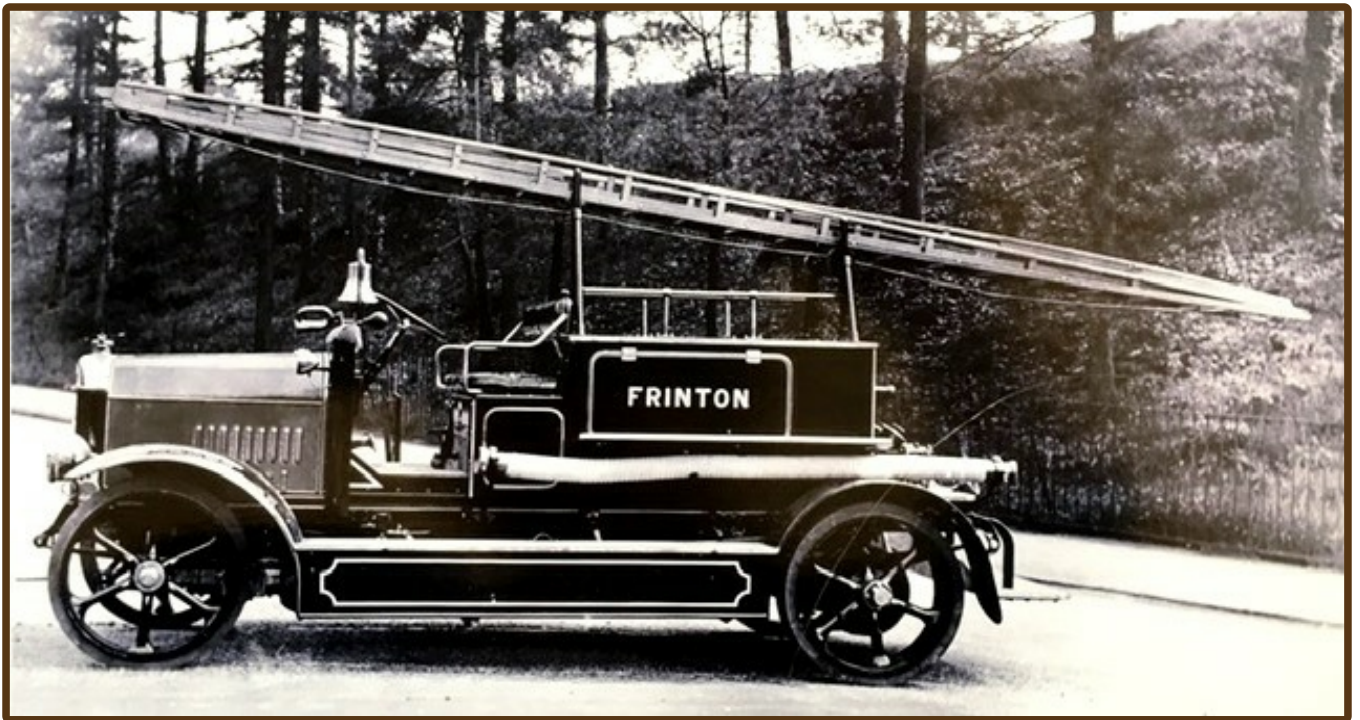


# Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust



## NEWSLETTER

Spring / Summer 2020



### **Frinton's 1926 Fire Engine**

See Anne Flavell's article on page 21.

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## Mary Dean 1940 - 2019

Liz Bruce

My very dear friend Mary departed this life on 8 November 2019. We had been friends for many years and she will be sadly missed by me. She was born on 8 December 1940 in Old Road, Frinton, went to local schools and had a career in nursing. She has a lovely daughter, Alexis, whom she adored along with her family.

Mary had a vast knowledge of the area and this proved to be invaluable to the Trust when she joined us in the archives. She also hosted the winter coffee mornings. For the last six years, around the Tendring area and as far as Colchester, we did our unique talk to many clubs and societies, about women in the Second World War. This proved to be quite a success, with Mary making most of the many war-time recipe cakes.



We had so much in common: we were both born on the same day (although eight years apart); we both had brothers called Jim; were both left-handed; and both of us attended Clacton County High School when it was a grammar school. We also had similar hobbies and interests such as card-making, knitting, needlework, dancing, local history, music, etc. We even went on holiday to Maastricht to see André Rieu and his fabulous orchestra.

A lovely, kind lady, Mary was someone whom I looked on as a 'big sister'; she helped me through my tough time last year. Nothing was ever too much for her and she was always ready to help; it will be difficult to replace her.

## Mary Dean Jacey Dias

In June 2019, I interviewed Mary as part of a research project for the Friends of Frinton Summer Theatre. Mary was a member of the Friends' Committee and her local knowledge goes back a lifetime. This is what she told me.

She was born and brought up in Frinton. Her father, Alec Dean, was a painter and decorator and used to build the scenery for the Summer Theatre when she was a child. She remembers that, at one point, Peter Hoar wanted to move the

day on which the play changed to Saturdays. This would have meant her father working all night and on a Sunday to get the new scenery ready, which he refused to do as he was a 'churchman'. So Peter left the changeover as Thursday.

Mary could not remember if her father was paid for his work, but she thought he got free tickets to performances. On some occasions, her brothers Jim and David would help him construct scenery.

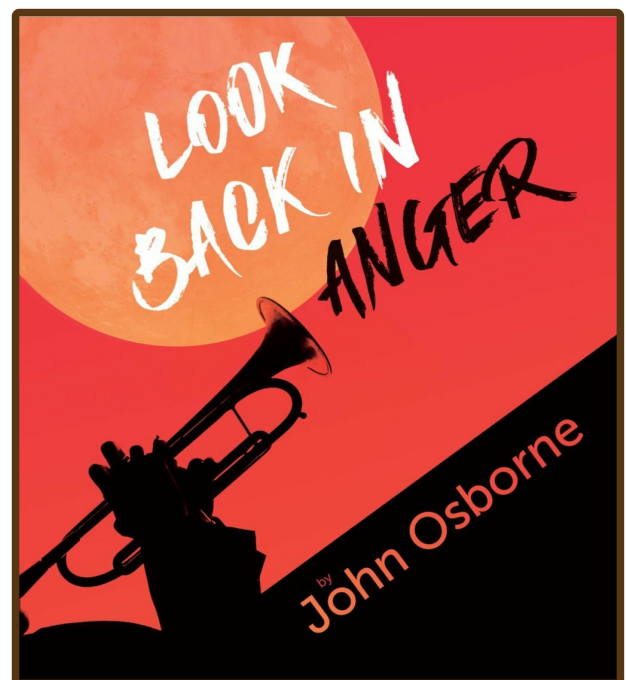
She recalled: "We had a house in Old Road and I could watch people from my bedroom, at the back of the house, coming to the Theatre in evening dress. It was very exciting for a young girl. My mother used to let a bedroom to the stage manager."

As a teenager in the 1950s Mary helped out with front-of-house duties. "In those days it was teenage girls who sold the programmes and showed people to their seats. We all dressed up prettily to do this two or three times a week. We were paid five shillings."

"The audience wore evening dress to the Theatre and most people just turned up on the night and bought tickets from the Box Office, which was in the foyer of the *Institute Hall* (known now as the *McGrigor Hall*). We didn't sell any alcoholic drinks, but you could get tea and coffee during the interval from George & Hilda Baker who were in charge of the kitchen every night. They were real characters who, like us, lived in Old Road. The older girls worked the Box Office and were paid 7/6d."

As Mary was involved with the Theatre in the 1950s, she remembers seeing Vanessa Redgrave in *Look Back in Anger*. "I would have been 16 then and there was a lot of controversy locally about the play. My father was absolutely disgusted and said to Peter Hoar: 'Peter, put on rubbish like that and you'll have no-one coming to the theatre.' He didn't want me to see it, but because I was front-of-house, I saw it three times!"

In Vanessa Redgrave's autobiography, she says that Mrs Branch was her landlady. Mary remembers Mrs Branch, a lovely woman who had a flat above *Loose's* (now *Townrow*) in Connaught Avenue. Mary also remembered Gawn Grainger, who was 'a very handsome actor' appearing at the Theatre around the same time.





## Diary of Trust Events

**Saturday, 4 April: Tea Party in memory of Christine Tovey** and unveiling of memorial bench at FRINTON CROSSING GARDEN from 2pm to 4pm. See page 11.

**Tuesday, 7 April: Winter Social Evening: ‘Memories of Blowers & Cooper’**, Frinton’s ironmongery and hardware store from 1903 to 1998. An illustrated talk by Robin Cooper, grandson of its founder, George Cooper (1870-1967). Venue: McGRIGOR HALL, Frinton-on-Sea at 7.30pm. Admission £2 members, £3 non-members.

**Easter Bank Holiday Weekend: Friday, 10 April to Monday, 13 April:** WALTON MARITIME MUSEUM opens daily from 2pm to 4pm at The Old Lifeboat House, East Terrace. A new exhibition celebrates 300 years of the Naze Tower and the important role it has played over the centuries.

**Easter Bank Holiday Weekend: Friday, 10 April to Monday, 13 April:** FRINTON CROSSING COTTAGE MUSEUM, displays of VE Day and the end of the Second World War & in the TREVOR BRIGHT RAILWAY MUSEUM a display of Eastern National ’buses and details of the Walton train crash of 1987. Open daily from 2pm to 4pm at the former Crossing Keeper’s Cottage, Station Approach, Frinton-on-Sea.

**Tuesday, 14 April:** FRINTON CROSSING COTTAGE MUSEUM & TREVOR BRIGHT RAILWAY MUSEUM open every Tuesday morning throughout the summer from 10am to noon. Refreshments available; also plants & produce. Bring your friends to see Frinton’s own museums and sit in the glorious gardens.

**Friday, 8 May: VE Day Celebrations:** we will be lighting our BEACON AT THE NAZE, Old Hall Lane, Walton-on-the-Naze at 9pm. A barbeque will be available from 7.30pm with exhibitions relating to the Second World War.

**Early Spring Bank Holiday Weekend: Friday, 8 May to Sunday, 10 May:** WALTON MARITIME MUSEUM opens daily from 2pm to 4pm. For further details, refer to ‘Easter Weekend’ above.

**Early Spring Bank Holiday Weekend: Friday, 8 May to Sunday, 10 May:** FRINTON CROSSING COTTAGE MUSEUM & TREVOR BRIGHT RAILWAY MUSEUM open daily from 2pm to 4pm. For further details, refer to ‘Easter Weekend’ above.

**Saturday, 9 May: Wartime History Day:** FRINTON CROSSING COTTAGE GARDENS: displays & stalls open from 10am. Also town walks, of about two hours, at 11.15am and 2.15pm led by John Barter, our local historian. Please dress according to the weather!

**Saturday, 16 May:** FRINTON CROSSING COTTAGE GARDEN: **Spring Fayre** from 10.30am to 2pm. We welcome donations of bric-a-brac, plants, homemade cakes, jams, preserves, tombola bottles, jewellery, garden produce, etc. in advance. Organiser, Ann Gladwell, can be contacted on 01255 852914 to arrange collection. Bric-a-brac stalls; also barbecue, refreshments and live music.

**Tuesday, 19 May:** **AGM** at McGRIGOR HALL, Frinton-on-Sea, 7pm for 7.30pm. Coffee will be served prior to the meeting. Please bring the agenda with you. Your membership renewal can also be made at the meeting. (The agenda and renewal form are enclosed with this newsletter.)

**May Bank Holiday Weekend: Saturday, 23 May to Monday, 25 May:** WALTON MARITIME MUSEUM opens daily from 2pm to 4pm. For further details, refer to 'Easter Weekend' above.

**May Bank Holiday Weekend: Saturday, 23 May to Monday, 25 May:** FRINTON CROSSING COTTAGE MUSEUM & TREVOR BRIGHT RAILWAY MUSEUM open daily from 2pm to 4pm. For further details, refer to 'Easter Weekend' above.

**Thursday, 28 May: Fundraising Supper Evening** for *James Stevens No.14* at The Court House, Great Bromley, followed by a short slide show; £23 per person. For bookings, or if you need transport, phone Linda Ellis on 01255 852993 or email: [secretary@fwheritage.co.uk](mailto:secretary@fwheritage.co.uk).

**Thursday, 11 June: Members' Visit to the Latin American Art Collection** at the UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX, Colchester. For further details, see page 7.

**Thursday, 9 July: Members' Visit to Glemham Hall**, Glemham, Suffolk, home of the Cobbold family. For further details, see page 7.

Other events in 2020 can be previewed by visiting our website [fwheritage.co.uk/events-diary](http://fwheritage.co.uk/events-diary) with more information in our next newsletter which will be distributed in July. Don't forget to find us on Facebook too!

## **From the Editor** **David Wicks**

Digital articles and / or images for inclusion in the Summer / Autumn 2020 edition of this newsletter should be sent directly to me or to [secretary@fwheritage.co.uk](mailto:secretary@fwheritage.co.uk). Please ensure that material for inclusion is submitted no later than **Saturday, 13 June 2020**. Material received after this deadline will NOT BE INCLUDED. Information to be incorporated into the 'Diary of Trust Events' section should also be sent, preferably by email, to Brian Jennings ([secretary@fwheritage.co.uk](mailto:secretary@fwheritage.co.uk)) by **Saturday, 6 June**.

## Members' Summer Outings

### Brian Jennings

This year the Trust has organised three visits that should interest members. Two are to Colchester and the third ventures further afield. Each visit will be restricted to 20 or 30 members (see below) and those attending will be encouraged to share transport and make their own way to the venue.



Our first visit, on 11 June at 2pm, will be to the University of Essex to see the Essex Collection of Art from Latin America (ESCALA) & the University Art Collections. ESCALA opened with a founding donation by Brazilian student Charles Cosac in 1993. The Collection is the largest of Latin American art in the UK and is integral to teaching at the University of Essex, where students from a

range of departments, including Art History, Language & Linguistics, and Human Rights, work hands-on with the artworks. The Collection will be presented to us by Curator, Dr Sarah Demelo who will give us a brief introduction to the Collection and its importance to the University with regard to both teaching and research, before pictures are rolled out from storage on their steel frames, so that we will be able to view them. There will also be an opportunity to view the Colchester Campus and to visit the gallery space in the Silberrad Student Centre.

Cost: £8 per person to be made at the time of booking. The visit will be limited to 20 Trust members. To book, email [brian.jennings650@gmail.com](mailto:brian.jennings650@gmail.com) or phone 07836 340315. Closing date for bookings is 31 May. Final arrangements will be distributed nearer the visit.

The second outing is on Thursday, 9 July. Make your own way to arrive for 2.15pm at Glemham Hall, north of Woodbridge on the A12. Glemham Hall is surrounded by 300 acres of beautiful Suffolk parkland. A long, sweeping drive leads you directly to the impressive country house built c.1560 by the de Glemham family. Glemham Hall's 3,000 acre estate hosts a working farm, and is now owned by Major Philip Hope-Cobbold who inherited it from his uncle in 1994. With a proud history of changing architecture and landscape, Glemham Hall has a wonderful history waiting to be discovered. Join us for a house tour, where you will explore the Hall from the attics down to the cellars! All being



well, Major Hope-Cobbold will lead our tour, and we will enjoy tea in the Orangery overlooking the garden afterwards.



Cost: £24 per person, including guided tour and tea in the Orangery, a 50% deposit to be made at the time of booking. The visit is limited to 30 Trust members. To book, email [brian.jennings650@gmail.com](mailto:brian.jennings650@gmail.com) or phone 07836 340315. The closing date for bookings is 11 June. Final details will be given nearer the visit.

Our final visit of the summer, on Thursday, 13 August, will be a guided tour, at 10.45am, of the Moot Hall, High Street, Colchester. The Town Hall site has been



the focus of civic duties for more than 800 years. Colchester's first town hall was built in 1160. The second town hall, was built in 1844 and was a three-storey structure with a stone-faced front elevation.

John Belcher designed the present town hall, known as the Moot Hall, which was chosen after a competition in 1897. Building work began in 1898 and it was opened by the Earl of Rosebery in May 1902. With outstanding function rooms that are still used for their original purpose and are also available to hire for functions and weddings, the building design is Baroque. The 162 foot tall tower was presented by industrialist James Paxman with a statue at the top of St Helena, Colchester's patron saint.



The Moot Hall houses a custom-built organ by Norman and Beard. The Old Library, originally Colchester's first town centre public library, was designed by Brightwen Binyon of Ipswich in 1894. The Council Chamber has a glorious painted ceiling showing a classical description of the 12 months of the year and the two stained glass windows depict the Roman history of the Borough.

Cost: £8 per person at time of booking. To book: phone Tony Barrett on 01255 674678 or email [brian.jennings650@gmail.com](mailto:brian.jennings650@gmail.com). The visit is limited to 20 Trust members. Closing date for bookings is 13 July. Final details will be given nearer the visit.

## **Membership Renewals**

### **Ted Maloney**

Yes, it is that time of year again. The Trust's membership year runs from April in the current year to April of the following year so, with this in mind, you should find an insert for renewing your membership enclosed in this issue of the newsletter. Your continued membership is important to us and we hope you will want to stay with us for the 2020/21 membership year.

Subscription rates remain unchanged at £10 for a single member or £18 for dual membership covering two people living at the same address. Please return your completed membership form, along with your payment, to the address on the form. Do please remember to include a stamped addressed envelope if you would like your new membership card(s) to be sent to you or, if no SAE is enclosed, you can collect your new card(s) from the Crossing Cottage, Frinton on Tuesday mornings when the garden and cottage will be open between 10am and noon. You can make your payment by cash, cheque or bank transfer using the details on the form, but even if you do choose to pay by bank transfer, please still send me your completed membership form so that I know you have re-joined and can issue your new card(s).

We hope you will join us for a further year of community and social events in support of our valued local heritage and environment. Your membership comes with free entry to our museums, discounted rates for social evenings and access to our summer outings. Please encourage your friends to join; extra forms can be downloaded from our website and there is a 'spare' form on page 26.

## **Disclaimer**

The publication of material in this newsletter does not imply that the views or opinions expressed are shared by the editor,  
Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust,  
or any persons other than the named author.

## From the Archives: Eleanor Farjeon

Liz Bruce

Eleanor Farjeon was born in the Strand, London on 13 February 1881. She was the daughter of novelist Benjamin & Maggie Farjeon. She came from a literary family; her younger two brothers, Joseph and Herbert, were writers while her older brother, Harry, was a composer.

Known to the family as ‘Nellie’, she was a small, shy girl and suffered poor eyesight and ill-health throughout her childhood, being educated at home and spent much of her time reading books. She was encouraged to write by her father from an early age. Her brother, Harry, and herself would play imaginative games as children which led her to inspiration later when writing.

She lived much of her life within the theatrical and literary circles of London, but a lot of her inspiration came from her childhood and holidays, some of which were spent in Frinton as can be seen from the Trust’s collection of postcards.



During World War One, the family moved to Sussex where the villages, landscape, and local traditions had a profound effect on her later writing. It was while living here that the Martin Pippin stories were located.

At 18 years old, she began to write operettas with her brothers. After the War she worked as a poet, journalist and broadcaster. She used a variety of pseudonyms such as Tomfool, Merry Andrew or Chimera. Under these pen-names she wrote poems in *The Herald*, *Punch*, *Time & Tide*, *The New Leader* and other periodicals.

Eleanor never married. During the 1950s, she received three literary awards: the Carnegie Medal for British children’s books, the Hans Christian Andersen Medal, and the Regina Medal.

In 1960, she donated her family book collection, which included works by her father, brothers, and niece, as well as music, photographs and correspondence, to the Public Library in Dunedin, New Zealand, where her father had worked as a journalist in the 1860s before returning to England.

Eleanor's most widely-published work is the hymn *Morning Has Broken* which she wrote in 1931 to an old Gaelic tune associated with the Scottish village of Bunessan in the Ross of Mull.

*Morning has broken  
Like the first morning,  
Blackbird has spoken  
Like the first bird.  
Praise for the singing!  
Praise for the morning!  
Praise for them, springing  
Fresh from the Word!*

She died in Hampstead on 5 June 1965.



## **In Memory of Christine Tovey**

**John Barter**

The extended family of the late Christine Tovey, née Wash, who died last year, have donated a new bench to the Trust in her memory. The Tovey and Wash families are holding an afternoon tea in the Cottage Garden from 2pm onwards and they have extended the invitation to all those who knew or remember Christine to come and join in the tea. Please let me know if you are likely to come to the tea (01255 852993) so that we can ensure there will be enough cakes!

The Wash family came to Frinton and Walton in the early 1900s running a painting, decorating and building firm as well as Blue House Dairy in Pole Barn Lane, opposite the end of Hadleigh Road, until it closed in the 1970s. They also helped support Frinton's Roman Catholic church for many years. Christine Tovey and her husband worked in different jobs in the area until they retired, including working for the dairy and delivering the milk, in addition to looking after *Kings House* on the Esplanade.

Christine was treasurer for the Girl Guides' Trefoil Guild for many years and used to love to come and sit in the Cottage Garden on a Tuesday morning during the summer months. Christine's local knowledge was extraordinary and she is a great loss to local history researchers.

The bench will mark the legacy that the Wash and Tovey families have contributed to community life throughout the area during the last nearly 120 years. Please come and support this very special afternoon.

# Chairman's Report

## Tony Barrett

This newsletter is the last opportunity that I shall have for communicating with all members. After nearly six years in the Chair, I feel it is time to move on so I am not seeking re-election at the AGM in May. I hope members will allow me the luxury of a little looking back but, at the same time, thinking of the future.

My term of office has been dominated by endless consideration of the role/future of the Walton Maritime Museum (WMM) following the decision by Tendring District Council (TDC) massively to increase the rent. Negotiations went on and on and, whilst some charity relief from the higher demand was achieved, it was obvious that there could not be a future for a museum in the present building. The current lease expires in April 2021.

The problem of actually finding 'homes' for the artefacts, etc. continues to worry the committee but work is in progress and all should be well in the end. The decision finally to close the Museum on 31 August 2020 will allow the working groups some seven months to clear the building and leave it in a condition to be returned to the Council. I am naturally saddened that the decision to close should have been made whilst I was your chairman. I would have so much have preferred being able to spend more time in achieving an increase in membership (although at 334 it is the highest for many years), improving our publicity and moving the Trust forward generally.

There have, however, been some positives. Through the *Tendring Coastal Heritage Group* (TCHG), precursor to *Resorting to the Coast*, the Trust is now working with like-minded organisations across the peninsula. My work in that area will continue and I have been able, in recent times, to liaise and discuss problems and solutions with my opposite numbers in Halesworth, Sudbury and Faversham, in addition to having a close working relationship with the Harwich Society. It appears that we all suffer from the same problem: a lack of volunteers with specialist skills, but we seem to be weaker in this area than the other organisations mentioned. Whilst funding is of great importance, money without our having the appropriate volunteers will not on its own move us forward.

So what of the future? As we seek to encourage the growth of our membership and play a key role in the development of our community, conserving our heritage must always be at the heart of the work of the Trust as we seek to protect the unique aspects of our area. Heritage is an asset that we must preserve for future generations to enjoy and exploit. We need to address the problems of apathy and disinterestedness. We should ask ourselves 'why is this so much the case'?



John Barter, our current vice-chairman, will be standing for election as your chairman in May. He will need all the support that he can get. In order to ease through the proposed new constitution, I have agreed to be his vice-chairman (always, of course, if this is what members wish at the Annual General Meeting). Real progress has been made on the redrafting in recent times and it should be ready for members to consider within the next 12 months with a view of implementation in May 2021.

Finally, my thanks for the continuing support of our retiring President, Rachel Baldwin, our Secretary, Brian Jennings and the very many other friends and colleagues who have helped me during the past six years. Some will say I did not do enough, others he did too much; a few might even say 'it was about right'. I would simply say I did my best for a cause in which I deeply believe.

## **Secretary's Report (Part 1)**

### **Brian Jennings**

#### **Walton Maritime Museum**

We first opened in 1986, some 34 years ago. This year will be the final exhibition in the *Old Lifeboat House* at East Terrace. We will open at the Easter and two May Bank Holidays and from 1 June until 31 August, 2pm-4pm daily. This year's exhibition will include items from the Walton archive of Nipper Norman, who was a well-respected historian in the town, as well as the history of the Naze Tower, which is celebrating 300 years in 2020. When we close, the displayed items will be placed in the Trust archive and put in store in readiness for temporary exhibitions during the summer season in 2021 while we plan our future and move forward into the digital age and a building where we can keep our archive dry and safe for the future! The stewarding rota will be co-ordinated this season by Tim Scott-Saunders and Bob Smith. Your help with stewarding would be much appreciated. You can contact Bob: [thislldome@uwclub.net](mailto:thislldome@uwclub.net) or via [secretary@fwheritage.co.uk](mailto:secretary@fwheritage.co.uk). Can you manage one or two afternoons each month from 2pm-4pm?

#### **Local Planning Matters**

Tendring District Council in December announced they were, at long last, taking heritage and culture seriously and are in the process of forming a policy document. Locally-listed buildings and conservation areas will be reviewed. We can only hope this will slow the erosion of our town and village heritage. One piece of good news is that, despite TDC taking no notice of the Great Holland Conservation Plan and granting consent to demolish the former bakery in the very centre of the village to replace it with a large detached house, the developer is renovating the cottage instead, preserving the heart of the village for the foreseeable future.

# Trevor Bright Railway Museum

## Tony Barrett

Preparation for the 2020 displays/exhibitions is now well under way. In the Museum itself there will be refurbished displays of Walton-on-the-Naze, Frinton-on-Sea and Thorpe-le-Soken Stations. The special area devoted to Clacton-on-Sea is to be retained for another year; there is a display board detailing the train crash at Walton-on-the-Naze in 1987. Two exhibitions of models complete our displays for this year: one of Eastern National 'buses and a smaller one of buffet/Pullman cars.

The extension in the waiting room at Frinton-on-Sea Station was officially opened on 26 November; delayed because of the serious illness of the usual booking clerk. She remains unwell but her replacement has arrived and access to the waiting room is now as before, i.e. open when the booking office is open. The new displays there will be on the iconic '309' class train and the Gates, the latter being enhanced by a new painting by Diana Cobb, one of the Station's adopters.

There is also a new small display relating to Frinton Station and its environs, including photographs of the spinney a century or more ago. A further item of great interest is a wooden bench, restored by the Essex & South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership with whom we closely work. The bench, now a prized artefact, is at least 100 years old having been discovered a while ago at Dovercourt Station. It is marked GER (Great Eastern Railway) 72 which places it well before grouping in 1923. It is hoped to affix a suitable plaque in the future. Martin Leech's photograph of the bench appears below.

Future plans include the re-erection of the semaphore signal and a restored ticket office in the Cottage Garden. We also have permission to erect a noticeboard in the Station Booking Hall, and we plan to repaint the roundel above the fireplace there in its original GER livery.



Members will note there is much to see, so do check the *Diary of Trust Events* on page 5 for extra opening times in addition to the normal Tuesday mornings.

## **Scheduled trips on *James Stevens No.14*, the world's oldest motor lifeboat**

**Sunday, 10 May:** A two-hour afternoon trip on *James Stevens No.14*, the world's oldest motor lifeboat, around **Horsey Island and Walton's Backwaters**. £22 per person. Depart 12.30pm. Booking details are at the end of this section.

**Sunday, 24 May:** A two-hour morning trip on *James Stevens No.14*, the world's oldest motor lifeboat, around **Horsey Island and Walton's Backwaters**. £22 per person. Depart 11.30am. Booking details are at the end of this section.

**Sunday, 31 May:** A two-hour evening trip on *James Stevens No.14*, the world's oldest motor lifeboat, around **Horsey Island and Walton's Backwaters**. £22 per person. Depart 5.30pm. Booking details are at the end of this section.

**Sunday, 7 June:** A day trip on *James Stevens No.14*, the world's oldest motor lifeboat, to **Shotley Marina** with a one-hour stop to take lunch or relax on the terrace overlooking River Orwell & the Port of Felixstowe. £35 per person. Depart 10.30am, return 4.30pm. Booking details are at the end of this section.

**Saturday, 13 June:** A two-hour late afternoon trip on *James Stevens No.14*, the world's oldest motor lifeboat, around **Horsey Island and Walton's Backwaters**. £22 per person. Depart 4pm. Booking details are at the end of this section.

**Fathers' Day, Sunday, 21 June:** A day trip on *James Stevens No.14*, the world's oldest motor lifeboat, to **Woolverstone Marina** with a one-and-a-half hour stop for lunch at the restaurant or picnic on the terrace overlooking the River Orwell. £35 per person. Depart 10am, return 3.30pm. Booking details are at the end of this section.

**Sunday, 28 June:** A two-hour afternoon trip on *James Stevens No.14*, the world's oldest motor lifeboat, around **Horsey Island and Walton's Backwaters**. £22 per person. Depart 4pm. Booking details are at the end of this section.

**Saturday, 4 July:** *James Stevens No.14*, the world's oldest motor lifeboat, will be making short trips between 11am and 4pm around **Brightlingsea Harbour** at the town's annual regatta.

also ...

**Sunday, 5 July:** *James Stevens No.14*, the world's oldest motor lifeboat, will be making short trips between 11am and 3pm around **Brightlingsea Harbour** at the town's annual regatta.

**Thursday, 9 July:** A two-hour afternoon trip on *James Stevens No.14*, the world's oldest motor lifeboat, around **Horsey Island and Walton's Backwaters**. £22 per person. Depart 1.30pm. Booking details are at the end of this section.

**Sunday, 12 July:** A day trip on *James Stevens No.14*, the world's oldest motor lifeboat, to **Royal Harwich Marina** with a 1½ hour stop to take lunch at the restaurant or relax on the terrace overlooking the River Orwell. £35 per person. Depart 10.30am, return 4.30pm. Booking details are at the end of this section.

**Saturday, 18 July:** A two-hour morning trip on *James Stevens No.14*, the world's oldest motor lifeboat, around **Horsey Island and Walton's Backwaters**. £22 per person. Depart 9am. Booking details are at the end of this section.

**Sunday, 26 July:** A two-hour afternoon trip on *James Stevens No.14*, the world's oldest motor lifeboat, around **Horsey Island and Walton's Backwaters**. £22 per person. Depart 2pm. Booking details are at the end of this section.

**Sunday, 2 August:** A two-hour morning trip on *James Stevens No.14*, the world's oldest motor lifeboat, around **Horsey Island and Walton's Backwaters**. £22 per person. Depart 9.45am. Booking details are at the end of this section.

**Tuesday, 4 August:** A day trip on *James Stevens No.14* to **Pin Mill** on the Shotley Peninsula with a 1½ hour stop to take lunch at the famous **Butt & Oyster** or picnic overlooking the river. £36 per person. Depart 10am, return 4.30pm. Booking details are at the end of this section.

**Sunday, 9 August:** A day trip on *James Stevens No.14*, the world's oldest motor lifeboat, to **Mistley Quay Marina** with a 1½ hour stop for lunch at the Tea-House Café overlooking the River Stour. £37 per person. Depart 10am, return 4.30pm. Booking details are at the end of this section.

**Wednesday, 12 August:** A two-hour afternoon trip on *James Stevens No.14*, the world's oldest motor lifeboat, around **Walton's Backwaters & Horsey Island**. £22 per person. Depart 4pm. Booking details are at the end of this section.

**Wednesday, 19 August:** A two-hour morning trip on *James Stevens No.14*, the world's oldest motor lifeboat, around **Horsey Island & Walton's Backwaters**. £22 per person. Depart 10.30am. Booking details are at the end of this section.

**Saturday, 22 August:** A day trip on *James Stevens No.14* to **Mistley Quay Marina** with a 1½ hour stop for lunch at the Tea-House Café overlooking the River Stour. £37 per person. Depart 10am, return 3.30pm. Booking details are at the end of this section.

**Tuesday, 25 August:** A two-hour afternoon trip on *James Stevens No.14*, the world's oldest motor lifeboat, around **Horsey Island & Walton's Backwaters**. £22 per person. Depart 3pm. Booking details are at the end of this section.

**Thursday, 27 August:** A two-hour late afternoon trip on *James Stevens No.14*, the world's oldest motor lifeboat, around **Horsey Island and Walton's**



**Backwaters.** £22 per person. Depart 5pm. Booking details are at the end of this section.

**Monday, 31 August:** A day trip on *James Stevens No.14*, the world's oldest motor lifeboat, to **Woolverstone Marina** with a one-and-a-half hour stop for lunch at the restaurant or picnic on the terrace overlooking the River Orwell. £35 per person. Depart 9.30am, return 3.30pm. Booking details are at the end of this section.

**Sunday, 6 September:** A day trip on *James Stevens No.14*, the world's oldest motor lifeboat, to **Wrabness**, passing Felixstowe and stopping at Harwich Ports. £30 per person. Depart 11am, return 4.30pm. Booking details are at the end of this section.

**Tuesday, 8 September:** A two-hour afternoon trip on *James Stevens No.14*, the world's oldest motor lifeboat, around **Horsey Island and Walton's Backwaters**. £22 per person. Depart 2pm. Booking details are at the end of this section.

**Saturday, 3 October:** A half-day bird-watching trip on *James Stevens No.14*, the world's oldest motor lifeboat, around **Horsey Island and Walton's Backwaters**. £22 per person. Depart 11.30am. Booking details are at the end of this section.

**Sunday, 18 October:** A half-day bird-watching trip on *James Stevens No.14*, the world's oldest motor lifeboat, around **Horsey Island and Walton's Backwaters**. £22 per person. Depart 10.30am. Booking details are at the end of this section.

Other events in 2020 can be previewed at: [fwheritage.co.uk/events](http://fwheritage.co.uk/events) with more information in our next newsletter which will be distributed at the end of July 2020. Don't forget to find us on Facebook too!

**Booking Details:** for scheduled trips, see our website ([fwheritage.co.uk](http://fwheritage.co.uk)), email [jsbookings@fwheritage.co.uk](mailto:jsbookings@fwheritage.co.uk) or phone Brian on 07836 340315. All trips are subject to weather and skipper availability on the day. If you require a special date or would like to make a private booking, please contact us. We carry up to 12 passengers. We also offer a service to 'dispose of ashes' at sea. There is more information on the website. Unless stated, all trips depart from Titchmarsh Marina, Coles Lane, Walton-on-the-Naze, CO14 8SL.

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**Editor's Note:** Help is wanted for the annual re-painting of *James Stevens No.14* in April if you are able to volunteer. Please use the contact details above!

# The Walings Drought Garden, Frinton

## Paul Baines

The Walings drought garden was designed in 2008 as a result of a commission from Frinton & Walton Town Council.

The original rock garden had seen better days and it was time to give the site a complete redesign. One of the main problems was that the site was on a slope, difficult to maintain and any rainfall just washed off the slope. The site has its own microclimate as it sits nestled beneath the sea wall in full sun; a difficult challenge to overcome.

I decided that a Mediterranean style gravel garden would work well. The garden was thus design to incorporate terraced beds on three levels using oak sleepers as retaining walls. The ground was thoroughly prepared with plenty of compost and organic matter incorporated into the soil prior to any planting.

The design used a palette of drought-resistant plants to include lavender, *nepeta*, *santolina*, *perovskia*, *hebe*, *rosa rugosa*, *helianthemum*, *euphorbia* and ornamental grasses to name a few species. All of these plants enjoy hot sunny conditions and thrive during periods of drought, which we often experience here

on the Tendring peninsular, the driest part of the UK.



The plants were initially watered in to help get them established but the garden has not been watered since. The planting is now well established and maintained every six weeks or so to keep it looking good. Many of the plants are cut back hard in

early spring to encourage new growth and keep them in good health. With this style of planting the garden has much interest throughout the year.

The Walings drought garden has been a great success and is enjoyed by visitors to the town and locals alike.



# The Spinney Garden, Frinton

## Paul Baines

The Spinney was again a commission from Frinton & Walton Town Council. I worked on this project as the landscape consultant with local architect Graham MacNamara to deliver a scheme that comprises an enclosed public garden that can be used and enjoyed by the people of Frinton and visitors throughout the year. The site was formerly a wildlife reserve; however sadly it had become completely overgrown. Before any work was undertaken, an ecological survey was carried out which revealed very little wildlife within the site. The new garden should improve things.

The garden is designed around two paved seating circles linked by an adjoining path. Large planting beds enclose the space and, once matured, will create a place of intimacy and peace that should attract many species of wildlife. An avenue of ornamental cherries planted in lawns sit either side of the entrance path welcomes visitors and leads them to the main circular seating terraces.

The planting comprises a few shrubs, but mainly large drifts of perennials and grasses such as *helenium*, *salvia*, *nepeta*, *sedum*, *perovskia*, *aster*, *stipa*, and *miscanthus*; all designed to give year-round interest, especially during the late summer and autumn when many gardens look past their best. Plants are left intact over the winter before being cut to ground in February in readiness for the coming spring.

There are around 25 new trees, providing spring flower and spectacular autumn colour, and around 6000 bulbs, including *narcissus*, *allium*, crocuses and snowdrops. The garden is still very much in its infancy, but over the next few years I feel sure it will develop to become a place of calm and peacefulness, which local residents and visitors, both young and old, can enjoy.



# Frank Philpot and the Frinton Fire Engine

Anne Flavell

## The Fireman

Frank Gordon Philpot, a plumber by trade, was the Chief Fire Officer in Frinton-on-Sea in the 1930s. He was born on 22 October 1887 at Leiston in Suffolk, where the family was still living at the time of the 1891 census.

In 1901 Frank was living at 2 Naze Cottages, Walton-on-the-Naze, with his father Philip Philpot, aged 52, a painter and paper-hanger, and his mother Emily A[lice] Philpot (née Roach), aged 49, together with an older brother and a younger sister. (He had a further five older brothers and sisters, who had by then left home). In 1911 he was lodging at *Carton*, Old Road, Frinton, the home of Henry Stevenson, a house painter, his wife and three children. Frank's occupation was "Plumber (building trade)"; a second lodger in the house, John Nicker, was a "Carpenter (building trade)".

On 2 April 1914 Frank, then aged 26, a journeyman plumber of 16 Witton Wood Lane, Frinton, married Eleanor Davies, known as Daisy, aged 21, of 5 High Street, Walton. In 1916 Frank was called up for service in the First World War, during which he served in France in the Royal Engineers, and subsequently in the Tank Corps. He was demobbed at Thetford on 29 January 1919 and transferred to class Z (army reserve on demobilization). His army records show that in 1916 he and Daisy were "residing at: c/o Mr Cave, Old Road, Frinton-on-Sea". When he was transferred to the reserve on 27 February 1919, his address was given as "over boot shop, Old Road, Frinton-on-Sea, Essex".)



Charles Cave was a boot and shoe repairer and it was, in fact, with the Cave family in Walton that his wife Daisy had been brought up.

Frank must have joined the Frinton Fire Brigade shortly after his discharge from the First World War. (A Council minute of 15 May 1940 records that Chief Officer F G Philpot had been awarded a 20-year long-service medal.)

In August 1927, at the Fire Brigade's annual display on the Greensward, Fireman Philpot was second in the "one-man appliance and target drill, [which] consisted of each man running out lengths of hose, and after the



water was turned on, directing it on a defined object”. His time of one minute 20 seconds was three seconds slower than that of the winner, Fireman Jeffs.

On 24 May 1932, following the resignation on medical advice of Walter Stow (1874-1952), who would have been in the Brigade when Frank joined it, Frank was confirmed as Chief Officer of the Fire Brigade, with Mr Nash as Second Officer.

The drought, heat and abnormal amounts of sunshine experienced during the summer and autumn of 1933, following two heatwaves in August 1932, would have provided a taxing time for the Fire Brigade and its new Chief Officer. *The Essex Chronicle* of 1 September 1933 describes “the parched countryside” and “fires in many places”. The article continues: “For 24 hours Frinton Fire Brigade fought a fire at Mossy [sic] New Hall Beaumont in which 80 tons of hay and barley straw were destroyed. Pumping started through a hose 1,200 feet in length, and a good supply of salt water was obtained when the sluice in the sea wall was opened to let in the rising tide. During the fire another call was received from Holland Hall and this was dealt with by auxiliaries from Frinton”.

*The Citizen* newspaper of 29 July 1935 reported that “Flames came within an ace of destroying a large section of Frinton’s famous greensward and scores of beach huts last night when gorse and grass on the cliffs caught fire. In a few minutes flames were leaping over beach huts. Their occupants departed hurriedly and hundreds of visitors helped to remove chairs, methylated spirits and other inflammable articles. Frinton Fire Brigade extinguished the blaze when the flames were only inches from the huts and greensward”.

In July 1936 Frank and his colleagues attended the blaze in Connaught Avenue that destroyed the premises of *Mummery & Harris*. This was the fire that local historian Kenneth Walker described as “probably the most spectacular fire that has ever occurred in Frinton”. The fire was reported in *The Essex Chronicle* of Friday, 31 July 1936, and is illustrated in Norman Jacobs’ 1995 book *Frinton & Walton: A Pictorial History* (illustration 147).

On 12 March 1937 Frinton and Walton Urban District Council (F&WUDC) entertained the Fire Brigade to dinner at the Queen’s Hotel. As reported in *The Essex Chronicle*, Councillor W Lowther Kemp, in his speech proposing a toast to the Brigade, said “personally he found it hard to understand why men would join a voluntary brigade and turn out to what was often dangerous and hazardous work after they had put in a full day at their own employment. It could only be because of the spirit of good sportsmanship”.

The 1939 Register records Frank and Daisy still living over Charles Cave’s boot shop, at 21 Old Road; Frank is described as master plumber; his date of birth has

advanced by two years to 1889! (Just doors away at number 18 in the same terrace were living John Nicker, now a builder and decorator, and his family. John Nicker had been Frank's fellow lodger in the Stevenson household in 1911.)

My father, Mervyn Herbert (1921-2015), remembered Frank and Daisy's home at the back of and over Charles Cave's shop. This would have been the left-hand portion (now numbered 5, the premises of The Connaught Clinic, and 5a) of a handsome gabled terrace of shops at the seafront end of Old Road. At the back was a kitchen / living room, and upstairs a sitting room and bedroom. The front first-floor room, a big room, had a side window from which you could look onto the Greensward. My father recalled going down the passage alongside Mr Cave's shop to get into the kitchen, in which there was a ship's bell. This bell apparently came from the *ss Belgia*, a Belgian cargo steamer which, on 26 January 1941, was bombed and damaged by *Luftwaffe* aircraft in the Thames Estuary, with the loss of six of its 26 crew. The steamer drifted ashore at Frinton the next day, on fire. The fire was put out, after which it took several days for tugs to get the vessel clear of the shallows again to be towed to Harwich, where she arrived on 14 February to be repaired. She was eventually returned to service renamed the *Empire Bell*.

Frank received a letter of congratulation from Sir William Spens (1882-1962), Regional Commissioner for Civil Defence for the Eastern Region: "My attention has been drawn to the action of your brigade in connection with the fire on the *ss Belgia* which broke out on January 27, and I should like to congratulate both the brigade and yourself, as Chief Officer, on the arrangements made, and on the manner in which they were carried out. Both seem to me to be admirable".

Documents in the Essex Record Office show that, at the outbreak of the Second World War, the regular fire brigade in Frinton consisted of Frank Philpot and 13 others, with 48 in the auxiliary brigade. They were each receiving the same gross weekly wage of £2 2s 10d, which gradually increased with the duration of the war. From 1 April, Company Officer Philpot was paid directly by the recently-created National Fire Service. Frank possibly retired from the Brigade at the end of the war.

## **The Fire Engine**

Frinton's first motorised fire engine was built by Dennis Bros. Ltd of Guildford who, with Leyland and Merryweather, dominated the market, and it was supplied to Frinton-on-Sea on 31 May 1926. It was of the Braidwood body type, where the crew would be seated on either side of what was virtually a box for containing the hose and small items of equipment. This gave no protection from the weather and was potentially very dangerous, as men could be thrown off the machine

when cornering at speed. Surrey History Centre, which holds the archive of Dennis Specialist Vehicles Ltd, has the original specifications for the Frinton order (no. 8277), and a magnificent photograph of the new vehicle, very clearly designated Frinton! (Shown on the front cover.)

Form 44  
Order No. 8277 DENNIS BROS. (1913) LTD.  
Supplied to Frinton-a-Sea Date supplied May 31 - 1926.  
Chassis No. 7036 Type Engine No. 18501 H.P. 32.8  
Body No. 15161 Type Bore 115 Stroke 150  
Fitted with Crankshaft Crank Pin  
DETAILS:  
✓ L.A.V. electric lamps: 2 head, 2 side, 1 tail:  
2. 12 Volt accumulators:  
3. 8ft. length of 3½" suction:  
Strainer + blank cap.  
✓ 8" Bell + horn:  
✓ Direct suction adapter 2½ V.  
✓ 35 ft. telescopic ladder:  
✓ Sea and ignition:  
✓ 2½ V outlet adapter:  
3/14/26 ✓ 120 lb. pressure tank 3/14/26  
Folio Chassis No.

Alongside a typed listing of technical specifications, the order records details such as an “8” Bell + horn” and a “35ft. telescopic ladder”. The cost appears in manuscript as £899.

The archive also holds a later document, dated 1 October 1936, informing F&WUDC “that this chassis has been converted to pneumatics”.

The Frinton engine was registered as and carried the number plate TW3711, TW representing the Chelmsford licensing area. It must have been fairly shortly after the acquisition of the new engine that my proud father, as a young boy, had his photo taken with Frank

Philpot on the running board of what is very recognisably this fire engine.

My father and his parents lived at *Lyndhurst*, (now named *Friars* and numbered 54), Old Road, just opposite the building that housed the engine and next to what were then the Council Offices, now Frinton Library (no. 59). The 1939 Register lists “Fire Station” between “Council House” and “Parish Church” in Old Road. The building looks very similar today, except that the front doors have been bricked up, with the inclusion of a window. It was strategically placed for my father, so that when he heard the engine setting off to tackle a fire, he could jump onto his bicycle and race behind it to the source of the blaze.





My father took a photograph from a front bedroom in *Lyndhurst* of the engine pulling out of the garage, and some of the fire-fighting equipment out on the grass verge opposite, in what was possibly a fire practice.



The Dennis fire engine has made several appearances in print. In Norman Jacobs' 1995 book *Frinton & Walton* it provided the

setting for the photograph of fireman Charlie Moon's wedding in 1934 (illustration 160). In another picture (illustration 162) in the same publication, Frank himself is standing in uniform alongside the line of his firemen who have achieved a hundred per cent success rate in their gas mask exams. In Stan Jarvis' 1999 volume *Frinton Past* (p 118), the fire engine, with Frank ringing the bell, is depicted in around 1935 driving past *Loose & Son's* shop in Connaught Avenue.

Frank Philpot died in 1958 aged 70, and for some years after his death his widow, Daisy, continued to live in Frinton in a terraced house at the opposite end of Old Road to that at which she began her married life. Her neighbour at what was number 9, now number 105, was Frinton's policeman Monty Theobald (Montie Samuel Theobald, 1899-1993). Daisy eventually moved to Wanstead in Greater London where she died in 1976, aged 83.




\*\*\*\*\*

Biographical information about Frank's predecessors (Harold Corton, Walter Stow, William Keeley, James Spencer Wardley, John Thomas Cast and Harry Finch) can be found in David Hughes' work *Essex Firemen Who Served Between 1900 and 1920*, the second edition of which can be viewed online on as part of Museum Articles on the Essex Fire Museum website.

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**Editor's Note:** The Trust archives at Frinton have full details of the participation of the *EMED*, Walton's lifeboat, in the *ss Belgia* incident mentioned in the article above.





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there is a ‘spare’ membership form  
for you to pass on to a friend or neighbour.

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# The Clacton 1940 Aeroplane Crash

Roger Kennell, Clacton VCH Group

Flying low over Walton-on-the-Naze and on to Frinton-on-Sea in the evening of 30 April 1940, a damaged German Heinkel 111 mine-laying aeroplane, with its four-man crew, was heading in the direction of Clacton-on-Sea.

This aircraft had been sent to lay sea-mines along our East Coast and, on reaching Harwich, had broken through the cloud and mist, whereupon the Harwich defences fired on the aircraft and damaged it. Losing height, the Heinkel circled over Clacton and Holland-on-Sea where a resident reported that the air stank of



aviation fuel. The residential area around Victoria Road in the Gardens part of town is where the aircraft, now on fire and with engines spluttering, came down and then one of the mines on board exploded. The terrific explosion, heard

as far afield as Colchester and Ipswich, demolished Orchard House killing the whole crew, together with Mr & Mrs Gill, the occupants. The Gills were the first civilians on mainland Britain to lose their lives in the Second World War.

Thursday, 30 April 2020 will mark the 80th anniversary of this crash which was nationally significant. The Clacton VCH Group, in association with the Essex Record Office, will be holding an exhibition at St. Paul's Church Hall, Church Road, Clacton-on-Sea on the anniversary to commemorate this important incident.

The exhibition opens at 10am and closes at 4pm. A new book telling how the whole incident unfolded will be launched at 11am, and there will be an illustrated presentation at 2pm. Please do join us at this event.





## Secretary's Report (Part 2)

Brian Jennings

### Frinton Crossing Cottage

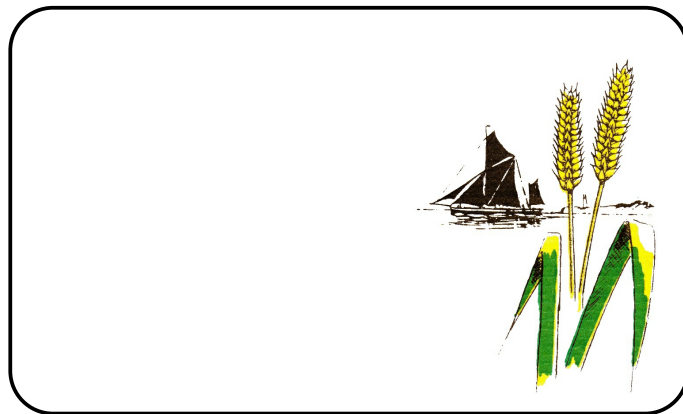


New items regularly arrive for our artefact and archive collections. We have received our first pieces of pottery originally sold at the *Lido* on Frinton's seafront, donated to the Trust by Fiona Neilson & Nick Dolan from Northumberland. We are also grateful to Robin Tomkins of *Tomkins, Homer & Ley*, developers of Frinton, who has donated more old plans which chart the development of the town, plot by plot from 1900.

Work has finally started to repair and re-paint the old railway gates, Trust artefacts, which were salvaged when the new barriers were fitted in 2009. Now on display in the flowerbed outside Frinton Railway

Station, along with memorabilia from Liverpool Street Station's platform 13, given to the Trust when the London station was refurbished in 1988. Our lectern information board, located alongside the gates in the flowerbed, gives the full history.

**Just a reminder:** We need bric-a-brac and items including, plants, cakes and jams to sell at the **Spring Fayre on 16 May 2020** (see *Diary of Trust Events*).



### Ask your friends to join the Trust!

For further information about the Trust, contact the Secretary,  
Brian Jennings on 01255 861440 or email: [secretary@fwheritage.co.uk](mailto:secretary@fwheritage.co.uk)

Visit our website [fwheritage.co.uk](http://fwheritage.co.uk)

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