

BOOTHE MEMORIAL PARK & MUSEUM

FRIENDS OF BOOTHE
APRIL 2024

The Zoo Cottage Comes to Boothe Park



The Friends of Boothe have acquired a new addition. It is very suited to the Boothe brothers quirky, fun-loving style and will be a real boost to any young children who come to visit. It is called the "Zookeepers Cottage".

The creator of this imaginative dollhouse-size exhibit is Dawn Schneider, a Shelton resident who designs dollhouses. When describing how this came to be, Dawn wrote, "For the 100th birthday of Beardsley Zoo, I made a very large, whimsical dollhouse "art piece" called the Zookeepers Cottage. The Zoo displayed it during their birthday celebration. The concept was a house that all the zoo animals lived in at night after the zoo closed. Each room is furnished with different animals living in it, including the zookeeper who has his own studio apartment with the animals.

"I tried to get all the animals that the zoo has had over the years such as the beloved red pandas, bears, lions, tigers, otters, monkeys, and peacocks. Some of the interior rooms have wallpaper that are actual scenes from 100-year-old postcards of Beardsley Park and the surrounding area. The Zoo park benches, stone lions, and rose arches are also all represented in this house."

The Friends of Boothe, were smitten with the Cottage, knowing that it would be a great addition for young and old alike. The outside of the house is visible on one side of the display, and the inside of the rooms (and all their inhabitants) on the other. This exhibit, is located in the

small building next to the garage where other model homesteads are located. These dollhouse size buildings are delightful for all ages and include the Lincoln log cabin, and presidential houses of Roosevelt, Washington, and others.

You can get your first look at the Zookeeper's Cottage, below, and in person on Opening Day, on Sunday, May 19th. For additional hours after May 19th, please check our website: <https://boothememorialpark.com/events>



Opening Day is on the Way! So come out and Play, the third Sunday in May!



Opening Day at Boothe May 2023

Photos courtesy of Gwen Ackley and Rod Jovanelly

The following is a summary of **last** year's Opening Day from the perspective of antique car owner and Port Five Auxiliary member, Gwen Ackley, and Friends of Boothe Board member, Ann Minton providing a personal look at this great event.

Sunday morning, May 21, 2023 brought mild spring weather and a steady stream of show vehicles onto the park field. Boothe friends and Port Five members, Parker and Gwen Ackley drove fifteen miles on back roads in a 112- year-old Hupmobile Model 20 Roadster and were happy to arrive without incident, along with many other antique car drivers.



Upon entering Boothe, the Port Five National Association of Naval Veterans crew, who sponsor the car show, directed all cars to appropriate show parking spots. Many Port Five members had arrived at daybreak to set up for the day.

The mood was upbeat as cars came in. Up on the patio, Port Five volunteers were busy at the grill cooking egg sandwiches for the breakfast shift. Delicious homemade baked goods were for sale at another table. At the gazebo area were over 20 raffle baskets supplied by the Port 5 Ladies Auxiliary filled with a great variety of terrific prizes to win.

At 9 am, DJ Seth Carley played a kick-off song for the official start of the car show and kept an upbeat tempo for several hours. There were outstanding cars parked across the entire field including a hot rod that would later win the "Best Paint" award; a 1959 red and white two-door hard-top Edsel Ranger; a white 1965 Mustang Convertible "Pony" car, complete with a pony under the hood and a large pony leaning out the car; and an original 1926 Ford Model T.



Up the great lawn the Friends of Boothe volunteers were readying the Homestead and all other buildings, to open for tours at noon. The trained volunteers provided the history and stories behind each building and its artifacts. The Visitor Center's video ran continually all afternoon to introduce guests to the Boothe family and the buildings. In the Americana Barn volunteers held weaving demonstrations of rugs that were later placed on sale at the Homestead. The blacksmith lit the fires to begin making small items while providing historical background to this activity. The stately white clock tower chimed; its clock face could be seen rising above the other unique buildings, all of which were designed by the Boothe Brothers. Their original dream was to rival Henry Ford's Dearborn Village.

With May being Veterans Appreciation Month, Channel 12 was filming for a show they would run later that day. The Marine Corps League made a presentation to the Stratford Veterans Museum at Boothe Memorial Park. It was an original photo of the flag raising at Iwo Jima, including sand from the beach where thousands had died.



After the moving Flag Raising ceremonies, the Port Five Team began serving the lunch menu that included many hot sandwiches, while the Miccalizzis' ice cream truck was selling frozen treats. Volunteers at the Boothe Homestead, served lemonade and cake in honor of founder, David Boothe's Birthday.

Strolling through the Park, a Welcome Table, located near the sunken garden, provided information and maps for visitors, along with a scavenger hunt. A Balloon Man was making magical balloon toys for the kids young and old. Near the patio, parakeets, maintained by Boothe volunteers, were cheerfully singing inside the aviary. The Railroad Museum's outdoor display was a marvel in miniature that was an immediate draw for young children. Additionally, the Observatory volunteers were encouraging visitors to search the sky with their telescopes.



Later in the afternoon, the Stratford Community Band played for the park visitors, who sat in the audience or strolled through listening to the familiar tunes. The park grounds had flowering shrubs in bloom, and the Rose Garden volunteers were on hand to answer questions about the delicate rose bushes. Located between the Rose Garden and the parking lot, the Radio Club had doors open to show their latest technology.

The car show field was overflowing with an unbelievable array of cars, trucks, jeeps and even a vintage fire engine. At 2 pm, Port Five began to announce the car awards, starting with "The Best in Show". The winning vehicle was a pristine red and white 1955 Ford Fairlane Crown Victoria that drove up to a round of applause. Many other awards were handed out to proud antique auto owners.



Before you knew it, the clock tower chimed 4 pm, marking the end of the Opening Day's festivities. The raffle basket winners were announced making even more happy visitors. The Friends of Boothe and Port Five volunteers were busily packing and cleaning up, with hundreds of smiling families, heading back to their cars to head home. Gwen and Parker waved goodbye as they rolled down Main Street in the Hupmobile. The End of another successful and enchanting Boothe Park Opening and Port Five Car Show!

Looking forward to May 19th, 2024!

BOOTHE UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark your calendars for these events and stay tuned for additional fun times!

***Opening Day & Antique Car Show.**

Flag-raising and welcome ceremony at Noon.
Sunday, May 19, 2024, 9:00 - 3:30 Free to public

***Hats Off to Roses Event.** Rose Garden & Coliseum Saturday, June 8, 2024, 5:00-7:00 pm:

Rain Date: Sunday, June 9, 2024, 5:00-7:00 pm.
Note: Ticketed event

***Hudson Shakespeare Company** performance of 'The Merry Wives of Windsor'

July 18 - 20, 2024, and July 25 - 27, 2024,
Sunken Garden: Details to be announced

Boothe Park Member Advantages

Why should you become a member?

There are more benefits than ever before!

***Private Tour.** Membership will now entitle you and up to 7 guests to a private tour of the homestead scheduled at any time of year at your convenience. To schedule your personal tour, contact:

freindsofboothepk@gmail.com

*** Member-Only Events.** Some entertaining events will be discounted, or free of charge to members. Last year we had our first ever Movie Night in the Visitor Center including popcorn and lemonade, and a visit from the Astronomical Society providing us with a view of the stars.

*** Receive our Newsletter.** As a member, you will receive our newsletters throughout the year and stay informed of activities at the Park.

***Get current information** about major events, including discounts on admission.

***Have the satisfaction** of knowing that your membership directly supports the legacy of the Boothe Brothers, who shared their lives and property with the Town of Stratford and visitors from far and wide.

For information on becoming a member see page 4.

The Wooden Canteen of the 1790's



Focusing on one of the unique items in the Boothe Homestead displays, we are looking more closely at the wooden canteen. It is an item that may have easily not gained a great deal of attention over the years, but none-the-less it is one of the rarest items, stemming from the Revolution.

The wooden canteen at Boothe has the initials "AB" on the bottom, and belonged to Corporal Abijah Booth (1745 – 1802), who fought with the Continental Army during the American Revolution. You might ask, "But didn't they have tin/metal items back then?" Well, yes, they did, but most of that metal came from the British. So, when the American forces were at war, the British enforced a blockade of the American seaports and the availability of pre-made canteens evaporated. American forces were desperately in need of portable water containers so Congress turned to the production of wooden canteens. Documentation shows that they were being produced as early as the 1750's but perhaps not in mass production until the war necessitated it.

The wooden canteens were primarily produced in Hingham, MA in great quantities. Over time, it became apparent that both Colonial and British forces preferred the wooden canteen over the tin. Researchers believe that the wood kept the water fresher, and during summer months kept it from heating up.

The fragile aspect of the wood along with the useful nature of the item, seems to account for the very few in left existence. Boothe is very lucky to have this unique item. Seek it out next time you visit.

[Stay Connected to Boothe](#)

If you are receiving this as an online newsletter, please share it with your friends, neighbors, or relatives who might enjoy this information. Simply tell them to contact the email address below and request to be added to our distribution list. The Friends of Boothe News will keep them up to date with all our upcoming events and show off those which took place last season.

Send requests to: friendsoboothepk@gmail.com

How to Become a Member of Friends of Boothe Memorial Park and Museum

Become a member today and be eligible to enjoy the new and upcoming Members Only Events in 2024!

Individual membership = \$20

Family membership = \$30

You have three Options:

1. ONLINE

Click here: <https://boothememorialpark.com>

- In the top row click: "Support Us"
- Click on: "Membership"
- Fill out the online form on our [secure website](#).
- Click "Submit" at the bottom of the screen.

2. ONLINE and MAIL

- **Print the form** found on the same link above and fill it out.
- **Mail** it with your check to the Boothe address listed. .

3. BY MAIL

- **Write** your Name, Street address, City, State, Zip, Phone, Email on a sheet of paper.
- **Include** your check indicating if this is a
 - \$20 Individual membership;
 - \$30 Family membership; or
 - \$50 Business membership
- **Mail** your information and your check to:
Treasurer; Friends of Boothe Park, Inc;
5800 Main Street; P.O. Box 902;
Stratford, CT 06615

All donations are gratefully accepted. Each and every member makes a positive impact on our daily operations throughout the year.

Thank you from the Friends of Boothe!

Friends of Boothe Park Inc.

P.O. Box 902

Stratford, CT 06614

Flashback: Last December - Holiday at the Homestead



Want to be involved at Boothe Park and Museum?

Become a tour guide in one of the historic buildings.

Teach children about life a century ago.

Assist with decorating or staffing events.

Learn to be a blacksmith assistant, a rose gardener, or a weaver of rugs.

All these opportunities are available whenever YOU are available.

Newsletter composed by Ann Minton, Friends of Boothe, Board of Trustees. If you are reading this newsletter, let us know what you think. We'd love to get your feedback. If you have questions or suggestions for future articles, drop us a note: ann.m.minton@gmail.com We are here for you!