



# MUSEUM NEWS

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Steypning Museum Newsletter

April 2016

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## Museum Diary

- 09.04.16 Spring Coffee Morning  
Penfold Hall  
10.30 - 12.00
- 31.05.16 Activity Morning  
10.00 - 12.30  
Fletcher's Croft Marquee
- 12.11.16 Autumn Coffee Morning  
Penfold Hall  
10.30 - 12.00

## 200 Club

February Draw:

- 1<sup>st</sup> prize = Muriel Wright (£35)  
2<sup>nd</sup> prize = Mary Travers (£25)  
3<sup>rd</sup> prize = Maggie Hollands (£15)

March Draw:

- 1<sup>st</sup> prize = Chris Cox (£35)  
2<sup>nd</sup> prize = Vivian Coates (£25)  
3<sup>rd</sup> prize = David Dryden (£15)

## Steypning Museum Children's Activity Day

*from Joan Denwood*

The museum held a successful activity day during the recent half term, with 34 children and 22 adults coming along. It really was a lively, fun day and just as a museum should be.

The toy table provided great fun for all ages, particularly the Jack-in-the-Boxes and Jacob's Ladder. Bagatelle provided a good maths lesson with adding up the scores and what is Shove Ha'penny some asked.

Manipulating string puppets in a puppet theatre was a challenge and the glove puppets created lots of discussion too. Costumes for both boys and girls were enjoyed with rich Victorian and Tudor dresses, as well as Knight and King costumes. The popular brass-rubbing activity had children going back over and over again and taking their masterpieces home. Another item taken home was from the craft table where Spring baskets, created as a nest were made, with a treat inside too.

Many thanks to all our visitors for coming along and especially to our helpers, without whom all this would not be possible. As they were leaving, 2 brothers said "that was great, can we come to the next one?".

The next Activity Morning, organised by Steypning Museum, will be on Tuesday 31st May 10 - 12.30 in a marquee on Fletcher's Croft as part of the Steypning Festival. Entry will be £2 per child.

## Spring Coffee Morning

*from Gillian Kille*

The Spring coffee morning will be held on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> April at the Penfold Hall. We will have our usual cake stall, bric-a-brac and books stall and our popular Spring plant stall. Diana Duffell, who usually runs the stall, has always supplied some lovely plants and cuttings but is unfortunately

unable to help us this year, due to another commitment, and so I am putting out a plea to all the gardeners out there. If you can start nurturing any cuttings you may have and bring any them along on the day with any plants or garden related items you may wish to donate – we would be really grateful. We would also be delighted to receive any home made cakes for the cake stall.

We also hope to have a few more scarves and handbags for sale.

I appreciate that some of you may not receive this newsletter until after the 9<sup>th</sup> April, but I hope you did notice the short reminder in the February news.

### **Annual General Meeting**

Our annual general meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> March was well attended. The business part of the meeting followed the customary pattern of reports by the Chairman, Curator and Treasurer of the main committee and also officers of the 200 Club.

Jacque Buttriss spoke about the proposal, outlined in the February newsletter, to convert the Museum Trust into a Charitable Incorporated Trust.

In his curator's report, Chris Todd explained after serving for 25 years, he was intending to step down in 2017. He felt that as it may be difficult to find one person to fill his role, his responsibilities could be covered by three people. One would cover exhibitions and the permanent displays, one overseeing care of the collection and one to deal with the daily calls on the Museum services. Please contact Chris if you feel that you might like to volunteer for any of the three tasks. You won't be

committing yourself, but just exploring what would be involved

Jackie Campbell proposed a vote of thanks for the work of Jacque Buttriss as she stood down from the role of the Museum committee chairman.

Following the business part of the meeting, a talk by Lucy Hockley about the reconstruction of Steyning's Saxon Hall at the Weald and Downland Museum was very well received.

The management committee elected for the coming year was as follows:

Muriel Wright (Chairman), Jacque Buttriss (Vice Chairman), Chris Tod (Curator), Paul Norris (Treasurer), Helen Coutrouzas (Minute Secretary), Tony Kettelman (Friends and Communication), Sarah Leigh (Stewards), Joan Denwood (Education), Erica Gaylor (subscription secretary and 200 Club organiser), Julie Luckin (Publicity), Liane Watt (Oral History)

Maggie Hollands will soon resume her role as Chair of the Social events sub-committee, ably supported by co-opted members Mariella Alexander, Pam Perry, Louise Roemer and Paddy Robson. A warm vote of thanks was given to Gill Kille for acting as Chair during Maggie's year away.

### **End Piece**

I have displayed below some of Joan Denwood's photos of the half term Childrens' Activities Day and, following Brian Pickings recent account of a his Steyning boyhood, Bernard Coote has felt inspired to provide his own memories.

Tony Kettelman (Editor)

### Activities Photos

Joan Denwood has provided the following photos of the children enjoying their activities.



### A Few Rememberings

Bernard Coote was born in Steyning and had all his schooling there. His parents Albert and Emma Jane also spent all their lives in Steyning. He writes:

At the age of 11, " the day war broke out " left its mark. There was the wailing of distant air raid sirens, a sense of foreboding. My father unearthed his tin hat, brought back from France . We dug a shelter in the garden - it soon flooded . Gone now were the days when every year, all the fun of the fair filled the field opposite the Star Inn. It was a bright and noisy event with roundabouts and swings. sideshows and stalls, and impressive, gleaming steam engines throbbed and smoked.

Steyning had a "tank trap". It was in the Horsham Road between Penn's House and Coxham Lane. Soldiers dug into the high banks, installed large containers connected to perforated pipes on each side of the road . The inflammable contents were for spraying on to German tanks and vehicles which would then be put out of action! There was no sign of it ever being tested. Then suddenly it disappeared .

Enemy planes were often overhead. Occasionally one was shot down and crash landed - one in Newnham Lane just south of the cricket field . They were rarely guarded and gave local boys an opportunity to plunder souvenirs .

In 1939, the Primary School had its own air raid warning system . A house in Dog Lane was the local warning post, and we took it turns in a morning or afternoon, to sit there, waiting . News of approaching enemy planes would be phoned through and we would then race to the school with the news - no doubt the planes had long passed over.

These were the months of taking in London evacuees, with their teachers . School time was shared; they had the classroom in the mornings and we a had the afternoons. In the week we reversed. It was soon decided that they could return to London and we felt we had met" foreigners".

There was no warning of the bomb which destroyed the row of cottages (and sweet shop) facing Chantry Green. Our class room in the Grammar School was 100 yards away. Headmaster Stuart Clarke was coolness itself, ordering us under the desks.

Wartime saw many teachers leave to join the " forces ", while long retired and out of touch characters replaced them. Major Childs of Boer War vintage was one. Later, Flight Lieutenant Goble invalided out of the RAF after an air battle, returned to teaching and gave us the benefit of his love of life and literature. In 1945 a demobbed Welsh PT instructor joined the staff and we moved as never before.

An evening never to be forgotten was in June 1944. All the roads north of Steyning were crammed with every kind of army vehicle waiting for embarkation to Normandy. Then the skies filled with planes towing gliders. Conversations with the soldiers had a tense and fearful excitement. What was happening ?

Wartime summer holidays meant work on the farms - 7am till 5.0pm, and our first weekly pay packets. Work might be filling sacks with cold wet cabbages, picking up muddy sticky potatoes (Nash Farm ), or making thousands of sheaves into stooks (Wappingthorne), building stacks, helping with the threshing. One week of slashing thistles in the fields of Huddlestone Farm earned me my first £1 note in wages .

The war years brought the wider world to Steyning . The Navy came to Wiston House, and Canadian troops to Wappingthorne. A Sergeant (catering ) Rainbow from Regina often visited our house and he sometimes brought tins of Canadian products which cheered many a meal.

War over; school finished ; farewell Steyning ; National Service to Tangmere Airfield. Times passed, included a few weeks when we trainee airmen were detailed to polish the wings and fuselages of the Meteor aircraft attempting to break the world speed record.

So a Steyning old boy remembers a long-ago world and now how we all grew too fast into our post-war lives.

Bernard Coote March 2016