

MUSEUM NEWS

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Behind the scenes of a locked-down museum

We might have had to close during lockdown, but the site was still a hive of activity thanks to our indomitable and hardworking team!

Social distancing meant that only a couple of people could be on site at a time, but we still managed to get lots of jobs done – including sorting through the museum stores in preparation for redevelopment.

As you might have seen on Facebook, this resulted in a number of finds both weird and wonderful! A highlight was Helen's discovery of a file of information about the Parker family who used to live on our site, some of which will feature in our new displays and exhibitions.

If you've kept an eye on our Facebook page, you'll have seen pictures of some of these finds as well as other activities such as 'Name that Plant' and 'Mystery Objects' quizzes. Social media has been a crucial way of keeping in touch during lockdown – big thanks to Matt and Jan for posting and engaging with our followers.

Matt has also been kept busy creating a piece on the frames, comprised of small parts of 21 different designs sent to us from Harby Primary School in Leicester. He's also working on an 'appreciation piece' for the NHS which will be ready soon, so look out for pics on Facebook.



Thank you to all our staff and volunteers who've stuck with us through lockdown. Those who've been shielding are sorely missed and we hope to welcome you back very soon.



Curator's Notes

Despite a very unsettling situation, our small museum community has shown its trademark resilience and creativity.

As the lockdown began in March, we also learned that both our applications to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the FCC had been successful and that we could embark upon our major redevelopment project, 'A Right Good Yarn.'

As ever, the gang have been amazingly flexible and shifted their efforts to moving the entire collection store, catching up on maintenance and ramping up our digital presence.

Our project with partners Common Threads had to develop in light of the current crisis too. To respond to the current need this evolved into a collaborative art project – the Resilience Quilt. We're delighted by the creativity people have shown and can't wait to see the final work assembled.

The team have also been amazing as we have designed a new safe visitor experience. Everyone has pitched in to make immediate changes and at the same time keep an eye on the future.

The place has been very quiet without our fantastic volunteers. We're looking forward to seeing everyone return for what will be an exciting couple of years ahead.

Jim Grevatte

office@frameworkknittersmuseum.org.uk

'A Right Good Yarn' project timeline

Summer 2020

Permission granted to start. Project Delivery Team appointed. Details of main building works finalised and contractors invited to tender.

Summer 2020 to Spring 2021

New exhibitions to be designed, complete with storylines, text, graphics and other interactive features.



Late Summer 2020 to Summer 2022

Activity Plan will be put in place, to include a range of events for the local community, craft groups, schools and other audiences to enjoy.

Autumn 2020 to Late Summer 2021

Construction works will take place on the main site, Gunn Cottage and the Chapel to create a brand new visitor route and enhanced facilities, including a new café and gift shop.

Late Summer 2021

New exhibitions and displays will be installed.

Autumn 2021

Trial opening period, followed by community launch, reopening and celebrations!



Last call to create the Resilience Quilt

Join us to create a quilt made up of individual creative textile responses to the unique events and experiences of the 2020 Covid-19 outbreak.



We invite you to help us document these extraordinary times: create a textile quilt piece using images, colours, patterns, words, stitches and textures to represent the isolation, the worries, the gardens dug and flowers planted, the extraordinary blue skies, the time we had to listen to the birds, the amazing gestures of friendship, support and bravery, the uncertainty, the boredom!

As well as helping you channel your creative energies, taking part in the Resilience Quilt project is a great way to stay connected with the museum without visiting our site.

We've been overwhelmed by the creativity and quality of the diamond pieces we've received so far. It's become a pleasure to check the post each morning and see what wonders have come in from all you creative people out there.

The deadline for sending us your quilt pieces has been extended to 31st July, so there's still time to get involved. To download your instructions and submission form, please visit the museum website.

PS. Don't forget to share what you're making on social media using #resiliencequilt!

Book your 2 hour 'Covid-Safe' Museum Visit!

The museum is now open for 2 hour private visits for your family or social bubble.

Enjoy exclusive access to our workers' cottages and collections, exploring the site at your leisure. During your safe, socially distanced visit, you can watch a frame demonstration, knit your own souvenir and have a refreshing cuppa and cake in our Tea Room.

Visiting slots are available from Wednesday to Saturday. To book and pay in advance by card or PayPal, please visit www.frameworkknittersmuseum.org.uk.

Story of a Framework Knitter: Rachel Carter

On Saturday 23rd May, local sculptor Rachel Carter premiered her film, 'The Story of a Framework Knitter' as part of the Nottstopping Festival.



The tale – filmed in our frameshop – shares the lives of Rachel's FWK ancestors who lived in Nottinghamshire during some turbulent times, including Thomas Bramley (her 6 x Great Grandad) who is reputed to have met in secret with Lord Byron prior to his maiden speech in Parliament opposing the Frame Breakers Bill.

You can watch Rachel's film on YouTube by following this link: <https://tinyurl.com/ydc6p96p>.

Beauty out of ugliness

Helen Brownett, our Textile Artist & Technical Demonstrator, has designed her own version of a Covid-19 virus – and knitted it in 3D on one of our antique circular knitting machines. Helen put the finishing touches to the blue coronavirus by hand, adding pink pompoms to make her creation instantly recognisable.



Explaining her motivation to design and knit a coronavirus, Helen says: 'I've always had an interest in knitting unusual things. Past projects have included the knitted bike you can see in the museum garden, an octopus and even a shed! During lockdown, I thought I'd use some of my newfound spare time to knit something that captured the spirit of the times we're living in.'

A photo of Helen's creation, posted on Facebook by Museum Assistant, Jan Perrett, has reached over 3,200 people. Says Jan: 'It (Covid-19) is currently a symbol of fear, but I love the fact that Helen has created something beautiful out of something so horrendous.'

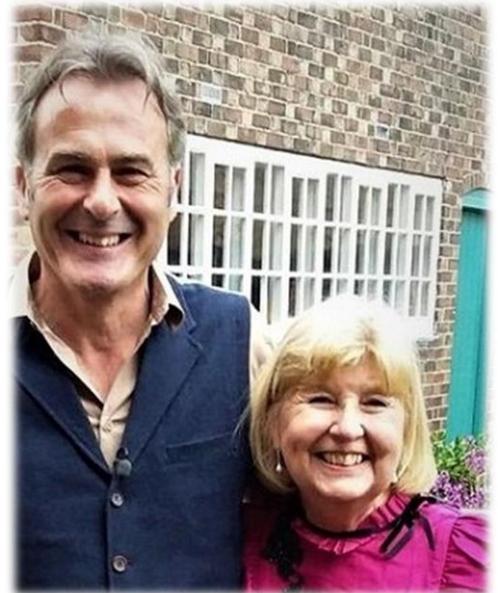
Your museum garden needs YOU!

As part of the redevelopment project, 'A Right Good Yarn,' we'll be extending the museum's garden into the grounds of Gunn Cottage. This will include a lovely new outdoor seating area adjacent to the new café.

If you'd like to help us create the new garden, or can donate any heritage varieties of plants, bulbs or seeds, we'd love to hear from you!

Why I volunteer – Gill King

I saw a request for volunteers in The Rudd. I had retired and I was enjoying new freedom and there was now time in my diary, so I thought, "Why not give it a try?"



I had visited the Museum, so I sort of knew what it was about. That was about five years ago. It was definitely one of the best decisions I have made.

I started with a fortnightly afternoon slot welcoming visitors, serving in the shop and making the odd pot of tea. How involved you get is very much up to you. But the place soon drew me in and I found myself wanting to know all I could about framework knitting which was so important in the industrial development of the East Midlands.

I am now a guide for booked parties and help with school visits and recently have begun learning to use the old frames themselves. I have been challenged and stimulated and even met Paul Martin, when Flog It visited the museum (pictured above)!

A global broadcast

Throughout the world, there are keen knitting enthusiasts ranging through all sorts of knitting techniques and this is no different for the circular sock machines, which we commonly call Griswolds.

Unfortunately, due to the virus, many of the get togethers that happen around the world, sometimes referred to as “Crank ins,” have been unable to happen. So, one of the hosts in the US, Jim and Amy Grant of Good Karma Farm and Spinning Co., decided to take it online and host one through Zoom.



As you may imagine, this allowed people from all over the world – from the UK, US, Canada, New Zealand and more – to get together and share their passions for sock knitting machines with each other. This also gave me an opportunity to show knitting enthusiasts what sort of knitting machines were used before these.

In mid-May, I had the chance to show off the museum’s frames to a global audience of knitting enthusiasts, a chance we have not had before. The stream I did went live on Facebook on the 17th May and the recording is still online should you wish to see it.

The stream did wonderfully well. In total, it attracted 2,200 views, 110 reactions, and over 250 comments from people interacting with the stream. I can say it was a wonderful opportunity to do and am thoroughly thankful for the chance.

Matthew Hamilton, Framework Coordinator

Friends’ Corner

The best-laid plans.....etc! Not much to report this time as our trips and events have been scuppered this year. However, always optimistic, we shall be having a committee meeting, when appropriate, and may be able to salvage something different for later in the year.

Our usual spring newsletter went out in March (albeit with some information that has since been rendered inaccurate!) and membership renewals have been encouraging with many loyal members increasing their donations at a time when various other organisations are asking for extra support.

While our AGM is postponed, I am pleased to say that all our committee members have agreed to carry on (though another recruit would be welcome)

Jim and the Museum staff have been working out ways to make the Museum “Covid-Safe” for visitors and volunteers so, like most aspects of life, things will be done differently.

However, Friends members are still entitled to free entry and I hope some of you will visit to encourage and support us all as we emerge from this difficult time.

Kathy Powis, Chairman of the Friends of RFKM



Barbara and Kathy venturing out