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Members' Magazine

1981

No. 16

Enormous Success at Friends' Auction but urgent need for new sources of funds.

THE FRIENDS' most ambitious fund-raising project, the auction held in Chichester in April, was an overwhelming success. Nearly £9,000 was raised — a figure which exceeded all expectations.

The sum makes up a substantial part of the £15,000 the Friends are aiming to raise towards the re-erection of the North Cray hall house, one of the most important buildings in store at the Museum.

The success of the auction comes in a year marked by economic depression, and the result is extraordinary for that fact alone. It is poignant also because 1981 has been the toughest year so far for the Museum in its search for funds from new outside sources.

Old friends have continued to support the Museum's work, but the Museum's future is critically dependent on finding new sponsors for major projects.

Fortunately, and despite poor weather and the economic difficulties, visitor numbers are down by only about four per cent compared with last year. (Many similar ventures have suffered 15-25 per cent cutbacks.) This has meant that the Museum has been able to cover running costs and continue development — however carefully and prudently.

But with the enormous rate of development at the Museum over the last few years behind us and the economic depresssion deepening, there is an urgent need to raise a substantial amount of capital.

To ensure a healthy and secure future for the Museum a sum in the region of £40,000 will have to be found during the coming year.

The result of the auction gave an enormous boost to the morale of staff, volunteers and Friends alike at the beginning of the season. The figure of £9,000 was at first unbelievable, and it is a tribute to the vast amount of hard work which went into the auction preparations over a very long period by loyal friends of the Museum. Thanks are due to many, in particular, Joan Brooks, Lyn Armstrong, and Bernard Johnson. Much of the administration was undertaken by Richard



West Wittering School

Pailthorpe. Sir James Waddell, Chairman of the Friends, devoted immense energy and time to the event. The Museum is also indebted to Messrs. Wyatts & Son for giving their services to conduct the auction and for advice on the items, and to Bernard Price, for his interest and time; and finally to all those who gave the items, contributed to expenses or who supported the auction on the night.

The whole-hearted response to the fund-raising campaign is vital in the short-term to the rescue of an important building and is evidence again of the Museum's long-term determination to survive in increasingly difficult economic times.

West Wittering School Dismantled

THIS SUMMER the Museum dismantled a very small school building from a sharp corner in West Wittering, where the structure was in danger of collapsing.

The school, replaced in the 19th century by a larger parochial school, was originally built by the Oliver Whitby Trust, which also founded the Prebendal School at Chichester. Records of the Oliver Whitby Trust show that a school existed at West Wittering in 1777 which had six pupils. The teacher was paid 26/- for six months.

The building is of flint and stone with a tiled roof. The walls parallel to the road appear to predate the rest of the structure and may have been part of a totally different structure converted to become the school. The schoolroom itself is 24ft x 12ft. Next to it is a small yard closed at the opposite end by a stable.

The Museum's attention was drawn to the building by Mr. Harris, the headmaster of West Wittering School, whose classes have taken the school as a subject for their project work this term.

The dismantling work has been led by Alan Waters, with Martin Bossom and Brian Boseley. The County Archaeologist, Fred Aldsworth, has surveyed and drawn the building, and excavated the site. The Museum's Research Director, Richard Harris, has been closely involved with the dismantling and interpretation of the building. Heather Champion has been tracing the history of the school from documents.

The aim is to re-erect the building at the Museum and furnish it with school equipment of the early 19th century.

• THE MUSEUM NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT • THE MUSEUM NEEDS YOUR SUPPO

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The Museum Rescues a Town House from Surrey

THE MUSEUM'S STAFF were diverted soon after the start of the season with the rescue from demolition of a 17th century town house from the centre of Reigate in Surrey.

The building was in part of the town's High Street scheduled for redevelopment as offices and shops. The Museum's attention was drawn to its fate by the Department of the Environment, whose expert staff were later called in to assist the Museum after an unusual discovery was made.

During his survey of the building the Museum's Research Director, Richard Harris uncovered fragments of brightly coloured wall paintings in the main rooms on the first and second floors. Above one of the magnificent stone fireplaces at the end of the room was a mural depicting a scene with houses, hills and a windmill, likely to be the view from the windows at that end of the room. Other fragments included black and white designs repeated in patterns over the walls and ceilings of the rooms.

To help the Museum remove the paintings intact Department of the Environment experts were called in. The paintings were removed with their backings of plaster and laths and are now in store awaiting conservation

The building is three storeys high and comprises a semi-basement, first and second floors and an attic. It butted onto a jeweller's shop which fronted the High Street, which replaced an earlier timber-frame. There may have been a link between this building and that removed by the Museum, but this is not certain.

The building was constructed of close-studded timber framing, with plastering probably on the interior and exterior. Some time later the building was tile-hung.

The dismantling of the Reigate house was one of the most difficult removal tasks undertaken by the Museum, not least as demolition of other buildings was continuing all around the 17th century house during the work. The plans of the development company meant a deadline for completion which the Museum kept to. Many people were involved in the dismantling — Roger and Heather Champion, Alan Waters and the six young people on the Project Based Work Experience Scheme, and Mick Cunliffe, formerly Site Manager with Avoncroft Museum of Buildings.

The building is suitable for re-erection in the Market Square, possibly in conjunction with another building to put it in similar context to its original siting at Reigate. The possibility of including a painted room based on the wall paintings found inside the building will also be considered.

Man's Influence on the Landscape — A New Exhibition

A PERMANENT EXHIBITION is being prepared for the Museum to describe the way in which man has influenced the landscape and converted natural materials to his own use.

The exhibition will show the development of the landscape in the West Dean area from early times, and will concentrate on the products of the woodlands and link these with the exhibits at the Museum.

There will be a nature trail associated with the exhibition, which will be housed in the Coldwaltham Cattle Shed in the woods, and is being financed by a grant from the Carnegie UK Trust.

The exhibition is being prepared by Ruth Tittensor, an ecologist with a special interest in the history of landscape, who has made a detailed study of the West Dean area; and designed by Bruce Williams of Bruce Williams Designs, Chichester. The exhibition will be opened in the Spring.

A Computer Joins the Museum Staff

THE MUSEUM now has access to a micro-computer, which will enable the building records, photographic collections and reference books to be indexed. Richard Harris, to whom computers are a pre-occupation second only to vernacular architecture, is

developing a programme for this use.

The volunteer force establishing the Museum's reference library in the Crawley Hall have been working on cataloguing the books and papers throughout the year, led by the Honorary Librarian, Mrs. Marjorie Hallam.

Salvington Mill

THE MUSEUM'S involvement as a co-trustee of the Salvington Mill Trust continues. Last month the Mill Trust held its first open day to show interested visitors work done so far.

About 700 people came to see the repairs undertaken by the West Sussex Rural Engineering Company of Charlton, including the massive crown tree, which weighs two tons, cost £1,200 and has the job of supporting the huge structure.

Before this work was carried out steel frames were fitted round the buck, or upper section of the Mill, and the whole structure jacked up to take the weight from the timber. David James of R.T. James and Partners designed the steel work. Architect David Russell, a member of the Museum's Council of Management, has also been advising.

The project is backed by the Friends of Salvington Mill, which has also raised some of the money needed for the work. The cost so far has been about £12,000. This sum has been contributed by the Science Museum and by the Borough of Worthing.

The Borough is actively supporting the restoration, which is expected to take another four years.

The Duke of Gloucester Visits the Museum

THE MUSEUM received its first royal visitor in May when the Duke of Gloucester arrived by helicopter to open the newly-completed cottage from Boarhunt in Hampshire.

The Duke toured the Museum with the Museum Chairman, Mr. Geoffrey Godber, the Lord Lieutenant of West Sussex, Lavinia, Duchess of Norfolk, the Founder of the Museum, Roy Armstrong, Museum Director, Chris Zeuner and Research Director, Richard Harris.

Many Friends and volunteer stewards watched the Duke open Boarhunt in its new position at the far end of the site. Richard Harris presented him with a drawing he had executed of the interior of the building.

Boarhunt was rescued from demolition by

the Museum ten years ago. The repair work was carried out by Roger Champion and the wattle and daub work undertaken by six young people on a Project Based Work Experience Scheme. The roof was thatched by Rod Miller of South Western Thatchers.



Richard Harris with the Duke of Gloucester.

Walderton Cottage

WORK has gone on steadily all winter and through a wet spring and early summer on the re-building of the house from Walderton. Many working days which would have been wash-outs have been saved by the modern structure erected over the site chosen for the cottage near the Market Square.

This was taken down in July to allow the re-erection of the medieval timber-framed roof and floor timbers, which is now almost complete.

The cottage was dismantled in 1980 under the guidance of Richard Harris, the Museum's Research Director. It started life in the 14th century as an extension to an earlier building and contained a small open hall. In the mid 17th century the outside walls were reconstructed in flint and brick and a chimney built. The alterations which the building has undergone make it a particularly interesting structure for the Museum to re-erect as it offers an opportunity to explain these changes. The project caught the imagination of BBC Chronicle, which filmed the dismantling and is now filming the re-erection process.

The flint-work is being undertaken by John Friar, who has completed the majority

of the walls, the base of the chimney and the bread oven. Matti Denton, one of the Museum's original volunteers, has contributed towards the 17th century filor, now partially complete, by bonding together the broken paviars. The timbers have been repaired by Roger Champion.

New Guidebook

A NEW GUIDEBOOK for visitors is to be produced for the 1982 season. The format will differ slightly from that of the present guidebook, although it will still include a substantial amount of detail about the buildings for visitors to study. Much of the writing will be undertaken by Richard Harris.

PBWE Scheme

SIX YOUNG PEOPLE have been working on the Museum site during the Spring on a Project Based Work Experience Scheme, supervised by Alan Waters.

During their six months with the Museum their most significant contribution was the completion of Boarhunt. They undertook the wattling, using hazel coppiced by them in Hampshire, daubing of the panels, laying of the floor, and outside the building, the land-scaping and hedging.

They completed many other jobs elsewhere on the site, and towards the end of the scheme took part in the initial stages of the dismantling of the 17th century town house from Reigate.

One of them, Brian Boseley, is to continue on the Museum staff for another six months in view of his aptitude for work at the Museum, with help from a special grant from the Radcliffe Trust.

Charlton Farm Open Day

IN FEBRUARY the Museum held an open day at Charlton Farm, to allow Friends and local people to see the conversion of the buildings to workshops and stores for the Museum's collections. Visitors were also able to see the workshops of the Museum's tenants, the West Sussex Rural Engineering Company.

The day was a great success and was well-supported. The Museum's special thanks are due to the Peter Minet Trust for financial support for the provision of the Museum's workshops.

Bell Frame from Hampshire

ROGER AND HEATHER Champion have dismantled a bell-frame of the 16th century from the church in Southwick, Hampshire, where the bells were to be rehung on a new frame.

The timber bell frame is extremely complete, and rested on part of the original timber-framing of the church tower. This was replaced and the tower is now of stone.

The removal of the bell frame was a tricky task. The bells, still hanging, first had to be removed and supported independently of the frame. Each timber then had to be lowered through a small trap door down to the gallery and onto the ground.

The bell frame is now in store and it is hoped that it will eventually be possible to display it for visitors to see.

Timber Festival Weekend

THE BIGGEST special event the Museum has ever organised took place over a weekend in May when craftsmen in wood gathered on the site for a Timber Festival.

The aim of the Festival was to demonstrate the multitude of ways in which the natural material of wood is converted to use by man. The event was well-supported and a great success and is likely to be repeated in the future.

Among the exhibits were hurdle making, wood turning, furniture restoration, cleaving, charcoal burning, carpentry and antique musical instrument restoration.

Steam sawing equipment was brought to the site by Mr. J. Hampshire of Kirdford. He used the equipment to saw timber to the Museum's specification for repair work on buildings, and enjoyed it so much that he remained for the following week to carry on

A major feature of the weekend was the forestry demonstration provided by the Forestry section of the Edward James Foundation at West Dean. They demonstrated tree felling behind Bayleaf, felling mature beeches which were due to come down, and showing some of the machines and equipment used by the Department in its work. On Sunday the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu sent a 1937 Latil Traulier, designed for timber haulage in the forests.

Clearly the public enjoyed an event devoted to the theme of wood, so close to the hearts of those of us involved at the Museum, and it is hoped that it will be possible to establish a regular event of this sort, which will become an established date in the local calendar.

Knepp Outhouse



Knepp Outhouse

THE MUSEUM will shortly be dismantling a small 17th century outbuilding on the Knepp Estate north of Storrington. The tiny building has been donated by its owner, Sir Walter Burrell.

Its exact original purpose is unknown, although it is possible this will become clear during the dismantling. The building will be useful to include in the curtilage of a 17th century house.

Toll Cottage

WORK PROCEEDS on rebuilding the Toll Cottage. Work to be done includes building the chimney, internal plastering, landscaping and eventually, furnishing. The completed building will be open next year.

Knatts Lane Horse Whim

THE MUSEUM has rescued a fascinating survival of wooden machinery in good condition - a horse whim from Knatts Lane in Knatts Valley, Kent.

The structure is a horse-driven capstan winch used to raise buckets of water from a well. An illustration of the machinery is included in the Plumbers' Exhibition in the section on water supply.

The rectangular building covering the whim and well had been collapsed by its owner. Some of the timbers had been placed on a bonfire, which luckily went out. The Museum was alerted to the building's condition by the local authority to whom the existence of the structure had been reported by the Museum Director, over five years ago. At this time the building was listed and indeed was still a listed building when the owner mistreated it.

In the circumstances the local authority

decided that the listing should be lifted, as the building had now been, to all intents and purposes, demolished.

At extremely short notice Roger and Heather Champion rescued the remaining timbers and the wooden machinery over a

Most of the covering building will be of new timber, and Roger and Heather are preparing the timbers at the Sheffield Park Sawpit, re-erected at the Museum, using the traditional method of converting timber for construction work.

This had been made possible by the acquisition of a brand new pit-saw, from a supplier the Museum discovered which manufactures them still for use in the Third World. Over a number of weekends Roger and Heather have been mastering the technique of using the saw, and reached the stage of sawing the two wall-plates, 27 feet long, from one piece of timber. It took a total of 41/2 hours. Their aim is to re-erect the building with new timber prepared wholly by pit-saw.

Opening of Court Barn

IN AUTUMN last year Lavinia, Duchess of Norfolk officially opened Court Barn and its exhibition mounted by the Worshipful Company of Plumbers explaining the history of water supply and lead roofing through the ages.

The 17th century aisled barn from Lee on Solent in Hampshire was re-erected at the Museum with financial help from the Plumbers Company and individual firms of its members. David Russell, a member of the Museum's Management Council, was the architect and Roger Champion was responsible for the repair work and re-erection.

The exhibition inside includes examples of tools and materials used by plumbers, and a series of illustrations showing the manufacture of lead and its uses. At one end is a complete reconstructed plumber's workshop.

A committee has now been formed with members from the Plumbers Company and the Museum (Chris Zeuner and Heather Champion) to manage the exhibition and arrange demonstrations in the reconstructed workshop.

Lurgashall Mill Opens

PERHAPS the most important single addition to the Museum this year was Lurgashall Mill, which has been fully operational since it was opened in April by Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Ansty, whose family ran it before its decline and eventual removal to the Museum.

The Mill is now grinding flour for sale to visitors each day under the watchful eye of miller, Robert Demaus, and the product has been well received by visitors.

The completion of the Mill is the culmination of several years' work at the Museum, beginning with the creation of two ponds to enable the Mill to work. To ensure an adequate supply of water for the wheel a powerful water pump was installed to recirculate it while the Mill is working.

The total project has cost in the region of £50,000. The Mill was dismantled from its site in Lurgashall, near Petworth by Museum staff, and rebuilt principally by John Friar. The machinery was restored by Peter Stenning, while the water wheel was restored by Geoff Boxall.

Mr. and Mrs. Ansty opened it amidst due ceremony at the beginning of the season. Miller Robert Demaus, who is in charge of its operation on its new site, has had considerable experience of operating watermills and was involved in a similar project at Newcastle Emlyn in Wales.

The Mill's chief importance to the Museum is in the opportunity it offers to operate historic machinery on a regular basis for the public to see.

Council of Management

MISS KATE BARSON resigned from the Council of Management at its annual general meeting in June. Miss Barson has been a member of the Council from the very beginning of the Museum, only just missing the honour of being a Founder member.

In addition to serving on the Council, she has given and continues to give loyal service as a volunteer steward.

As a Council member she was noted for her outspokenness and veracity. Indeed it was with these characteristics that she announced her resignation, wishing it to be taken as an example to others of her generation to make way for new blood. Her contributions at Council meetings will be very much missed, but her involvement with the Museum continues - from her regular Wednesday base, the Ticket Kiosk.

DURING the year the Council of Management welcomed the following new members - Mr. David Biart, Solicitor, of Chichester; Col. William Harrison, former West Sussex County Surveyor; Nigel Talbot Ponsonby, special adviser to Humberts on recreational management and Mr. Jimmy. Woollings, Manager of Barclays Bank, Chichester.

AT THE Council's AGM, the Chairman, Mr. Geoffrey Godber was re-elected. He explained to Members his intention that this should be his last year as Chairman of the Museum. Sir James Waddell was re-elected Vice Chairman, and Mr. Patrick Tye as Honorary Treasurer.

Exhibitions

THE MUSEUM has taken its travelling exhibition to a number of different venues during the year, but perhaps the most unusual were the shop windows of the Museums Association and the Britannia Building Society, both in Central London. The displays generated a great deal of interest from passers-by, many of whom took away leaflets.

Some thousands of people must have passed by the Britannia Building Society window in Kingsway during August when the exhibition was mounted. The Museum's thanks are due to both organisations for making these valuable facilities available.

Sussex Trust Exhibition

THE MUSEUM was host in July to an exhibition of the work of the Sussex Trust for Nature Conservation. It traced the work achieved by Trust members over two decades to save the rich variety of wildlife habitats in the county.

The Trust has established 23 nature reserves, and manages 1,000 acres of its own, including the reserves at Amberley Wildbrooks, Mens Woodland and Ebernoe Common. The Trust has recently taken on 20 acres of the south facing slopes of Levin Down just above

The exhibition was mounted in the upper room of the shop by Mr. John Booker, secretary of the Trust's Chichester and Bognor Regis

Poplars Cottage

THE MUSEUM has been offered a small timber-framed building derelict for many years on the Wiston Estate, near Washington.

Poplars Cottage is a small house with a smoke bay, an example of vernacular architecture yet to be represented on the Museum site. Although part of the structure has been replaced by stone the timber-frame is very complete, as is part of the original smoke bay.

The building will be dismantled by Museum staff in the Autumn. County Archaeologist Fred Alsworth will be undertaking an excavation of the site.



Poplars Cottage

Refreshments for Visitors

AS THE Museum grows, so has the demand from visitors for refreshments, and this year a wagon shed re-erected on site has been converted into a small tea shop.

The wagon shed, from Pallingham Quay, was re-erected on the old Toll Cottage site by Walberton builder, John Booker, and is now in operation for serving refreshments.

Richard Pailthorpe has been responsible for the development of the project and will continue to control it, while Peggy Tall is running it on a daily basis with a number of helpers on a rota.

The venture is being administered by the Museum's subsidiary company, and it is hoped that it will make a useful contribution to the Museum's finances.

Winter Meetings for Stewards

A SERIES of winter meetings designed specifically for stewards and potential stewards is to be arranged for the coming winter. The meetings will be informal with refreshments provided and are designed to help stewards keep up their background knowledge of the buildings and other aspects of the Museum.

Richard Harris, Research Director and Chris Zeuner, Museum Director will present the meetings. It is hoped that as many stewards as possible will come to these meetings. We believe that a thorough knowledge of the Museum's exhibits will help stewards to present the Museum more interestingly to our visitors and also help make stewards' duties more enjoyable. Details are enclosed with this newsletter.

WEA/Southampton University Course: Local Studies — A Guide to Understanding Our Locality

A Course designed to provide information about the area around the Museum and ways of finding out more about it has been arranged by Southampton University Department of Adult Education in association with the Museum and the WEA. The course brings together experts from different fields of study — geography, natural history, planning, history and archaeology — to explore the ways in which we can discover a broad understanding of the area.

The course will be held on Wednesday evenings beginning on October 4th, preceded by an introductory Saturday school on October 10th. Full details are enclosed with this newsletter.

SAM MAXWELL

SAM MAXWELL, who for the last three years has been responsible for handling the Museum's accounts, died in July, at the age of 67. His death followed a brief illness from which his friends and colleagues believed he was recovering.

Sam Maxwell was for 30 years before his retirement in 1976, Manager of the Eartham Estate, where he built up a first class dairy herd of Ayrshires, a pedigree Aberdeen Angus beef herd, a commercial crossbred flock of sheep, and a pedigree breeding flock of Southdown Sheep, whose successors belong to East Dean farmer Mr. Humphrey who folds some of his lambs at the Museum. Mr. Maxwell won many prizes at the principal agricultural shows, including the South of England Show at Ardingly.

After his retirement Mr. Maxwell continued to look after certain interests at the Eartham Estate. He kept up his interest in sports, particularly curling—he was Past President of the English Curling Association.

Mr. Maxwell's daughter, Marion, was for many years my secretary at the Museum, and his wife, Vera, has also maintained a close interest in the Museum and its work.

Mr. Maxwell took over the Museum's books at a time when the organisation was growing rapidly and in need of more detailed book-keeping and accounting. For almost three years his unstinting work in the office ensured that bills were paid promptly, and all possible discount extracted — this help was invaluable to me and vital to the Museum and its finances. Mr. Maxwell was a well-liked and respected member of the Museum's staff whose integrity, reliability and friendliness will be so sorely missed.

Christopher Zeuner

Steam Threshing

THE SUMMER SEASON opened with a demonstration of steam threshing, a once-familiar scene in rural life, which attracted a great deal of interest from visitors.

Using a traction engine, threshing box and elevator, the long-stalked thatching straw grown in the field next to the Museum was threshed in the traditional way over a weekend, and stacked in two ricks ready for use on the roof of Boarhunt Cottage.

The 1912 Traction Engine and the threshing box were provided by Mr. Bert Dibben of Hampshire. The elevator and a further traction engine belonged to Mr. John Beck of Barnham. The sacks of grain were carried away by the Museum's Shire horse, Freddie, in the recently restored wagon while the smaller horse, Shem, brought water to the engine in a water cart.

The straw was grown by South Western Thatchers in conjunction with the Edward James Foundation which owns the field at the centre of the Museum.

Other special demonstrations during the year included sheep shearing by shepherd Horace Oliver who cares for the flock owned by Mr. Humphrey of East Dean, whose sheep are seen regularly at the

Museum. Mr. Humphrey also demonstrated the method of preparing sheep for competition in agricultural shows.

Later in the season visitors were able to see an unsual demonstration — that of drumming the bees — by beekepper Dick Tutton, who cares for the bees in the hives kept by the lake at the Museum. He showed how beekeepers remove honeycombs from the traditional straw hives known as skeps. The process involves placing a second skep over the first in the form of a lid, and then repeatedly drumming the lower skep until all the bees have followed their natural instinct of travelling upwards — into the second skep. The combs can then be removed.



Steam Threshing Scene at the Museum.

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