



Museum News

Steyning Museum Newsletter

October 2011

Museum Diary

- 29.10.11 Autumn Coffee Morning
Penfold Hall
10.30 - 12.00
- 16.12.11 Joint Christmas Supper
Steyning Centre
7.00 for 7.45
- 14.01.12 Stewards & Helpers Social
Penfold Hall
11.30 am
- 28.04.12 Spring Coffee Morning
Penfold Hall
10.30 - 12.00
- 27.10.12 Autumn Coffee Morning
Penfold Hall
10.30 - 12.00

200 Club

June Draw:

- 1st prize = Alistair Canning (£35)
2nd prize = Mrs Crowder (£25)
3rd prize = David Thompson (£15)

July Draw:

- 1st prize = Judy Taylor (£35)
2nd prize = Liz Coatsworth (£25)
3rd prize = Tony Kettelman (£15)

August Draw:

- 1st prize = Joan Drew (£35)
2nd prize = Louise Elliott (£25)
3rd prize = Ted Wickens (£15)

September Draw:

- 1st prize = Muriel Wright (£35)
2nd prize = Jackie Canning (£25)
3rd prize = David Dryden (£15)

Garden Coffee Morning:

A report from Gillian Kille:

There was a rather anxious start to the garden coffee morning on 13th August at "Jarvis", due to some early morning drizzle and a gloomy sky, but miraculously by 10.15 am the rain stopped and we had sunshine and a blue sky – so all was well! The cake stall was rapidly transferred outside into the garden, tables and chairs set out and 69 people came along throughout the morning to enjoy coffee, biscuits and a chat with friends in Jenny and Martin Toomey's beautiful garden. Both the cake stall and the raffle did very well. A big 'thank you' must go to Jenny and Martin for giving us permission to use their garden this year.

We managed to make a net profit, after expenses, of £278.63, well up on last year's event, so many grateful thanks once again to all who came along to support, plus all the cake makers and helpers who gave up their time etc and, as always, were very generous.

If any of you wish to open your garden (central Steyning if possible) for future garden coffee mornings, preferably in August (bearing in mind that we would need use of the kitchen and to have your 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 direct to gill.k@MapletreeSolutions.com

Fund Raising

In previous newsletters, I have mentioned that Museum income is feeling the strain in the present economic climate. We have been looking for ways to boost income and Gill Kille and her social events team have been coming up with some money spinning ideas. You may remember that we had the very successful concert in St. Andrews and St. Cuthman Church last year, followed by the Clothes Swap, which also attracted a good crowd. The latest new project has been the Antiques Valuation on 17th September, and Gill has provided the following report:

The Antiques Valuation Afternoon: Sat 17 September 2011

By 2pm, the start of the event, we had some sunshine and it was a dry day. Fifty people came though the door at The Steyning Centre clutching their treasures for Simon Langton of Denhams to give his opinion and to informally value them.

The afternoon proved to be very informative and enjoyable – Simon was very entertaining, engaging attention by involving everyone in each person's valuation, which I am sure encouraged most people to stay until the very end. You could almost hear a pin drop whilst Simon was talking, when normally there would be a buzz of conversation! Our net profit, after expenses, amounted to £184.50.

We had been hoping to attract more people, but possibly more advertising nearer the time would have boosted numbers and given a reminder to some people. However, Simon was kept busy with only a short break for tea and cake for everyone and we feel it would be good to hold another such event again in 2-3 years time.

I should like to thank to all the helpers who contributed to making it a very successful event.

Autumn Coffee Morning

Our next coffee morning will be on Saturday, 29th October in the Penfold Hall, 10.30 – 12pm. We will have our usual cake stall, of course, and there will also be a bric-a-brac stall – so if any of you have any items for this stall, do please bring them along on the day, or leave at the Museum in advance. We look forward to seeing you and if you can bring along a friend they will be very welcome – the more the merrier!

Solar Panels

The management committee has spent some time examining another source of income, namely, having solar panels on the Museum roof. It is, however, a long term plan rather than an immediate boost to finances as the income from the feed-in tariff will have to be set against the initial capital cost.

We have taken advice as to the best provider and a planning application has been submitted, so we will see what happens.

Rates

In a previous newsletter, I reported that we might lose the rate relief which Horsham district council have always been able to grant us. Despite their need for savings, we were delighted to learn that they can provide us with relief for another year. This will provide us with a total saving of £1190.75.

Unexpected

Chris Tod tells us about an unexpected gift:

Early in August, Peter Thorogood from St. Mary's House rang me up and asked if the Museum was interested in a couple of Steyning documents which were coming up for sale at Toovey's the next day. He said that they looked most interesting and that, although he would not be able to go to the sale, would the Museum be interested in acquiring them with some financial help from himself?

We took a look at the catalogue and said yes we would. Well, we got them

and, although there were a couple of bids against us, the cost was within the sum of money that Peter had so kindly offered.

To our surprise they were behind glass in enormous frames (about a metre square) and "weighed a ton"; but they were gems. The first document is a will of 1730 made by John Box, the landlord of The Chequer Inn at that time. In the will "being ill and weak in body but in perfect mind memory and understanding" he left his house and business to his wife, during her widowhood – making it clear that, in the event of her re-marrying, it would all pass to his son. But he then introduced a slightly unusual caveat which reads *"It is my will and desire that my son John Box should live with his mother and assist her with the business of the house it being my intention for him to succeed her in the house but if it should so happen that he prove undutiful, disorderly and troublesome I empower his Mother to remove and dispose of him as she shall think proper for her own quiet and ease . . ."* Maybe he knew something about his son's character which prompted him to include this clause. In practice it was never invoked. His wife died in 1732 and his son did become the landlord of the Chequer Inn – though not for long. Young John died only a few years later in 1736.

The second document was a bit of challenge. It deals with a dispute over access to and ownership of "one messuage [with tenements] and two

gardens with appurtenances in Steyning” between Richard Penfold and other named people and is a bit difficult to get ones head round. David Thompson reckons that the 1777 document we have is a clerkly translation of a latin court document which the clerk has slightly misconstrued in some respects when translating it for the purposes of a final judgement and signature. The other problem has been the practical one that a large wax seal of George III is attached to the bottom of the document. A seal of this sort should normally be housed in its own metal case but, having spent an unknown number of years behind glass and not encased, it has become loose and is now cracked and damaged. Fortunately we have been able to remove the whole document from the frame and secure the seal against further damage and are seeking guidance from the Record Office on how best to repair it.

We will hope to display these documents, with other recently acquired items, in the course of the next year.

New Exhibitions

The Elsie and Doris Waters exhibition has been a great success and will be continuing for the time being, but starting alongside it soon will also be a small display “People of the Millennium” The next major exhibition will be “Growing up” using some of the larger objects played with by children in

the past. Also appearing later in October will be a display on the White Horse Fire as well as one showing the what people produced on 8th October at the Big Draw Day.

Joint Christmas Supper

The Steyning Society and the Museum Friends are again joining together for the Christmas Supper on 16th December at the Steyning Centre. Peter Harris has provided us with the details at the end of the newsletter.

Local History Courses

Following Peter’s information about the Christmas Supper, Sarah Leigh has provided us with information about WEA/Steyning Museum local history courses.

End Piece

For the closing article this month, I have selected one of the many pieces from the Parish Magazine written by the Reverend Cox in the 1920s and 1930s whilst he was vicar of St Andrew’s church. He was interested in all aspects of Steyning’s history, and the article I have chosen concerns whether or not Steyning ever had a prison. In places, I have used a series of dots to indicate that I have omitted local references which might not be understood today.

Tony Kettelman
(Editor)

The Prison House in Steyninge

It is unlikely that James Colleye, so long ago as 1609, had occasion to carry on a very considerable correspondence, but whether his letters were many or few, there is little doubt that such as there were bore the rather depressing address of "The Prison House in Stenyng; " for that was what he called the house in which he lived, and that was the name by which it was known to all the Steyning folk long before, as well as long after, his day.

James Colleye's old house in the High Street still stands, facing straight across the road into Church Street, but the old name by which it was called has long been gone. Perhaps those who dwelt there in later days felt that "The Prison House" was not entirely a happy name by which to describe the place in which they chose to spend, and perhaps to end, their days. But we wonder who it was who first called it "The Stone House." Just a hundred years ago it appears without any distinguishing name at all; for in that interesting list of Steyning houses which is given in the Tithe Award of 1835, it is described merely as a "tenement and garden in the occupation of Widow Woolgar;" - the owner of it then being the Duke of Norfolk, who was lord of the manor.

But although at that time the house was no longer known as "The Prison House," its old name was not allowed to be forgotten entirely; for immediately behind the Stone House and Penfold House (and at present merged into their gardens) there was a strip of land on which was a barn; and these were described a hundred years ago in the Tithe Award as "The Prison Barn and Yards."the Yards extended from Fagg's Barn to the White Horse Lane, or "Shippen Street" as it used to be called. The Prison Barn has gone, but its site, together with the greater part of the two Prison Yards, were shown as Lot 9 in the recent sale catalogue (i.e. in 1934).in 1835 there were also three separate "acre" strips of land in the "Common Field, just opposite the Canada Garden Allotments, and each of these "acre" strips is shown in the Tithe Award as "Prison Land."

The existence of this Prison Land suggests that prisoners may have been employed to cultivate it. If that was so, there is a special interest attaching to an old iron gyve, or fetter, or shackle, which was dug out of the bankalongside "The Portway" - as that old road leading from "Shippen Street" towards Pepperscomb was called, and as it should still be called. It was an unlikely place for this gyve to be found, and we wonder how it ever came to be there. Did an escaping prisoner get the iron band with its chain from off his leg, and then throw it into the hedge, where in course of time it became buried? Perhaps so; but only perhaps!

With all this evidence that Steyning at one time had its own prison, and that it was situated at that corner formed by our High Street and Shippen - or "Sheep-pen" - Street, it is strange that there is nothing whatever to help us to know with certainty *when* it was actually used as a prison. From time to time we catch sight of people from this place who were detained by the authorities, but on no occasion was it at "The

Prison House in Stenyngge." In 1808 when the soldiers were in barracks here in preparation for Napoleon - the Steyning Overseers expended 2/4 for "Bread for girls in the Caige:" - apparently the temporary "lock-up". Our Wardens' Book tells us "That on the Vth day of January 1661 William Budd of Dover, Robert Posse of Cornwall and William Moulin of Devonshire vagrant rogues [were visited] with correction in town;" - that was probably at the whipping-post, or in the stocks. The eleven Steyning Quakers, who in January 1681 for conscience' sake suffered three weeks' imprisonment, were taken to the prison at Horsham. There was also a "House of Correction" at Petworth to which, between 1631 and 1833, some of the Steyning offenders were sent. And then we find that in April 1336,- nearly 600 years ago,- Walter Smyth and Robert Roberd had been to a gaol delivery at Guildford; and on their return from thence they dined with "William Bonet at Wappingthorn. As "The Prison House in Stenyngge" was a dwelling house by 1609, offenders after that date would no doubt be sent either to Horsham or to Petworth; but it is possible that in 1336 it was only the worst cases which were sent to Guildford,

The Abbot of Fecamp in his day (and it was over before 1336) had very wide and absolute powers over all his people in Steyning. Here are some of them as stated in 1279 and 1288, - the gallows, pillory, trebuchet, (a ducking stool ; i.e. "a chair of undignified construction on which certain offenders were placed, usually before their own door, to be jeered at and to be pelted by their neighbours,") tumbrell, (a ducking-stool for scolds,) "infangethef and outfangethef",- i.e. the right to call any man dwelling here who had committed a felony, whether in Steyning or elsewhere, and to judge him in his own Court; in fact, the Abbot claimed to have "all judgement of all his matters and things which may happen." It will be seen that the four forms of punishment mentioned were summary, and thus dispensed with the need of a prison, but as these punishments could not fit every form of crime, there must have been a prison somewhere; and as the Abbot of Fecamp strenuously resisted the intrusion of any outside authority - even that of the King himself,- he must have had his own prison somewhere within his own town and the only ancient building that has come down to us which could have been suitable for that purpose is "The Prison House in Stenyngge,"- which is now known to us as "The Stone House."

Rev. Cox, June 1934