

Report to the Orford & Gedgrave Parish Council Annual Parish Meeting
Wednesday, 19 May 2021.

In common with the rest of the world, 2020/2021 has proved very difficult for Orford Museum. Our Curator, Jenna Ingamells, has continued to work on various aspects of the collection mostly from home but other Museum work has been severely curtailed by the closure of Orford Castle. Even when the lockdowns were temporarily lifted, access for us was very limited. However, we are confident that the Museum cases and their contents are secure and well looked after by English Heritage staff who are occasionally there for maintenance purposes. We have also continued to deal with the many enquiries we receive from members of the public.

Sadly, we have had to close down the Friends of Orford Museum organisation as we have been unable to find an editor for The Orford & District Local History Bulletin, our very popular publication which was the main benefit offered to the Friends together with free entry to the Castle and Museum. It has to be said, however, that very few Friends ever took advantage of this free entry. Out of about 180 membership cards issued in 2019, only about 6 were ever used and it was much the same in earlier years.

On a more positive note, English Heritage has agreed to allow us to house the Orford stocks in the Museum. These stocks actually belong to the New Orford Town Trust as I am sure Parish Council members are aware. In 2016, at the request of the NOTT, our previous Curator, Jen Hall, arranged for Dick Murphy to carry out an extensive restoration which was completed sometime ago. Since then we have been trying to find a home for them. They used to be in St. Bartholomew's Church but, sadly, the church authorities have refused to take them back. This is unfortunate as residents of Orford will now have to pay to see a fascinating relic of Orford's past which belongs to them. We do not currently have a date for their installation as negotiations with English Heritage about how they are to be displayed are proving problematic but I am hopeful that they will be in the Castle soon.

In conclusion, could I say that we are badly in need of new Trustees and volunteer help. I have appealed to residents of the village and the surrounding area through our Newsletter and through Village Voice and the Link but, so far, no one has come forward or shown any interest. If any Parish Council member knows of anyone who might be interested in being involved, do please contact me.

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Chairman

Orford Museum

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