

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 cut-backs.) 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 depression 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

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.



West Wittering School

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.

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

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.

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 unusual demonstration — that of drumming the bees — by beekeeper 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.