

RUTLAND HISTORY NEWS

joint newsletter of the FRIENDS OF THE RUTLAND COUNTY MUSEUM Reg. Charity No: 521871

and the RUTLAND LOCAL HISTORY AND RECORD SOCIETY Reg. Charity No: 700273

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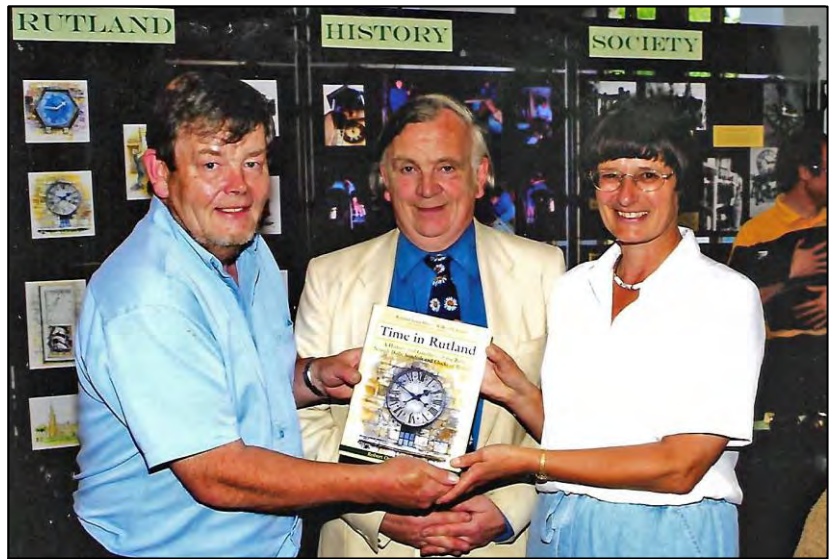
SUMMER 2002

LAUNCHING 'TIME IN RUTLAND'

When we started our project to record the history of time in Rutland some seven or eight years ago, little did we know what we were letting ourselves in for. We had no external brief and were not constrained in any way - our simple objective was to record everything to do with time. Like large oak trees grow from tiny acorns our I simple idea expanded into a monster - because to clocks and sundials we added scratch dials and then church bells, and as well as recording and photographing these we had to research all the relevant documents at the local Record Offices, libraries and museums, consult experts in bells and sundials as well as local historians, churchwardens and the like.

About two years ago we started writing the book, selecting photographs and preparing drawings. Our initial estimates were that it would have about 240 pages and some 300 illustrations. How wrong can you be? - the final version has 400 pages and over 900 illustrations. In order to achieve this, we had to get to grips with the finer details of modern technology - computers, scanners, CD writers, not only to store the results of our research, but also to write the book and also to transfer it to designer John Robey. We had fond hopes of being able to launch the book towards the end of the millennium year. Again, how wrong can you be? - it took a further 18 months of hard work to prepare the final version. But by April 2002 everything was checked and ready for printing, and, at last, we could allow ourselves to think about the launch.

The book was being printed in Spain and was scheduled for delivery early in June. Tim Clough promised to ring us as soon as the delivery lorry arrived at the museum



Authors Sheila Sleath and Robert Ovens with Leader of Rutland County Council and RLHRS committee member, Edward Baines

and it was with great excitement, and some trepidation, that we rushed to Oakham to see the final result of our efforts. To say that we were delighted is an understatement! We were not allowed to get involved in organising the launch party at the museum on Saturday 21 June. All we were aware of was that we had to sign books, say a few words, and have photographs taken.

On the evening the book was launched by Edward Baines, who pointed out, to our delight and amazement, that this was the first book on Rutland to be written by authors who were born and bred in in the county. Tintinabula, a very professional handbell band from Kinnoulton, then entertained members and guests - nearly 100 of them. Their 30 minute performance included many familiar tunes including "Celebration

Fanfare", as well as an entertaining demonstration of change ringing.

The other highlight of the evening was the barbecue, prepared and served by members of both societies. Noteworthy among the cooks were the entire Clough family contingent!

It was a memorable evening and the best possible send-off for our book. Thanks to all involved.

Robert Ovens and Sheila Sleath

Publication schedule

The major publication 'Time in Rutland' has now been successfully launched and very well received. Editorial work of the RLHRS was largely devoted to this volume, and publication of the next issue of Rutland Record, no 21, has been delayed. However, our priority is now to catch up with this issue and all other outstanding projects on our publication programme.



From the RLHRS visit to Burley in June

WANTED - volunteer newsletter editor(s) to produce a more regular, more detailed report on RLHRS activities for its members - Contact Sue on 01780 410533

Future Events - our new programme offers an interesting range of talks during the coming months. (NB Look out for special parking arrangements for the Ashwell visit.) However, members may notice the lack of the traditional 'Autumn Social'. In its place we look forward to a joint RLHRS/FRCM post-Christmas Party at the museum in early January, Mulled wine, seasonal food and entertainment should help to banish the winter blues!

ALL CHANGE AT THE MUSEUM

Heritage Lottery Fund and Museum Development

We are delighted to confirm that the Heritage Lottery Fund has offered a grant of just over £300,000 towards the museum's reorientation and development project. Work will be starting in the autumn to re-open an original entrance to the Stable Block at the north end of the Riding School building, off the South Street car park, and to restore the appearance of this facade. The Volunteer Soldier gallery will be replaced by a new reception area, with introductory displays about Rutland, linking to the main displays through the rest of the building. The existing meeting room will be divided to provide a shop area and a room with study facilities. The introductory displays will be movable to give flexibility of use. In the Riding School, the balcony display cases, which do not meet modern standards, will be taken out and replaced by re-using those from the Volunteer Soldier gallery, and part of the balcony will be devoted to the Volunteer Soldier story. There will be a passenger lift to the balcony. Staff accommodation will be concentrated in No 2 Catmose Street, above the Colonel Noel Suite which will become the main meeting and activity area. The existing entrance will be changed into a window as it was originally. Toilets will be refurbished. During the alterations, there is bound to be some inconvenience to museum users, but fortunately there will be no need to close the museum while work

proceeds. The alterations should be complete sometime in the spring, at a date to be announced.

The project would not be possible without the support of Rutland County Council, which has allocated £48,600 in its capital programme for 2002-03, the Friends of the Museum who have promised £35,000. and the Rutland Local History & Record Society, contributing £4,000.

Further details of the scheme are being given at an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Friends of the Museum on Thursday 5th September.

Museum staff changes

The museum development scheme coincides with major changes in the staffing of the museum. Tim Clough, who has been variously Keeper or Curator since 1974, retired on 31st August and the appointment of his successor is awaited. The staff structure has been reviewed, and it is intended to introduce a new structure which will enable the museum to deliver a more comprehensive service, emphasising its educational role and promoting its activities more widely. More information will be circulated in due course when everything has been agreed and the new structure is in place.

Pending completion of these arrangements, Tim Clough will remain in office as Honorary Secretary of the Friends of the Museum, and he will also be continuing as Honorary Editor of the RLHRS.

ARCHAEOLOGY NEWS

The Roman Town at Thistleton

The fieldwalking group has been busy at the Roman Town site near Thistleton. During October - December 2001 a total of 4000 pottery sherds (the vast majority Roman), 42 kg of iron slag and other small finds were recovered from the town site. Finds have been identified and mapped and in the next few weeks a geophysical survey will be undertaken by the University of Leicester with the help of the group. Want to get involved? It's free, it's fun and it gets you out in the fresh air. **Call Kate Don on 01572 767701.**

CHAIRMAN'S VIEW

Over the last year RHLRS has worked hard to respond to members' wishes and widen the Society's appeal. Our new, colourful leaflet has already brought in 17 new members (although some subscriptions remain overdue!). Popular visits, organised by members, included Wing, Exton Park and Burley. Meanwhile, various sub-groups continue to look at aspects such as future development, finance, planning and, in an exciting new project, Rutland's Oral History. We supported the Museum Service's bid for lottery money, believing strongly in access for all to local records and opportunities for education and research, in return we are promised office space and involvement with the new Rutland Studies Room.