

# December 2023 What's On!

**Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year**

**Diary Dates:** There is nothing in the diary for January.



**Update.** Progress with the refurbishment of the museum is in hand and the decorating of all the rooms will be started before Christmas. There is a fair amount of electrical work to



be carried out before that. The trapdoors will not be opened (before Covid we got an estimate to open the trapdoors and haul up new cabinets and it was £7000.00) the new cabinets will be assembled on site. We need to strip out everything of ours. I propose to do on the next two Wednesdays. **If you want to help**

**out; I will be there from 10 till 12noon.**

**Christmas Market Stall.** First of all, a big thank you to all those who braved the cold to stand on our stall. There is a lot of competition from other stalls selling similar items. After deducting the float, we raised just £70.56 but items like pencils, rubbers, rulers and pencil sharpeners don't sell.



Would you believe they were all purchased in about 2006 and prompted such an argument that one of the founder volunteers was forced to resign. The most popular item we sold was the cut out carillon model selling 12 of the 13 we had on the stall. I was a little disappointed with the Spitfire models selling just 1 of the 6 we had. See below.

**Christmas Cards.** We have a collection of military Christmas Cards from WW1 to the present day; they are stored in different archive boxes making the job of putting them together difficult but I have made a start to put them in albums. All the cards are in one place. I have carried out a similar exercise with ephemera relating to the Zeppelin Raid.

The Christmas cards vary from the romantic and sentimental to outright propaganda invariably putting on a cheerful face, showing our soldiers as confident of victory.

**Banking Problems.** We have had more than our fair share of problems with banks. HSBC our present bank charge us £5 a month for the privilege of having an account with them and 40p for every transaction. It is clear they do not want our business. Trying to change has turned into a nightmare, we are now on our third attempt to change our bank (or this case a Building Society). This has prevented us from setting up card payments. It appears that we are not alone.



**The charity regulators** reported recently that charities are seeing their bank accounts suddenly closed or suspended by high street banks. In an open letter to the CEOs of major banks, the regulators have said the sector experiences “poor customer service and administrative delays” and called on banks to improve the “substandard” services they offer. The regulators have urged banks to make it easier for trustees to set up a charity bank account and better train bank staff on how charities are run. The letter warns: “Inadequate banking provision drives charities to rely on unsafe practices, such as trustees using their own bank accounts, or keeping large cash reserves unsecured – and public trust in charities may become eroded.”

“The current stresses for charity trustees are heightened by avoidable frustrations at the availability of bank accounts and substandard service from banks. Too often, charities experience accounts being closed or suspended suddenly for long periods of time with poor customer service and administrative delays. This letter makes clear that we consider the service charities experience is unacceptable”.

**German Cemeteries.** A Facebook follower drew our attention to this YouTube video about the German graves in Britain [The Eagles That Landed - Forgotten Luftwaffe Cemetery Sandringham - YouTube](#)

If you have ever visited Loughborough Cemetery in the military section there are a number of German and Italian graves, including the four German airmen when the Dornier crashed at Burton on the Wolds. It was the only German aircraft lost from the 300 bombers that took part in the [Coventry Raid](#). We have the Vin Plate (Vehicle Identification Number) from the crashed Dornier in our collection. It was rescued by a Captain Miles who, I believe was in charge of the soldiers tasked to guard the wreckage from souvenir hunters. Read the Loughborough Echo’s account of the Dornier that crashed. [The Echo](#)



**Mystery Object.** Sorting out the New Street store I came across this plastic object, it is transparent and about 3 inches high. I recognised it immediately but do any of you have any idea what it is? Need a clue? It is part of a weapon system.



Would you believe it, I could not find one on the internet. That is the second item that I could not find on the internet recently having failed to find an image of the flag of the Royal Leicestershire Regiment. Come on Google! I’m betting that not one of you will know what it is. Prove me wrong and I will buy you a coffee.

**From our Collection.** October 1915 and for the first time during World War I, British troops wore steel helmets. High numbers of head wounds from shrapnel early in the war led all countries to introduce steel helmets for their troops. The French were the first to adopt steel helmets (we beat them in the adoption of khaki uniforms) and the Germans the last.



The British Army adopted this form of helmet initially known as the 'Brodie' helmet, as its standard head protection in 1915. However, there were so few of them that they were designated 'trench stores' i.e. left in the trenches for the next unit. It wasn't until spring 1916 that it began to be issued to troops in large numbers, by then 1,000,000 had been produced.

**Museum Data Service.** In the few years that I have been involved with the museum I cannot remember how many times I have heard of schemes to put every museum's catalogue on a national site, they have all come to nothing. However, here is a scheme that looks as if the idea will finally get off the ground.



A partnership of Art UK, Collections Trust and the University of Leicester are working towards this. In their words. "Today, with our partners Art UK and the University of Leicester, we are thrilled to launch the website of the new Museum Data Service. MDS aims to connect and share all the object records across all UK museums, large and small.

Why? Because it is not currently possible to search, let alone work, across the 80 million or so object records spread across UK museum databases, most of them offline. That's a barrier to collaboration and to innovation in our understanding of collections. Today we launch the [website](#) of a game-changing new service that aims to connect and share all the object records across all UK museums, large and small."

I have completed the *Expression of Interest* form with the intention of joining.

**I didn't Know That.** I must have passed this plaque set in the block paving in Devonshire Square hundreds of times without reading it. However, I finally looked down and discovered a piece of Loughborough's hidden military history. Devonshire Place got its name from the Devonshire Militia. The militias had been around for hundreds of years, local men recruited into companies and given military training, part time volunteers. Today we call them the Army Reserve.

The units in counties along the southern coast were probably the most efficient and best funded owing to the ever present threat from the French and Spanish. They would also have little in common or sympathy with the Luddites whereas the local recruited militia might be men whose jobs were being threatened by the increasing use of machines. In 1812 the Devonshire Militia spend a year deployed around the Midlands to help curtail the activities



of the Luddite machine smashing campaign. The wording reads:

Devonshire Place is named after the Devonshire Militia who drilled here when stationed in Loughborough. They were here to quell the Luddite riots surfacing in the industrial Midlands in



The early 1800s.

Christmas Treat. Found this by accident a YouTube video of someone playing 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star' I cannot think who it could be?



Perhaps Peter knows? [Bells at Loughborough Carillon Tower & War Memorial Museum](#)

[Queens Park](#)  [Twinkle Twinkle Little Star - YouTube.](#)

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