



An Amazing Achievement

Staff and volunteers at the Museum would like to congratulate our patron, Eddie Izzard, on completing 27 marathons in just 27 days. This remarkable feat took place in March this year in South Africa, and the number 27 was selected to reflect the number of years Nelson Mandela spent in prison before becoming South Africa's first black president.

During the more-than-700 mile "run", Eddie had to combat dehydration, heat exhaustion and sunstroke and was forced to take an unscheduled rest on the fifth day. This meant he had to complete two marathons on the final day in order to achieve his goal – this he did most successfully, raising more than £1.35 million for the Sport Relief charity in the process.



The pictures show, left, Eddie Izzard re-opening Bexhill Museum in November 2009, and, right, at the start of his South Africa challenge in Pretoria

Note: within days of returning from South Africa, Eddie visited the Museum to check on the progress of a project to install an interactive display featuring his model train sets. The layout is being set up in the Motoring Gallery. Once it is completed it is hoped that visitors, both disabled and non-disabled, will be able to operate the trains for themselves.



March this year: Eddie at the Museum with his father, John, and on the right, holding his model of a Southern 245 Steam Engine.



**DIARY DATES**

COFFEE MORNING Parkhurst Hall
5 May 10-11.30am

GUIDED WALK "Stepping out to
find the *Amsterdam*"
7 May 6pm

BOOK SALE
Education Room
21 May 11am-3pm

FAMILY GUIDED WALK "Stepping
out to a family ramble in the
Highwoods"
1 June 10.30am

STRAWBERRY TEA
Education Room
1 June 1pm-3pm

GRAND DRAW

COFFEE MORNING Parkhurst Hall
2 June 10-11.30 am

FAMILY ART & CRAFT ACTIVITY
2 June 2-4pm

OUTING Chatham Historic
Dockyard
14 June

GUIDED WALK "Stepping out to
explore 500 years of the Royal Mail
around Bexhill"
19 June 2pm

GUIDED WALK "Stepping out to
Bexhill in 1916"
3 July 2pm

COFFEE MORNING Parkhurst Hall
7 July 10-11.30 am

GUIDED WALK "Stepping out to
Northeye, a deserted medieval
village"
20 July 2pm

Beauport Park Archive by Julian Porter

We are now very fortunate to have a large part of the Beauport Park Roman bathhouse archive in our care. This is an exceptionally important archaeological site located between Bexhill, Battle and Hastings. The site was discovered in 1869 but not excavated until the 1970s by Gerald Brodribb (1915-1999).

It is thought that Beauport Park was the third largest iron working site in the Roman Empire and was established in about AD 80 and abandoned sometime in the 3rd century. The bathhouse was partially preserved by being buried under a landslide of iron working debris.

Many of the Roman tiles are stamped "CLBR" meaning Classis Britannica which was the part of the Roman navy in control of the English Channel. It seems likely that the site was built and operated by the Classis Britannica who would have had the capacity to transport the iron back to mainland Europe.

Although it is now hard to imagine that we were once a major industrial area, the raw materials of iron ore and wood for charcoal were here in abundance and our coastal location was also convenient. Control of these resources would have been one of the reasons for the Roman invasion of AD 43. However, the site is an enigma. Why was there just this bathhouse amongst thousands of tonnes of iron working slag? There must have been other buildings which have either not yet been discovered or have left no evidence of their presence.

With the recent excavations along the site of the Bexhill to Hastings Link Road by Oxford Archaeology we now know more about local iron production, and the remains of fourteen bloomery furnaces from the 1st to late 2nd centuries were discovered near Upper Wilting Farm.

Bexhill Museum now has a very important archaeological archive and we hope to be able to extend the Museum in order to show it to our visitors.

*Picture at top of page:
the Beauport Archive in
store at Bexhill Museum.*

*Below: a Classis
Britannica floor tile with
tile comb impression and
a close-up of the tile with
"CLBR" just visible.*





Exploring Stuff *the story continues*

The second series of the Exploring Stuff workshops came to an end in March. We had a great time running them and really enjoyed working with all those involved. Students from Bexhill College and people living with dementia and their carers contributed enormously to make it a thoroughly worthwhile project.

Many attended a session during the Museum's winter closure and added their thoughts and ideas to the development of the exhibition which opened in February. Exhibits from the first series of workshops are on display in the cafe gallery, along with a short film made by Sally Hemmings and examples of students' work inspired by the meetings and the Museum's collections.

In addition to the full and varied workshops, we have had an excellent response to the family days. The December drop-in attracted more than 100 people who made snow globes and created the beautiful white sculptures of 'things' now on display in the cafe gallery. All the art works were created from objects discarded and donated by Oxfam Bexhill, Shirley Anne Dementia and Alzheimers charity shops. Thanks to Artist Nicole Zaaroura for facilitating the day and to all the volunteers involved in donating jam jars, helping out and running around replenishing supplies. It was frantic and fabulous!

Our recent Spring open day was also a great success, with more than 50 young people attending a 'Searching and Sorting' session with Penny Hobson. Many wonderful creations were produced, this time with material collected from the beach. Thanks to Penny and all the volunteers, without whom these events would not be possible.

In March we were thrilled by the fantastic response to the talk given by Paul Camic (Professor of Psychology and Public Health, Christ Church Canterbury University). Over 120 people attended his fascinating presentation on 'The Objects in Our Lives/The Life in Our Objects' at the Izzard Theatre, Bexhill College. Again, thanks to all involved for making this such a successful event.

Designed by Di Knell, the exhibition's new interactive display is now up and running in the cafe gallery. This enables visitors to 'Be a Curator' and design an exhibition of objects organised as per their varying roles and uses, i.e. form and function, attachment, symbolism, story, remembrance and souvenir and identity. This is quite different to the way museums usually categorise things and it was a bit of a challenge to settle on these six specific groups. We managed it, however, and hope you enjoy being able to decide for yourselves whether you agree with our categories or think we missed something out.

You can follow the project on Twitter (@Exploring_Stuff) and on Facebook (BexhillMuseumExploringStuff).

Louise Kenward <http://www.louisekenward.com>





Emily Wilding Davison – the Bexhill Connection *by* Dave Hatherell

Emily Wilding Davison is remembered as the suffragette who was fatally injured in a collision with a racehorse at the Epsom Derby in 1913. She came from a large family, having three siblings and nine half-siblings from her father's first marriage. This family, with a large collection of aunts, uncles and cousins had their origins in Morpeth, Northumberland.

As she and her family grew, they went in various directions – to London, Canada, the USA, France, Sheffield and even Bexhill. Two of her half-brothers, Henry Jocelyn and William Seton, came to live here.

Henry had a career in the Royal Navy, retiring in 1902 with the rank of Captain. He had been presented at Court and had been burnt during the rescue of a crew from another vessel. He lived with his wife, Mary and daughter, Aline at Moorfield, Sutherland Avenue, which appears to have been the north east corner of the Sutherland Road/Collington Avenue junction. His later years were caught up in litigation, including bankruptcy. He also supported a sister who is thought to be Amy Briscoe, who had fallen on hard times following a divorce. He died in Warwick in 1914 and is remembered with a prie-dieu and brass plaque in St Stephen's Church. His widow was occupied as an accompanist with the Bexhill Music Society until she bowed out in 1919, her sight failing. She attended her daughter's marriage in Johannesburg in 1923. Both were present in Bexhill, in Terminus Avenue, on the outbreak of war. Mary died in 1942.

William's life was not quite as illustrious. At the time of his marriage in 1903, he was a porter at a Sheffield hospital. The family memory is that whilst in Manchester, William and his wife, Sarah took in and cared for Emily on her various prison releases. He appears in Bexhill in 1910, living in Chandler Road. They had five sons, the eldest, William, was just old enough to serve in the Royal Navy at the end of World War One. He emigrated to Canada. Edward and George emigrated to Australia in the 1950s. One son, Jocelyn, remained in Bexhill. The whereabouts of his two daughters is at the moment uncertain. Addresses associated with this family are Buxton Drive, Edmonton Road, Grange Court Drive and Sedgwick Road. Research on this branch of the family is continuing.



"To inspire people of all ages and promote learning and enjoyment among all Bexhill residents as well as visitors by encouraging discovery"

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