5pm

- * Tours of the Abbey
- * Talk on the life of the Countess of Pembroke
- * Talk on the wartime objects in the Museum
- * Rag Rug Making Demonstrations in the Cottage
- * Family Trail (follow the clues for a reward!)

MIKE RUFF CELEBRATES IN SONGS & WORDS
TWO important centuries: the ending of WW1 and The Emancipation Act of 1918
12.30pm & 2.30pm
(Part of the Museum of Cambridge's Tracing Traditions Project)

For full programme go to www.farmlandmuseum.org.uk



www.heritageopendays.org.uk



Ely Road (A10) - 3 miles north of Camoridge before Chatterton
Cambridgeshire CB25 9PQ

COUNTRY DANCING

FREE workshops for ADULTS

Suitable for Teachers, Educators & Community Workers
And those who just want to give it a try .. No experience required!

Wednesday 19 September


2 - 3.30pm or 4 - 5.30pm



Country dancing is a fun, vibrant, colourful tradition.
Come alone or bring a friend. Easy to learn.
Great for exercise & well-being!

This free workshop is part of the Museum's Tracing Traditions project with the Museum of Cambridge & supported by TRADAMIS

To book email: info@farmlandmuseum.org.uk or call 01223 850988
Or go online: <http://tradamis.org/events.html>

Ely Road (A10) Cambridgeshire CB25 9PQ
www.farmlandmuseum.org.uk





BRING FRIENDS & FAMILY TO DENNY

Opening times are Tuesday to Friday inclusive 12.00 noon until 5.00 pm. On Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays 10.30 am until 5.00 pm. Admission charges are Adults £5.00, Concessions (over 60's, disabled, students, income support & job seekers) £4.00, Children (from age 5 to 17) £3.00 and those under five are admitted free. A family ticket is available for £13.00. For some special event days an additional £1.00 may be added to the aforementioned charges.

The 'Docky Box' Tearoom is open for food and drinks Weekends and Bank holidays, also on Wednesdays and Thursdays during school holidays. English Heritage current members visit Denny Abbey free of charge and enjoy a price reduction on the Museum admittance charge.

OCTOBER HALF-TERM FAMILY ACTIVITY AFTERNOONS

Wednesday 24 October

Thursday 25 October

Drop-in between 12noon - 4pm

Craft activities & a Family
Trail

Normal admission prices apply.
Docky Box Tea Room Open

Have you visited the Book Shop Recently?

We have a great selection of books all looking for a new home! The Book Shop only stocks books in good condition - ALL have been donated.

October 28th 11.00am - 4.00 pm



HALLOWE'EN EVENT

Yes, again already... Brace yourselves!

DON'T MISS OUT... Keep up to date with all the Museums events and special arrangements with the website www.farmlandmuseum.org.uk. Check this out regularly to ensure you are kept "in the loop."

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