



MUSEUM NEWS

Steyping Museum Newsletter

October 2005

The Extension

If you have walked by the Museum recently or been inside, you will appreciate I couldn't really start this month with anything other than the Museum extension. Building only started at the end of August and such has been the speed of construction by Stringer and Kitson, that we already have a completed shell. By the time you receive this newsletter they will have knocked through the wall connecting the extension to the existing Museum. The whole of the initial build should then be completed in October, leaving the winter months for fitting out the interior.

It was only 12 months ago that we sent out the Buy a Brick leaflets, and to have raised the money and erected the basic shell of the building so quickly is down to the hard work of all those involved. Once building had started, Tony Kitson has been our site representative and visited most days to negotiate with Stringer and Kitson's men. Peter Meanley has also been keeping an eye on proceedings, and because progress has been so rapid, Chris Tod has had to make daily decisions we hadn't expected to tackle for some time. We owe our warm thanks to them all.

Chris Tod says that it will be marvellous to be able to get at objects in the collection without having to move dozens of other boxes first or to scale our loft ladder: in the extension there are stairs! He is also looking forward to the exciting challenge of trying to incorporate all the fresh ideas we have into the new displays without losing the cosy feel of the existing Museum.

In the New Year, Chris will be holding training sessions for stewards to familiarise them with what will be in the extension.

Museum Computer

When the extension has been fitted out we will have our own computer. We already have a use for it. We have just been given a CD of photographs, school magazines and other

archive material from Steyping Grammar School which our visitors will be able to examine.

The Website

Our website has now been up for over four months and if you have been looking at it, you will see that progress on the building project has been regularly illustrated with photographs taken by Tony Kitson.

Having got ourselves launched so successfully, the management committee thought it was worth paying for a domain site which was recognisably ours. You will therefore now find us on:

www.steyningmuseum.org.uk

During July and August the website attracted an average of 5 new visitors each day - that's excluding our many "returners". New visitors totalled 332 and 68% of them came from the UK, 21% from the US and 3% from Australia. The rest were from Spain, Czech Republic, Canada, France, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, Denmark, Hong Kong, Peru, India, Sweden, Germany, Ireland and South Africa. September's daily average of new visitors rose to 6. People looked at 3-4 pages on average, although many stayed for over an hour and went through most of the site. In about 1,500 recorded "hits", which was the most popular page? Not the Home page (2nd), the Museum page (3rd) or the History page (4th). It was Exhibit 8, the brass rubbing from the tomb of John de Braose of Wiston.

Since the last newsletter several new pages have been added to the Website. As well as Tony Kitson's regular photographic updates to show how the museum extension is progressing, Chris Tod has produced a valuable list of material kept in the museum archives. Jacquie Buttriss added detailed information about the services we can offer schools, and Lynda Denyer wrote an article about how Steyping became linked with Fécamp in Normandy. Janet Keystone allowed

us to reproduce her attractive local map, and several people sent messages to the online Guestbook. There is a page dedicated to St. Mary's House in Bramber, and last, but not least, we have an online jigsaw puzzle! If you haven't revisited the site recently, it's all there waiting for you.

Many thanks to Lynda Denyer for her hard work in keeping us up-to-date.

Garden Coffee Morning

Helen Coutrouzas has provided the following report on the garden coffee morning:

This event on 20th August was once more blessed with fine weather after some very wet days. Around 70 Friends and their guests enjoyed the lovely garden at Jarvis and helped to raise £200 for the Museum. On behalf of the Social Events Sub-Committee, I want to thank Jenny and Martin Toomey for inviting us to invade their home. Thanks also to Sheila, Mary and Gwenda, our faithful raffle ticket ladies, also those who contributed cakes, Eric who sits at the entrance, José who is always happy to wash up, and everyone who helped in any way.

Each year, our Sub-Committee organises 3 coffee mornings, the January mulled wine party, the AGM tea and the manning of the High Street stall at the Country Fair. Most of the dates are fixed a year ahead. We meet usually twice a year to plan these events and we are only really busy in short bursts. We would welcome any additions to our number to help with the arrangements, so if any of the Friends feel they could help (and we do need one or two more), please call me on 814603 or leave me a note at the Museum.

Helen Coutrouzas.

October Exhibition

Chris Tod had originally planned to launch a new temporary exhibition in October, but the extension build has gone ahead so quickly that his time will be fully committed. The next exhibition has therefore been postponed to a future date.

AGM

The building of the extension has persuaded the management committee to make a change in the usual format of the Annual General Meeting. We have booked the Penfold Hall for 2.30 pm on 1st April 2006. We will start with the business meeting as usual, but rather than follow tea with a speaker, we have decided to arrange a conducted tour of the new extension ahead of the official opening, as by then it will

be fitted out and ready for inspection.

Museum Diary

29.10.05	Autumn Coffee Morning Penfold Hall 10.30 - 12.00
21.01.06	Stewards and Helpers Social Penfold Hall 11.30am
01.04.06	Annual General Meeting Penfold Hall 2.00pm
08.04.06	Spring Coffee Morning Penfold Hall 10.30 - 12.00

200 Club

June Draw:

- 1st prize = Sheila Wright (£35)
- 2nd prize = Joan Booty (£25)
- 3rd prize = Mrs Y Goacher (£15)

July Draw:

- 1st prize = Ivy Steele (£35)
- 2nd prize = Betty Calloway (£25)
- 3rd prize = Jean Meanley (£15)

August Draw:

- 1st prize = Joan Lawson (£35)
- 2nd prize = Mrs C. Chapman (£25)
- 3rd prize = Joan Drew (£15)

September Draw:

- 1st prize = Mr J. Johnston (£35)
- 2nd prize = Mrs Betty Roper (£25)
- 3rd prize = Vi Hays (£15)

Having run the 200 Club for several years, Lawrie Smalley had decided to hand over the job to a new pair of hands. Brian Hill has now taken on the task of secretary of the Club, but we haven't lost Lawrie altogether, as he now becomes the Vice-Chairman. On behalf of all members, I extend our thanks to Lawrie for steering the Club so successfully. Under his guidance we achieved a membership of 200 for the first time - and that's not easy to achieve!

Photography

One of the stewards phoned me a short while ago to ask for some guidance about visitors wishing to take photographs in the Museum. The answer we usually give when this arises is to tell the visitor that photography is only allowed with the permission of the Curator.

Committee Changes

Many members of the Management Committee continue from year to year, but there are occasional changes to their number which bring new blood and new ideas to the

committee. We have been fortunate to acquire the services of two new members since the AGM. Jacquie Buttriss has agreed to join us as Education Officer, a role which becomes increasingly important as more local schools use the Museum resources to enrich the children's curriculum. Our other new member is David Haseldine, who has taken over the role of Publicity from Jill Kemp. We owe our thanks to Jill for responding to my arm twisting in our hour of need and she has done a magnificent job in bringing the Museum to the notice of the public through her press reports. David has already made a good start in following in Jill's footsteps with the good press coverage he organised for the start of the extension building.

Charles Macdonald Mementos

We have been given various mementos of Charles Macdonald's time in Steyning. Amongst them are copies of three CD's of his music. The Museum has a copy of each, but there are surplus copies which we would like to give away, on a first come first served basis, to anyone who has memories of Charles or enjoyed his music making. The CD's are "The Elements", "Times Delight" and "Country Pageant". Let Chris know how many you would like.

Holy Water Stoup?

Does anyone have any special knowledge of medieval holy water stoups? We have been given a heavy stone object which circumstantial evidence suggests is a stoup recovered by Charles Catt in 1909 whilst examining the foundations of "massive walls" during the levelling of some ground just the other side of Bramber Street from the castle.

Wiston Documents

We have recently been given copies of Steyning and Wiston inventories, wills and probate accounts covering a period from the mid 16th century to the end of the 18th century. Janet Pennington and Joyce Sleight have worked on these over the last 15 years or more and have established an extraordinary card index which analyses all the hundreds of different objects mentioned in these documents, all the people involved, and much other information besides. It is a marvellous research archive and we expect to be suggesting how we can make best use of it when Chris Tod conducts the next series of training sessions, subsequent to the completion

of the new extension.

Meanwhile, there are a few mysteries which we felt you might like to help to unravel. Among the many objects which can be readily recognised are some which have so far defied certain identification, despite attempts to allow for wayward spellings and changes in the sounds of words.

Among them are the following:

Costlers

A pewter Thundrell (belonged to Francis Willett, a cordwainer)

Bing (one of the possessions of Neville Hearsi who was an innkeeper but also, apparently, a "musician")

Sooler (John Farley was a yeoman)

Spetter (belonging to Jane Parsons, 1674)

A pewter Cattel (belonging to Jane Parsons, 1674)

Jowle (or Jole) Wheels (the people who listed these were farmers)

1 dozen Biscaks, (with plates in Elizabeth Martin's back room)

Plogs (described as being in the shop, although John Groome is also identified as a "Gentleman")

Beck and also 1 pair of Quilers (belonging to Charles Groome, a farmer)

Tacks (in Charles Groome's larder)

A pair of Goffes

Bankey

6 Busshins

Seysse

Blake Byllys

The last 5 items belonged to James Peeres, a draper, who died in 1559

You may like to have a go at working out what these items were.

While on the subject of inventories, it is sobering to see that when the Workhouse was closed in 1835 the Governor had a 20 gallon cask in his room. Was this entirely for his use or was it the most secure place to store the liquor supplies for the whole workhouse?

The Market House

We finish this month with an article written for us by Janet Pennington on the Market House which used to stand in the middle of the High Street.

Tony Ketterman
Editor