

THE SPECIAL DELIVERY NEWS

EDGAR SEWTER PRIMARY SCHOOL AND BEECH HOUSE CARE HOME EDITION

Museum found at railway station

“We had not idea it was there,”
say local residents

Published in partnership with:



Made possible with

**Heritage
Fund**



For more stories visit:
www.suffolkartlink.org.uk

Special Delivery in Halesworth

Exploring the art of communication with artists Alex Jeffrey, Caitlin Howells and Shelly O'Brien.

Inspired by collections of letters held by Suffolk Archives and in county museums, Special Delivery brings together primary school pupils and residents in care homes to consider different ways of communicating—and to invent a few of their own.

The Lincoln Letters

For the Beech House Care Home and Edgar Sewter Primary School programme, the artists chose to work with the Lincoln Letters, a collection held in the Halesworth and District Museum housed in the town's Victorian railway station.

Cover headline:

Based on survey results from Beech House residents and children from the Edgar Sewter Primary School.



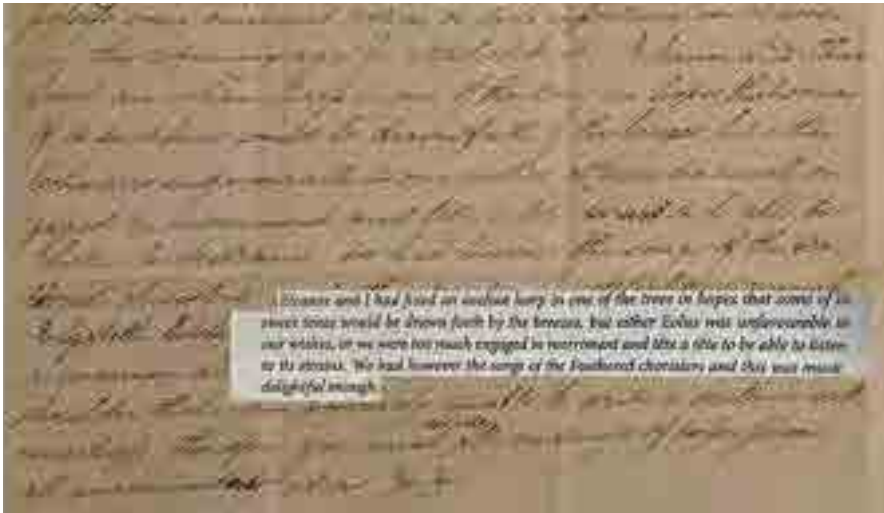
In 1816, the Lincolnes moved from Essex to Halesworth to take over a drapery and grocery business in the Market Place.

As leading citizens of the town and also strong Congregational Church members, the Lincolnes were well placed to observe daily life in the town.

They were also prolific letter writers; there are over 200 letters in the collection, including an account of the young Queen Victoria's coronation, celebrated in Halesworth with a dinner of cold roast beef and plum pudding for 1200 poor people served up on tables along the length of the Thoroughfare, and requests from daughter Mary from her boarding school in Beccles for a French Dictionary and some piano pieces.

Image: Some of the Lincolne letters, with examples of cross-writing and a wax seal.

3 MAY 2022

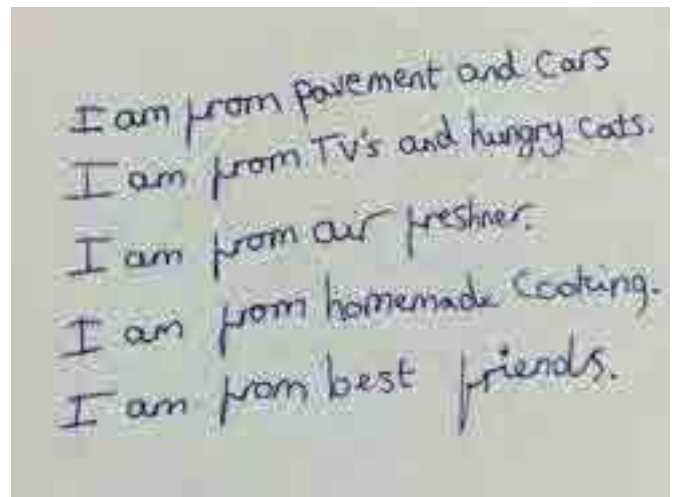


In August 1835, Mary Napier Lincolne wrote to her brother William, who was away in Witham, describing life back at home in Halesworth.

One event she recounted was of a tea party she attended with her good friend, Eleanor.

I am from ...

Inspired by the reference to 'Feathered choristers', Alex asked the children to write about where they were 'from', using two word to describe the sights, sounds, smells, tastes and feelings of home. Then they created huge envelopes in which to send their poems to the residents at Beech House.



Images: Top left; Extract from Mary's letter. Bottom left; Doodling to music. Above; Example of 'I am from ...' poem and finished envelope.

3 MAY 2022

AN IMPORTANT INVITATION



The residents were invited to do the same activity, and the response was amusing, informative—and very moving.

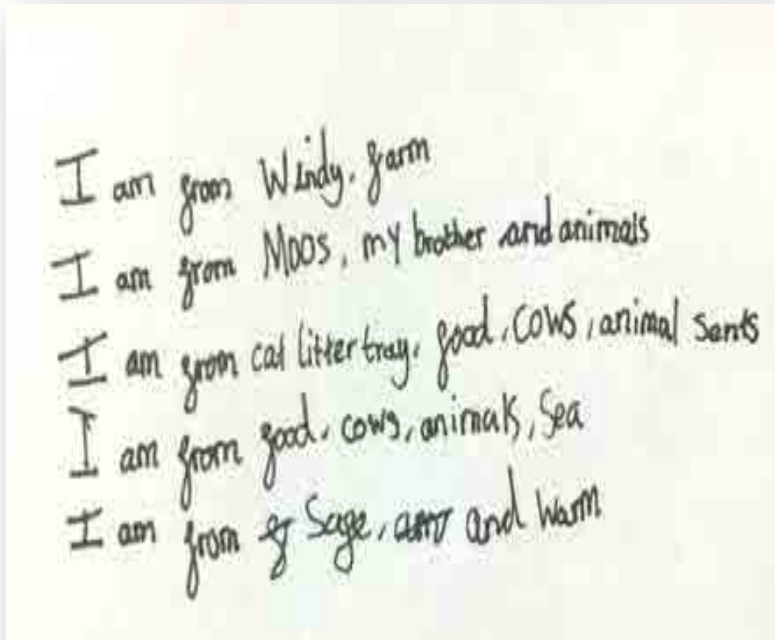
They wrote about being from views of green fields and sea side, from the sounds of cows mooing and church bells, the smells of oil lamps and sweet peas, the taste of herbs, chocolate and red wine and feelings of happiness and being safe.

The residents listened to a recording of the children reading their poems and responded not only with recordings of their own poems but also with some additional sounds, including that of a donkey braying; the children were delighted.



Images: Top left; Resident composing an 'I am from' poem.
Bottom left; Residents listening to the children reciting their poems.
Above; The Important Invitation.

10 MAY 2022



"I enjoyed it very much [and] am looking forward to next week. I loved hearing the children's letters."

Beech House resident

Getting to know you

The children were so excited to open up the huge envelope and find all the lovely poems inside.

They were thrilled to receive the Important Invitation—which was to take tea with the residents in their garden at Beech House.

The rest of the session was taken up with creating Polaroid images of themselves and decorating greeting cards.

Images:

Top; One of the children's 'I am from ...' poems.

Right; An image of Mary Napier Lincolne.



10 MAY 2022

Using a polaroid camera to take a portrait is a far cry from a selfie on a mobile phone—not least because you have to wait a few seconds for the image to even begin to appear.

Another difference is that the 'sitter' is required to be in profile and should definitely NOT be smiling. It was a challenge, but one they all managed and soon everyone had created their own version of the Mary Napier Lincolne image.

The photos were mounted in oval greeting cards and individually decorated, using gilt paper and special metallic pens.

Images: Just a few of our Special Delivery participants.



17 MAY 2022

Flowers can say so much



In this session, the children studied a letter written by Mary, one of the Lincolne children, when she was 13 years old and away at boarding school in Beccles.

It is written in the most beautifully clear copperplate script, which probably earned her good marks at school but made it difficult for the pupils at the Edgar Sewter to decipher; they had to use magnifying glasses to work out what she was saying.

Part of the letter refers to having a 'nice little piece of ground' allotted to her on which she was growing some flowers. She also asked for some music pieces and her brother William's French dictionary, as it would be 'useful' to her.

All this talk of lessons prompted much chat amongst the children about what they were reading and learning.

They used lines from the letter along with news about their own school experiences to create a beautiful bouquet of flowers to send to the residents.



Images: Top right; Extract from Mary's letter.
Middle: Picking out details from the letter.
Bottom right; Some individual blooms.

17 MAY 2022



And of course the residents responded in kind—producing not only some lovely flowers, but also the decorated vases to hold them.



24 MAY 2022

Feather quills & green ink dancing

Having admired Mary's copperplate handwriting, it was time for the children to experience writing with a pen and ink for themselves.

Caitlin brought in an assortment of feathers and showed the group how to sharpen the end to make a nib.

Each child personalised their pen and then it was time to try them out, by doodling to music.

The result was glorious—and clearly very satisfying for the children.

"This made me feel like myself; crazy." Pupil



Trying out their new pens.



A finished pen.



Glorious inky creations, above and right.



24 MAY 2022

“It was nice to do something different, I enjoyed writing as I used to write a lot.” Beech House resident



Over at Beech House, the residents chatted about learning to write—and then created these beautiful card quills.

First, they doodled to music. Next, they coloured in parts of their ‘pen-dance’ drawing, after which they cut out large quill shapes and wrote messages on the back of them to send to the children at the Edgar Sewter.

“I really enjoyed it and look forward to each week to see what exciting things we’re going to do.”

Beech House resident



Images clockwise from top left: A bundle of ‘pen-dance patterned’ quills. The quills in greater detail. ‘Pick up your pen and write’, says Rita Dedman.

ACTIVITY PACKS ACTIVITY PACKS ACTIVITY PACKS ACTIVITY

Suffolk Artlink has years of experience running intergenerational projects in schools, care homes and supported housing units across the county.

Typically, we bring the children and adults together in the same space; that way, they can share skills, learn new ones and create beautiful artwork together, encouraged and inspired by our wonderful team of artists.

It also gives them a splendid opportunity to socialise, get to know and understand the different generations a little better and begin relationships that often last well beyond the project itself.

Whilst we've been able to deliver face-to-face to the children in schools, COVID restrictions have seriously limited our access to care homes.

Yet we have managed to meet via Zoom, chat via WhatsApp, share voice recordings via tablets and dance pens together sharing online playlists.

And our wonderful team of artists has produced Activity Packs to ensure that the residents are always connected to the children – and vice versa.

“The residents are always so excited to see what the activity's going to be – sometimes we get so involved we spend all day doing it.”

Beech House staff



Image: The first Activity Pack asked residents to compose an 'I am from...' poem. They wrote it down and several recorded their work onto the iPad for the children to hear.



Image: Activities ranged from writing poetry to cutting out bundles of paper to make flowers.

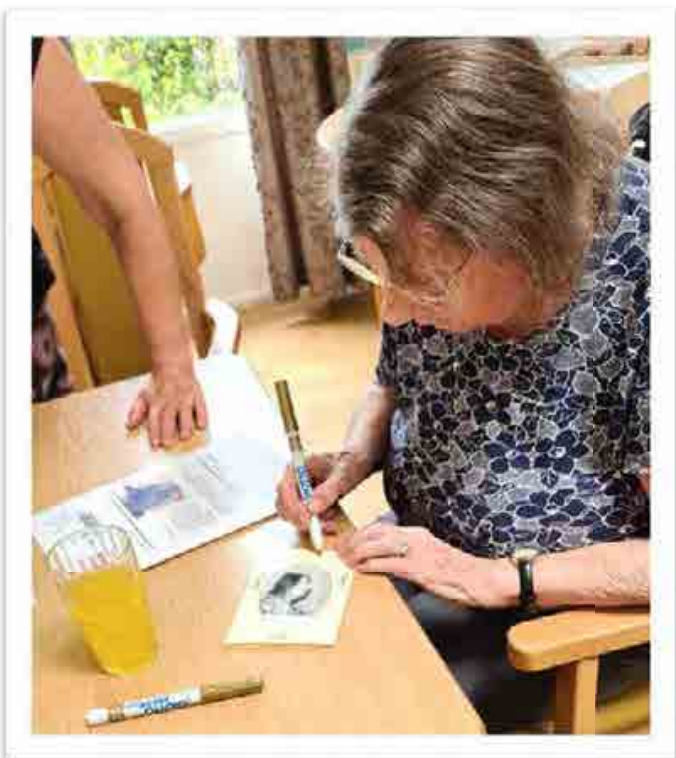
ACTIVITY PACKS ACTIVITY PACKS ACTIVITY PACKS ACTIVITY



Images:

Above left; Reading the instructions in the second Activity Pack.

Bottom left; Using special gilt pens to decorate the photo card.



Top right; Taking a pen for a dance.

Bottom right; Trying out the feather quill pen.



7 JUNE 2022

Halesworth and District Museum



Today, the children visited the Museum to see the Lincolne Letters for themselves.

They also discovered all sorts of surprising things, like monkey-faced coins, coronation displays and some really 'cool' fossils.

Images:

Above; Examining the Lincolne Letters with Alex and taking notes.

Below; An illustration and notes by one of the pupils.

Right; The children's drawings of exhibits that surprised them.

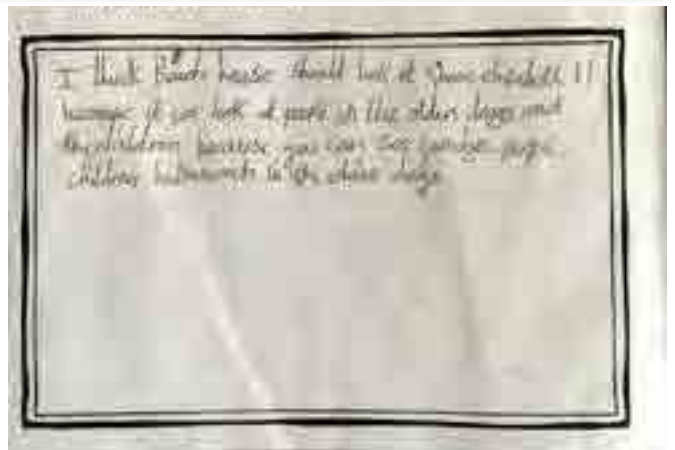


7 JUNE 2022

The children drew exhibits, chatted about them with Museum staff, rang the Work Bell and even got to try on one of the exhibits—the pig face bascinet helmet.



Before they left, each child made a recommendation of one object they thought Beech House residents would enjoy seeing.



Images from top left, clockwise: Trying on the helmet. Drawing the spear heads. A recommendation to look at the Coronation display. Drawing an item from that display.

14 JUNE 2022

We meet in person

A lovely summer's day, a beautiful garden setting—just perfect for a tea party at Beech House.



Images:

Left; It was very hot and sun hats were definitely needed.

Bottom row, left to right;
Having a chat and a cupcake.
Sharing her drawings of the
Coronation rosettes.
Discussing how Halesworth
Thoroughfare has changed
over the years.



“The residents have been so looking forward to meeting the children—they were so excited to see them.” Beech House staff member

14 JUNE 2022



Nerves, cupcakes—and recommendations

This was the first time the children had visited the adults, and some of them were a little nervous before they arrived.

But the nerves very quickly disappeared as they all started chatting away and telling the adults about the Museum and all the fascinating things they could find there.

Beech House gave us such a delicious tea, with homemade cupcakes and biscuits and a huge platter of fresh fruit, including raspberries picked that morning from their own fruit bushes.



And then the children took it in turns to address the whole group, and tell them about their 'recommendation' – the exhibit they thought the adults should make a point of seeing in Halesworth Museum.

It was a lovely afternoon and all the children agreed that they couldn't wait to go back and see the residents again.

Images:

Top left; A pupil telling one of the residents about her trip to the Museum.

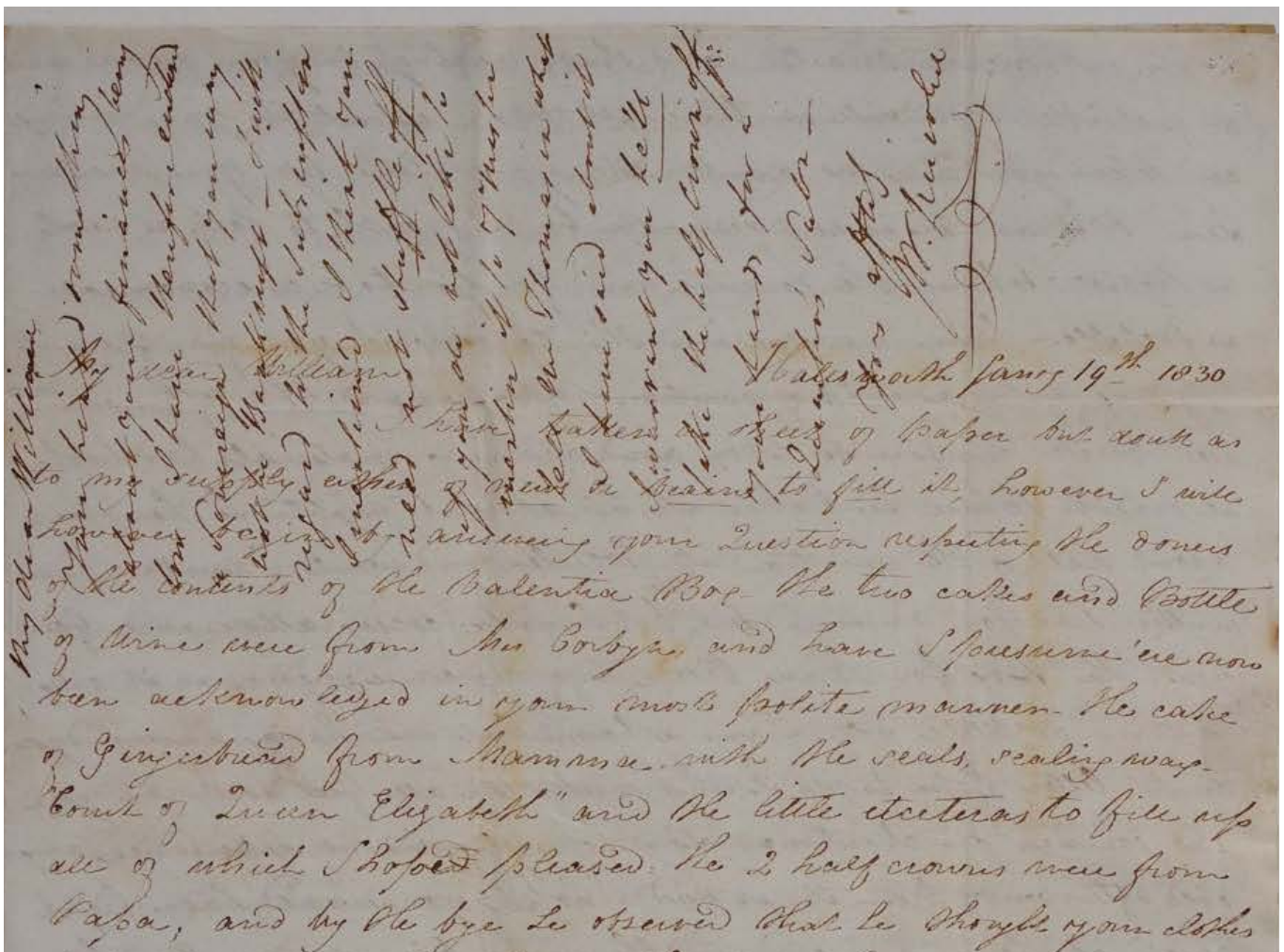
Bottom left; The children loved this lady's hair.

"I was nervous before we went in, because I didn't know what to expect—but it was lovely. I can't wait to go again." Pupil

21 JUNE 2022

Valentia boxes

Gingerbread cake, sealing wax—and two half crowns



In January 1830, Mary and William Lincolne of Halesworth wrote to their son, William, who was apprenticed in Witham, Essex.

The letter is a fine example of 'cross-writing', in which two or more writers wrote at different angles; this saved paper, which was very expensive at the time.

In the letter, they refer to a Valentia Box—which is obviously a box of treats.

Inside this box, William received several cakes, a bottle of wine, some sealing wax and money—with which it's suggested that he get a hair cut and buy some new clothes, to smarten himself up a bit.

21 JUNE 2022

A personal box of treats

Never mind what goes inside; first the children have to decorate the outside of their own little boxes.

Over the next two weeks, they will create their own Valentia boxes, using images, letters and bits of artwork they've made during the project.

Meanwhile, the residents have received their own set of boxes, materials, and an Activity Pack to advise them in the delicate art of decoupage.



Residents on a mission

23 JUNE 2022

However, before the residents can begin their Valentia boxes, they have a mission; to find the exhibits recommended to them by the children.



23 JUNE 2022

Mission accomplished



"I enjoyed seeing all the coins and [was] fascinated by the fossils. All clearly written and described in detail."

"I liked the spear head and loved the Singer [sewing] Machine, it made me think of my mum."

Beech House residents' comments



"I thought the bell was amazing, and loved seeing the photos of how the town had changed. I loved that it was all from local places and I loved seeing what the children had seen."

Resident's comment about her visit to the Halesworth and District Museum.

28 JUNE 2022

Sad news and joyful memories

This week, we shared the sad news that one of the Beech House residents, Stanley, had passed away.

Although they never met him, the children will forever remember Stanley as 'the man who did the donkey noise'.

He recorded it on the iPad right back at the beginning of the project and the children were most impressed by it.

As they got on with their Valentia boxes, they chatted about him and used photos and his lovely 'I am from' poem to add details and embellishments to their work.



Images: Stanley's 'I am from ...' poem.
Interior of box lid.
Applying some finishing touches.



A Special Delivery Valentia Box.

5 JULY 2022

Celebration Tea Party



Just a few pictures from the lovely celebration party at Beech House.





Sharing Valentia boxes, a letter from staff, and views on their visit to the Museum.



Our final session with the children, and they all agreed that they'd learned new creative skills, found out lots about their local heritage—and didn't want the project to finish.

Having admired the residents' lavender dolls last week, this was their chance to make their own; it was a lovely fragrant way to bring Special Delivery in Halesworth to a gentle, creative close.

12 JULY 2022





The Art of Communication

From cross-hatched copperplate hand writing to a series of gift boxes with thank you letters; the art of communication made real by pupils from the Edgar Sewter Primary School and residents at Beech House Care Home in Halesworth.

Special Delivery brings together primary school children and residents in care homes and independent living units to explore and share the art of communication, inspired by documents held by Suffolk Archives and county museums.

A programme of creative sessions led by professional artists encourages participants to consider different generational and cultural approaches to communication, from formal letter writing to the artful use of emojis.

Our thanks to the school and care staff, artists and designers, Suffolk Archives and museums staff and volunteers for their support, enthusiasm—and splendid ideas.

And, of course, an enormous 'thank you' to the children and residents who took part; you all made Special Delivery very special indeed.

A
Special Delivery
for Edgar Sewter
Primary School &
Beech House
Care Home

Suffolk Artlink
We are a participatory arts
charity, producing inclusive
arts programmes led by ex-
perienced arts practitioners
and encompassing a rich
variety of art forms.

Suffolk Artlink,
Units 13 & 14,
Malt Store Annex,
The Cut, 8 New Cut,
Halesworth, Suffolk,
IP19 8BY
01986 873955

🐦 @Suffolk_Artlink

enquiries@suffolkartlink.org.uk

📷 @Suffolk_Artlink

www.suffolkartlink.org.uk

f Suffolk.Artlink



Made possible with

**Heritage
Fund**

**SUFFOLK
ARCHIVES**



Charity No: 1110898
Company No: 05354844