

Remember the 50s at the Museum of St Albans

Can you help?

From 19 February to 3 September 2005 the Museum of St Albans will don its blue suede shoes and lead visitors into the wonderful world of the 1950s.

A fresh exhibition will explore the culture and contrasts of a decade of change: poised between the austerity of war and the swinging Sixties. Authentic period clothes, and music from our own jukebox, will set the scene. Remember the excitement of the Coronation and the Festival of Britain? If so, Museum Curator John Beckerson is keen to hear from you. Or perhaps you still have in your attic one of the New Look fashions of the day? Or maybe some old photographs of you at work and play in and around St Albans from those years, which you could lend to the Museum to copy and include in the gallery?

Of course the fifties were also a time of continued struggles with the gradual, slow end of rationing, hard to bear for a nation still going short after the rigours of war. Indeed, conflict still hung over Britain: the shadow of the Bomb and the Cold War was never far away. Whether you felt that the nuclear deterrent was a necessary evil, or marched with CND, everyone remembers the times of tension and worry. Do you have objects, photos or memorabilia which remind you of the other side of 1950s life which you could lend?

St Albans played its part in changes great and small, and the town never seemed to stop developing. New estates such as Marshalwick were built to meet the huge demand for houses. The County Council proposed 5000 in its plan of 1951. Workers at Marconi, DeHavilland and Ballitoe helped the export drive. The M1 put St Albans at the heart of the new motorway network. The young Queen came to present the Royal Maundy at St Albans abbey. Downhill from the abbey, the council complained furiously about the gas board's intention to expand the smoky gasworks – remember them? - whilst other citizens grew ever more worried about the demolition of interesting historic buildings in the name of progress. In Verulamium Park, the fun of the traditional Pageants was gloriously restored in 1953 – did you play a part?

The Museum is keen to hear about these and all sorts of 50s memories. So if you have a story to tell or something to lend, however small, get in touch with Curator John Beckerson by writing to him at the Museum of St Albans, 9A Hatfield Road, St Albans AL1 3RR, or telephoning 01727 819340, or calling in person between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday to Friday.

Entrance to the museum and its exhibitions is always free.