

January 2019



Dear Member,

Happy New Year! I am pleased to report that Poole Museum Foundation has kicked off 2019 with 66 Founder Members, and we look forward to adding new members to the Foundation throughout the year. As a 'Thank You' for your continued support, you will soon be receiving a new Membership Rewards Card in the post that will earn you rewards for each visit to Poole Museum.

This New Year promises to be filled with many interesting, fun and exciting events, beginning with the opening of our latest exhibition, 'Calm Before the Storm: The Art of Photographing Lifeboats'. This exhibition presents a remarkable collection of images from the archive of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI). For generations, the Beken family in Cowes has photographed maritime activity in the area, creating a significant visual record of Isle of Wight industry and RNLI lifeboats.

'Calm before the Storm: The Art of Photographing Lifeboats' celebrates the digitisation of over eight hundred Beken glass plate negatives. It explores the stories of individual lifeboats and their volunteer crews, from starting service to saving lives at sea.

The exhibition also features photographs made by Jack Lowe as part of The Lifeboat Station Project, an ambitious journey to all 238 RNLI stations in the UK and Ireland photographing the lifeboat crews of today. Jack's use of a Victorian process to produce images on glass complements the historical photographs of the Beken collection, prompting reflection on generations of lifesaving.

In the next Members' Newsletter we will unveil an all new 'guest author' series, with each edition featuring a different Trustee or Museum staff member. This month, Trustee Peter Dobson has asked that we share a recent article from The Oldie magazine in which the author recalls a peculiar run in with the great Augustus John.

Board of Trustees

Felicity Irwin DL (chair)
Peter Burt
John Butterworth
Prof. Timothy Darvill OBE
Samantha Tuck
Peter Dobson
Prof. Emma Hunt
Simon Jenner

Important Dates at a Glance:

26 January- 22 April:

Calm Before the Storm: The Art of Photographing Lifeboats



7 June:

Henry Lamb
Fundraising Dinner at
Sandbanks Hotel
(More information to come)

Poole Museum Foundation,
Registered charity number 1171114
4 High Street, Poole, Dorset BH15 1BW

T: 01202 262600 E: museumfoundation@poole.gov.uk www.poolemuseum.com/support-us

I Once Met

Augustus John

I was a priggish prep-school boy of about nine or ten in the late 1940s when my family (my father was the writer VS Pritchett) lived in a small rented cottage on the Wiltshire farm belonging to Mary Campbell. She was the daughter of the Earl of Rosslyn and was married to Robin Campbell who had lost a leg in a raid on Rommel's HQ in the war.

Mary loved farming and loved parties; she adored her small herd of Jersey cows and adored the collection of writers, artists and assorted bohemians who would come to stay at the weekends.

She used to lead her friends on jaunts and sometimes we were included. There were occasional visits, for example, to Pewsey, to the grand house belonging to her ex-husband, the businessman Sir Philip Dunn – referred to by Mary and all her friends as The Tycoon.

I remember another jaunt when a group of us went to support Robin Mount (dashing amateur jockey and grandfather of *The Oldie's* Editor), riding in a nearby point-to-point. While the grown-ups were watching the racing or chattering in the beer tent, my older sister and I

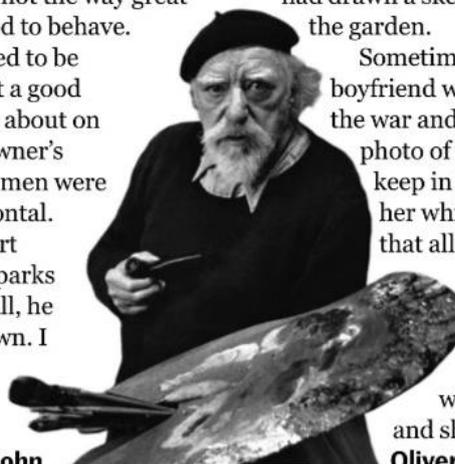
wandered round the field where all the cars were parked. I spotted a bearded tramp slumped across the bonnet of one of the cars. 'Are you all right, sir?' I asked, all prep-school nice manners.

The tramp subsided a little further down the bonnet. 'That's Augustus John,' my sister told me. The great artist slithered down again, turned and gave me a woozy smile. 'Just having a little rest,' he said.

I realised he was drunk and I was shocked. This was not the way great men were supposed to behave.

They were supposed to be splendid and to set a good example, not to lie about on cars without the owner's permission. Great men were upright, not horizontal. Augustus had let art down, he'd let car parks down and, above all, he had let himself down. I walked away.

**Prone to being
'tired': Augustus John**



More than 20 years later, when I was less priggish and working for the *Evening Standard*, I was reporting on a by-election in the Berwick-upon-Tweed constituency and found myself in a pub near Alnwick, talking to the barmaid – as reporters did in those days. She had worked as a lady's maid to Mary Campbell before the war when she was still married to The Tycoon and living in London; somewhere near Portland Place, I think.

Augustus John had been a visitor and had drawn a sketch of the maid sitting in the garden.

Sometime afterwards, her boyfriend was called up to fight in the war and he asked if she had a photo of herself that he could keep in his wallet, to remember her while he was away. She said that all she had was this sketch.

The boyfriend was disappointed, but said he supposed it would have to do. He took it, went off to join the army and she never saw him again.

Oliver Pritchett

(Taken from the February 2019 edition of *The Oldie*, issue 370. Written by Oliver Pritchett. www.theoldie.co.uk)

Stay tuned for updates about our exclusive members only events, including private gallery tours, tea parties and more! As always, **thank you** for aiding in our endeavours to support Poole Museums in displaying and developing its historical collections and buildings and by encouraging the advancement of public appreciation and education in arts, culture, heritage and science.

Warm Regards,

Christine Spader
Fundraising and Membership Officer

Poole Museum Foundation,
Registered charity number 1171114
4 High Street, Poole, Dorset BH15 1BW

T: 01202 262600 E: museumfoundation@poole.gov.uk www.poolemuseum.com/support-us