



Newsletter No. 76

# SALTASH HERITAGE

April 2020



# Information

Because of the problem with getting the April newsletter printed and distributed Saltash Heritage have decided to make it available to everyone via public media.

Saltash Heritage produces a newsletter three times a year to keep our members updated and informed. A short film of the new exhibition can be seen at:- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wipkY4ovGP8&t=11s>  
Enjoy - and come and see us when we finally open.

[www.saltash-heritage.org.uk](http://www.saltash-heritage.org.uk) e-mail [info@saltash-heritage.org.uk](mailto:info@saltash-heritage.org.uk)

## Forthcoming events

Opening of museum	Saltash Heritage	Delayed
Saltash Heritage AGM		Delayed

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## Editorial

The April newsletter is usually the easiest to fill. The new exhibition has opened with lots of photographic opportunities of guests and visitors to fill the pages. Hopefully this will happen in time for the next newsletter. When we do open there will be lots of catching up to do. As I put this newsletter together I have no idea how we will distribute it. Our usual printer has closed and no doubt will have a massive backlog when he can get back to work. Email seems favourite at the moment but we will produce it in print eventually.

*Bruce Hunt*

## Front Cover

Celebrating the new exhibition for 2020 'War and Peace'

*Bruce Hunt*

## A few words from the chair



As I put these words on the page, I don't even know whether our trusty printer Jason and his team will be able to do their usual superb job. Will Her Majesty's Government see a business such as Jason's as essential, or will The Printing Press be obliged to shut down for as long as it takes? Jason tells us that he intends to stay open "unless shut down by Boris".

I am essentially an optimist, although I must admit that my usual optimism is being severely challenged just now, so I carry on scribbling in the hope and belief that our Spring Newsletter will reach you without delay.

You might think that temporary closure of an organisation such as ours should be a fairly straightforward exercise. Not so, I'm afraid. I want to pay tribute to my fellow committee members whose instant reaction was not to huff and puff and maintain that the dangers of Covid-19 are exaggerated, but who responded in practical and essentially caring ways.

What needs to be done immediately,

in the short and medium term, and looking into the future? What can I do to assist? What about a video of our 1940s exhibition? We need to keep in touch with our faithful members and our valiant steward volunteers – can we think of reliable and inventive ways of doing that? Mustn't forget our landlords – Saltash Town Council – we need to keep them up to date with what we are doing.

I spent much of my time last week "working from home". Partly because Fran and I have opted for "voluntary" self-isolation (much "encouraged" by our five children!), and partly because as an Anglican priest over the age of 70 – while the pandemic remains with us – my only contact with parishioners is restricted to electronic methods. As an essentially social being, I am finding that already to be a bit of a strain.

But never mind. In the course of the last seven days Saltash Heritage committee members have exchanged seven thousand words by email, all aimed at ensuring that – while adhering strictly to social distancing and scrupulous hygiene – we are not only keeping things ticking over but also looking at an enhanced future once we have emerged into the light at the end of the tunnel!

Especial thanks to Lizzy and Bruce for keeping me relatively sane in all of this.

*Bob Munro*

## Blog

While we are abiding by all the government advice I will endeavour to keep my Update Blog going via email. Any information I receive I will pass on to you. I hope to send some photos and any telephone numbers that I think might be of help. I am even thinking of sending out the odd quiz – no prizes – but just to keep your brain cells exercised.



For those of you not on email PLEASE do not feel isolated. All the committee are only a phone call away. We may personally not be able to help BUT we can put you in touch with someone who can. Plus we will be very happy to chat – we love a good natter.

Take care and stay safe

*Sylvia Caldwell*  
*Assistant Secretary*

## Major ships in service in the Royal Navy in 1914

Battleships	72
Armoured Cruisers	30
Battle Cruisers	8
Cruisers	94
RNR Merchant Cruisers	2
Torpedo Boat Destroyers	108
Ocean Going Destroyers	115
Torpedo Boats	41
Submarines	25 + 20 under construction
Total	495

The navy also had a large number of patrol boats, harbour defence boats, River boats (many based in the Far East), dispatch boats.



# Warships called TAMAR

## The first HMS Tamar

Name:	HMS <i>Tamar</i>
Ordered:	11 January 1757
Builder:	John Snooks, <a href="#">Saltash</a>
Laid down:	15 March 1757
Launched:	23 January 1758
Commissioned:	January 1758
In service:	1758–1780
Renamed:	HMS Pluto in 1780
Honours and awards:	<a href="#">Battle of Ushant (1778)</a>
Captured:	30 November 1780
Fate:	captured at sea by 24-gun French privateer <i>Duc de Chartres</i>
<b>General characteristics</b>	
Class and type:	16-gun <i>Favourite</i> -class sloop-of-war
Tons burthen:	313 <sup>15</sup> / <sub>94</sub> ( <b>bm</b> )
Length:	•96 ft 4 in (29.4 m) (gundeck) •78 ft 10 in (24.0 m) (keel)
Beam:	27 ft 4 in (8.3 m)
Depth of hold:	8 ft 3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> in (2.5 m)
Propulsion:	Sail
Sail plan:	<a href="#">Ship rig</a>
Complement:	125

The evolution of the Royal Naval Dockyard at Devonport benefitted Saltash when the Saltash shipbuilder ‘Snook’ was instructed to build two 16 gun sloops for the Admiralty. However Snook proved an unreliable contractor and was paid off by the Admiralty and the job was handed over to Mr. Chitty.

Alderney (spelt Aldernay on the drawings) was 230 tons and 88ft 4ins in length with the Tamar being slightly larger, (*see left*).

## Commanding Officers of HMS Tamar

1764 Cdr. Patrick MOUAT.

TAMAR accompanied Capt. Hon. John BYRON in DOLPHIN on a circumnavigation of the globe, sailing on 21 June 1764 during which Capt. BYRON took possession of a group of islands in the name of George III in January 1765 and called them the Falkland Is. The circumnavigation took two years with the ships returning in May 1766

1767 Capt. Anthony HUNT, accompanied by FAVOURITE, and SWIFT, were sent out again to the Falkland Islands to establish Britain's claim to their sovereignty

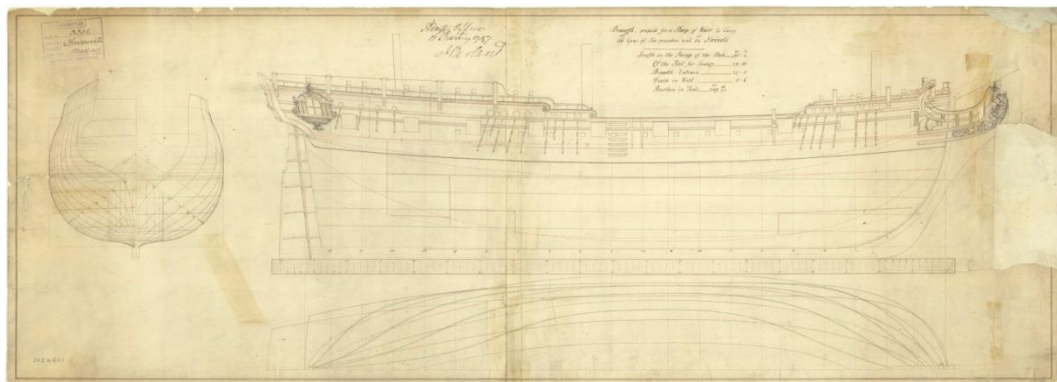
James MONTAGUE took command of the ship on 11 Sept. 1773 after being promoted by his father (Admiral John MONTAGU) first to Lt. and then Commander.

The ship was renamed Pluto in 1777 and converted to a fire-ship.

As PLUTO, under the command of Cdr. James BRADBURY she was with the British fleet under Admiral KEPPEL seeing action with the French off Ushant on 27 July 1778 (the other fire-ship present was VULCAN).

Tamar was captured by the French on 30 November 1780.

*(A fire ship was a ship with a crew that were specifically trained and armed to use their guns with the specific intention of killing and maiming the crew of an enemy ship, as opposed to the usual aim of disabling a ship)*



## Other HMS Tamars

**HMS Tamar (1795)** was a store lighter launched in 1795 and purchased that year for Navy service. She was broken up in 1798.

**HMS Tamar (1796)** was a 38-gun fifth rate launched in 1796 and broken up in 1810.

**HMS Tamar (1814)** was a 26-gun Conway class sixth rate launched in 1814, converted into a coal hulk in 1831 at Plymouth, and sold in 1837.

Josiah & Thomas Brindley launched *Tamar* at Frindsbury in 1814. She arrived in Halifax, after 75 men died of fever, including Captain Arthur Stowe. She was driven ashore on the coast of Labrador, British North America, in early August 1819, but later was refloated. Under the command of Captain George Richard Pechell, she captured a large pirate brig near San Domingo in 1820. She was part of the failed settlement on Melville Island at Fort Dundas in the Gulf of Carpentaria.

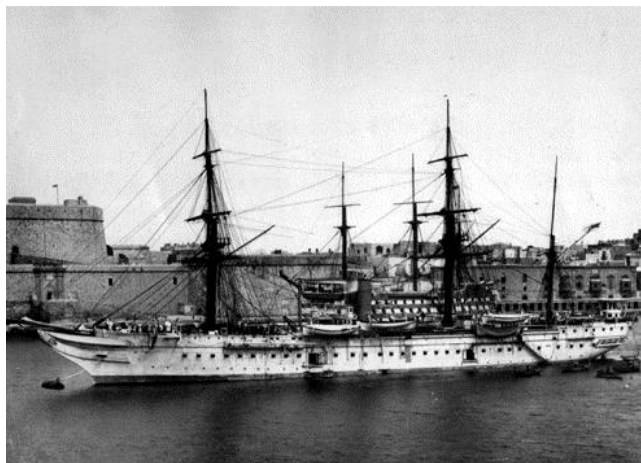
On 3 March 1821 *Tamar* came into Kingston, Jamaica with the brigantine *Jupiter*. *Tamar* had detained *Jupiter* in the Mona Passage on 23 May after a long chase. *Jupiter*, of eight guns and 190 men, was flying the Buenos Ayrean flag and did not surrender until *Tamar* had fired several shots into her that killed one man and wounded another, and that had severely damaged her rigging. A few days later *Tamar* sailed for Savanilla with *Jupiter*.

**HMS Tamar (1863)** The 1863 incarnation of HMS *Tamar* was the fourth to bear that name, which is derived from the River Tamar, in Cornwall, and the ship's crest is based on its coat of arms. Built in Cubitt Town in East London, she was launched in June 1863, and began her maiden voyage on 12 January 1864 as a troopship to the Cape and China.

*Tamar* was dual-powered with masts and a steam engine, giving a speed of 12 knots. She originally had two funnels, but she was re-equipped with a more advanced boiler and *Mareduced* to one funnel.

In 1874, she formed part of the Naval Brigade that helped to defeat the Ashanti War. *Tamar* took part in the bombardment of Alexandria in 1882.

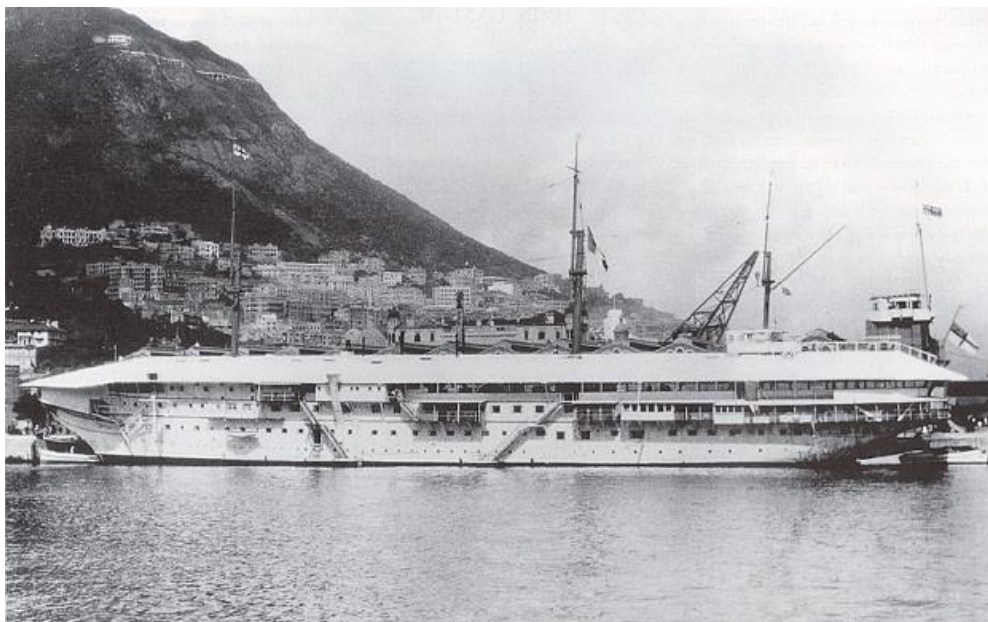
In 1879, The British Medical Journal reported a group of sailors aboard *Tamar* were poisoned by a bad pigeon pie which spawned an Admiralty Investigation.



*HMS Tamar in Malta 1892*

In 1897 *Tamar* was hulked as a base ship and relieved HMS *Victor Emmanuel* as the Hong Kong receiving ship. She was used as a base ship until replaced by the shore station, which was named HMS *Tamar*, after the ship *Tamar* had been towed out to a buoy on 8 December during the Battle of Hong Kong during World War II. Amidst a curfew of darkness and bombardment by the Imperial Japanese forces, the orders came at 2100 hours on 11 December

to scuttle her. She was scuttled at the buoy on 12 December 1941 once it was clear that the advance could not be arrested, to avoid being used by the invading Japanese forces. As the ship's superstructure became airlocked, the ship refused to sink for some time, until the Royal Artillery was called in to administer the *coup de grâce*.



*HMS Tamar as a hulk in Hong Kong Harbour*



In late 2014, during dredging work for the Central–Wan Chai Bypass, the remains of what strongly appears to be *Tamar* were discovered at the location of the old Wan Chai Ferry Pier where she is believed to have been scuttled. A government report, completed in September 2015 but released on the government's website in February 2017, finds strong evidence that the remains are those of *Tamar*.

The anchor from the ship was recovered and is now on display on the site HMS *Tamar*



On 6 November 2013 it was announced that the Royal Navy had signed an Agreement in Principle to build three new offshore patrol vessels, based on the River-class design, at a fixed price of £348 million including spares and support. In August 2014 BAE Systems signed the contract to build the ships on the Clyde in Scotland.

The Ministry of Defence stated that the Batch 2 ships are capable of being used for constabulary duties such as "counter-terrorism, counter-piracy and anti-smuggling operations". According to BAE Systems, the vessels are designed to deploy globally, conducting anti-piracy, counter-terrorism and anti-smuggling tasks currently conducted by frigates and destroyers. A £287m order, for two further ships, including HMS *Tamar*, (P233) and support for all five Batch 2 ships, was announced on 8 December 2016.



*HMS Tamar was lowered into the water on 10 October 2018. This is the seventh ship to be named HMS Tamar.*

*Bruce Hunt*



## Bryony Robins



Museum Development Officer for Cornwall

Bryony, who some of you might have met over the last five years and certainly at the opening of our Blue Plaque Trail by HRH the Duchess of Gloucester in 2017, has provided us with access to professional advice and guidance for the last five year as she has to all the museums in Cornwall. Saltash Heritage has benefitted enormously from her creativity, her enthusiasm and her willingness to support South East Cornwall and our museums group in this area with training sessions, opportunities to further our learning and

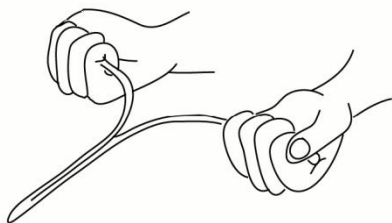
networking. She has seen us through a couple of accreditation updates and always offered so much encouragement when we would come up with some rather wild ideas.

Bryony has just informed us that she is taking on a new role in June this year, when she will become the new Creative Director at the RCM that is the Royal Cornwall Museum in Truro. Bryony is keen to maintain contact with her friends in the museum world in Cornwall and hopes to work with some of the voluntary museums in the future.

We all wish Bryony tremendous luck in her new role and are delighted she will still be working in our County to promote the Cornish museum service.

Lizzy

## The art of Dowsing



This is the inbuilt ability of man from the beginning of time to seek water and minerals.

There are many sceptics about, who do not believe in the response of the rods, twigs or pendulum in finding water, minerals, oil, gas pipes, cables or archaeology.

Many mining, electrical and water companies employ dowsers in exploration work. The Police also use the services of a Dowser.

How does it work? The short answer is that no-one knows, but it works.

Archaeological units use dowsing alongside highly technical equipment when conducting a survey.

Try bending a pair of metal coat hangers and try yourself. Copper is a particularly good conductor.

IF YOU HAVE THE CONFIDENCE TO DEVELOP THIS ABILITY,  
YOU MIGHT SURPRISE YOURSELF

# Proposal to let road traffic 'share' Saltash rail bridge

## PLAN GOING TO MINISTRY

THE suggestion that the Royal Albert rail bridge at Saltash should be used for both rail and road traffic, pending the building of a road bridge over the Tamar, was backed by Looe Urban Council last night.

It came from Mr Eric Williams, who said he had gone carefully into the scheme and could see no serious snags.

The Council decided to put the suggestion to the Minister of Transport and British Railways and to ask the backing of Cornwall County Council and Mr. Douglas Marshall, M.P. for South-East Cornwall.

Mr. Williams contended that rail and road traffic could use the bridge alternately.

### Timing

To enable that to be done he suggested filling in the space between the rails with a suitable material, erecting level-Crossing gates at both ends. installing traffic lights and having a breakdown lorry at each end in case a car accidentally stopped

Allowing eight minutes before a train was due, he continued. 60 vehicles could travel at 25 miles an hour 20 yards apart, thus having the bridge empty in three minutes and allowing a margin of five minutes to deal with untoward incident.

Experts, however, would know best how to regulate both road and rail traffic to obtain best results.

Mr Williams said that allowing an average of eight minutes for cars alternating with eight minutes for a train, 240 cars could pass in an hour.

### Done in India

At 1/- a car the revenue would be £96 for an eight-hour day or £672 for a seven-day week. He believed that only a small outlay would be required to make the bridge suitable for both kinds of traffic and that the resulting revenue would make the scheme well worthwhile.

Supporting. Brig. J. A. L. Caunter described the suggestion as excellent. It had been considered feasible as a means of getting more military traffic over the Indus when he was serving in India during the war.

Mr. H.G. Cox understood that the scheme had been tried out during the war.

Mr R. Piggott said British Railways operated a similar type of service over a smaller bridge in Scotland between Oban and Fort William.

*Western Morning News Dec 20 1955*



## Memories of World War II



It was September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1939 we were listening the wireless (as we called the radio in those days), when the Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain announced “Britain is at war with Germany.” What would happen? I had no idea as I was ten years old at the time and did not know what to expect. Life went on as usual for a while but then worrying announcements came over the wireless, countries in Europe were being invaded, ships were being sunk, troops were in action.

Then in January 1940 food rationing arrived with the following for each adult for a week... 2 ounces of butter, 4 ounces of margarine, 2 ounces of cheese, 4 ounces of cooking fat, 3 pints of milk, 8 ounces of sugar, 2 ounces of tea, 1 egg or one packet of dried egg powder which had to last a month! Then preserves (jam, marmalade) one pound or one jar a month. Meat ... bacon and ham 4 ounces, and other meat value of one shilling and two pence. For example two chops. Sweets were also rationed later to 2 ounces a week! We grew vegetables in the front and back garden. To make the butter ration go further I had to mix the butter and margarine in a bowl with a little milk and beat it for a while to blend it together.

To supplement the meat ration we had sausages, liver, roast animal's heart, savoury rolls, (similar to sausages,) rabbit pie, tripe, spam, boiled meat bones flavoured with Bisto gravy for soup, plus vegetables. It was often a case of putting our rations together for Sunday roast, then on Monday ... cold meat and bubble and squeak (cabbage and potato fried). Tuesday... cottage pie (Minced meat) and potato. And then the rest of the week it varied from above choices, sometimes a piece

of fish with potatoes at home, but fish and chips if you could afford them from the fish and chip shop. I remember going to buy fresh fish from Miss George's fresh fish shop in Fore Street. The two sisters ran the shop. One served customers while the other gutted the fish in the back room and cut up newspaper to various sizes to wrap up the fish after first having a sheet of white paper around the fish. I can hear the sister who was serving suddenly shout “Florrie more fish” or paper.

We spent some time outside the sweetshop deciding how to spend our sweet ration and with only a penny a week pocket money, alphabet letters were the best value, more for your money (half penny a bag) or one barley sugar stick or one penny bar of chocolate either from Cluttons in North Road or Miss Bright's vegetable and sweet shop in Fore Street. A special feature in Miss Bright's shop window at Christmas was a mechanical Father Christmas who nodded his head all day.

At school each day we had a small bottle of milk, a third of a pint I think it was. Rationing continued long after the war.

Bananas were almost unheard of and I remember being in a queue at the fruit shop as we heard bananas were arriving that day. After over an hour I eventually got two small bananas! Wonderful. We did not waste food and you had to eat whatever was put in front of you, or go hungry! We did not have fridges in those days so butter, margarine, meat, were kept in a box safe with wire across the front and hung up outside the back door in the shade!

We survived and did not go hungry and did not get colds and walked to and from school each day, or cycled.

Clothing coupons were also a feature and you had to make do and mend, and clothes had to last. My mac was so long, nearly down to my ankles as it had to last while I was still growing all my secondary school days!

Then came the air raids and the blitz. Each night the throb of the German aircraft woke me up about 9pm, and quickly out of bed, put on thick jersey over pyjamas and downstairs before the air raid siren sounded and sheltered in the cupboard under the stairs (considered the safest place in the house when bombs were falling outside). As time went on and the air raids increased I did not go to bed but slept on a mattress on the stair cupboard floor until the air raid was over with the "all clear" siren sounding over the town. Mother sat on a stool in the same cupboard. It was during one raid I thought a bomb had landed on the house, the lights went out! It was further along the road outside Clutton's general shop and market garden, and an unexploded bomb had come down and all properties in the vicinity had to be evacuated the next day. With my parents we went to relations outside Landrake for several weeks, until the bomb had been either removed or made safe so we could return. At the farmhouse over a mile from Landrake, we were packed in with people from Plymouth, escaping the air raids. In the one room, my mother and I slept in one bed in one corner, my grandmother on a camp bed, my Father slept on the floor. Each day my Father and I walked over a mile to Landrake to catch the bus to Saltash for him to go to work and me to Saltash County Grammar School, and back in the evening by bus then the long walk.

During the war we were all issued with gas masks and carried them everywhere plus identity cards. Sometimes we had to wear our gas masks during lessons, not easy if you wore glasses as you could not wear them under the gas masks! There were air raid shelters in the school grounds and we sat on forms in a cold damp atmosphere until the raid was over. Lessons went on as usual and school finished each day at 4pm, so home to do homework, not so easy in one room with the wireless on. We only had a coal fire in one room, no heating in the bedrooms or bathroom.

Of course we did not have television only wireless and listened to Children's Hour with Uncle Mac, and a programme "Out with Romany". In the evening programmes "ITMA," "In Town tonight" and "Dick Barton, special agent" and others entertained us.

We also had holidays at school when we had various activities and I remember a day out on Dartmoor, travelling by train.

There were blackout restrictions, so no lights were allowed to be seen from outside so heavy curtains were hung over each window. If a light was showing outside the Air raid warden would call "put that light out". Blackout was to deter the approaching German

aircraft. We had to put special strips of paper across the windows to stop them shattering if a bomb dropped nearby.

Later my Father eventually bought an Anderson air raid shelter from the Borough Council for £1 (I found the receipt recently!) and had to dig foundations in the garden and assemble the shelter. It had two steps down and a wooden door, and the galvanised shelter was covered with turf. Our only light and heat was a candle in an earthenware plant pot! Father stood outside with his 1914-1918 tin helmet on and warned us each time a searchlight lit up the sky, then we knew the massive gun at Carkeel Amy camp was about to fire. It shook the whole of Saltash as the German aircraft flew overhead trying to dodge the gunfire, barrage balloons, and English aircraft.

Father was also in the Home Guard and did duty at night in various locations in the town on certain nights.

My Mother's war effort was working once a week for the Red Cross, knitting for soldiers, scarves, gloves, hats etc. and also making bandages and assembling other medical equipment for the fighting forces.

My war effort with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saltash Girl Guide Company every Saturday was to collect waste paper on the Guides two wheeled trek cart and deposit the load at a house garage in Burraton where Mr and Mrs Miles lived. The authorities collected the loads from there to be recycled.

All iron railings, fences and gates were also removed and sent away to be used for munitions,

We also had soldiers billeted in our house. The one room had to be emptied and just the bare boards were left, and three soldiers from a regiment based at Carkeel slept on the floor when not on duty. I do not know why they were billeted in various private properties in the town for several weeks. We did not have to provide food for them. I think they were among the troops guarding Brunel's railway bridge. Glad to say that although the main Fore Street was bombed and shops and houses destroyed the bridge escaped. People were sadly killed in the Saltash blitz. One night Saltash Six Firemen on their way to Plymouth to help fight fires there, were killed en-route. A Saltash Scout Donald Cummings, was also killed near Saltash station while on messenger duty as he was standing in for Scout Master Douglas Vosper. People were also killed when the bombs fell in Fore Street.

St Nicholas and St Faith Church had an incendiary bomb through the roof on the left hand side of the East window and all the choir stalls were burnt, but the window remained intact except for a small triangle on Christ's shoulder. You can see today the triangle was replaced with different coloured glass. Saltash Wesley Church in Fore Street was completely destroyed like other buildings.

With the air raids each night, we often wondered if we would ever sleep all night in our beds!

Yes we carried on with our lives, attending school, Sunday school, Guides etc plus social evenings at the Church hall making sure we were at home before the air raids began.

We did not starve and I do not remember ever getting colds although heating was sparse. We dressed up warm to walk or cycle to school, and with macs and Wellington boots in the rain.

We had thick snow on one occasion and the school field was deep, so our games teacher arranged a snow fight as we could not play hockey!

During the war sheep were put on our tennis courts to keep the grass down, so no tennis for a while. We went swimming every day from May to end of September in the public swimming pool on Brunel Green which was fed by cold salt water from the river. The only facilities were wooden huts to change into our costumes. Mr Train was in charge of the pool and we paid one old penny a time.

If you got into difficulty in the pool, Mr Train was standing by with a long boat hook to haul you out!

Luckily we did not need it!

School swimming sessions were held once a week in the pool and an annual swimming sports day.

Eventually I left school in December 1944 and started work in the book department of WH Smith and Son on Mutley Plain as the shops and other buildings in the centre of Plymouth were destroyed during the air raids. The war in Europe ended on May 8<sup>th</sup> 1945 and we had a day off from work. Cycling up through Fore Street, Saltash on that day, no one seemed to be around so I presume they were all celebrating at home. But at last we could sleep all night in our beds. The war in the Far East did not end until a few months later, when VJ day was celebrated and the end of world war two. Food rationing ended 1954 although some foods came off rationing before.

We did not starve and perhaps we were healthier in those traumatic days.

*Audrey Miller.*

## Voices in the night...

In the early hours of Saturday a mail train all the way from Saltash to Truro caused many sleepers to stir and several to reach for the telephone. A loudspeaker on the train constantly blared out:

**"Help Help This train is being attacked by bandits. Please inform the police."**

The message, a standard device in use since the "Great Mail Train Robbery," cannot easily be switched off. A spokesman for British Rail told the "Cornish Guardian" that the device went into action with its false alarm after the train had left Plymouth. The train was stopped at Keyham and checked by police, but no one was available to switch off the alarm. The nearest G.P.O. engineer able to do it was at Truro.

At 4.95 a.m. a police constable on the Tamar Bridge who heard the alarm contacted headquarters and was told that the train had already been checked out. The voice in the night crying loudly for help went on until the train arrived in Truro.

"I don't know about train robbers." said one man at Saltash who sleeps close to the line.

"All I got robbed of was sleep."

*6 May 1971*

# Stewards Party

On the 11<sup>th</sup> January the Management team organised their usual annual volunteers 'Thank You Party'. We were delighted to welcome around 50 of our 65 volunteers. Unfortunately someone in Saltash managed to organise a wedding on that day, which took away some of our key management team. We had the most delightful lunch and afternoon. For the very first time we had a photograph taken of all those stewards present, along with our town Mayor Mrs Gloria Challen. Everyone in the photograph was officially a volunteer in our museum. Amazingly our volunteers slotted into their allocated seats extremely quickly and without any fuss, much to the amazement of the photographers present. Following lunch we enjoyed a quick resume of the previous year's work and learnt a little more about the preparation work for the new exhibition, 'War and Peace – the 1940s'.

The secretary informed everyone present that this year, we would not have the three awards which the team normally presented to the volunteers. However she then surprised them all by informing them, that every one of them was to receive an award this year of a silver jigsaw piece to be sewn onto their lanyards. This was to celebrate the winning of another award at the Cornwall Heritage Awards, when Saltash Heritage won first prize in the category 'Best Project on a budget.' For their innovative work, with all their volunteers. Everyone was delighted to shake hands and have a photograph taken receiving their awards. Following which they enjoyed some lovely singing led by Tony Marsh and Roger Smith.

What the secretary was unable to tell them was that she had entered all the volunteers again for a further award with the Cornwall Heritage Awards for 2020 under the category of 'Wellbeing Museum' and that in fact we had been short listed once again. The final announcement to be made, in late March. Unfortunately due to the postponement of the event, we will not now know until October, what the result will be. We have also been short listed at the award ceremony for our work with a young volunteer called Robert and for this work we have also been short listed under the category of 'One to watch'. As soon as we know the results we will inform you.

*Lizzy*

## Flavour of the exhibition

As the opening of this year's exhibition has been delayed a short film has been made to give you a flavour of what to look forward to.  
It can be viewed on:-

Facebook at [https://www.facebook.com/Saltashheritage/?epa=SEARCH\\_BOX](https://www.facebook.com/Saltashheritage/?epa=SEARCH_BOX)  
Youtube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wikpY4ovGP8>  
Saltash .org at <https://saltash.org/Saltash-Heritage/exhibitions/war-and-peace.html>





BURRATON COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

BURRATON COMMUNITY CENTRE

50 YEARS  
1968 - 2018







*Tony Marsh and Roger entertain*



## 'Secrets of the Museum'



Just in case you missed this when it was first aired I would like to recommend a series shown on BBC2 recently. It is called 'Secrets of the Museum ' and it gives you a detailed insight into what goes on behind the scenes at the Victoria and Albert museum in London. I have found the series absolutely fascinating and I do admit to being green with envy at the facilities they have for conserving the priceless exhibits held by the museum. The Mary Quant mini dress and the Star Wars costume with the missing helmet, which they managed to replicate, were particularly good. It did feel quite satisfying to find that the training given at local level on conservation and storage was on a par with the procedures followed at the V&A.

Sadly the series has finished but you should be able to access it through I-player or catch-up on sky.

*Jackie Austin*

## Public Houses

In February 1934 at the annual renewal of licences to Public Houses in Saltash it was decided that 13 licences would be issued (this number did not include clubs).

With a population of 3,631 this gave a licence for every 403 persons and it was recommended the 'Tamar Inn' and 'Town Hall Inn' should not have their licences renewed (The Town Hall Inn is now Saltash Heritage).

It may seem that one licenced premises for every 403 of the population is a lot of pubs but Millbrook had a pub for every 280 persons of the population.

## Back story

Sometimes when you build a display it is useful to have a 'back story' to work to and to justify why things are where they are. In the 1930/40's the museum building was no. 37 Fore St. This consisted of a shop facing the road and a passageway leading to a door that gave access to the rear tenement. In this scenario the Bolitho family rented the tenement. These three overlapping stories look at their life in the late 1930's to the mid 1940's

## Mondays

Monday was wash day, it always had been and for the Bolitho's at No. 37 it was no different. Friday was bath night, Saturday was change the beds, Sunday was church then dinner in the parlour where the table was laid with a table cloth and the posh cutlery and of course Monday was wash day.

On Mondays Edward Bolitho got up a little earlier than normal to light a fire under the copper in the yard before going off to work. Elsie Bolitho sorted out the washing into piles before waking young Peter. Peter was an only child and had his own bedroom at the back of the house, something very few of his schoolmates had. Peter's first job each day was to empty his chamber pot in the privy at the bottom of the garden, a job he hated. Peter knew that some families had an indoor toilet and a bathroom but Peter's dad thought this was unhealthy. Peter hated the privy, especially on a cold winter's night.

On Friday (bath night), Peter bathed in a galvanized bath that was normally hung outside and was brought in so he could bathe in the kitchen before tea. His mother would have all the pans full of water boiling on the gas stove when he got home from school. His parents didn't bath, well not in a bath like him, his father said they had a 'Budgie Bath', Peter knew that a budgie was a bird but had never seen one but he has seen sparrows in a puddle outside, he couldn't imagine his parents doing that!! He knew he was getting too big for the small bath so maybe he would find out soon.

In the school holidays Peter would help his mother with the washing. There was a reassuring routine to wash day. Mum would take a hard block of soap and with a knife kept for the occasion she would shave slivers off the soap into the copper. This was then stirred with the blade end of an old paddle that Edward had found on the beach opposite the Union Inn. Once the soap was dissolved in went the sheets, these would be followed by Edward's white shirt but first they had to have their collars scrubbed on the kitchen drainer with a small worn scrubbing brush. Peter liked to poke the fire with a stick and was allowed to fill the dolly tub with cold water from the outside tap, there was a short hose kept for this purpose and Peter liked to see how far away he could stand from the dolly tub and still get water into it.

Once the sheets and pillowcases had been cooked Elsie would transfer them to the dolly tub for rinsing then drop Edward's white shirts into the copper giving them a quick stir with the paddle. Peter would use the dolly to get the soap out of the sheets. A little bag of 'Dolly Blue' on a long piece of string was dipped into the rinse water. His mother washed the smalls and colours in the sink before it came to the part that Peter liked most. The mangle. This was his mother's pride and joy. It came from Aunt Beatrice, like the cutlery. When she died each member of the family was allowed to pick two items from her house (in strict order of family seniority). Elsie's first choice was the cutlery, something she had

admired from a child. Her second choice was the mangle much to the annoyance of husband Edward who tried to persuade her to pick the lawnmower but Elsie would have none of it. Mangle she wanted and mangle she would have. It wasn't often that she stood up to Edward but this time she did, much to the surprise of the rest of the family. It took Edward and his brother all afternoon to wheel the mangle from St Stephens to No. 37. She even made Edward clean it and paint it.



Peter's job was to turn the big handle but before that everything has to be folded to fit the rollers, first the sheets, then the Sunday tablecloth. After each item gone through the mangle (twice) they were pegged on the washing line.

Some of the sheets had been turned outside to the middle. Peter noticed that these were always pegged on the line away from view.

At the end of the wash the copper was emptied onto the yard which was then scrubbed and rinsed with the dolly water. Peter had a small wooden boat, which he often tried to float down the yard on the wave of water.

Lunch on Mondays was always a treat. Elsie had a way with pasties and Peter would often take one cold to school but on wasday, in the holidays, his mum would warm the pasty on the copper. The smell of the warm pasty was Peter's incentive to turn the mangle handle as fast as he could.

*Bruce Hunt*



# Rabbits

When Peter left school he was desperate to get a job and have some money of his own. His father insisted that he get a 'proper job' by which he meant an apprenticeship. He still received his Saturday morning sixpence for polishing the step and he did some odd jobs and deliveries for Mr Luxton in the hardware shop for a few pence. He also assisted his father, who didn't pay him at all. He explained that now he had left school he should earn his keep and any money he should pay him was going into the housekeeping.

The highlight of his day was meeting up with his old school friends at the Recreation Ground for a game of football, talk about girls and trying to fathom out what was happening in Germany but this seemed a long way away.

Peter's parents (Edward and Elsie) seemed quite worried, Edward had been wounded in the Great War and Peter knew it still affected him but he never talked about it. A few weeks later Peter and his mates had a day out fishing on the Lynher. He knew something was wrong as soon as walked into the house. His parents were listening to the wireless, something they didn't do that often as it involved dad putting the wire aerial out of the window. His father looked up and said, "We are at war". Peter's first thought was 'how exciting', but the look on his mother's face warned him to keep quiet.



*37a Fore St, home to the rabbits*

Over the next few weeks everything happened and nothing happened. There were many false alarms and stories circulating but in reality everything stayed the same. Peter helped his father put tape on the windows but still cleaned the step. His father, being a joiner, started bringing odd bits of wood home. When Peter asked him why he said he was building a rabbit hutch. If we are having pets I would

prefer a dog he replied. The look his father gave him could only be described as pity. When the hutch was finished Peter thought the impending new members of the family should have an address and as they lived at number 37 the rabbits should be 37a. Peter's father eventually came home one night with three rabbits, and although not known for his sense of humour, he told Peter they already had names and were called, Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Why? Because those are the days they are on the menu! Peter didn't speak to him for a week. Blackout curtains were a must and as no lights could be used outside this had its problems. Navigating his way to the privy one evening he missed it completely and walked straight into a wall. His father soon fixed this problem by tying one end of a rope to the railing next to the back door and the other end to a hook next to the privy. This worked but there were still the occasional mishaps. Peter would always



*The outside privy at the bottom of the yard*



*Half size Anderson shelter for up to 4*

leave a visit to the privy, especially at night, to the last second before going to bed. One dark and wet night he made a last minute dash, sliding one hand along the rope and hitching his nightshirt up with the other he reach the privy, flung open the door and sat down.... on his mother's lap – she screamed, stood up and catapulted him across the yard into the compost heap, she was just about to lay into him with a garden spade when she recognised his yelps of pain. When Peter later joined the Royal Navy he was often called upon to recount this story and always said that was why he joined up.

Over the next few weeks the town gradually changed as the reality of war began to sink in. Saltash Council began building bomb shelters in the gardens of the houses in Lander Road. His father was busy making shuttering and had joined the fire watch. There were many air raid alerts but no real air raids. Anderson and Morrison shelters were being delivered to the railway station goods yard and distributed around the town.

Space was limited in their yard but they could just fit a two section Anderson shelter at the back. Peter and his father (under the supervision of Elsie) put the shelter together. The instructions said it should be half buried in the ground for the best protection but, having a concrete yard they put it up on the surface. As Edward was fire watching Peter and his mother decided to try it out one evening. They lasted just over an hour and decided to go back indoors. The only thing Peter thought was good about it was its proximity to the privy.

*Bruce Hunt*



## The red step

In 1940 Elsie Bolitho and her family lived in the tenement at the rear of 37 Fore St. Her husband, Edward, had been injured in the Great War but managed to earn a living as a jobbing carpenter and was well known in the town. Elsie and Ted had one child, a son named Peter who they both doted over but tried very hard not to show it. Peter knew this and also knew that times were hard. Since the outbreak of the war work had been scarce for his father who, wanting to be useful, spent most evenings fire watching from the tower of St. Nicks church. Peter and his mother had an understanding that he did some chores for his pocket money, but he knew really that if he didn't mum would always see him right. His main job was to polish the step with 'Cardinal Red'. He did this every Saturday morning and received 6<sup>d</sup> for his efforts. In the afternoon he would spend his 6<sup>d</sup> with his friends at Quickies Cinema behind the Star Hotel. Although he grumbled sometimes, he didn't mind doing the step as he knew it pleased his mother. Elsie believed that a polished step meant a clean a tidy home. After all everyone could see your step but not many crossed it into your home.



As 1940 drew to an end Peter was called up and joined the Royal Navy. The step cleaning fell to Elsie, she saw it as a duty to Peter and felt very close to him as she spread the polish that brought it up to a shine, she would put his sixpence into a dish on the sideboard. A week later when shopping in Elliott's for her rations she popped into old Mr Luxton's shop for a new tin of Cardinal Red. Elsie had known Mr Luxton all her life and he had a soft spot for Elsie. He remembered her as a small child with her nose pressed against his shop window. As soon as she entered the shop Elsie knew all was not right the moment she saw him. It was the worst news possible. No Cardinal Red, and even

worse, the factory in the Midlands had been converted to manufacture camouflage paint for Lancaster and Wellington bombers.

As time passed the Bolitho step lost its shine and Elsie was grateful that Peter was now serving overseas and could not see the dulling of his work. She would still pop into see Mr Luxton whose shop was looking very empty but as he told her, what else would he do, he had no family to take it on and who would buy it in wartime, and anyway he liked to be in Fore St. as he knew everyone and everyone knew him.

As the war went on Edward Bolitho spent more time on duty and Elsie took to calling in on Mr Luxton to check he was alright and eating properly. She would tell him how lucky he was to still have a shop as half of Fore St had been destroyed. Mr Luxton appreciated her visits and was pleased for her when she sometimes came in with a big smile on her face after receiving a letter from Peter.

The day came when Elsie visited the shop and Mr Luxton feared to worst, he could see that Elsie was close to tears. A cup of strong tea and Elsie told her story of Peter and the Cardinal Red polish. The postman had delivered a letter that morning and Peter's ship was returning to Plymouth in a couple of weeks. She was worried about the unspoken

understanding between mother and son, and that she had let him down. Mr Luxton sympathised but he had an idea. He knew that the war would end soon and there was little need now for camouflage paint, he wrote to the factory telling Elsie's story and was delighted when two tins of Cardinal Red were delivered from Saltash Station a few days later. Mr Luxton knew exactly what he was going to do with them.

The next time Elsie came in to see him he gave her a parcel neatly wrapped in brown paper then sat back with a smile on his lip as Elsie unwrapped a brand new tin of Cardinal Red. The look on her face was the best thing Mr Luxton had seen since the war began. He quietly slipped away into the empty stock room with a tear in his eye.

The other tin he was going to trade with his friend Harry Eggins for a pack of sausage that he knew Harry kept back for special customers.

Peter hadn't told his parents the exact date of his arrival or the fact that he was now a Leading Seaman. As he stepped off the ferry and past the Passage House Inn he was shocked at the damage and how run down the town was after the years of war. Buildings were damaged and not repaired, there were potholes everywhere and once well-kept gardens looked like wild undergrowth. His heart sank as he neared No. 37. As he turned into the passageway the first thing he saw was an Anderson Shelter followed by the bright red step and he knew it was his mother's way of saying, welcome home son.

As the door opened and she threw her arms around the boy that was now a man, both knew that neither would mention the step but both knew what it meant to each other.

*Bruce Hunt*



## Funny Bit

Scientists at British Aerospace developed a gun built specifically to launch dead chickens at the windshields of airliners and military jets, all travelling at maximum velocity. The idea is to simulate the frequent incidents of collisions with airborne fowl to test the strength of the windshields. British Rail heard about the gun and were eager to test it on the windshields of their new high speed trains. Arrangements were made. But when the gun was fired, the engineers stood shocked as the chicken hurtled out of the barrel, crashed into the shatterproof shield, smashed it to smithereens, crashed through the control console, snapped the engineer's backrest in two and embedded itself in the back wall of the cab. Horrified BR staff sent British Aerospace the disastrous results of the experiment, along with the designs of the windshield, and begged the scientists for suggestions.

B.A. responded with just three words, "Thaw the chicken".

# Appeals

Over the winter months we have put out a few appeals for items that we would like to include or enhance this year's exhibition. Some of these items may have seemed a bit odd but they would be used to enhance displays or to add that all important atmosphere.



*Boot scraper*

For the outside display, which is in effect a back yard, we asked if anyone had a boot scraper, old milk bottles and a knob type door handle. We got all three. We also asked for a cat to sit on top of the Anderson Shelter and rabbits for a hutch in the garden, we got both.

Another strange request was for a tin of Cardinal Red polish for the step, that seemed to stump people but with a bit of ingenuity we have managed to make one.

One thing we really wanted to do was have a line of 1940's washing across the yard, so we asked for items that could be pegged on a line (with old wooden pegs). We also wanted to add a bit of humour so asked if anyone could supply us with any 1940's bloomers and long johns. The result really surprised us; we had three pair of bloomers and no long johns.... That's not the surprise... The surprise was that the bloomers were brought in by men, so come

on ladies; the men have done their bit, now it's your turn now to bring in the long johns.



## The chains of Saltash



*The Mayors Chains*

From that shield is attached the fob. The seal on the medallion is based on the common seal used until 1886. It is in the shape of a St. John's cross with a raised circular container in the centre. (Some people suggest the container was for snuff - more likely it held the seal). The lid of the container shows the seal bordered by the words "Sigillum Saltasche Cornwaile". The centre shows a lion shield and supporters with a prince's coronet above. The supporters are ostrich feathers, associated with the Duke of Cornwall, and the base is water shown by wavy lines.

Connecting the arms of the cross are leaves. The fob is detachable.

The remaining twenty links carry three different patterns—a lion passant, a leaf pattern, and another depicting the rose, the thistle and the shamrock, the emblems of England, Scotland, and Ireland, but there is no Welsh symbol.

Only seven of them carry inscriptions, but one is unusual—it records: "In memory of John Porter, Alderman 1585. Wm. Porter, Member Corpn. 1714. Philip Porter, Member Corpn. 1878, 1884".

The Mayor wears full regalia on very few occasions, but the chain is in constant use when visiting the various organisation, concerts, fetes, and at the Town Council meetings.

The Mayoral chain weighs 500 grams, and the Mayoress's chain 260 grams.

Saltash is one of the few towns possessing a chain for the Mayoress, and it attracts much attention at the various functions.

It consists of nine different links, each commemorating an event in Saltash since 1919. The fob is in the shape of a Maltese cross with a copy of the seal of the Water Court in the centre. This depicts a three-masted ship facing left with sails furled and anchored by the bow. It is bordered by the words "Sigillum Aquate Saltasche". It was presented by the Mayor at that time, Cllr. J. H. Pooley, J.P., and it was his hope that succeeding mayors might add a link and so form a Mayoress's chain. His name appears on the fob. In 1922 Mrs. A. Grenfell's name appeared on a gold emblem showing the fouled anchor surmounted by a crown and supported by the two ostrich feathers associated with the Duke of Cornwall.



*Saltash Mayoress Chains*

In 1923 Engineering Captain Bishop tried to revive the oyster fishing, and Mrs. Bishop's emblem shows the oyster shell on a fouled anchor and supported by two dolphins.

1924 saw the re-building of the Guildhall during the Mayoralty of Ald. Lander. His Mayoress was Mrs. E. Vosper and the emblem is that of the Guildhall.

The Fire Engine records the office held by Mr. Venn who was captain of the Brigade, and many of the older citizens still remember "Mary" the fire engine.

Mrs. W. P. Drury has her name recorded on the emblem showing St. Nicholas' Church which, during her husband's term of office was renovated and then passed out of the custody of the Borough Council. The Mayor still has a reserved seat in the church and maintains the right to ask for the bells to be rung, up to a certain number.

Mrs. Venn's name appears once again as Mayoress to Ald. Howard, 1932/33, when the Town Pier was renovated and so appears on the emblem.

The two saints guarding the boundary stone commemorate the joining of the two parishes—Saltash and St. Stephen's—in 1934. The boundary stone is a replica of the one on the Callington Road, about 250 yards south of the Holland Inn. The two figures represent St. Nicholas and St. Stephen.

Mrs. H. J. Davy was Mayoress at the time of the Silver Jubilee of King George V., and it is with pleasure that we can record that today Saltash has two Silver Jubilee Mayors—Cllr. Herbert Davy and Cllr. Victor Harding.

The remaining two links carry no names; instead they record two memorable events—the opening of the Tamar Road Bridge in 1961, and the final voyage of the Saltash Floating Bridge.

Mayoresses wear the chain with pride, and it is verily a picture-book of Saltash in gold.

*May Fayre and Pageant programme 1978*



## Station Valance



During the refurbishment of the station building we have been keeping a photographic record of the progress and have been able to assist CORMAC, the contractors with information from our archive. One example is the valance that surrounds the canopy over the door on the road side of the building. Over the years this had deteriorated to a point where it was unrecognisable.

A search through our archive came up with a couple of images of this little photographed part of the building.

Most railway stations incorporated valances somewhere on their stations, usually around the platform canopy or waiting shelter. Every railway company had their own distinctive pattern of valance and originally there were many thousands of railway companies both large and small. There were even variants within companies as different local contractors were responsible for the construction of individual stations.

The two photographs (left) provided enough information for CORMAC to have a valance manufactured that was as close to the original and in keeping with the building.

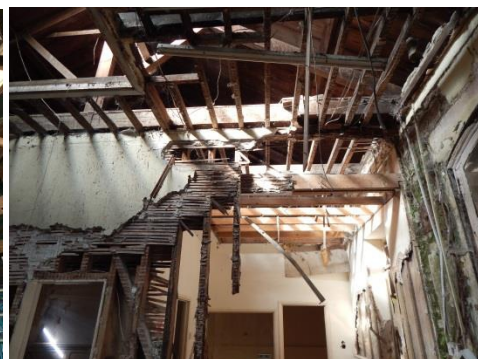
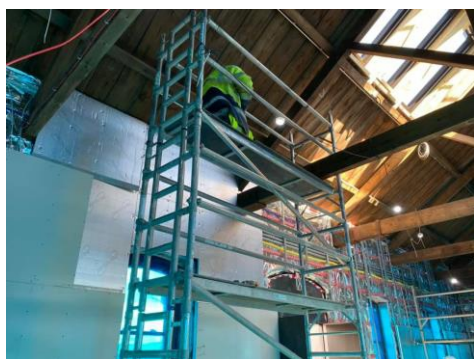
There are many more examples where CORMAC have pulled out the stops to ensure that the character of the building is kept.





*The new valance now in place over the main door on the approach road. You can make your own judgement on how it looks.*

## Inside the station



How it was....

# Make your own Roof-Cat



I think I mentioned last time that I had been asked to make a soft-toy cat to sit on the roof of the Anderson Shelter for our up-coming exhibition. Well he's now been created and it has been suggested that some of our members might like to make a roof-cat of their own, so here's the pattern I used. The cloth was from a child's dress that I found in a charity shop. I made the eyes from polymer clay, varnished with Mod Podge, and the whiskers are wire. None of these are suitable for a child to play with, so if you want to make a roof-cat for a child, please do use safe accessories and/or embroider the features. Have fun!

## Instructions:

Enlarge all three pattern pieces to whatever size you like.

Cut out 2 x head pieces, 2 x body pieces and 1x tail piece allowing an extra quarter inch all around for sewing. Fleece fabric would work well, or any other slightly stretchy, moderately thick fabric.

Add the facial features to one head piece, attaching or sewing them on firmly.

With the right sides together on the inside, sew all around the head, close to the cut edges, leaving a small gap between the ears and turn it inside out. Fill the head with polystyrene beads, uncooked rice or wheat grains, sand, chopped up pieces of fleece, sponge or something similar. Stitch the gap closed.

With the right sides together on the inside, sew all around the 2 body parts, including the slits which separate the legs from the body and between the 2 front legs, leaving a small gap at the bottom for turning inside out. Fill the body with the same stuff as you used for the head and stitch the gap closed.

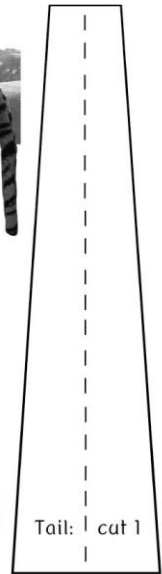
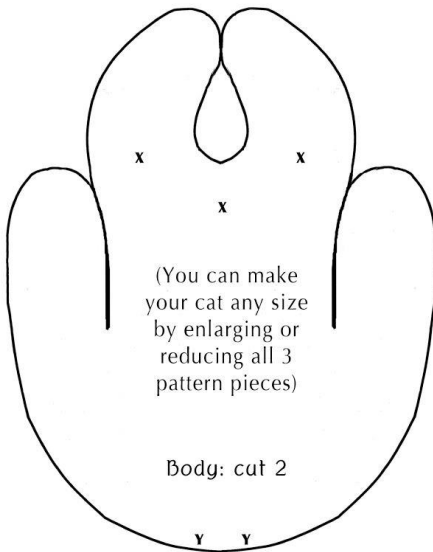
Fold the tail in half along the dotted line, right side on the inside, and sew across the narrow end and all down the side, leaving the wide end open. Turn inside out and fill the tail loosely so that it will curl, before stitching the end closed.

Sew the tail onto the body between the 2 'Y's.

Attach the head to the body at the 3 points marked 'X'.

Congratulations, you have made your very own roof-cat.

## SEW YOUR OWN ROOF-CAT



If you would like an A4 copy of the pattern please call into Saltash Heritage when we reopen and you can pick up a plan from the museum.



Sharon's talent does not stop with cats. When we put out an appeal for rabbits to live in a hutch in the back yard, it was Sharon who came to the rescue and produced not one but three rabbits. They are at present guarding the office but will re-locate as soon as the hutch is furnished.

The rabbits are so cute I couldn't resist giving them names so picked names that are appropriate and simple so called them.....

**Monday, Wednesday and Friday**

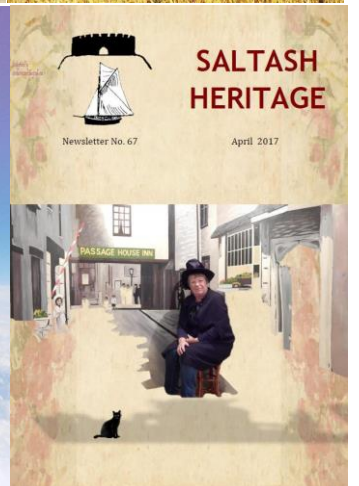
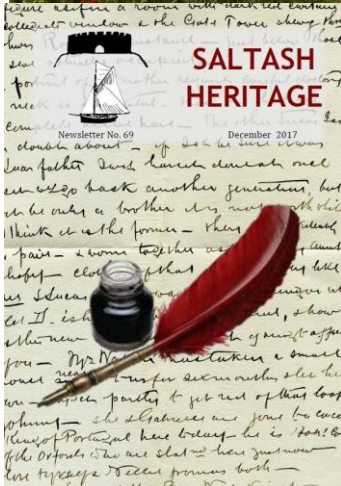
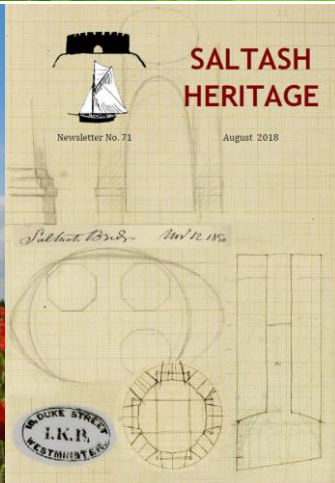
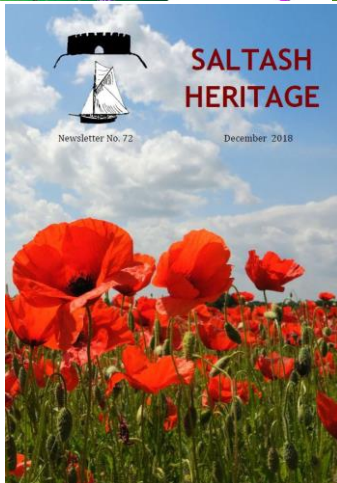
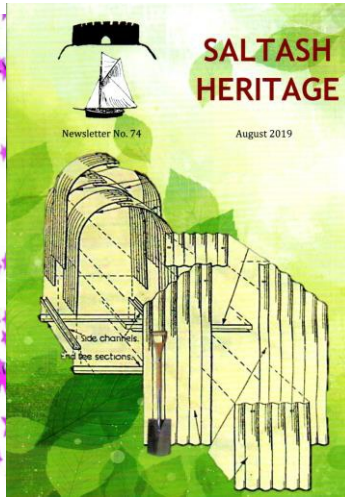
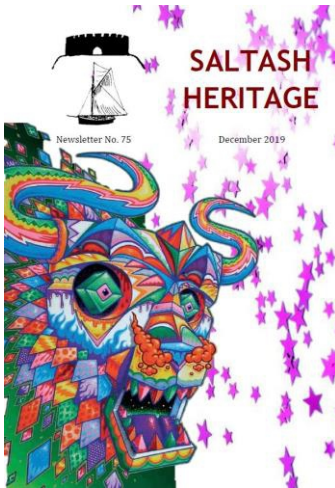
*Because that's when they are on the menu*







# Newsletter Back Numbers





# SALTASH HERITAGE

17, Lower Fore Street, Saltash  
Cornwall, PL12 6JQ  
tel. 01752 848466

## MEMBERSHIP FORM April 20/21

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....Post Code: .....

Email: .....

Telephone: .....

Please tick as appropriate

- ☐ I wish to renew/apply for membership of Saltash Heritage
- ☐ I will pay by annual standing order.
- ☐ I enclose £10 (single) or £15 (double) annual membership fee.  
(Please make cheques payable to "Saltash Heritage")

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Please fill out this form and send it (with your cheque if paying that way) to: The Membership Secretary,  
Saltash Heritage, 17, Lower Fore Street, Saltash PL12 6JQ,  
or take it into the museum, Thank you.  
Membership cards can be collected from the museum.

Visit our website: **[www.saltash-heritage.org.uk](http://www.saltash-heritage.org.uk)**

Gift Aid Declaration  
**SALTASH HERITAGE**  
Registered Charity No. 297525

DETAILS OF DONOR:

Title ..... Forename(s) ..... Surname .....

Address .....

..... Postcode .....

I want Saltash Heritage to treat all donations and/or membership subscriptions that I have made since April 2012 and all donations and/or membership subscriptions that I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations.

Signature ..... Date .....

When completed, please send the above form to the Membership Secretary with your subscription renewal and/or donation, or to the Hon. Treasurer at Saltash Heritage, 17, Lower Fore Street, Saltash, PL12 6JQ. Thank you.

NOTES:

1. You must pay an amount of income tax at least equal to the tax that the charity reclaims on your subscriptions and/or donations in the tax year.
2. You can cancel this declaration at any time by notifying the charity.
3. If, in the future, your circumstances change and you no longer pay tax on your income equal to the tax that the charity reclaims, you should cancel your declaration.
4. If you pay tax at the higher rate, you can claim further tax relief on your self-assessment tax return.
5. Please notify Saltash Heritage if you change your name or address.