Amazing News

Earlier in the year I wrote about the need for the Museum to examine our financial situation so that we would be prepared for any challenge facing us in the present atmosphere of financial cuts. Apart from good housekeeping to reduce expenditure, the management committee felt it was important to increase the number of Friends, who are our main source of income. Our stall at the Showcase event in the Spring aroused much interest, but didn't encourage many to become Friends. Recently, it was suggested at a committee meeting that we explore the possibility of taking a stall at the farmers’ market to publicise the Museum and recruit new Friends. We were generously offered one of the community stalls at the Market on 4th September.

I thought we might, at most, recruit 20 new members, but the amazing news is that we signed up 77 new Friends who all paid their £5 on the spot. As these new members read their first newsletter, I would like to welcome them to the Friends and thank them all for supporting Steyning’s Museum in this way.

Museum Diary

09.04.11 Spring Coffee Morning
Penfold Hall
10.30 - 12.00

29.10.11 Autumn Coffee Morning
Penfold Hall
10.30 - 12.00

200 Club

June Draw:
1st prize = Daphne Carter-Shaw (£35)
2nd prize = Mr NC Davis (£25)
3rd prize = Mary Townsend (£15)

July Draw:
1st prize = Phyl Rowntree (£35)
2nd prize = Val Bullen (£25)
3rd prize = Ken Stotesbury (£15)

August Draw:
1st prize = Neil Jones (£35)
2nd prize = Norman Checkley (£25)
3rd prize = Joan Lawson (£15)

September Draw:
1st prize = Betty Loader (£35)
2nd prize = Erica Gaylor (£25)
3rd prize = Helen Lewis (£15)

Social Events

Earlier in the year, Gillian Kille took over the running of the social events sub-committee, and the group has been busy planning money raising occasions.

Below, Gillian reports about past and future events:

Garden Coffee Morning

We couldn't have had better weather for this year's Summer garden coffee morning, held, by kind permission of Sarah Leigh, in her lovely garden at Rosebank on Saturday 3rd July. It truly was a beautiful, sunny summer’s day. The event did clash with one or two other events locally, reflected by only 42 people coming
along, but in spite of a reduced attendance this year, we still managed to make a net profit, after expenses, of £198.42, which was an increase on last year's summer event. Everyone was seen to be enjoying the morning, relaxing with friends in the garden over coffee and enjoying the ambiance. There was the usual cake stall and raffle which both did very well, but the cake makers must be especially congratulated on the superb quality of the cakes, which were delicious and were snapped up. Thank you also to those who responded to our plea for extra cake makers and we do hope you will support us again.

Finally, a thank you to all those who came along to support the event and a very big thank you to all the helpers and those who donated items for the raffle prizes.

We always need to find other central Steyning venues for future garden summer coffee mornings, (there is one being planned for August next year) so if any of you have any ideas for a venue (bearing in mind that we would need use of the kitchen and to have permission to hold the event indoors if it rains) please do drop a line to Gillian Kille c/o the Museum, or send an email to gill.k@MapletreeSolutions.com

Our next coffee morning will be on Saturday, 30th October in the Penfold Hall, as usual, and we look forward to seeing you there. Please do try to support the Museum by coming along and tell a friend!

**Other Fundraising Events**

As it is becoming increasingly important, in view of rising costs, to raise more funds for the Museum, two extra events are being organised.

The first is a clothes swap evening at Penfold Hall on Friday 12th November this year. The doors will open at 6.30 pm. and clothes swapping will start at 7.30pm.

We fully appreciate that this evening will appeal mainly to those ladies in the 20 to 50 something age range (!) although everyone is welcome and the event should attract a wider clientele. It is essentially a fund raising event and provides an opportunity to recycle some of those unwanted 'best' wardrobe items and gain new items. Entrance will be £5 on the door and up to 10 items of clothing and accessories are allowed. There will be free coffee and cake available throughout the evening. Any clothes items not swapped will be donated to a Steyning charity.

Our second event is an afternoon concert to be held on Saturday 5th March, 2011 at St Andrew's Church, featuring two very popular choirs, Kaleidoscope and Cantatrice, directed by Zoë Peate. Tea and cake will be served at The Steyning Centre immediately after the concert. More details about the concert will be given in the December Newsletter. Tickets for the event will be available at the end of December 2010 from The Steyning Bookshop. The concert promises to be most enjoyable and we hope as many of you as possible will come along, so please make a note of the date in your diaries.

**Joint Christmas Supper**

This year sees the fourth joint Christmas supper between The Steyning Society and the Museum Friends on the evening of Friday 17th December in the Steyning Centre. As before, the evening will start with pre-supper drinks in the Saxon Room at 7.00pm with the three course supper with wine following at 7.45pm in the man hall.

An inclusive ticket will cost £15.00 and can be obtained from Peter Harris, using the form in the invitation enclosed with this newsletter. Cheques should be made payable to The Steyning Society. There will be a raffle, and a short talk at the end of the supper by Geoff Barnard of the Greening campaign.

**The End Piece**

Janet Pennington has kindly provided the first part of an article for us this month which traces the history of the George Inn in Steyning Changes of name and ownership complicated the task in a way which might seem familiar to those of you who have delved into your family history.

The concluding part of the article will follow in the December newsletter.

Tony Ketteman (Editor)
The George Inn, 46-50 High Street, Steyning

Janet Pennington

The name *George Inn* will cause many Steyning residents to think of the former pub at 138 High Street, at the north-west end of the town, which closed in 1958.

The house named the *King’s Head* on the left, & the former *George Inn* on the right, Horsham Road/High Street, Steyning

The medieval building is situated on the steep bend where the Horsham Road begins, opposite the entrance to Mouse Lane, and seems to have become an inn in the first quarter of the 18th century. After its closure in 1958 the name became Georgein House for several decades, eventually changing to George Inn House, a pleasing reminder of a former Steyning hostelry. A later northern range which had been added to the *George* was named the *King’s Head* in the latter half of the 20th century. That name really belongs to a building at the other end of the High Street, as this article will explain.

The Old Workhouse in Mouse Lane, with the *George* inn buildings to the right, c.1820 (picture in private hands)
An inn called the *George* was situated between 44 High Street (the present Post Office) and 56 High Street (now Bunce’s Home Hardware) as early as 1627. It was known as the *Swan* before that. The authors of *The Timber-Framed Buildings of Steyning*, in their section on 44 High Street, unfortunately mention the latter’s ‘…reported use as an inn’.¹ This story dies hard in Steyning, but research shows that 44 was never an inn; it was certainly a mercer’s shop in the 17ᵗʰ and early 18ᵗʰ centuries, ² but the inn was its neighbour. The Revd Ernest Cox and Frank Duke’s splendid book *In And Around Steyning* clarifies the situation: ‘The deeds of this Post Office house, No. 44, state that in 1674 it was “situate between a messuage heretofore called the Swann and now known as the George on the West”, (that is, on the site now occupied by the three shops, Nos. 46-50) “and by the messuage of John Fletcher, gent., on the East”.’³ The article on Wood’s the butcher’s shop in Steyning Museum Newsletter, October 2007 indicates that John Fletcher’s messuage and John Wood’s shop were one and the same.

The former *Swan*, later *George* & then *King’s Head*, 46-50 High Street.
The Post Office, 44 High Street, is to the right of the inn range.

The Charity Shop, 52 High Street, to the left of The Sussex Produce Company in the above illustration, does not seem to have been part of the inn, though the inn yard can be glimpsed through the archway next to it. By 1726 a deed refers to the property (46-50 High Street) as “late an Inne known by the name of George.” It can then be proposed that the *George* inn sign moved to the building at the bottom of the High Street opposite Mouse Lane before 1726.⁴ Innkeepers moved around, and in this period frequently took the inn name with them, in such a way taking the ‘goodwill’ of the business, and advertising the fact that they had moved to another site.⁵ There

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⁴ Cox & Duke, 94
⁵ See J. Pennington, ‘The Inns and Taverns of Western Sussex, 1550-1700: A Regional Study of Their Architectural and Social History’, (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Southampton, 2003), for more information on inn history. A copy is available at Steyning Museum
would not have been two inns of the same name operating at the same time in a small
town.6

The earliest reference found to the Swan in Steyning is in 1609, when Richard
Farnefold died. At his death he owned Gatewick House, the water mill there, Jarvis
farmhouse, the building now called the Stone House, and much else besides. One of
his properties was described as ‘…the messuage called Le Swann in the tenure of
Robert Cox or his assigns…’.7 Readers of Steyning Scandals will know just what
went on in the inn yard of the Swan in 1610, when a youth called Thomas Starke was
captured in the stable with his breeches open (rather than pulled down) in the company
of a grey mare.8 John Baulcombe, one of the witnesses in the ensuing court case, was
the son-in-law of Robert Cox who in 1624 was the landlord of the White Lion Inn at
Bramber (now the Castle Hotel).9

By 1627 the Swan had been renamed the George, now owned by Richard Farnefold’s
son, Sir Thomas, who had been knighted in 1621. He owed the enormous sum of
£4,000 (the equivalent of about £360,000 today) to Sir David Watkins of London, and
it looks as though he had to pass numerous properties over in lieu of this debt,
including Gatewick House.10 Perhaps the renaming of the inn happened when Cox
left the Swan, and a new landlord called it the George; this could also have happened
after Cox’s death if he had been sub-letting the Swan. In 1646 and 1656 the inn is
described as a ‘tenement and 5 acres of land in Steyning Borough called the George
in occupation of Henry Barnes’.11 All the other documents refer to three acres of land,
not five, and there could have been two acres in Steyning’s common fields.

The Swan/George/King’s Head at 46-50 High Street is at the bottom of the 1897 O/S map,
and the later George at the top left. Highland Crofts has a footpath running diagonally across it.

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6 J. Pennington, ‘The Inns and Taverns of Western Sussex etc.’, 297: the only example of this I have
seen in Sussex was at Chichester in the 17th century, with two inns called the White Horse, though one
was within the city walls, and the other without.
8 J. Pennington, Steyning Scandals: Secrets of a Sussex Market Town, 1547-1947, (2009 revised edn),
64-68
9 J. Pennington, ‘The Inns and Taverns of Western Sussex etc.’, 206
10 Breach, 102. It is interesting to see that Sir Thomas Farnefold refers to the High Street as ‘…the
Heye, Chefe or Market Streee…’ in 1622.
11 West Sussex Record Office (hereafter WSRO), Wiston MS 2485
In 1666, the year of the Great Fire of London, the ‘Messuage and inn called the George in the High Street of Steyning, with two closes of meadow and pasture (3a)…’ was being sold. The three acres of land was Highland Crofts, to the north of the inn, which name still survives. Inns frequently had land attached, useful for grazing horses and cattle or growing crops. It has to be remembered that much of what is now built on behind the north side of the High Street was farmland in the 17th century, with narrow ways to and from these holdings, which can be seen on earlier maps. The George was occupied by John Parsons ‘…or his Assignes…’ in 1666, and it is not certain whether he was actually the landlord at this time. Some of the Parsons family in Steyning were brewers, and John may have been supplying beer to his own inn, but not actually running it.

As Cox and Duke reveal, the inn’s former sign of the Swan was still remembered in a deed of 1674, when the George was mentioned as being next to what is now the Post Office, at 44 High Street. The George was of some importance in the town, as depositions of witnesses in a lawsuit were taken there in 1699 and the Adur River Commissioners used it for a meeting in 1714. Mary Burnett, a widow, was the innkeeper on both occasions and she will be mentioned in more detail in Part 2 of this article. The name George is an ancient one in inn terms, emerging during the medieval period as the Patron Saint of England, and continuing through the turbulent times of the Reformation. St. George represents one of the most powerful English inn names, together with the Crown, symbol of the monarchy, and the Swan, symbol of the Virgin Mary.

A document dated 1652 states that the George was opposite the Market House, on the north side of the High Street. It was therefore right in the heart of the market area of Steyning, with the old market house (demolished in 1771 to make way for an improved road system - see Steyning Museum Newsletter, October 2005), more or less in front of it and standing in the middle of the street. On the south side of the High Street were the Crown and the Blue Anchor, situated between the White Horse and the Chequer; to the east of the George there was the Spread Eagle, later the King’s Arms, on the corner of Bank Passage. At one time the George may have been the leading town inn, as its name suggests, but it gradually slid down the social hierarchy of drinking establishments in Steyning.

With thanks to the following for access to their properties:-

Mrs. Kate Barton, Steyning Pet Shop, 46 High Street; Chris Morgan, Fishmonger, 48 High Street; Nick Hempleman, The Sussex Produce Company, 50 High Street (and Ben who carried the ladder!); Rachel, the relief manageress of Cancer Research UK Charity Shop at 52 High Street

12 WSRO, Wiston MS 6152