



# The SBT Heritage Centre Opening. by Clare Robinson-Cox



The day dawned, bright and dry, though a little chilly, but that was to be expected as it was only February. This was a day that a small, dedicated group of people had been working towards for almost two years, sometimes thinking it would never happen. But Saturday 20th February 2016 is a day that those people will, I am sure, remember for a very long time, as will anyone else who had the pride and privilege to be invited to attend. The event that had been so long awaited? The re-opening of the Staffordshire Bull Terrier Heritage Centre in Wednesbury, West Midlands.

Unfortunately, just over 2 years ago, the Heritage Centre was forced to close its doors as they had to leave the Old Post Office, the original venue. As the Centre is a Charity run entirely by volunteers, this change of venue gave the Heritage Centre committee a big headache – where would they go, where could all of the treasures be stored, what costs would they incur and how could they pay them?

Luckily a venue just yards from the Old Post Office was available and, after negotiation with the local council, the Heritage Centre took possession of its new venue during early 2014. Great news indeed but the building was in a sorry state to say the least.

The Heritage Centre originally opened over 10 years ago



in a different venue. They had opened their doors on a regular basis to welcome visitors from far and wide, as well as the local community, who have an interest in the Staffordshire Bull Terrier.



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But, through the hard work of the committee and other volunteers the Heritage Centre was transformed and the official opening date was set.



So with a new logo, the big moment had arrived. The Centre was being officially opened by “Her Worshipful the Mayor of Sandwell, Councillor Mrs Barbara Price and her Consort, Councillor Robert Price”.



A new logo was designed, incorporating the Black Country flag, echoing the fact that the Staffordshire Bull Terrier is the only true breed founded in the heart of the Black Country, amidst the smoke and fires of the iron and chain foundries and the brick cones of the glassworks. The flag depicts the black of the smoke with the red of the fire (black by day, red by night), divided by the outline of a brick glasswork cone in white, surrounded by the chains of industry. No other breed is more appropriately linked to this flag and, by right of passage, no other group or charity representing dog breeds, can realistically lay claim to raising it in their name.





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Other notable VIPs included Greg Hedges of the Mercian Regiment (formed by amalgamation of the Staffordshire Regiment) in full dress uniform along with an even more important guest, the Regiment mascot – Watchman.



Watchman seemed to have had a most enjoyable day, meeting lots of people, including his breeders – Karon and Wayne Jackson.

Members of the Sedgley and Gornal Staffordshire Bull Terrier Ringcraft

Club were invited in recognition of the support and fundraising they have and still continue to contribute towards the Centre. The S&G SBTRC are regular fund-raisers for other worthy causes,



including Help For Heroes, and make a significant contribution every year to the Black Country Carnival that takes place in Old Hill in July.





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The Staffordshire Bull Terrier Club was also invited and well represented by committee members, who were delighted and honoured to have been a part of the day. The Club has subsequently re-affirmed its support of the Heritage Centre by making a substantial donation for further much-needed roof repairs. Furthermore, two of the SBTC Committee members, Spencer Cox and Wayne Jackson, were welcomed to the opening in their own right for the provision and fitting of some of the carpet and flooring at the Centre.

The overwhelming feedback from the day was it was a great success and many of those who attended are looking forward to returning again very soon. For now, I will leave you with some further pictures of the Centre, the visitors and, of course, the dogs that are our wonderful breed. But remember, the SBT Heritage Centre is a charity, run by unpaid volunteers using donations to maintain this Centre, protecting and promoting the history and heritage of OUR breed. If you are able to donate, no matter how little, please do so via this link: [https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=s-xclick&hosted\\_button\\_id=6MMML3JLEPDK2](https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=s-xclick&hosted_button_id=6MMML3JLEPDK2) and you will receive a warm and friendly welcome at the SBT Heritage Centre for many years to come.



Other VIPs from other SBT Clubs around the country included Archie Bryden, Gillian Skelly, Lesley Mcfadyen and Jo-Ann Essex, all of whom had travelled quite a way to be part of such an auspicious event.

The Heritage Centre committee worked very hard throughout the day to ensure every guest was welcomed and shown around the new Centre, as well as providing a wonderful spread for everyone to enjoy.

