

Outreach

The newsletter of the Friends of The National Archives

Vol 5: No 3, June 2018

The Chairman reviews the past year and looks to the future

Tony Wakeford, Chairman, reflected on the progress of the Friends at our recent AGM.

Our AGM on 19 June gave me the opportunity to express thanks and appreciation to all those who contributed towards the success of the Friends over the past 12 months. My fellow trustees have devoted many hours to manage the needs of the Friends. We operate on an entirely voluntary basis that requires a considerable amount of time and effort to ensure effective management and compliance with statutory requirements, as well as responding to enquiries and requests from TNA for funding and support. My colleagues have done a splendid job and for that I am very grateful.

Behind the scenes the proofreaders, magazine dispatchers (the stuffing team) and the helpers who assisted at various events, and the AGM, have all helped to keep things running smoothly. Much more visible are Howard Marchant and the recruiting team – our pressgang, who have provided a valuable visible presence for members and potential new members.

We enjoy a good working relationship, and friendships, with staff across many parts of TNA. It has been an interesting time exploring new ideas and ways in which we can develop and extend our support for TNA's benefit with Jeff James, TNA's Chief Executive and Keeper, Caroline Ottaway-Searle, Director of Public Engagement, Valerie Johnson, Director of Research and Collections, and members of their teams. I should particularly like to highlight the



Chairman, Tony Wakeford, and trustee, Maggie Deighton, cut the Friends' 30th anniversary cake at our 2018 AGM.

splendid assistance we have received from Kelly Kimpton, TNA's volunteers' co-ordinator.

The AGM marked some changes with our president and two patrons standing down. I should like to thank Lord Crathorne and Sir Keith Thomas for their patronage over the years and, on behalf of the trustees and membership, wish them well for the future. We presented Lord Hennessy with a gift to mark our appreciation for his presidency and support. I was delighted to introduce Paddy Ashdown, Lord Ashdown of

Norton-sub-Hamdon, who has accepted our invitation to become our next president.

My first year as chairman has very much focused on matters of policy and process. We are first and foremost a charity and have to ensure that our procedures meet all regulatory requirements. We have almost completed a thorough review of our policies and have introduced risk management processes to assist in the running of the charity. GDPR has caused us to review our data protection policy and working practices. As a result we have reduced access to personal data by disbanding the magazine 'stuffing team' and will be temporarily using trustees to undertake bulk mailings whilst we review the overall process. I am grateful for the invaluable help and guidance from TNA's experts on data protection and risk management matters.

It has been an interesting and positive year where we have developed our support for TNA's education and outreach teams. We have also undertaken to support a postgraduate research fellowship scheme and following recent interviews an appointment has been offered to begin in September. We have also

continued on page 2

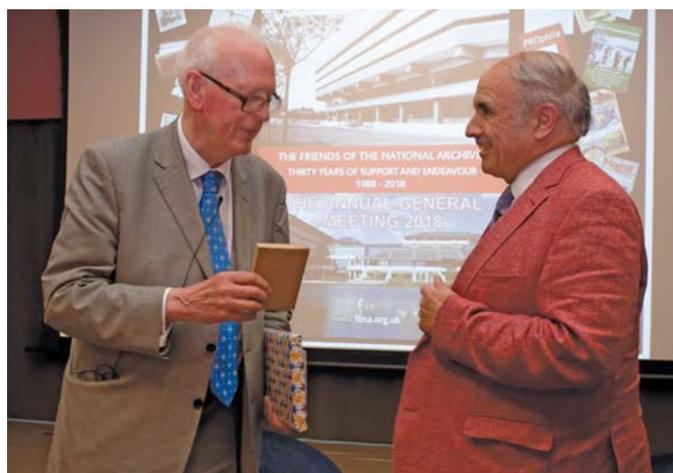
The Chairman reviews the past year and looks to the future, continued

produced an anniversary brochure that provides a snapshot of some of the key projects of the past 30 years. We have become more diverse in our support as the nature of TNA's activities and responsibilities have changed over the same period.

And so to the future - one of my main concerns since becoming chairman has been the trustees' workload and how far we can reasonably expect to continue on a voluntary basis before it becomes unfair and untenable. We want to increase the membership base but this will put further pressure on the trustees. Requests for additional volunteers have not been entirely successful so it falls to the willing few. However, I am pleased to report that we have had some success with volunteers for the recruiting team and we have recently appointed Tony Reed to the non-trustee support post of meetings administrator.

With these issues in mind the trustees have agreed in principle to consider incorporating. The Charity is an unincorporated association and as such has no legal identity. The contracts that we have are in the names of individual trustees, rather than in the name of the Friends. Incorporation would enable contracts to be in the name of the Charity so that changes of trustees would have no affect. It also affords trustees extra protection – at the moment trustees are personally liable if things go wrong. This, in part, has affected the success in attracting new trustees to the team. Clearly, we need to review our working practices – smarter, not harder, but incorporation would enable us in time to acquire paid support or buy in services to meet a current need. Ultimately it is about building resilience for the future prosperity and success of the Friends.

Over the summer the trustees will make themselves available to discuss and explain the reasoning for incorporation and the



Tony Wakeford thanked our outgoing president, Peter Hennessy, for all his help and support, and presented him with tokens of our appreciation.

processes involved. It is not just a case of changing our status – the Charity would have to be dissolved and a new one created, a bureaucratic situation that cannot be avoided. Our intention is to have a Special General Meeting in December to formally decide.

In other areas we want to begin fundraising and also develop links with Friends of other archives. We will also engage more widely in the charity sector to share ideas and best management practice with other small charities. Closer to home, the new TNA Foundation Trust will be set up in the near future and I will ensure that we establish a good working relationship and clear lines of responsibility. We have much to do and much to look forward to as we head towards the next milestone anniversary.

Poppy Factory visit



On Tuesday 14 June, a group of Friends went along to the Poppy Factory at Richmond for a most enjoyable and informative visit. After learning more about the amazing, life-changing work they do in support of ex-service men and women, there was a tour around the factory, followed by the opportunity of taking the one handed, poppy making challenge. It was a very interesting visit enjoyed by all, and we would like to thank the staff and veterans for answering all of our questions and making us most welcome.



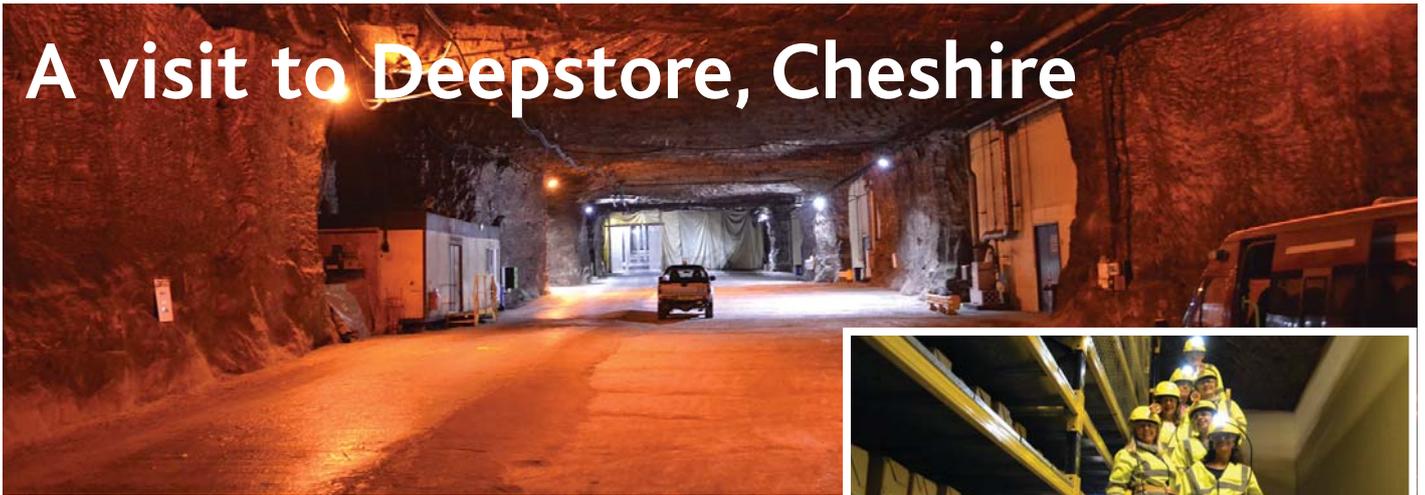
Left: Peter Helmore and his poppy.

Below left: the one handed poppy maker.

Below right: volunteers at the factory.



A visit to Deepstore, Cheshire



On Monday 11 June, a few lucky staff and volunteers were given the rare opportunity of being able to visit the TNA records kept at Deepstore.

After a brief history of the mine over lunch on arrival, there followed a safety and security briefing, and we were then kitted out ready to be transported via one of the mine shafts. Below the Cheshire countryside an amazing dry, cavernous space has been excavated by the extraction of salt used on British roads during the winter. It is here, 150 metres underground, that large vaults have been created allowing organisations such as TNA to store excess documents.

Still a working mine, it is said as a whole to be the size of 700 football fields with 39 miles of roadway, being

Top: the cavernous and impressive roadways at Deepstore, Cheshire.
 Right: group picture of TNA staff and volunteers who visited Deepstore.
 Below: storage shelves for TNA records at Deepstore.



used by a large fleet of vehicles which include an ambulance and fire engine. Only a small proportion of the space is currently occupied for storage, but entering into it, you definitely get the sense of its vastness. Just one of the small vaults used by TNA contains over

40,000 boxes of WW1 documents, all neatly arranged in alphabetical order on 3-storey high shelving. The pitch blackness and constant temperature of around 14 degrees are perfect conditions for preserving those precious records in the care of TNA, and the fact that only those who work in the mine are able to navigate down there, means that security is at a premium.

It was an extremely unusual and interesting visit, and a big thank you to all of those involved who made it possible.

Small Charities Coalition meeting



L-R: Eileen Wicks, Alex Wells, Poppy Rosenberg and Tony Wakeford. At the end of June, representatives from the Small Charities Coalition (SCC) visited TNA to meet our Chairman and Vice Chairman to explore the possibility of the Friends hosting a charity governance and management networking and information sharing event for SCC members.

MEDEA Awards Recognition

The film-making projects supported by the Friends have been recognised by the MEDEA Awards, part of the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme. The awards are given for excellence and creativity in media in Education.

Andrew Payne, Head of TNA's Education and Outreach Department with the Suffrage Tales finalists' medallion and Tony Wakeford holding the winning trophy for Somme Tales.



A special thank you



L to R, Jane Buckingham, Jane Pearey, Dorota Boisot and Eileen Wicks.

We would like to say a special thank you to the ladies who volunteered their time and hard work in assisting the TNA staff at 'Suffragette Archives

At Night' on Friday 18 May. This marked another successful and well attended TNA event which was enjoyed by all who were present.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Do you enjoy meeting and helping new people?

If so, and you can spare some time (on a regular or occasional basis), you could be just the person we need to be part of our team that supplies volunteers to help with various functions at The National Archives.

These include stewarding at conferences, helping with family days and other TNA and Friends events, **and especially helping staff our recruitment / members enquiry stalls (Kew Desk, or the 'pressgang')**. Which kind of activity you wish to be involved in, and how often, is up to you. To find out more about what the team does and how you might fit in please contact Howard at the email address below:

recruiting@ftna.org.uk

or drop by at one of our stalls to have a chat. The dates when the team are available can be found under the **Kew Desk Tab** (via Contact Us) on our website.

West Sussex outreach meeting

Council members recently met with colleagues from West Sussex Record Office and West Sussex Archives Society, at the record office in Chichester. The meeting took place as part of the Friends of The National Archives outreach programme, through which we are trying to build our links with other relevant Friends organisations around the country. We discussed opportunities and challenges which we share in common, and benefitted from a fascinating tour of the West Sussex archives and an insight into some of their holdings. We also begun to explore options for a possible joint event in the next 12-18 months. More information will follow as plans take shape!



L-R: Tony (Chairman), Sue Millard (WSAS), Julie (Editor) and Wendy Walker (WSRO).

EASYFUNDRAISING

We have raised over £2036 with grateful thanks to the 60 members who subscribe to this scheme. Please join us and help to raise even more funds to help support projects and activities at The National Archives.

Go to www.easyfundraising.org.uk and create an account. Select the Friends as your charity. When you shop online go via easyfundraising who will link you to the online retailer of your choice (there are over 2000 of them!). When you have completed your purchase in the usual way, the retailer will make a donation to easyfundraising (usually between 1 and 6 per cent of the purchase price).