



JANUARY 2016

NEWSLETTER

BALDOCK MUSEUM & LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

MUSEUM NEWS

As most of you probably realise, the Museum has been closed most of the time since the July flood when a drain pipe came loose and flooded the basement with storm water to a depth of an inch or two. Fortunately we had moved the collection back upstairs beforehand so there was little damage. The water has been removed and the basement cleaned but the lingering smell was sufficient to make attending the Museum for two hours rather unpleasant. So, having opened late because of the dampness in the tower room caused (again) by a blocked drain in the street outside and the raising of the level of the street above the level of the damp course during the Town Centre Enhancement, we had to close yet again.

It was intended that some damp-proofing work should be done this winter to try and prevent the problems of last winter but, with the Museum closing early, this was done in the autumn instead. The cost of the work was paid to Baldock Town Hall Ltd by NHDC as part of their contribution to putting the old Town Hall back into use. The work has left the Museum in a bit of a mess and Tesco have kindly offered to come and redecorate the affected areas. We hope that we will be ready to open as usual on 2nd March when the display on the Baldock turnpike will be on show.

COMING EVENTS:

Thursday 28th January: *'Hitchin: A Century of Change'*, Hugh Madgin continues his popular series of talks on local towns.

Thursday 24th March: *'A 1950s Childhood'* another entertaining trip down memory lane by Frank Foy.

Thursday 26th May: *'Slideshow of 20th Century Pictures of Baldock'*; a selection from the photographs collected by the late Edna Page.

Thursday 28th July: *'Superstitious? Me?'* Judy Flack looks at the origins of everyday superstitions.

Thursday 22nd September: A.G.M., Quiz and Buffet Evening.

Thursday 24th November: *'The Malting Industry in Baldock'*; by Brendan King.

All meetings will be in the Community Centre, Simpsons Drive at 8pm. Non-members are welcome at a charge of £2.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS.

The Society relies heavily on the subscriptions of its members to support the Museum . The cost has been held for some years at **£6 for a family and £4 for single membership** which entitles you to attend our five talks, receive the newsletter and visit the Museum free, which we hope you think is good value. Normally we continue to supply the newsletter for four or five years after membership has lapsed in the hope of a renewal so please remember to renew this year. This can be done at our talks or by sending a cheque payable to Baldock Museum & Local History Society to the Treasurer, Mr. J. Merrett, 23 Bush Spring, Baldock, SG7 6QT (or through the door of 22 Whitehorse Street) **please remember to include your name and address.**

On the subject of the newsletter, it would be helpful, to keep down costs, if we could send newsletters by email so could those renewing their subscriptions please give their email address.

HELP NEEDED

Once again we are getting rather short of volunteers to man the Museum. If you could help out by attending for two hours on a Sunday (2-4pm) or a Wednesday (11am-1pm) once every two months (or more or less, as you wish) please telephone 892640 or make yourself known at a meeting.



This picture of Norton End is part of the collection of the late Edna Page that has now kindly been donated to this society by the Baldock Society. It shows the junction of Cemetery Road (Norton Road), with the Icknield Way and the road to Norton. The gasworks and the gas holder may just be seen in the background. The picture appears to have been taken in the 1920s to show the site of a recently demolished 'island' of cottages in the middle of the road, marked by a triangular patch of grass in the centre of the picture. These cottages had been demolished as part of B.U.D.C.'s scheme to clear the slum housing in Norton End and in other parts of the town that began after the First World War. Probably these houses, and some others which stood on the right of the picture, were demolished at some time between 1921 and 1923, but some reader may know differently?

The picture seems to be part of a set of at least five, possibly taken for the Council to record the changes and the condition of the area. For those not sure what they are looking at, the Orange Tree would be to the left of the person taking the picture. Some of Edna's collection will be shown in a slide show at our meeting on 26th May.