



MUSEUM NEWS

Steyning Museum Newsletter

February 2008

Museum Diary

- 12.04.08 Spring Coffee Morning
Penfold Hall - 10.30-12.00
- 15.03.08 Annual General Meeting
Penfold Hall - 2.30pm
- 25.10.08 Autumn Coffee Morning
Penfold Hall - 10.30-12.00

200 Club

December Draw:

- 1st prize = Phillip Flowers (£35)
2nd prize = Norman Checkley (£25)
3rd prize = Aileen Fairbanks (£15)

January Draw:

- 1st prize = John Coates (£100)
2nd prize = Mr NC Davis (£50)
3rd prize = Martin Toomey (£25)

Disability Access

If you have come into the Museum recently you will have seen the results of the refurbishment of the toilet and lobby. This has been through the hard work of Paul Norris who deserves our warm thanks for his efforts.

Though the Committee has been aware for some time of the need to refurbish the entrance to the Museum (it is after all what visitors first see), it was the requirement to fulfil the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) that led to the recent activity.

The terms of the lottery bid and our need to remain an 'accredited' museum for grant applications, meant that we had to carry out the recommendations of the 'disability audit' we had to commission, covering all aspects of the Museum.

The audit was very detailed and the recommendations were wide ranging, dealing with all aspects of a visitor's experience in coming to the Museum. It examined difficulties

which might be encountered mostly from the view point of a child, a person with a learning disability, someone in a wheelchair or anyone with impaired eyesight or hearing.

The recommendations began with how easy it was for the public to learn about the Museum through publicity material, then progressed to how they gained access on arriving for the first time, and how easy it was to find their way round once inside. There were comments about general lighting levels, the ease of reading information on the displays, gaining access to the shop counter and recommendations about health and safety. You can appreciate from that selection of some of the points the report covered, that the audit was very thorough and very helpful.

The recommendations were divided into those required by the Disability Discrimination Act and those which were desirable to carry out. We have been steadily working our way through the list and have now arrived at what was said about toilet provision.

The recommendations for the toilet were chiefly concerned about the needs of users who might be visually impaired or were wheelchair users. As an example, for anyone with a visual impairment, a major concern would be the need to distinguish between the background wall colour and the light switch or the position of the sanitary ware. Paul therefore had to change the wall colour so that it provided a sharper contrast.

For wheelchair users, having handrails, mirror or towel dispenser at the right height is of vital importance, as is having enough room to manoeuvre generally. There are some requirements in the audit report which recognise the difficulty of changing some things, but Paul has been carrying out most of the items which can be altered. He has therefore, apart from repainting the walls, lowered the light switch, fitted a new mirror at a lower level, and moved the heater. That still leaves one or two things to do.

As far as the lobby is concerned, the main point raised in the audit was that the metal

