



# MUSEUM NEWS

Steyping Museum Newsletter

June 2012

## Museum Diary

- 25.08.12 Summer Garden Coffee Morning  
Rosebank, Jarvis Lane  
10.30 - 12.00
- 29.09.12 Clothes Swap Event  
Penfold Hall  
2 - 5
- 27.10.12 Autumn Coffee Morning  
Penfold Hall  
10.30 - 1200
- 16.12.12 Southdown Concert Band  
Steyping Centre  
2 - 5
- 16.03.13 Benefit Choral Concert  
St Andrew and St Cuthman Church

## 200 Club

April Draw:

- 1<sup>st</sup> prize = Ken Stotesbury (£35)  
2<sup>nd</sup> prize = Erica Gaylor (£25)  
3<sup>rd</sup> prize = Noël Smalley (£15)

May Draw:

- 1<sup>st</sup> prize = Joyce Sleight (£35)  
2<sup>nd</sup> prize = Phyl Rowntree (£25)  
3<sup>rd</sup> prize = Jim Buckman (£15)

## 200 Club Appeal

*From Richard Coatsworth:*

The Friends of Steyping Museum run a 200 Club in which members may "invest" £10 a year. Monthly draws are made and there are three prizes each month of £35, £25 and £15. A grand draw in January each year has a top prize of £100 and two smaller prizes. The surplus from the 200 Club is donated from the 200 Club to the Museum towards the running expenses. Museum costs are going up and a little extra help never goes amiss.

Since I became membership secretary about three years ago the membership of the 200 Club has never reached the full number, and with members not renewing each year we

are always looking for some new members to enjoy a small flutter, with the surplus going to a local cause we, as the Friends, all believe in.

We are suffering from a steady decline in membership currently, and I would really appreciate a few extra members of the 200 Club this year. If you could leave cash or a cheque at the museum of £10 and your name to join in the 200 Club we would be most grateful.

## AGM

A new management committee was elected at the AGM on 24th March.

Responsibilities for the coming year will be:

Jacquie Buttriss (Chairman), Jackie Campbell (Vice Chairman), Chris Tod (Curator), Paul Norris (Treasurer) Helen Coutrouzas (Minutes Secretary), Sarah Leigh (Stewards), Tony Kettelman (Communications and Friends Secretary), Joan Denwood (Education and Shop sales with Muriel Wright), Jill Kemp (Publicity). As before, Gill Kille will be Chair of the Social Events sub-Committee supported by Iris Taylor, Pam Perry and Mariella Alexander.

## Spring Coffee Morning

*Gill Kille writes:*

In spite of a dull, drizzly day, 62 people attended and enjoyed the Spring coffee morning. All the stalls – cakes, plants and bric-a-brac – did very well, as did the raffle, and the net profit amounted to £347.42, well up on the amount raised at last year's event! Thank you to all the helpers and those of you who kindly donated items for the stalls and the raffle.

The Museum's shop also had a stall and sales amounted to £19.90. The shop will

now have a regular presence at the coffee mornings and will be at the Autumn coffee morning in time for some quality 'stocking filler' items and other gift items for Christmas, etc.

### **Summer Garden Coffee Morning**

The next coffee morning is on Saturday, 25th August in the garden at "Rosebank", Jarvis Lane, Steyning from 10.30 – 12 noon. Sarah Leigh has kindly agreed to hold the event in her large garden this year, which many of you know, and we are all hoping for a dry, sunny day.

There will be a cake stall and a raffle. If anyone new would like to make some cakes for this event, please leave a note for me, Gillian Kille, at the Museum with your name and a phone number.

### **Clothes Swap Event**

This will be our second clothes swap event – by public demand! It is being held on Saturday, 29th September at The Penfold Hall, 2pm – 5pm. Refreshments will be available. As before, admission is £5 per person and you are allowed to bring up to 6 items of your best, unwanted clothing or jewellery (not earrings). The idea is to 'trade in' your clothing items for 'new' ones and so re-stock your wardrobe ready for Autumn! Any items left at the end of the afternoon will be donated to the local St Barnabas Hospice shop.

### **The Southdowns Concert Band Xmas Concert, 16<sup>th</sup> December 2012 at The Steyning Centre, 2pm – 5pm.**

We have decided this year to bring in a bit of festive cheer, in aid of our Museum. Please note, the date has been changed to the afternoon of **Sunday, 16<sup>th</sup> December** at 2pm. (not the 9<sup>th</sup> Dec). This is the first time this very accomplished Band will be playing in Steyning and at the Steyning Centre. The Band comprises wind instruments and brass, with keyboards, percussion and tympani, and they have built up a very respected reputation in West Sussex. The Band will provide a varied, seasonal concert to suit all tastes and so offer family entertainment. This Band is much in demand, so we are very fortunate that they have agreed to support us and have a slot in their busy diary. Posters and local advertising

will be produced from September, so you have received advanced notification in this Newsletter.

Tickets will be on sale at the Steyning Bookshop and the Museum from the end of September, priced at £7.50 per person. A more favourable price for a family ticket (two adults plus 2 children) is being considered. Refreshments will be available. **Final** details on the concert will be issued in the October Newsletter.

### **Saving Money**

The Museum's investment in solar panels is now producing savings. At the last reading on 26th March, the panels had generated 897 kilowatts of electricity and we will be paid 43.3 pence per kw. at the end of June.

Following the success of the panels, we have now begun the task of insulating the roof space of the original Museum building.

### **End Piece**

In the December newsletter I mentioned that the Museum was selling a new book, *Portrait of Village Life*, a compilation of articles by Keith Nethercoate-Bryant which appeared in *The Villager* over a period of 20 years. It illustrates Keith's wide historical knowledge, especially about Beeding and Bramber,

Sadly, Keith has now died, so it is fitting that our end piece this month should be an extract from his book, together with an appreciation of Keith's life by Peter Thorogood, the editor and publisher of *Portrait of Village Life*.

I have chosen two articles which illustrate that Keith had an interest in general history along side that of the past life of Beeding and Bramber. Both articles are about coinage, one from the early days of *The Villager* in 1985 and one from 2002.

### **Next Newsletter**

As has been our custom for many years, the next edition of the newsletter will be in October.

Tony Kettelman  
(Editor)

# Friends of Steyning Museum

Saturday 25th August

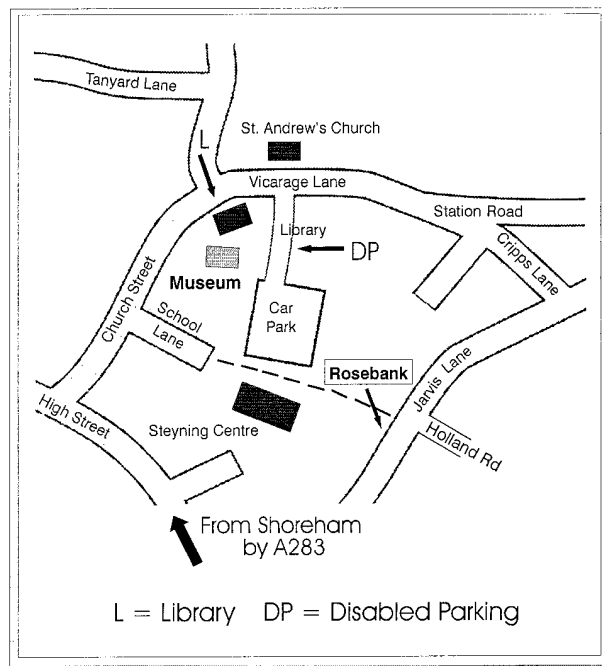
10.30 - 12.00

## Garden Coffee Morning



Entrance:-  
£1  
Indoors if wet

at  
Rosebank  
Jarvis Lane  
Steyning



## **Keith Nethercoate-Bryant 1927 - 2012**

When we came to St. Mary's at Bramber in 1984, we knew no-one. Unbeknown to us, the whole village had made it their business to find out about us- what these mystery newcomers were going to do with their beloved St. Mary's. Within a few days of our arrival, a letter of welcome arrived from Beeding Parish Council signed 'Keith Nethercoate Bryant'. A few weeks later, village people in costume came to our gate with leaflets announcing the forthcoming 'Stuart Fayre', which of course we attended. There we saw, among the stalls and displays, a hefty, brawny fellow, stripped to the waist, surrounded by an admiring crowd, putting the shot to an incredible distance. A sudden cloud burst sent everyone running for cover and we soon found ourselves under the awning of the Beeding and Bramber History Society tent, where we learned that Keith was also the Chairman.

In the ensuing months we came to know Keith and his delightful wife, Margaret, who soon became our first local friends. As co-founder and Chairman of the History Society, Keith was able to help us piece together some of the early history of Bramber, and in particular of St. Mary's. We soon came to admire the energy Keith put into local projects, for primarily he was ever concerned with the welfare of his fellow human beings. Thus our friendship with Keith and Margaret continued over many years, Keith through our mutual interests in all aspects of local history, and Margaret through art, for she was, like Keith's mother, a painter of considerable talent.

It happens sometimes in life that we have an inspired thought that comes to us as it were from nowhere in particular. In my case it was half out of a dream - the idea of collecting together in book form all the knowledge that Keith had assembled and enshrined in what he called his 'Miniature Essays'. We came to admire his enthralling articles in the monthly parish magazine, *The Villager*, written over a period of some twenty years.

As I began to go through the long process of editing, Keith came to life through his sense of history and his love of the community in which he lived. The breadth and depth of his knowledge was impressive. He would have made a good professor had life shown him the way, but it was not for him, for he had great engineering skills, having worked in the petrochemical industry. I had the great good fortune to spend many afternoons sitting in the gardens at St. Mary's talking with him about the incidents and vicissitudes of his eventful life. When finally the book arrived from the printer, we went immediately to Worthing to deliver it to him in hospital. He showed it to everyone in his ward -patients, doctors and nurses. Every time we visited he seemed to be holding the book proudly in his hand a fitting fulfilment of his life's work.

Over the years, it has been a privilege to know Keith, the devoted father, grandfather and great-grandfather, the submariner, the naval historian, the campaigner, the sportsman, the local history man, the author, and above all - friend. By the time I chose the title of my introductory essay to his book, *Portrait of Village Life* Keith was rapidly declining in health. I chose the title deliberately: 'Keith Nethercoate-Bryant as I Know Him'. I will never change it to the past tense in future editions because he lives on through his writings and his name will always be remembered in his community with admiration and affection.

Peter Thorogood

May1985

## A Link with the New World

A year or two before the last war a small leather bag was discovered during minor repairs and redecoration to the old toll cottage that used to stand south of The Rising Sun. It contained a few old coins, among which was a silver crown-sized coin dated 1734. That, along with the other minor pieces in the bag, was acquired by my grandfather, a medical man, who was also an archaeologist and keen numismatist. How the bag was left there or why it was hidden remains a mystery. The fact that it was concealed could perhaps indicate a 'fiddle by the tollkeeper who was only paid 9/- per week by the person who held the right to levy tolls from the turnpike trust. The trust was titled 'New road to avoid Beeding Hill' and was wound up in 1885. The coin in question was a Spanish milled dollar or 'Piece of Eight' minted in Mexico. This was probably the most popular coin and certainly the most romantic piece of currency ever. The phrase 'Piece of 8' usually excites the imagination of children and without doubt quite a few adults as well. Who has not read R. L. Stevenson's Treasure Island and day-dreamed of finding buried treasure on some Caribbean island on the old Spanish Main?

These large silver pieces were accepted here and in most countries in the 18th and 19th centuries. They were issued countermarked by the Royal Mint and also restruck and circulated as the Bank of England dollar in the early 1800s. The silver was of a very high standard. The mint-master was responsible for the fineness of the metal. The penalty for debasement was loss of a limb or death and this gave assurance to traders. The Spanish/American 8 reals (pronounced re-als) was the origin of the U.S. dollar of today, (Dollar evolved from Thaler or Daaler, European crowns).

When small change was short, the coin was cut into  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$  and  $\frac{1}{8}$  pieces in pie-shaped segments called 'bits'; that is why the U.S.  $\frac{1}{4}$  dollar is to this day known as 'two bits'. In colonial America they were known as 'Dos Mundos' as they depicted the two hemispheres (the old and new worlds) between two pillars (the pillars of Hercules, entrance to the Mediterranean). Sellers and merchants in the New World, when writing home or about their wealth, would write the '8' between two pillars (thus: **I8 I**) to indicate the dollar unit and one can easily imagine a hastily written **I8 I** as the \$, which is, of course, the U.S. dollar sign of today.

March 2002

## Numismatics

The oxen of biblical times, when mentioned in the context of transactions, were not always beasts. In the Middle East copper ingots have been excavated and historians agree that these may have been the equivalent value of an ox and could have been mediums of exchange in those early times. The Greek civilisation produced the first coins with properly engraved dies. The Owl of Athens was one of the first motifs along with portraits of Greek heroes and leaders like Alexander the Great and his father Philip. Dolphins were also popular devices.

The Romans followed Greece in producing finely made coins, using gold, silver, bronze, and 'electrum', a natural alloy of gold and silver. They were so prolific with their minting that even today some Roman coins are available to young collectors for a few pence.

In Britain, when the Romans withdrew their legions in the early part of the 5th century, local tribes cast their own coins, which were very crude; other coinage known as 'hammered' was in use from the Viking period and endured until the 17th century. 'Hammered' was a term for using two dies and hammering them together on a metal disc by hand. 'Milled' coins, struck by machine, were first in use in the reign of Elizabeth I.

Platinum was discovered, by mining, in Russia in the 19th century. This new metal was viewed with suspicion, and was first minted into coin in the regal Russian currency, replacing silver. This coinage is now much sought after and fetches large sums at auction.

At the time of the Industrial Revolution there was a dearth of regal coins and many private issues were made, especially for the colonies (America & Canada); commerce could not function without small change. Unlike the man with 'The Million Pound Note', a man with a shilling could not buy an article for a halfpenny if the trader didn't have the eleven pence halfpenny change.

Archaeologists are delighted to discover coins as they help to 'date' dig sites. As the founding chairman of the local Burial Board I was involved in the excavations at Botolphs burial ground prior to it being commissioned. I remember the discovery of a coin of the Roman, Hadrian [AD 117-38] and another, a silver penny of Henry III.