



Members' Magazine  
WEALD AND DOWNLAND  
OPEN AIR MUSEUM



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COVER ILLUSTRATION

The illustration on the cover is of the Titchfield  
Market Hall as re-erected at the Museum.

TENTH BIRTHDAY

1977 is a special year for the Museum. It is now ten years since Edward James agreed to lease some land to the Promotion Committee of the Museum as a museum site. I know that for Mr. Armstrong this was one of the most significant stages in his long and tenacious efforts to establish the Museum. It was not until 1969 that work began on site and much has taken place since then. Those of us who have the privilege to work full-time at the Museum are always grateful for the vision and enthusiasm of Mr. Armstrong and to founder members which resulted in the establishment of the Museum. Also to Mr. E. James and to the Foundation for providing the exceptionally beautiful site which is such an important asset.

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THE BEGINNINGS - Roy Armstrong  
Museum Founder

To mark the tenth anniversary of the Museum's foundation, I have been asked to contribute a few notes and reminiscences of events which may be relevant and new to many Friends and volunteers.

Perhaps I should start with my own experiences soon after the end of the last war, when I was the tutor to an Extra-Mural University course in what was then the village of Crawley. During the class, which lasted four years and most of the members of which are now dispersed or dead, the area was designated as a site for one of the new towns planned to absorb the overspill from London and counteract the magnetic tendencies inherent in the economic system to create metropolitan elephantiasis. I remember that the branch of the W.E.A. took an active part in the organization of public meetings to acquaint the local inhabitants with the facts and it made a considerable contribution to the smoother running and sound sense of the development which followed. During the following three years, however, in spite of the comprehensive listing of buildings of architectural or historic importance under the Town and Country Planning Act 1947, one building after another - often of unique interest - disappeared without trace. They were sacrificed in the interests of neat planning - often conceived with the best intentions - but limited in outlook. With few exceptions, I found the general attitude of the New Town staff - whether architects or planners - unsympathetic to the case for preserving links with the past, or for treating the New Town as an organic development

in which a sense of continuity was not only worth retaining, but essential to a really integrated and fully conscious community. In fact, many considered that a clean sweep of the past was desirable. I remember one architect saying to another when visiting a small exhibition which members of my class had prepared, and which illustrated a few of the early timber-framed buildings which still survived, that he "could not understand why people wanted to preserve such inefficient, inconvenient and sub-standard buildings". It is quite understandable that those trained in modern techniques, and taking as basic, modern standards of interior design should take such an attitude, but they are missing the value of older buildings as a vital element in our consciousness. Such visual and solid links with the past contribute towards a full understanding of the present but also of the way in which we may try to frame the future.

The second point that was driven home in these years at Crawley was the inadequacy of the listing of buildings under the 1947 Act. Again and again buildings which had not been listed were revealed during demolition as buildings of great, if not unique, interest. It is singularly appropriate therefore that the main building to be re-erected in this tenth anniversary year at the Museum is in fact a building from Crawley - the "old barn" which was not recognized for what it had originally been until 1973, when on the eve of demolition.

Having already seen, just before the war, how the Scandinavian countries had in their many Open Air Museums succeeded, not only in preserving early examples of traditional building, but also in developing public understanding and appreciation of the craftsmanship and sound taste of the past, and by so doing increasing public support for the preservation, where practicable, of traditional buildings in cities, villages and countryside, it did not seem entirely impossible to attempt something along similar lines in this country. In 1956 the Welsh National Museum opened at St. Fagan's, near Cardiff. This was following the Scandinavian example. In fact, the Wealden area is considerably richer and more varied in its building heritage than either Scandinavia or Wales and has suffered much more from camouflage facading and transformation; for these reasons it has been less understood and appreciated. It was not, however, until the 'sixties' that there was any real opportunity to pursue these ideas.

The first practical step was taken in 1964 when a number of soundings were made as to possible support, and one or two suggestions as to a possible site were taken up. Individuals who might have been expected to show interest and have some influence were approached. Finally, in the Autumn of 1965, the proposals were discussed by a group formed some years earlier, the "Wealden Buildings Study Group". This body was formed by students from classes taken either by Mr. R.T. Mason or myself - Mr. Mason having been for many years the pioneer and lone worker in the study and systematic examination of timber-framed buildings within the Wealden area. As a result, a Committee was formed for the promotion of an Open Air Museum for the Weald.

Of various approaches for a possible site made during the following year, the most promising was in the neighbourhood of Brighton. Lord Cohen, who was then a dominant figure on the Brighton Council, promised his wholehearted support and this was backed by several other leading members of the Brighton Council. Every member of the Council was circularized and a brochure, to which the late Sir Mortimer Wheeler very generously wrote an enthusiastic foreword, was prepared. Three possible sites, ranging from forty to sixty acres each, were suggested by the Planning Department and in order to adapt the title of the Committee to meet the possibility of acquiring a site on the Downland area behind Brighton, the name was changed to "The Committee for the Promotion of an Open Air Museum for the Weald and Downland" a horribly cumbersome title!

It was during these negotiations, which were protracted for more than twelve months, that news came to the Committee that an educational Trust called "The Edward James Foundation" had been formed, among the purposes of which was the development of appreciation of the countryside and of an understanding of rural values and rural life. Although West Dean was situated still further from the centre of the Weald, it seemed worth sounding the Trustees of the Foundation as to whether the Open Air Museum project would fit in with the purposes for which the Foundation had been created. At the same time, the sudden death of Lord Cohen, and the extreme difficulties which then faced the Brighton Council with the launching of the Marina project, diminished the chances of an early decision by the Brighton Council.

The approach to the Edward James' Foundation, and the sympathy with which the proposal was received by the then Agent at West Dean, Mr. Jermy, together with an immediate response by cable from America by Mr. James, settled the matter; and the search for a suitable site on the West Dean Estate, agreeable to the Planning Authority, the Trustees of the Foundation and the aims of the Museum, began. It is the tenth anniversary of the crucial date when the favourable cable from Edward James was received, that we are celebrating this year.

Perhaps a further brief note should be added covering the period between the receipt of Mr. James' cable from America and the final locating of the site at Singleton. A number of sites were considered during the first negotiations, and of these, the most favoured was south of the village of West Dean. The river Lavant ran through the centre and would have made an important feature in the landscaping and planning, particularly of the village complex. The site was level and had a number of features to recommend it, being a logical extension of the existing village along the valley bottom. Detailed alternative plans were prepared by Mr. Warren and provisional approval indicated by the Planning Authority. When, however, the proposal was presented to residents in the village the opposition was so strong that it could not be ignored or ridden over roughshod if good relations were to be maintained.

The search for a site, therefore, had to be re-considered. It was at this point that Mr. James again made a crucial contribution by suggesting to Mr. Jermy the field south-west of Singleton (which had been loaned for many years for annual sheep dog trials), together with part of the woodland area framing it to the south. At first there seemed to be two major difficulties - the steep slope of the site downwards from south to north, and the need for the home farm to retain grazing and control over at least half the area. Added to this was the concern of the Planning Authority as to access from the Goodwood road - the limited visibility and the steepness of the gradient, as well as unwillingness to allow buildings close to the Chichester or the Goodwood roads in an area of "outstanding natural beauty".

How these problems have been solved is familiar to everyone. Even the least tractable - the slope of the ground - has to a certain extent been overcome and judicious tree planting and tree felling over the years will help to reduce the unreality of some of the sites which have, of necessity, been selected for building.

If one weighs up all the considerations, the site has so many scenic advantages, the car park is so well screened and the recent addition, through the generosity of the Edward James' Foundation, of the very attractive woodland valley south of the charcoal-burning and woodcraft areas, that we have good reason to be thankful that circumstances directed us to the very beautiful site which we have. From what has been said, it becomes abundantly clear that we owe all this to Mr. James' personal interest and support, from the time when the first approach was made to him through Mr. Jermy just ten years ago.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES - C. Zeuner

### 1976 SEASON.

Since the last issue of the Newsletter much has taken place at the Museum. The dry weather of last year may not have benefitted many people but certainly the Museum was one organization which was given a very great boost by the long dry summer. Towards the end, we were getting increasingly concerned about the risk of fire but, thankfully, our very responsible public caused no problems. 178000 people came to the Museum and it was very noticeable that a considerable number of these visitors were foreign tourists. However, our local visitors remain our most important public. As members will know, the season no longer finishes with the end of Summer, as the Museum remains open on Sundays throughout the year and is also used increasingly by schools during the Winter months. Of course, numbers are much smaller at this time of year but it is important to make the Museum as available as possible. Over the Christmas period the Museum was open for the Bank Holidays. Over 400 people visited during this time. Hot soup was served in Bayleaf to warm those brave customers. The Winter openings would not be possible without the help of stewards, especially Mr. Bryden who has acted as Warden on every open day. The Museum is especially grateful to Mr. Hubling, who undertakes the duty of Warden on the two days when Mr. Bryant is off duty. A special thanks must also be extended to Mrs. Bryant and Mrs. Chandler who have managed the shop so extremely efficiently. Despite the high numbers, and therefore the increased income, it must never be forgotten that the whole venture is dependent upon volunteer stewards. The commitment shown by so many of these helpers is very much appreciated.

### Building Projects

The most important activity at the Museum is always the re-erection of the buildings. One of the problems brought with high attendances is the growing amount of maintenance. The Council of Management therefore agreed to the appointment of a new member of staff to be responsible for a range of maintenance work. Neil Pricket has been appointed for this work, his duties are concerned with site and building maintenance, also the important duty of maintaining equipment in good condition. For many of the routine jobs of cleaning, path maintenance, litter collection, volunteer help is still needed in these areas. The Warden especially appreciates help with litter collection.

The appointment of Neil Pricket has enabled the craftsmen to concentrate on the projects in hand. Roger Champion is repairing the framework of Crawley Hall and hopes to be re-erecting this in the Spring. On this building, we have experimented with resins to enable greater proportions of the original timber to be re-used. These resins are used to consolidate friable timber and to fill large cavities. There are a number of problems associated with their use and they are no substitute for carpentry. However, judicious use of the material has major advantages. John Friar has continued with the very laborious task of building the mill. The stone walls are now complete and John will concentrate on the sluices. In the meantime, the timberwork will be repaired. The iron wheel is currently being restored by Mr. Boxall of Binderton.

Anthony Simmons has been working on the repair of Boarhunt Cruck Cottage. This very fragmentary building has been reported in detail in an earlier issue. If all goes well, the frame should be erected by the end of the season.

### Job Creation Scheme

The Museum is currently benefitting from a Job Creation Scheme under which three assistants have been taken on to the staff. Their wages are paid by the Manpower Services Commission for a period of thirty-two weeks. The three assistants are working with the full-time staff and their help has given a boost to the Mill and to Crawley Hall.

### Monument Trust

The Monument Trust has been extremely generous to the Museum in the past. Currently, a donation of £7,000. is enabling the Lavant House erection to go forward. However, the Trust has offered to pay for three extra craftsmen for a period of three years, to enable some of the back-log of buildings awaiting re-erection to be brought forward. This extremely generous offer is plainly of great importance to the Museum. It is certainly the largest single offer of help we have benefitted from. All of us at the Museum are extremely grateful. At the conclusion of the Job Creation Scheme, we hope to seek suitable craftsmen to employ under this scheme.

### New Buildings

Since the summer, two small buildings of interest have been dismantled and placed in store. A Waggon Shed from Butcher's Farm, near Wiston has been donated by Mr. Goring. It has been dismantled by Mike Coviello and a team of helpers. In addition, a building constructed to cover a saw pit at Sheffield Park has been dismantled. This building will be re-erected close to the forge and will be used to demonstrate aspects of timber conversion.

Awaiting our attention is a granary over a waggon shed, with a stone slab roof at Ashurst. This will be dismantled in the Spring.

There are also a number of other buildings in the pipe line. More detailed reports will be published with the Autumn edition of the Newsletter.

### New Office

The Goodwood Granary has served as the Museum Office for some time. However, as our activity has increased it has been found to be inadequate. The main problem being the lack of privacy and the constant interruptions from enquiries, etc.. A temporary building has therefore, been erected close to the Goodwood Granary, which will serve as the Director's Office and the general Office. It has two rooms and will provide increased space and some privacy. The Goodwood Granary will be used by Miss Jackson as her office, but it will also serve as a classroom for the increasing number of more specialized visits by schools and students. Part of the Loan Service will also be stored in this building and for the moment, it will serve as a store for Guide Books.

Winkhurst. Lime Wash.

The whole of the outside of Winkhurst has been covered with a coat of lime wash. This includes the timber. We are used to thinking of timber frames with their contrast between the timbers and the panels. However, there is some evidence to suggest that the outside of such buildings may often have been completely coated with a wash. Winkhurst has been selected as a suitable building to treat as an example.

Trees.

During the winter we have lost many trees. The clump to the North of Titchfield has been felled due to Dutch Elm disease and many more will have to go. Also quite a number have been blown down by the winter gales. Planting of new areas and replacements is being done at the moment. We will have to be patient. The idea of re-planting the clump near Titchfield as a Jubilee commemoration does not seem to have attracted much support. Many thanks to the two people who have donated to the scheme, it will go ahead with their help as part of our annual effort. However, there is still time for others to contribute.

Museum Library

This important scheme is going forward, and a number of books suitable for the collection have been donated. The Friends have donated a sum of money for the purchase of new books. It is especially important to buy specialized material as it is published, as it is rarely re-printed. On the completion of Crawley, this scheme will be increasingly important. Members are asked to bear in mind the needs of the Museum in this way. The backing of a good, specialized, library of books and photographs is of utmost importance to the work of the Museum.

Funds.

The work of the Museum depends on continued fund raising. In these difficult times, it is not an easy task raising funds. Many organizations, including the Museum, have benefitted from Industrial and Commercial sponsorship. However, this form of fund raising depends very largely on good contacts. I, therefore, would ask any member who has contacts with commerce or industry, and who sees a possibility of sponsorship, however small, to contact the Director. It is surprising how generous companies can be in their sponsorship of cultural activity. In many respects industry is taking on the role of the patrons of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to whom we owe so much of our heritage. However, potential sponsors will not approach us, so please if you have any ideas contact us.

Material Needs!

Can any member acquire for us, free of charge, any of the following:-

- A set of chain harrows
- A light roller (tractor towed type)
- A small tipping trailer
- Peg tiles.
- Corrugated Iron

Newspaper

Please go on collecting. It is worthwhile. The last load brought in over £70. Please tie your bundles and keep magazines separate from newspaper.

Last Autumn

I was most fortunate to be able to attend a conference in Stockholm concerning open air museums. The European Association of Open Air Museums held its bi-annual conference at Skanson. During our stay, we travelled to a number of museums in southern Sweden and were able to return from the conference, by road, through Poland and Czechoslovakia visiting a number of open air museums on route. My attendance at the conference was helped by a grant from the Idlewilde Trust. In the Autumn of 1978, the Association will be holding its conference in the U.K. The last part of the conference will be held at Singleton, when the Museum will be host to representatives from all over Europe.

Summer School 1977 \*

The conversion of the Goodwood Granary into a classroom gives rise to opportunities for additional use during the school holidays.

For one day a week during the month of August, we are holding a summer school whereby children can use the Museum to their advantage.

The sessions will take place on Wednesday afternoons, commencing at 1.30 pm and finishing about 4.00 pm. During this time, the children will be able to pursue such subjects as painting, model-making, blacksmithing, traditional methods of cooking etc.

Children of all ages will be welcome but there will be a small charge of 20p, per session to help cover the cost of equipment.

We are also in need of adult help during these afternoons, teaching experience is not necessary. If anybody has the time to spare and would like to help, we would be pleased to hear from them.

For further details of the school, please contact Heather Jackson (Information Officer) at the Museum.

Museum Accounts

Many members have asked for more information to be made available regarding the financial situation of the Museum. Accordingly, a summary of the museum accounts for 1976 is published below. These are not audited accounts and are intended as a guide only. The Museum is currently changing its accounting year to end on 31st March. It would seem an unreasonable expense to publish 1500 copies of these in order to circulate to all members. However, members will be welcome to inspect the audited accounts at the Museum office during office hours as soon as they are available.

Summary of Financial Situation 1976

	£
<u>INCOME.</u>	
Donations for specific projects.....	7536
Donations for general purposes .....	1393
Admissions .....	48946
Sales, museum shop and postal sales	34284
Miscellaneous income, including interest	5704
Surplus b/f. from 1975 .....	40907
TOTAL	<u>£138,770</u>
 <u>EXPENDITURE</u>	
Exhibits, exhibitions, re-erection of buildings including craftsmen's salaries.	22441
Administrative costs, salaries, post, lighting, heating, office, security system, newsletters etc.	16944
Rent. Rates. Insurance .....	2507
Publicity .....	1990
Purchases for resale .....	22441 *Note 2.
Equipment, tractor, saws, generator, fuel, repair..	5484
Site facilities, completion of lake, roads, fencing tree planting, etc.	9816
Repairs to buildings .....	456
V.A.T. ....	6194
Miscellaneous .....	3755
TOTAL	<u>£92028</u>
SURPLUS	<u>£46742 *Note 1.</u>

Notes

- 1) Surplus includes funds donated for specific buildings and £15,000 for shop stock for the 1977 season. (The latter includes £6000 for the production of a new main guide).
- 2) Stock in hand December 1976, £16,157 including purchases in advance for 1977 season.
- 3) It should be noted that during the period January to March, very little income is earned. The surplus will be substantially reduced by 31st March. The budgeted surplus at March 1977 is £10,000 of which approximately £3000 is committed to specific projects. The Museum still has a backlog of buildings which cannot be re-erected unless funds are raised. If our commitment to these buildings is to be honoured and if we are to be able to rescue more buildings, every possible effort is still needed to raise funds.