



MUSEUM NEWS

Steyning Museum Newsletter

June 2017

Museum Diary

- 29.05.17 Steyning Country Fair
Museum Stall
High St
10am-4.00pm
- 10.06.17 Vintage Cream Tea
"Rosebank"
Jarvis Lane
3.00 - 5.00pm
- 07.10.17 The Big Draw
Museum & Penfold Hall
11.00am - 4.00pm
- 26.10.17 Children's Activity Morning
The Museum
10.00am-12.30
- 04.11.17 Autumn Coffee Morning
Penfold Hall
10.30am-12.00

200 Club

April Draw:

- 1st prize = April Henebury (£35)
2nd prize = Sylvia Crowder (£25)
3rd prize = Yvonne Sullivan (£15)

May Draw:

- 1st prize = Paul Norris (£35)
2nd prize = Tony Kitson (£25)
3rd prize = J. Walter (£15)

Spring Coffee Morning

from Maggie Hollands:

Once again we had a very successful coffee morning on 8th April. Although we did not have the usual

attendance as I am sure people were taking advantage of the lovely weather, we still managed to raise nearly £400.

Many thanks to everyone who contributed with goods to sell, cakes and plants. Also thank you to all who attended, it was a lovely atmosphere as usual.

A Note for your diaries:

We are holding a Vintage Cream Tea on 10th June at 3pm in the garden of Sarah Leigh at 'Rosebank' Jarvis Lane, Steyning. The one we held 2 years ago was such a success we thought we would repeat it. Again there will be homemade scones, 'nippy' waitresses and ukulele players. (If its wet we'll be indoors) Tickets can be obtained in advance from Steyning Museum at £4 or £5 or on the gate. These will be available from 10th May.

Please come and join us - it will be a very enjoyable afternoon.

Thank you to everyone for your support.

Additions to the Collection

The Museum frequently receives new items to add to the collection. I'll include details of some of these in future newsletters to give an idea of the wide variety of items the curating team need to deal with. This doesn't merely involve adding them to the Museum collection. Research about

them is often necessary to understand how they add to our knowledge of the town's past.

42 items have been donated recently:

1. Three postcards showing the High Street.

2. A Cinque Ports volunteer copper uniform button from the 18th or early 19th century.

3. Part of a "swap hook" - a 19th century reaping tool, found at Jesses Farm, Calcott

4. The Museum is able to learn when the some of the early Steyning buildings were constructed if their oak timbers have been dated. Recently, through this process, we learned that Chatfields was built between 1443 and 1475, whilst Holland Cottage dates from around 1486.

5. Young girl's dress from 1930's found among possessions of Gluck, the local artist.

6. Typed memories of Roy Heryett of local farming and the origins of the High Street Dairy.

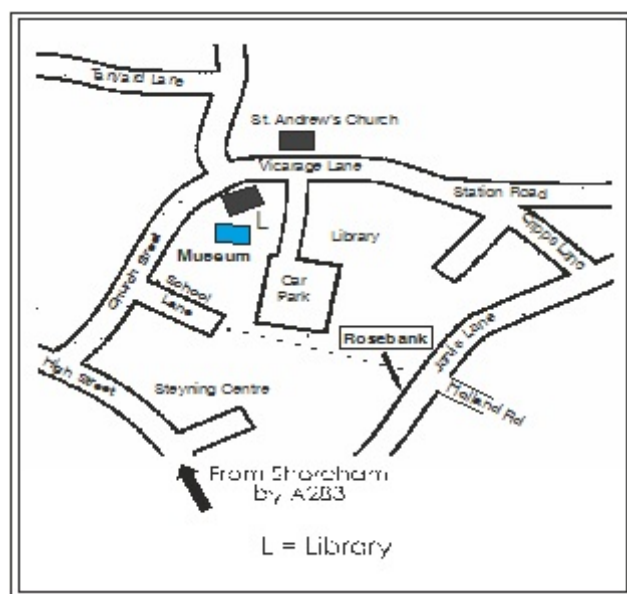
7. A report on the East and West boundary hedges of the Rublees Allotments prepared by Janet Pennington, Roger Browne and others, with the aim of establishing the age, history and content of these hedges. This will help the Parish Council in decisions regarding their future.

Exhibitions

You may remember that the April newsletter set out a plan for who would take over Chris Tod's responsibilities. The job of mounting exhibitions will be the responsibility of a team under the direction of Andrew Woodfield. They have now mounted their first two exhibits, "Anyone for Tea" and "Our Co-op" These tell the story of taking tea and shopping in

Steyning. The displays tell the story of Cobblestone Walk from hotel to tea house and shopping through the development of the Co-op. These are small displays, while the new display team's first major exhibition will be "Industry" (in Steyning)

Please come along give the new team your support.



Attendance Figures

We had 373 visitors to the Museum in March which brings the total so far this year to 1038.

We had no school visits in the same month so we didn't have those figures to boost our total.

(Attendance figures are important for us to keep our "accredited" status.)

The Rifle Range. A great deal of work has been done on behalf of the Steyning Downland Scheme and the Wiston Estate into the history and present state of the Rifle Range. Much of it has been overgrown so you may not be aware of its existence. We have recently received a lengthy report compiled by Justin Russell to serve as an introduction to the history of the site. Hopefully, this may be the first step towards work on conserving and preserving the site. According to the report, the origins of the Steyning Rifle Range date back to the creation of the Rifle Volunteer Force in 1859. The 18th Sussex Rifle Volunteers was formed in May 1860 with its administrative centre based in Henfield. However, in order to gain official recognition, they were required to have a suitable area for rifle practice. The valley at the foot of the South Downs, west of Mouse Lane, proved to be a suitable site.

The Report describes the changes to the extent and layout of the Rifle Range, as well as the types and numbers of targets used, the bullet impact areas, the types of rifles and ammunition used, and the various users of the Range from 1860 until it closed in 1989.

A brief history of the Sussex Rifle Volunteers is included in the Report, from their creation in 1860 until they were incorporated into the Territorial Army as part of the 4th Battalion Royal Sussex Regiment.

A detailed contemporary description of the area forming the Rifle Range and the evidence that remains of its previous use is covered in the report. You will also find supporting documents including photographs, diagrams, and plans of the Target Area and Stop Butt, the Markers' Gallery, Target frame, Target Store, the various firing positions, latrine block, location of the flag staffs and danger boards.

Included in the Report is also a catalogue of small arms ammunition recovered from the Rifle Range with drawings and diagrams. There are photographs of a "Steel Falling

Plate" very similar to one recently recovered from the Range and which is now part of the Museum's collection.

There is a list of the primary sources for the information in the report in the form of published material (newspaper articles for 1859 to 1944 etc) and personal communications. These contain references to several Steyning people. An extract from Hansard records the House of Commons debate about the shelling of Steyning by the Regular Army Artillery on 14th May 1944 and the resulting casualties.

You will also find in the Report location plans, extracts from O S maps from 1875 to 1971 and aerial photographs and plans of the Rifle Range.

The Report will be of interest to conservationists, local historians, those interested in militaria or UK military history, local people and those who either remember the Rifle Range pre 1989 or whose family members or friends used the Rifle Range in the past.

If this has aroused your interest, you will find a copy of the Report on the table by the counter in the Museum. Have a browse through it and you will learn about the importance of this historic site which has remained unknown to many who live in Steyning.

End Piece

Those of you who came to the Annual General Meeting, will remember the generous tributes paid to Chris Tod on his retirement. I was approached by several people at the April coffee morning who were unable to attend, but had heard about the tributes, so I thought I would end this month with one which was different in style, namely as a poem from David Thompson inspired by Rudyard Kipling's poem "If".

You will find it overleaf.

Next Newsletter

As is our custom in the summer months, the next Newsletter will be published in October.

Tony Ketteyman
Editor.

THE CURATOR

(With acknowledgements to Rudyard Kipling)

If you can keep your artifacts around you
And make sure that they're safe and can't be
took;
If you can keep collections forming round you
And enter them in an Accessions Book.
If you can lay on Special Exhibitions
And beg or borrow items to display
And give publicity to what you're doing
And welcome visitors each open day.

If you can meet with Management Committees
And tell them clearly all they need to know;
If you can deal with members of the public
And guide them gently where they ought to
go;
If you can show to schools and younger
children
The ways of people living long ago.
Making the past feel really so exciting
They really, really, really want to know!

If you can speak to groups of older people
And take tours walking round the town
Or produce talks and slides and lectures
To clubs and other people sitting down
If you can coax grant-making bodies
To stump up funds to pay for extra space
providing room for study and for storage
And make the Museum still a better place

If you, yourself, feel every satisfaction
When surrounded by reminders of days past
And for five- and-twenty years can keep on
going
And hand on a worthwhile legacy at last
If all the work you've done in that long period
Shows imaginative flair on every shelf
Steiny Museum will ever-after hail you
As, without doubt, the best Curator yourself.

*Being a tribute in terms of the Nation's
favourite poem "If..." to Chris Tod, the
Museum's favourite retiring Curator'*

*David Thompson
April 2017*