



Museum News

Steyning Museum Newsletter

February 2011

Museum Diary

- 05.03.11 Benefit Concert
 St. Andrew & St Cuthman
 Church 2.00pm
 followed by tea at the
 Steyning Centre
- 26.03.11 Annual General Meeting
 Penfold Hall
 2.30 pm
- 09.04.11 Spring Coffee Morning
 Penfold Hall
 10.30 - 12.00
- 13.08.11 Garden Coffee Morning
 Jarvis, Jarvis Lane
 10.30-12.00
- 29.10.11 Autumn Coffee Morning
 Penfold Hall
 10.30 - 12.00

200 Club

December Draw:

- 1st prize = Betty Calloway (£35)
2nd prize = Ian Ivatt (£25)
3rd prize = Joanna Norcross (£15)

Grand January Draw:

- 1st prize = Jack Campbell (£100)
2nd prize = Brian Hill (£50)
3rd prize = Sue Acton (£25)

Concert 5th March

We have been very fortunate that Zoe Peate has kindly offered to mount a benefit concert on behalf of the Museum on 5th March. The event will take place in the church of St Andrew and

St Cuthman in Steyning, and Zoe's two groups of singers, Cantatrice and Kaleidoscope, will perform a programme of music which should prove to be very popular. Tickets are now on sale at the counter in the Museum and the High Street Bookshop, with prices at £7.30 and £3.00 for under 18's.

As a bonus, Gill Kille and her helpers will provide tea and cake in the Steyning Centre after the performance.

Saturday Opening Times

On occasions when the Museum has remained open at lunch time on a Saturday for events such as Country Fair, it has been noticed that plenty of visitors turn up at that time. Stewards also notice that many visitors are still arriving on normal Saturdays towards the 12.30 closing time. It has therefore been decided to remain open at lunchtime on Saturdays in future. Sarah Leigh managed to find stewards who were willing to do a duty at that time so the new arrangement started on 8th January.

New Trustees

Steyning Museum is unusual in that it is owned and run completely by the Friends through the Steyning Museum Charitable Trust. The Friends raised the money to build the present premises, but as it is built on land owned by West Sussex County Council, the Charity leases the site from them. Those responsible for the lease are our three "holding" trustees. Geoff Seaton, Len Warner and Jackie Campbell have now stepped down as our trustees, and on behalf of the management committee, I should like to express our gratitude to them for looking after our interests so well. Special mention should

be made that Geoff Seaton who has been a trustee since the Museum was started. We are especially grateful for this long service

Taking over as new trustees will be Nick Hempleman, Kate Rainbow, and Tom Rowe, and we are very pleased to welcome them.

AGM

As the Friends are the people who run the Museum, the annual General Meeting is especially important for it gives everyone the chance to see how the management committee are running things. It provides an opportunity to receive the annual reports, examine the finances and take part in electing the members of the management committee.

The meeting is on Saturday 26th March in the Penfold Hall starting at 2.30pm. After the business part of the afternoon, there will be tea and cake to be followed by a talk by Mark Perry-Nash. Jacquie Buttriss met Mark when he made enquiries about possible Steyning family connections. Having learned that he gave history talks, Jacquie signed him up as our speaker for this year. His title is "Daily Life in a Medieval Sussex Village".

You will find your official notification of the AGM at the end of the newsletter.

The Museum Website

Since Lynda Denyer and Doug Thompson set up our Museum website, it has become increasingly important in attracting visitors.

Tourists planning to visit Steyning often come across our site while investigating what there is to see on their visit. This applies not only to visitors from the UK, but increasingly overseas visitors add us to their itinerary. Our visitor book records how many people are impressed with their Museum visit and our overseas visitors remark on how our displays and website give them an overview of British life.

A particular development arising from the website has been the increase in requests (some from Australia) for help in carrying out family research. Lynda Denyer keeps our

record of how the website is operating and has provided us with the following:

The museum website had a makeover during 2010, with the addition of a new family history section. Jacquie Buttriss is a skilled family history researcher and she kindly volunteered to take on the growing number of enquiries generated by the website. Jacquie also set up a family history blog, to record some of the fascinating stories and resources that she is discovering.

The new service was up and running by the fourth quarter of 2010. The website statistics showed an immediate impact. In the first quarter of 2010 there was an average of 32 "hits" per day, which was pretty consistent with the previous year. The fourth quarter of 2010 showed an average 92 daily "hits". In other words, website traffic is now three times what it was before the makeover.

There is one statistical blip which is unlikely to continue. The Museum of Everything in London held a Walter Potter taxidermy exhibition and visits to Tony Kettman's article about Mr Potter of Bramber suddenly outstripped all 121 pages on the website. The once unfashionable, even distasteful stuffed animal tableaux, suddenly connected with the modern art establishment. Steyning Museum comes up well on Google searches and visitors from all over the world discovered Tony's article. There was someone from South Korea having a look just as the web statistics were retrieved for this report.

Our website is at:

<http://steyningmuseum.org.uk>

and the Family History Blog is at:

<http://steyningfamilyhistory.blogspot.com>

Tony Kettman
(Editor)