



Museum News

Steyning Museum Newsletter

June 2014

Museum Diary

- 12.06.14 Fund Raising Dinner
The Sussex Produce Company
7.30pm
- 05.07.14 Garden Coffee Morning
Rosebank
Jarvis Lane
- 11.10.14 The Big Draw
& Penfold Hall
- 08.11.14 Autumn Coffee Morning
Penfold Hall
10.30 - 12.00
- 21.03.15 Annual General Meeting
Penfold Hall
2.30 pm

200 Club

April Draw:

- 1st prize = David Thompson (£35)
2nd prize = Sarah Leigh (£25)
3rd prize = Penny Hill (£15)

May Draw:

- 1st prize = Gwen Lowe (£35)
2nd prize = Heather Ward (£25)
3rd prize = Sylvia Crowder (£15)

Summer Coffee Morning

from Maggie Hollands:

Please come along to support our Summer Coffee morning on 5th July between 10.30 and 12noon.

Sarah Leigh has kindly agreed to let us hold the event in her garden at Rosebank, Jarvis Lane. You will find a map enclosed to help you find Sarah's house if you haven't been before.

There will be the usual stalls: bric a brac, cakes,

books and a raffle, so donations are very welcome. Also there will be a stall selling items from the Museum shop.

Please note: - you may prefer to bring a chair with you to sit and enjoy your coffee and biscuits.

AGM

The 2014/15 Management Committee elected at the Annual General Meeting held on the 29th March will be as follows:

Jacque Buttriss (Chairman), Jackie Campbell (Vice Chairman), Chris Tod (Curator), Paul Norris (Treasurer), Helen Coutrouzas (Minute Secretary), Tony Ketteman (Friends and Communication), Sarah Leigh (Stewards), Joan Denwood (Education), Muriel Wright (Shop), Erica Gaylor (Publicity).

Gill Kille has passed her responsibilities as Chair of the Social events sub-committee to Maggie Hollands, who will be ably supported by Pam Perry, Mariella Alexander and Paddy Robson.

The 200 Club

Steyning Museum as an independent organisation, does not receive any regular funding except monies that the Friends can raise. Horsham District Council grants us a waiver on part of our rates when its own finances permit, and we are sometimes able to receive monies for specific purposes from grant giving organisations. Both of those sources are dependent on the Museum being seen as an efficient organisation. In fact, other independent museums come to us for

advice as we are viewed as efficient. That position is only achieved because of the efforts of you, the Friends. Generating the bulk of our income through money raising activities, the creation of displays, the welcoming of the public to the Museum, and providing education opportunities are all down to the Friends . You only have to look at the comments in the visitors book to see that those efforts are warmly appreciated.

In the present economic climate, government support for publicly funded museums is being reduced. As an independent museum, we are also facing economic challenges. We have managed to invest monies over the years, but of course the yield from that has shrunken. That means that we must make sure that our other traditional ways of raising income must be maintained. That brings me to why this piece is labelled "The 200 Club".

The 200 Club came into existence in the early days of the Museum in the 1980's. The object was to provide members with a chance to win one of three prizes every month in return for an annual subscription of £10. The club is run according to the rules laid down by the Gaming Laws, which means that at least half the subscription income must be paid out as prizes every month and the remainder passes to the Museum. When the membership number is at or near 200 the income thus generated makes up a large part of the Museum's annual income. Now we come to the problem we have at

present. Membership has been steadily falling over the last two or three years. If we manage to recruit new members, existing ones are failing to renew, until at present the total membership has fallen below 150. This means that without new members the level of the monthly prizes will have to fall as they are calculated according to the total size of the membership.

Despite the financial climate at present, it is vital that we restore 200 Club numbers. For this reason, you will all find attached to the back of your newsletter a 200 Club application form. If you are already a member please persuade another family member or a friend to use the form to join up. They will also have to be a Friend to stay within the law, but this will be at a reduced rate for this year.

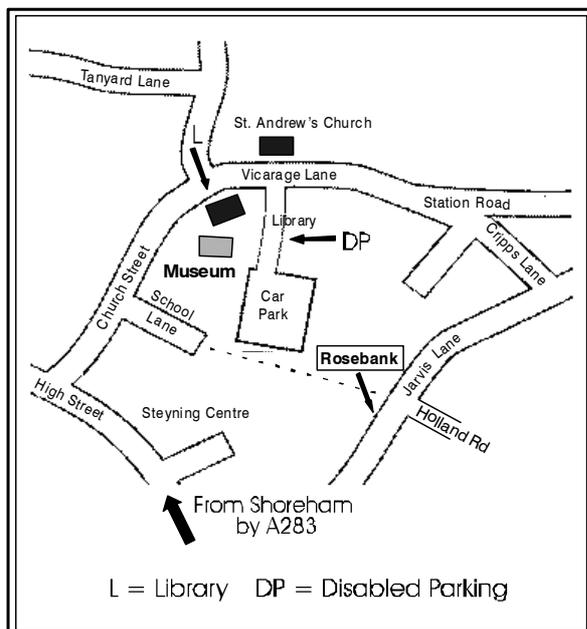
Deliverers

I have now used up my spare pool volunteers to deliver newsletters. At present I need someone to deliver eleven copies to Jarvis Lane and Maltings Green. If there is anyone out there who can help, please leave me a note at the Museum.

Our Church

For our end piece this month, Sarah Leigh has produced a summary of the talk on the church of St. Andrew and St. Cuthman given by Professor Malcolm Thurlby last month.

Tony Ketteman (Editor)



*Where to find Rosebank, Jarvis Lane
for the Garden Coffee Morning*

Not just any church!

I always knew this was not just any church, but I was quite overcome by the number of compliments paid to St Andrew and St Cuthman, Steyning, by our distinguished Romanesque (Norman) sculpture expert Professor Malcolm Thurlby at his lecture on 13 April. This was a joint event by Steyning Museum Trust and the Friends of the Sussex Historic Churches Trust and given to a packed audience of about 180 in the Steyning Centre. (If you missed it, you can download it from the link to the Museum website below, slides, commentary and all.)

These delicate compliments may sound a bit restrained – *“it has a number of features associated with great churches”* – *“one of the finest buildings of the late eleventh and mid-twelfth centuries”* – *“It’s a very ambitious building – not a great church, but certainly wants to be associated with the finest buildings in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries”* – but from Malcolm with his encyclopaedic knowledge of Romanesque churches it is the equivalent of a bunch of red roses.

Of course we have only the nave and part of the crossing left of the Norman church – the whole of the east end has disappeared so we can’t expect the sort of compliments we would get if it was preserved whole.

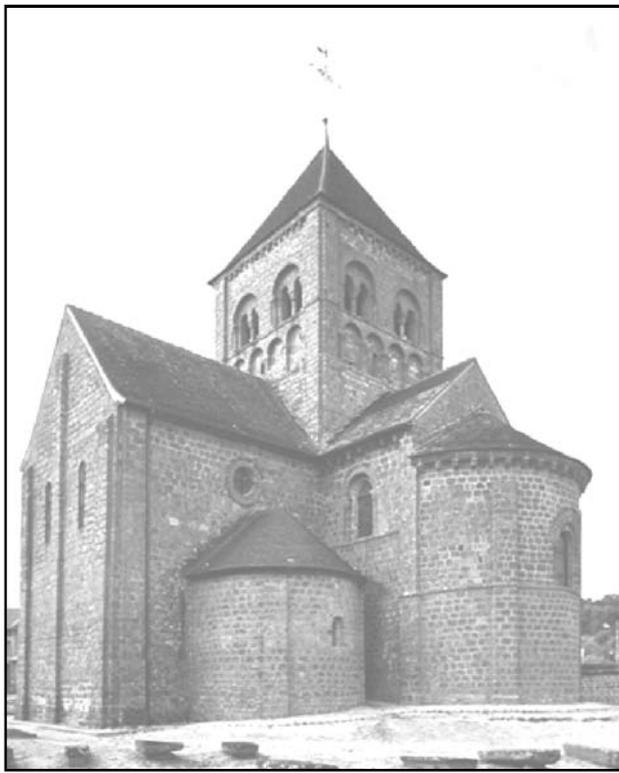
New readers start here – The Abbey of Fécamp was given the manor and church of Steyning in 1066 by William the Conqueror and they built the church. It was transferred to the Abbey of Syon in the fifteenth century and lost its east end after the dissolution of the monasteries in the sixteenth century, as Syon was no longer there to provide money to maintain it (it was costing the Abbess 13s 4d a year). So the chancel, transepts, tower and apses gradually fell into ruin and eventually the parishioners, bless them, demolished them all (after all, they were already five hundred years old and very out of date), knocked off one or two arcades from the west end of the nave and stuck a new tower there made out of bits of anything that came to hand. At some point they walled in the great chancel arch to preserve it, as it was collapsing without the support of the transepts. *Now read on.....*

What makes it remarkable, in Malcolm Thurlby’s view? Things we in Steyning take for granted. Very few parish churches of this period have a clerestory (the upper storey of windows), almost none one as elegant and finely designed as ours. Few of them have aisles. Few have such splendid and variegated decoration.

The Original Church

What did it look like, when it was first finished (in about 1180)? Most likely, Malcolm Thurlby thinks, very like the church at Domfront in Normandy, Notre Dame sur L’Eau. It almost certainly had a round apse at the east end with two apsidal chapels either side, transepts to the north and south, and a central tower – it was a cruciform church. The liturgical heart of the church, where the main altar was, would have been under the tower, just behind where the main chancel arch is today.

This is given some support from the only documentary records we have of the old church; when it was falling down in 1578 inspectors wrote *“The Chauncell, quyre, steeple and other thre chappells and lles adjoining to the sayde church be in great ruyne and decay and some part of them fallen downe, and the rest very lykely shortly to fall if present order be not taken thereon.”*



Three campaigns of building the Norman church

From Malcolm Thurlby's dating of the various sculptural elements, based on their stylistic links with other churches whose progress is dated from documentary sources, we can at last securely date each stage of the building of the Norman church. Each of these stylistic sets of argument which effectively stand on their own, nevertheless neatly match the historical record of the developments in the life of the abbey which built the church. Malcolm identifies three building campaigns:-

- 1085-1090 to about 1100 when the east end up to the crossing was built, including the north and south aisle arches which still survive;
- Around 1150 when the present main chancel arch was built (replacing an earlier, probably lower, crossing arch);
- 1160-75 when the nave was built.

The surviving south aisle archway is in the Anglo-Saxon tradition and clearly closely linked to the new Abbey Church at the mother abbey, Fécamp, consecrated in 1098. Malcolm points out that it is also very closely related to the sculpture in Sompting which is described as 'eleventh century' in the *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Sculpture*.

First Campaign – the crossing arches, around 1085 to 1103

This dating enables us to assume that the church was finished up to the crossing by the time the Abbot of Fécamp and Lord of the Manor of Steyning, William de Rots, visited England in 1103, and it seems likely that he consecrated it. It's hardly possible to exaggerate the huge logistical and financial commitment this church must have represented for the Abbot and his staff, its huge demands on materials, supervision and workmen, and there's no doubt he would come to see it. After all, if you set off across the Channel from Fécamp in 1103 you arrive at the mouth of the Adur, then the Brembre River, navigable up to the port of Steyning, so it wasn't out of his way, and it was his duty to visit his dependencies. He had very likely visited before, to approve the site of the church to which he was going to commit so many expensive boatloads of Caen stone.

As one reason for his visit was to represent Fécamp in the case against de Braose before King

Henry I at Salisbury in the course of which he won the argument over local hunting rights (described in great detail in the settlement document). I venture to suggest that the chaps on our unique frieze on the south aisle column shaft *are* hunters. But I can't persuade Dame Rosemary Cramp, editor of the *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Sculpture* of this – she thinks they may be harvesters, and all Malcolm would say in his lecture was that they were “either hunters or harvesters, that's all I'm going to say, Sarah”. So that's me told.

By the way, Malcolm points out that there are strong indications that St Cuthman's shrine was not in a crypt, as has been supposed, but in the north transept. There is very elaborate decoration on the east, inner side of the archway leading to it, but none on the western side, and on the south aisle the arch is more richly decorated on the western side than the east, suggesting that the processional route to the shrine was up the south aisle, round behind the choir beside the apses and round into the north transept. He points out that there are similar arrangements at Whitchurch Canonorum and at Bampton.

The main chancel arch, around 1150

After that the building stopped, so far as we know, for a few years. Abbot William died in 1107 but there were other developments which might explain it; Fécamp was given an estate at Cogges in Oxfordshire around 1103 and may have started to build there.

So for about 50 years building apparently stopped and we must assume that the parishioners used the old church, which may have been joined on to the new east end or may have been next door (on the flatter part of the mound). The priests serving the church would of course use the east end.

Then Malcolm dates the present huge central arch at about 1150 – it's still in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, very like the arches at New Shoreham (St Mary de Haura) and Bosham. The messy building join on the south nave wall clearly shows that it is part of a different building campaign.

This dating fits very well with the history, because we know that things were very bad here during the Anarchy (Stephen v Matilda) in the 1140s, as we have a letter from a Fécamp rent collector saying he can't collect any rents here. By around 1150, still more 1154 when Stephen died and Matilda's son Henry II acceded to the throne, things had no doubt calmed down.

More importantly, Fécamp now (since 1139) had a new young abbot– King Stephen's nephew and a second cousin of the new king, Henri de Sully, who had considerable estates of his own. He must have intended from the first to build a higher, more ambitious nave, hence the raising of the chancel arch.

The nave and clerestory, 1160-75

We see the importance of the connections of Henri de Sully as Abbot when 15-20 years later, our new nave is built. Malcolm dates this at about 1160-75. This dating is based on its very specific stylistic links with better documented buildings like the Water Tower and other buildings at Canterbury Cathedral, the church of the Hospital of St Cross at Winchester (started 1058), and two churches connected with Bishop Roger of Salisbury (1102-39), the powerful minister of Henry I, Malmesbury Abbey and the now destroyed Cathedral of Old Sarum.

Now we were really at the heart of things because Henri de Sully's other uncle, Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester, was the most important man in the kingdom after the King. The guiding influence over our Abbot is clearly this very rich uncle, King Stephen's brother, and Henry II's cousin (Blois was a grandson of the Conqueror, Henry II a great-grandson). Much of the detail resembles the church of the Hospital of St Cross in Winchester, which was started in 1158, so it

may be that someone who worked for Blois at St Cross came over here when he'd done his stuff in St Cross and worked here for Sully.

These two bishops, Salisbury and Winchester, with Prior Wibert of Canterbury who built the Water Tower, 1053-8, were the great movers and shakers of church building in the mid twelfth century.

Links to the churches of Bishop Roger of Salisbury and Bishop Henry of Winchester

There are many very close parallels, documented in the slide photos – for example

- the distinctive shapes of the various leaf forms on our capitals and those at St Cross;
- the horizontal ridges in the arch opposite the south door, very unusual, but they appear also at St Cross;
- the chevron or zigzag mouldings (did you know there were 18 different sorts of chevron?) which also appear at St Cross and at Old Sarum.
- the label-stops (little heads of people and animals which connect the joins of the nave arches) like those at Malmesbury and Old Sarum;
- the clerestory mouldings are like those at Malmesbury and Old Sarum
- the south doorway is very similar to one at Old Sarum.

You might think that this very detailed and varied decoration is a sign of different people working at different times, but not at all, this was the fashion of the time at least for the Benedictines – splendid variety was regarded as a higher form of art than mere repetition. This demonstrates that the nave was a most ambitious and fashionable enterprise.

However, Malcolm makes the point that by the time the nave was built round arches were a little old-fashioned – but the builders clearly had a strong sense of style and wanted continuity with the east end, so they completed the nave with round arches.

Looking at it, one always has to be aware that it would all have been painted in different colours, with the decoration picked out in contrasting shades. It must have been a glorious sight – and, used to it as we are, it still is – particularly when the sun shines in across the nave.

So where are we now?

As a result of Malcolm Thurlby's work, for which we must be ever grateful to him, I am now in a position to finalise the new Church Guide, the draft of which has been in the church for six months. Our new Vicar, Father Neil Roberts, is writing a preface to it and we hope to get it finalised very soon.

Sarah Leigh

To see the slides and commentary of Professor Malcolm Thurlby's lecture, go to steyningmuseum.org.uk/thurlby.ppt. The file will take a few minutes to download.



STEYNING MUSEUM TRUST
The Museum, Church Street, Steyning, West Sussex. BN44 3YB

Tel: 01903 813333
Registration No: 288562 (Charities Act 1960)

**Application for Membership of the 200 Club of
The Friends of Steyning Museum**

Being a Friend of Steyning Museum, I hereby apply for membership of the 200 Club and agree to abide by the rules of the said Club.

I elect to pay the annual subscription of £10 in advance by bankers order/cheque/cash *
(* delete as appropriate)
(Cheques should be made payable to *Steyning Museum 200 Club*)

Name

Address.....

.....

Post Code Tel:

Signature Date

Please return the completed form to:

*The Secretary, 200 Club of the Friends of Steyning Museum Trust,
The Museum, Church Street, Steyning. BN44 3YB Tel: 01903 813333*



STEYNING MUSEUM TRUST
The Museum, Church Street, Steyning, West Sussex. BN44 3YB

Tel: 01903 813333 www.steyningmuseum.org.uk
Registration No: 288562 (Charities Act 1960)

STANDING ORDER FOR 200 CLUB SUBSCRIPTION

Please pay to HSBC Bank, Steyning (Sort code 40-43-48) to the credit of the 200 Club, Steyning Museum Trust A/c No: 61225707

£10.00 on 1st April 2015 and annually on the same date until further notice

To: The Manager

Address

.....

.....

Name of Account to be Debited

Account Number Sort Code

Signed Date

Please return the completed form to:

*The Secretary, 200 Club of the Friends of Steyning Museum Trust,
The Museum, Church Street, Steyning. BN44 3YB
Te: 01903 813333 www.steyningmuseum.org.uk*