

**MUSEUM
OF OXFORD**

Museum of Oxford

Newsletter



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August 2016

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From the Editor

Hello and welcome to the latest instalment of the Museum of Oxford Newsletter! It's a light read this time, with just a couple of articles. Our very own David Juler in the Mayor's Chair, and Stephen has written an interesting historical article on Beaumont Palace.

If you would like to write a piece for us, please don't be shy. We accept anything and everything as long as it is related to Oxford, the Museum, volunteering or all three. It could be a one off, you could decide to write for us regularly, or every once in a while when an idea strikes you, just email David with your article and you might see it appear in the next newsletter! In addition, suggestions for what sorts of things you would like to see us include are welcome, and if any of you out there are avid puzzle designers (crosswords/Sudoku/brain teasers) and would like to exercise your skills, we'd like to hear from you!

Please contact us by emailing djuler@oxford.gov.uk

Felicity

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Contributors

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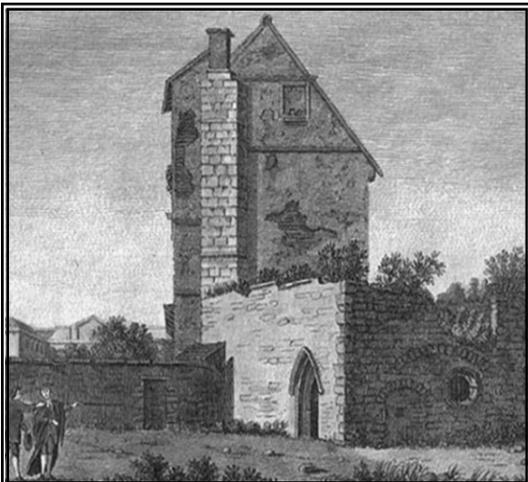
Designer – Laura Hill

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Beaumont

Palace

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With no visible remains today, it is easy to forget that, 500 years before Oxford served as the capital for King Charles I during the Civil War, earlier royal families had a home in the city.

In 1130, Henry I built lodging houses, known as the King's Houses just outside the north gate of the city, at the western end of present day Beaumont Street. These developed into Beaumont Palace, which for the next 150 years, was to be an important royal residence, convenient for the royal hunting-lodge at Woodstock.

Henry himself spent Easter 1133 in the *nova aula*, his 'new hall' at Beaumont in great pomp, celebrating the birth of his grandson, the future Henry II. Henry's successor, Stephen visited Oxford frequently, often conducting business here, particularly during the decade

when he was engaged infighting against warring barons.

“The last king to use Beaumont as a royal palace, was Edward I.”

Henry II did not spend much time in Oxford, although two of his eight children with Queen Eleanor, were born here. King Richard “the Lionheart”, went on to spend most of his life on Crusades, in captivity, or defending his lands in France; while King John is mainly remembered for losing territory in France and being forced to sign the Magna Carta. There is a plaque on the North-side of Beaumont Street, near Walton Street, commemorating their births in 1157 and 1167, respectively.

During this period Henry II maintained what was probably the largest royal court in Europe. It attracted huge attention from contemporary chroniclers, and typically comprised a number of major nobles and bishops, along with knights, domestic servants, prostitutes, clerks, horses and hunting dogs.

The last king to use Beaumont as a royal palace, spending some time there in the summer of 1275, was Edward I. At this time, Beaumont Palace comprised ceremonial halls and chambers, two chapels, a cloister, rooms for different members of the royal family, kitchens and other domestic offices. It was enclosed by a defensive wall; and entered through a great gate.

Later that same year, it seems to have ceased being a royal



residence, although remaining in royal ownership. The first tenant was an Italian lawyer, Francesco Accorso, who had undertaken diplomatic missions for Edward, and may have been teaching in Oxford at the time.

In 1318, Edward II gave the buildings to the Carmelite friars, honouring a promise he had made when he sought safety after the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314, in which he had been defeated by the Scots under Robert the Bruce.

Over the next two hundred years, the site was enlarged further, and the buildings made

more suitable for a monastery. The chapel, for example, was given a steeple and bells. But during the dissolution of the monasteries in the 1530's, the Carmelites were forced to give up the site, which by then probably extended from present day Magdalen Street to Walton Street. The land was given to a local M.P., Edmund Powell of Sandford, whose widow subsequently bequeathed it to St John's College.

The buildings were then largely demolished, and the stone was re-used in Christ Church and for a library at St John's. Late 18th century

engravings show that some of the buildings remained, probably the prior's oratory.

These appear to have lasted until the development of Beaumont Street in 1825, when all traces of the former palace and monastery were destroyed. Some parts of a 13th Century doorway have, however, survived, and are reported to be in the Carmelite Priory on Boar's Hill.

Stephen Struthers

David Juler in the Lord Mayor's Chair

I first met David Juler in 2011 when I began as a volunteer in Oxford's current Old Museum. His post was a temporary part-time paid Museum Assistant in the gift shop at the front desk. "I'd never visited the Museum before," he told me five years later, "although I had attended the occasional Beer festival at the Town Hall."

And then in 2012, within the Town Hall now, David became involved in the newly formed Explore Oxford, working in the shop and on reception. In early 2013 he moved on to become Museum Development Assistant for the Museum of Oxford, his particular focus on volunteers and accreditation for the

whole scheme, as well as playing his part in the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid to develop the Museum. Now in 2016 he speaks with pride of the HLF success, mentioning too the young volunteer group that he initiated and the formation of the Museum of Oxford Friends. "And," he added with a grin, "I'm still enjoying the on-going 'behind-the-scenes' activity."

"My lecturers were excellent and inspiring, I gained friends I'm still in contact with today"

David's first interest in museums stemmed, he told me, from his grandfather. "Loving natural history he took me as a child to all kinds of different museums in London. I shared that love." At school in Long Hanborough and later on at St Bartholomew's in Eynsham his enthusiasm developed – along with rugby, cycling and hill-climbing – and he took Advanced Levels in theatre studies, history and chemistry. "Quite a mix, I know - and somehow it was my next move that set me on my current path."

At Swansea University, "the best years of my life," David studied Ancient History, specialising in Egyptology. He



“He speaks with pride of the HLF success”

became involved in Xtreme Radio (the student Radio programme) where he ran breakfast radio shows and was voted Best Male Presenter of the Year.

He volunteered too at the University’s Egypt Centre that involved, for example, school visits and the processes of mummification. “My lecturers were excellent and inspiring, I gained friends I’m still in contact with today, and I also got to know and love the wonderful Gower peninsula.”

‘Phenomenology of Landscapes’ was his next step, being the theme of his MA. “Finding out about historical peoples,” he explained to me, “and how they interact with the

landscapes they lived in.” This he completed in 2011, making specific archaeological case studies in the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean.

“I see myself in my hard hat and reflective jacket.”

So on to the present time. Returning home to complete his dissertation, David gained funds from proof reading, working first as volunteer at Oxford’s University Museum and in the Ashmolean Museum’s education department where he supported family activities. (Volunteers at Explore Oxford will be familiar with David’s enthusiasm in this context.) And in the same

year he came to the Museum of Oxford.

Now as the Museum’s Development Assistant, David sees his future in development work and project managing within the museum sector and comparable organisations. “At this point in time, as the HLF project develops,” he comments with another grin, “I see myself in my hard hat and reflective jacket.” I note the clarity of David’s vision and that of his team’s, focused so directly on 2021 (they’re hoping!) with the opening of the new Museum of Oxford.

Prew Drue

Events



At the Museum of Oxford

Venture into the Interior

Tuesday 2nd August – Tuesday 30th August,
FREE, 10 am – 4:30pm, Gallery Corridor

Jim Vincent's prints of domestic interiors are often inspired by literature, but are also reflections of interior states of mind. The prints are produced by a digital computer tablet and stylus which enables him to obtain wonderful, vivid and unusual colour effects.

An Unseen Oxford

Friday 2nd September – Thursday 29th
September, FREE, 10am – 4:30pm, Gallery
Corridor

This documentary photography project by Peter David Grant, is based in and around Oxford, aiming to look behind the scenes and discover the people and activities that most residents and visitors don't notice or realise are there. Its goal is to remind us of the things we so easily take for granted.





Elsewhere

Blenheim Palace Festival of Transport

Sunday 28th – Monday 29th August, 10am – 5:30pm, Blenheim Palace Grounds

This Festival of Transport promises a great day out for any petrol head. Sunday will feature the classic car show, while Monday will have a wider variety to suit many interests. From classic cars and sports cars, to Kit cars and Hot Rods, Minis to motorbikes and more besides, there'll be something for everyone!

Picture This: Children's Illustrated Classics

Friday 24th June – Sunday 25th September, The River and Rowing Museum, Henley on Thames

Come and explore the magical world of children's book illustrations, in this wonderful interactive exhibition from the British Library. Dive into 100 years of children's classics, including the Just So Stories, The Borrowers, The Iron Man and The Railway Children. Design your own sweets for Willy Wonka's factory, join Peter Pan on his adventures and create your own Secret Garden. Make your own monster, hide in a Hobbit hole and picnic with our very own Mr Toad!



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