



VOLUNTEERS' NEWS
THE OPEN AIR MUSEUM
Singleton nr. Chichester
Sussex



NOVEMBER 1972

No. 1

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Volunteers' News will be produced three times a year, and it is hoped that it will help to keep all volunteers informed of developments at the Museum by this means. We hope also that volunteers will contribute to the Newsletter, either with reports of your own work at the Museum, or information that you feel would be of interest to other volunteers.

ROUND UP OF PROGRESS.

Hambrook Barn. The thatching of Hambrook Barn is well under way. The job is being done by Jarvis and Jarvis who also did the Granary. It only remains to complete the doors, and the building will be ready for the exhibition to be started. Out-line plans for this have been prepared, and work on the inside should start after Christmas.

Kirdford Sheds. The frame of this range is still going up. It is being done under the direction of Peter Parrish, and it is hoped that the first range will be ready for next May.

Bayleaf. The daubing of the inside of Bayleaf still requires to be completed, but work has been slow. A number of strong men for mixing are required for this work. Any volunteers please contact Pam West.

The Potters. The potters seemed to be very pleased with the work achieved during the summer. They now intend to plan a programme for next year. They are considering building another kiln, and will be remaining in their temporary site for next year. Their own news letter has covered in detail the work of last season.

Education Committee. A committee has been set up to investigate the best ways in which the museum can provide a service to schools. A report of progress in this matter will be made in a future Newsletter.

Shed for Volunteers. A shed has been placed behind the workshop, for the use of volunteers. It was felt that a dry place to eat, and to leave personal possessions would be welcome. At last it is there for general use.

Cover Photograph. Mr. Langridge charcoal burning near his home, just after the last war.

A NOTE ON TITCHFIELD MARKET HALL.

The building which has intrigued the general public most this summer has been the Titchfield Market Hall; not only because it has stood since Easter as an imposing skeleton right in the centre of the eastern half of the museum site, but because there are a number of questions suggested by it which are not answered in the Guide Book. Most of these will be dealt with, I hope adequately if there is sufficient space, in next year's guide, and these notes are really only an advance statement of what will be said then.

One reason why we have been in no hurry to complete the building is that we were anxious to allow as much time as possible for consideration of some of the points about which we have no certain evidence and which, once the decision is made and work completed, cannot be altered.

The most important is the treatment of the foundation. The market hall was moved from its original site in the centre of Titchfield to another less inconvenient site, over a hundred years ago, and in doing so, all the original posts supporting the hall and forming the ground-floor open-market arcade, were either replaced or cut down in length and new pads of nineteenth century brick were built to take them. We have no idea therefore what the original pads were like, either as to material or height. They could have been of brick, stone or wood, and anything perhaps from six to eighteen inches in height. Equally uncertain is the kind of material which should be used for the paving, the choice again lying with equal possibility between cobbles, flag-stones, or brick pavements.

As nothing has happened during the summer to shed any further light on these points, although there was some publicity in the press asking for old photographs, drawings or information which might help, a decision must now be made and this part of the building completed. It will then be possible to tile the roof - about which fortunately there are no uncertainties, and to infill, with herring-bone brickwork, between the timber studding of the upper storey frame. There are, however, other details about which there can be considerable differences of opinion. The most important is the treatment of the oriel window which we know, from sufficient evidence, must have existed at the end of the hall, but all we know is that this was an oriel, i.e. a window projecting on brackets from the otherwise flat surface of the end wall; we have no idea of the shape, the amount of projection, or the kind of decorative mouldings which it certainly would have had. Here the choice is even wider than in the matter of the foundations, there is also the question of the ornamental fascia board which would have decorated the bottom plate - i.e. the horizontal beam supporting the walls of the upper storey. We know for certain that such a fascia board existed, and would have been an essential part of the decoration of the building; the peg holes are there to prove this, as well as the evidence from similar market halls of the period. The same applies to the decorative pendants which hung midway between the arches formed by the arcade braces. To omit such decorative items because we do not know exactly what form they would have taken would be a kind of falsification of

the original design in which these decorations would play an integral part. Equally, to alter the original by possibly mistaken "restoration" is also undesirable. This is the kind of problem with which one is faced with any restoration or reconstruction of an early building; however complete the building may be, some uncertainties are bound to exist. There have been several in the case of both Winkhurst and Bayleaf, in spite of the fact that both of these were remarkably intact, as surviving medieval buildings go. It is fair to assume that such problems will be with us in the case of every early building we may be fortunate enough to acquire. Personally I think that the only solution is not to leave buildings incomplete, but to try to make it absolutely clear to the general public that we just do not know, and hope that this will both set people thinking for themselves, and avoid the suggestion, that applies, unfortunately, to so much restoration in the past, that we either know better than the original designers, or have knowledge and certainties which we clearly do not have. One way of clarifying part of the problem, which we intend to adopt, is to brand every piece of added timber with either an "R" for simple replacement identical with the unusable original (i.e. repair work), or a "C" for "conjectural" where, as in the case of this fascia board, or the oriel, we have no pattern for guidance.

J. Roy Armstrong.
October 1972.

LURGASHALL MILL

There is nothing pretentious about Lurgashall Mill. It is a small, country mill, serving part of a great country estate, and it stands in a very inconspicuous position. Not for Lurgashall the passing crowds of market day farmers, the waving signboards and the trim-painted weatherboarding of the rich town mills of the 19th century.

Lurgashall is tucked in on the slope of the dam which supplies its power, and from the road that runs along the dam top it looks hardly more than a shed, and a low one at that.

Perhaps by virtue of its modest function it enjoyed an extended life. Estate farmers used it for grinding corn until the middle of the last war, and it remained in working order for many years after that.

Disaster struck with the great rains of the autumn of 1968, when the floods surged over the top of the dam, carrying away part of the roadway and the mass of water pouring through the building heaved the floors apart and disturbed the millstones which crashed through rotting timbers.

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The brick and stone walls survived the onslaught, as did the roof and upper floor, but the lower two floors are badly damaged, though much of the machinery and main structure is salvagable. The building is now threatened with gentle decay and the more urgent pressure from the estate to remove it as redundant and potentially dangerous.

It is difficult to be precise about the date of the building. Its roof construction suggests the 18th or perhaps late 17th century, and the masonry is generally attributable to a similar date, though there is a considerable amount of 19th century brickwork. The wheel itself is iron and of 19th century manufacture, and it is hard to conceive that any of the surviving machinery can be earlier. Any suspicion of greater age must rest entirely with evidence in the timbers, and this is fragmentary to say the least. However, the wallplates do carry evidence of mortises and peg holes, and it is fairly clear that part, if not all, of the wheel-wall was timber-framed.

This established, there are three possibilities: that the framing was original to the 17th/18th century date; that the roof of that date contained re-used earlier timbers; that an earlier framed building on the site was re-roofed in the 17th/18th century.

I cannot pretend to favour any one of these theories, and will do no more than hope that when in due course the building is taken down and examined before re-erection at the museum, useful evidence will be discovered. We shall, of course, look particularly closely at the undersides of the wall plates.

The museum intends to rebuild the mill on the dam between the upper and lower ponds at the museum. At the moment only the upper pond has been formed, and even this only partially. The banks must be raised higher with spoil excavated from the lower pond, which will lie to the west of the present excavation, that is, between the pond and the forge. Our ultimate intention is to obtain a differential between water levels of 10ft., and this will enable us to operate an overshot mill such as Lurgashall.

A further awkward problem remains - the orientation. If rebuilt in its natural position, the mill wheel will be on the northern side, that is, facing the road, - a position neither readily seen nor satisfactory to the photographer, and it may therefore be that the museum decides to contrive a different arrangement which will be more pleasurable to the visitor.

The task of removing and reconstructing the mill is more ambitious than any previously undertaken by the museum and unfortunately it will be correspondingly expensive.

John Warren.

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THE OBJECT COLLECTION.

As you may know one aspect of the museum's activity that has progressed behind the scenes is the building up of an object collection. At the moment we have been unable to display much of this collection but unless we collect items now it will be too late. I think it would be useful if the collection policy were better known among our volunteers as this would help them in their search for items of interest to the museum. It has been wonderful to see the flow of interesting items into the stores over the last year or two.

The museum's main concern is with buildings, and therefore a limit action has to be put on the type of items collected. There is so much available that unless there is some restriction we would soon find ourselves with items in store which we could not deal with. These items are much better in the hands of people better equipped to deal with them, and we have on occasions been able to place items in other museums. The South-East Area Museum Service is trying to encourage this and we may be able to work through them in the future.

We have, therefore, decided that the collection should concentrate on craft and agricultural items, but that it should draw the line wherever the industrial revolution has shown its influence. It is, of course, impossible to put a date to this as its influence has been felt at different times in different fields.

The blacksmith's tools are therefore acceptable despite the fact that they are nineteenth century. Yet we would think twice before accepting an early tractor. It is hoped that these fields will in future be dealt with by other organisations within the area. Of course we would like to collect more early farm equipment, a wooden plough would be a very valuable acquisition for instance. This is much more difficult to find. Another field of interest in which we have very little, is household equipment.

The collection of craft tools is building up very well. As some of you will know we have a complete wheelwright's workshop, and also the contents of a cooperage, and we also have a large number of other items of interest. The most valuable collections are those that can be obtained complete when a workshop is closed, as these tell the story of the work done. They belong together and should be kept together whenever possible.

As well as collecting the objects, it is as important to collect any relevant information that can be obtained, and we have devised a new form for gathering this information. These forms will be available in the Granary and everybody is asked to use them whenever possible. By next year there will be a copy of the object index in the Granary which can be referred to by all volunteers. It should be of interest and may be helpful to those who are always on the look out for new items.

The classification of the object collection has been based, for the present, on a modified version of that used at the Museum of English Rural Life. The importance of a system will become greater as the collection grows, and when students and research workers wish to use the collection, it is important that items and any relevant information can be retrieved from the stores and the files.

The basis of the system is as follows:

There are 33 primary headings subdivided into secondary, tertiary and quarternary headings. An item is first of all classified under a suitable primary heading. Therefore, if we have a swage this would receive the primary heading CRAFT. A swage is used in the shaping of metal, therefore its secondary heading would be METAL. Finally it is used by a blacksmith and receives the tertiary heading BLACKSMITH. Therefore,

CRAFT, METAL, BLACKSMITH.

will be the final classification appearing on the top of the index card. All swages will be found in this section. A cooper's head vice would receive the classification:

CRAFT, WOOD, COOPER

The item is then given an accession number which starts at 1 each year followed by the year. Thus 14/1972 would be the 14th item received in 1972. It is by this number that the object can be identified from all similar items. Craft photographs receive the prefix P in front of the running number.

The index card carries other information as well. There will be a short description of the object, details of use, donor, and where the object is now. It is intended to file the recording forms mentioned earlier and to give these the same accession number so that reference to these will supply the researcher with more information.

Finally the object should have a label attached and its accession number painted on the object itself. This is not satisfactory for objects in use and these will have a small stamped plate affixed or the number stamped in a discreet position.

It is hoped that those interested will take advantage of this system, when it is available for inspection in the granary, to aid you with your own research and interests.

C. Zeuner.

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HORSE-POWER AT THE MUSEUM.

Before the introduction of the internal combustion engine, the generation of power for working stationary machinery depended on the harnessing of natural forces - either using water, the wind, or muscular energy in the form of either human or animal power. And whereas it's fair to say we know a great deal about the history, use and extent of wind and water mills it's equally fair to comment that we know much less about the historical development of muscle power, and more particularly, the use of animal power for driving stationary machines. In this field the Museum can make an important contribution.

The most widespread use of animal power for driving a stationary engine (besides the donkey wheel) was that employing the use of the horse. Horse-gins, or horse-engines, were used extensively on the farm and in industry, the basic principle being that a horse or horses would walk around a circular path attached to a beam which rotated either a shaft, a cog mechanism or a wooden drum. Gins of the drum type, for example, were used extensively in the coal mines of the north to wind coal to the surface. Sometimes the gin, whether on a farm or in industrial use, was housed in a round or multi-sided building, Hence the horse-gin or horse-wheel house.

So far the Museum volunteers have been able to save two horse-gins and two horse-gin houses from four quite separate locations. The two gins are a chaff-cutter and a pug-mill (for grinding clay), from Lingfield and East Grinstead respectively. Both are one horse-power machines, dating almost certainly from the late 19th century, and are in very good order. Don Glew has given considerable attention to the chaff-cutter, and it's hoped someone with equal skill and enthusiasm will soon make a start on restoring the pug-mill. The two gin houses are from Binsted and South Bersted, and (typically for farm examples) both had been built onto the sides of barns. The rotating machinery would have turned a shaft connected to machinery inside the barn. Both houses, unfortunately, were lacking in their machinery. There is a model of the South Bersted gin house on display in the Granary, with conjectural machinery added.

At the time of writing we have just been offered - and accepted - a very fine mid-19th century horse-gin at Patching, used until the 1920s for pumping water from a downland well. This will make a fine complement to the Museum's tread-wheel from Catherington dated c.1600, showing a more primitive type of water-raising by bucket rather than through a pump. Their comparative study will be valuable in highlighting changing solutions to the problem of water supply on the chalk downlands.

The Museum has just purchased fifty copies of J. Kenneth Major's "The Horse Driven Corn Mill in England" in an extract from Transactions of the International Symposium of Molinology (1969). There are many illustrations, and two maps. As there is so little published on the subject Museum volunteers should find this a useful introduction to the study. Copies may be obtained from me for 20p, plus 4p (for postage and envelope), at my private address, 8 St. Roche's Close, Lavant, Chichester. A profit of 10p on each sale is being made for Museum funds.

Kim Leslie.
November 1972

CHARCOAL.

On Monday the 11th September we saw Mr. & Mrs. Langridge back at the museum once more. They came to build another charcoal kiln on the same site as last year's burn. This time the kiln was about twice as big as the previous one.

On the following morning by 9 a.m. the kiln was lit. The weather was ideal, not too windy, not too hot. A number of local newspaper reporters came to see the burn and write up their notes on this romantic and ancient craft.

White steam belches from the kiln as the wood dries and soon the sand and earth covering is beginning to show signs of scorching. Mr. Langridge and his helpers went around with sand and water to repair any overheating breaks in the outer crust. Already the burn was being declared a success. The helpers and enthusiasts had supper by the charcoal burners' huts on a warm, lovely, evening and a most enjoyable evening it was. Evening became night and the long vigil went on. Strangely enough the time passes quickly - with intermittent conversation on many subjects. The dawn came and all looked in pleasure and amazement at the now almost completed burn. The shape of the kiln had changed during the night hours of damping and patting down, but not changed too much. All was now blackened and spent looking. Then began the careful task of opening up the kiln, starting at the apex, bringing down the earth with the wiper, wetting the charcoal as it was uncovered, then down again with the wiper and so on until all 20cwt of lovely metallic charcoal was revealed. A most rewarding 24 hours.

Matti Denton.

A USEFUL BOOK LIST.

For those of you interested in Crafts and Industries, there is a very useful booklet published for The Standing Conference for Local History, by the;

National Council of Social Service,
26, Bedford Square,
London W.C.1.

Crafts, Trades and Industries. A booklist for Local Historians, compiles by Andrew Jewell. - Price 13p.

In the words of the forward: 'the aim has been to provide the student of local history with sources of information about the tools, processes, development and working conditions of the traditional crafts, trades and industries.'