

The Museum closed at the end of September and now appears to be at its quietest. Appearances are deceiving, as it is busy time with meetings taking place to plan the summer exhibition and it is when I review the collection, renew the cabinets and try to restore order to the Curator's tiny office/storeroom. Adequate storage space remains a problem for museums great and small.

In late August Rosemary Boaz spoke, in the Methodist Hall, about her research into the history and architecture of the Cape House. It was a detailed and interesting look at a familiar landmark that began its life as a medieval timbered hall. Rosemary Cape was with us and shared her family's memories of living in such a fascinating dwelling. Thank you Rosemary, Tim and Rosemary.

In mid October Chris de Vere Hunt brilliantly directed the Museum Players in her play, All Aboard, that told the story of the Blue Motors Company. All Aboard was enthusiastically performed and received for two sold out performances in the Museum Solar. As the passengers waited for the late running bus many tales of Porlock emerged. Well done Chris and players. We are grateful to Chris, Christine and Nigel Greenwood, Mark Palmer, Stephanie Blake, Penny Kelham, John and Jane Hill and to newcomer Tamra as a war time evacuee recalling her experiences. Thank you also to those who worked behind the scenes insuring that all went smoothly.

Later in October the Solar was again filled to capacity, as author Matthew Greenwood spoke about and read excerpts from his latest book The Girl on Codsand Moor. The mystery surrounding the disappearance and death of Molly Phillips still captures the imagination and encourages debate. It was a lively evening.

It is the time of the year when we thank the many friends of the Museum who work behind the scenes in the Museum garden, fetch and carry for me, help with our events and help to stage exhibitions. We are also blessed with good neighbours who keep a watchful eye over the premises and are ever ready to lend a hand. Those of you who read the Free Press and other regional newspapers will have noticed how often articles and images of Museum events feature, this is entirely due to our long time Publicity Coordinator Penny Kelham and we are grateful to Penny for her gifted writing and photography.

We also thank Vi Martin and her team of Stewards. A frequent comment in our Visitor's Book is the warmth of the welcome they've received. A huge well done to Vi and our Stewards, as you have often heard me say, we could not open our doors without them.

We are always grateful for donations to the Museum and we thank the Porlock Community Orchard for their kind donation.

Our Treasurer, Rosalinde Haw, has asked me to mention the Co-op Local Community Fund. 1% from every Co-op own brand purchase is put towards the fund and the good of the community. Including the Museum.

There will be more about our Summer Exhibition in the Spring Newsletter, but we are very much looking forward to seeing the Solar filled with vibrant colours, as Clare Maryan Green tells the story of her farming year through her stained glass and paintings. I won't spoil the surprise, but Clare has recently taken up 'felting' and something extraordinary will be part of the exhibition.

We will be marking the anniversary of the end of WW1 with a display in the Great Hall and remembering those from Porlock who served and those who gave their lives for King and Country.

Jeff Cox will be continuing his story of living in Culbone and eventually leaving that magical clearing in the wood. It will be in the Museum Solar in mid February. Watch our notice board for the date.

The Museum will be open for Late Night Shopping (Saturday, December 9th) and raffle tickets will be available for the annual magnificent Christmas Hamper. We will look forward to seeing you there. Christmas cake, hot sausage rolls, mince pies, mulled cider and a warm welcome await you.

On 12th Night, January 6th, the Wassailers will begin their journey through the village at the Museum and with a Mummer's Play in the Solar.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all and we sincerely thank you for your continued support.

I will end with our heartfelt thanks to Chris and Roger who do such a splendid job of informing and amusing us with each Porlock Vale Newsletter.

Lita Strampp