

Bayleaf Farm Project Planned

Detailed decisions about the form of the planned Bayleaf Farm project are now taking place. The project will influence both the interior of Bayleaf and its curtilage, and will mark another significant step forward for the Museum.

The Garden. Based on the report of garden historian Dr. Sylvia Landsberg, the garden will be laid out in front of Bayleaf Farmhouse using 1500 as the dateline. The garden will concentrate mainly on growing vegetables as a garden of this period would have done, being an integral part of the farmstead. The Bayleaf garden will be the first of its kind. Most of the recreated historic gardens concentrate on the more decorative gardens of buildings of higher status.

The Museum aims to operate the garden fully and hopes to set up a specialist group of people to carry this out. There is great interest in the preservation of varieties of early vegetables and other institutions and groups of people employed in this will be assisting the Museum.

Bayleaf Interior. The production of vegetables in the garden will enable the Museum to bring parts of Bayleaf to life, through the drying of herbs and the storage of crops in the service rooms.

To extend the understanding of the medieval hall house, the Museum will undertake a furnishing project using replicas of furniture, domestic equipment and textiles.

The problems of achieving accuracy in both the garden and house interior are enormous but the project is considered worthwhile as a way of assisting visitors to understand the ways in which different parts of the house worked and to get a flavour of the life style of the inhabitants of a farmhouse of this period.

One of the great advantages of using replicas inside Bayleaf is that visitors will be able to walk amongst them, to touch them and to assimilate the atmosphere, using all their senses to enhance their enjoyment and understanding.

The Barn and Farmyard. To the west of Bayleaf the Cowfold Barn will be re-erected and a farmyard constructed typical of the period. The farmyard will be furnished with artefacts and livestock. There is

no intention to create a working farm and the farmstead will be supplied and serviced from modern stores and equipment, without compromising the authenticity of the exhibits. The re-creation of a fully working farm of the medieval period, with all the attendant problems of accuracy, is considered to be beyond the Museum's resources.

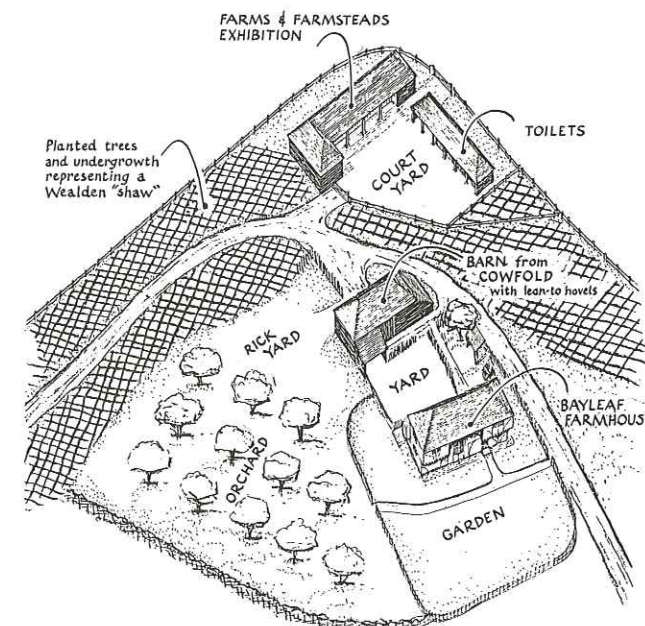
History of Farming Exhibition. A fourth element of the project is the special exhibition being prepared in association with the NFU. This exhibition will relate the history of farming within the region by taking farm buildings at different periods of history and using them to show some of the major landmarks in the development of farming.

The exhibition will be housed in a cattle-shed type building situated at right angles to the Kirdford Shed behind Bayleaf. The exhibition will take the form of a number of scenes, using diaramas, furnished rooms and models. It will seek to show farming as a continually changing activity and will demonstrate the theme from medieval times to the present day.

Richard Harris is responsible for writing the exhibition which will be designed by Ivor Heal, who was responsible for the National Horseracing Museum and is designing the Domesday Exhibition at Winchester.

The yard by the Kirdford Shed will be turned into a more formal area screened by the Bayleaf complex and will provide better visitor facilities at that end of the site.

The whole Bayleaf Farm Project is being developed by a working party, whose members are: Chris Zeuner, Roy Armstrong, Marjorie Hallam, Richard Harris, Roger Champion, Heather Champion, Elizabeth Newbery and Louise Jaggard. This group meets every fortnight, and is also concentrating its efforts on new methods of interpretation in other areas of the Museum.



Drawing of the proposed farm layout. (Richard Harris)



Cowfold Barn.

Letter from the Chairman of the Friends

At the Friends' AGM in November reference was made to the need for better communication with members. The suggestion was that events at the Museum sometimes took place without people realising they were in prospect. The Committee reckoned that in spite of difficulties, for example over settling dates with exhibitors and others, the two Magazine issues a year which are now customary did give fair notice of forthcoming events – which were also advertised in newspapers and otherwise over a wide area of Southern England. They acknowledged that loose enclosures with the Magazine do not necessarily compel attention but did not think the obvious remedy, which would be a third mailing in mid-season, would be justified, at a cost of over £300 for postage alone.

Many members will have enjoyed the "Country Fair" event held in May in the past. This year it is replaced by a "Tools of the Trade" day, with the emphasis on wood-working. The Friends will be running a produce and plants stall as at the Country Fair (gifts of cakes, produce, plants please!) and will be much involved in helping on the day with the displays.

- Other current Friends' activities include:
- A grant of £8000 to the Museum's Development Fund to pay for the sewer for the new toilets in the Horsham/Reigate buildings.
 - Financial assistance to the Museum to purchase a video player.
 - The Spring Tour. This year's is to Coventry in April. Contact Brig. Walter Greenway, Chichester 783057. Next year's tour may be to York – more details will follow but an indication of interest would

be welcomed by Carol Hawkins, on Farnham 726195 or at the Museum on Wednesdays.

- A cookery demonstration by Katie Stewart on 10 April at Bishop Otter College, Chichester. Proceeds to the Museum. Tickets £5 from the Museum Office.
- A food tasting evening on 25 July in Crawley Hall.
- A Christmas Fair – details elsewhere on this page.

The Development Fund, owing to the combined efforts of the Friends and the Museum staff, now stands at £97,000. We hope to include in the next issue an account of what has been done and the further work especially needing support. Meanwhile, initiatives in local fund-raising (sponsored this or that, garden openings and so on) would be much welcomed.

Sir James Waddell

Fund-raising

The Friends are planning a fund-raising food tasting evening in the market square on Friday, July 25, at 7.30pm, when for £3 you can taste five dishes and have two glasses of wine. See enclosed sheet for details.

The Museum is entering two teams into the Royal Military Police March on Sunday, August 10. Richard Pailthorpe is looking for participants and for sponsors. Further details and a form is enclosed with the Newsletter.

Horseshoes

Last year the Friends raised £1,700 for the Museum purely through the sale of some 3,500 horseshoes, which were cleaned by a few volunteers and sold in the Museum Shop.

Anyone who can spare a little time and elbow grease to help clean more for the coming year would be most welcome. Contact Bernard Rush on Midhurst 3928.

Joint Venture

The Friends are in the early stages of planning a joint fund-raising venture with the Friends of Chichester Cathedral and the Friends of Pallant House.

The event will be a Fair with good quality craft stalls plus our own souvenir items for sale. The venue is the Assembly Rooms in Chichester and the date will be Wednesday, 3 December.

The details have yet to be worked out but help with organisation and catering will be needed. Please put the date in your diary and encourage your friends to support the event.

Admission Prices

Admission charges for 1986 are: Adults – £1.80; OAP's and students – £1.30 and children – £1.00.

Exhibition of Building Conservation

The Museum is holding a four-day exhibition on the theme of building conservation from August 22-25 this year. The aim of the exhibition is to show the public the many aspects of building conservation and restoration, and to encourage them to explore the wide range of materials and specialist skills available.

Exhibitors will range from specialist brick and tile companies, thatchers, carpenters and joiners, to those engaged in the research and practice of conservation techniques and materials. Building conservation trusts, amenity societies and advisory agencies will also be represented.

A programme of demonstrations of techniques and processes will take place throughout the four days. On Friday there will be a programme of lectures and seminars open to the public.

Suppliers, conservators and craftsmen who would like to take part in the exhibition should contact Margaret Challen at the Museum.

Thatch Repairs

A programme of repairs to the thatched roofs of some of the Museum exhibit buildings is beginning this year. Some of the thatch is reaching the end of its life, although in some cases the first stage in repair will be re-ridging.

The most substantial repairs will be required on the Littlehampton Granary, which is being seriously damaged by a woodpecker who pulls out large quantities of thatch in its search for insects on a daily basis. For a long time it was thought that the culprit was a squirrel but now the woodpecker has been caught in the act. All attempts at persuading it to search for its meal elsewhere have failed. The thatch is plainly infinitely easier than a tree.



Littlehampton Granary, showing the roof damage.

1985 Season Better than Expected

A total of 175,020 visitors came to the Museum during 1985 – significantly more than had been expected at the time of the last Museum Newsletter when the Museum was in the doldrums of an exceedingly wet and dull summer.

After the severe effect of the weather in April and August the dry Autumn boosted the attendance figures, culminating in the best ever attended Autumn Activity Weekend.

There was an increase during the year in the number of free entrants, due partly to the increase in the number of Friends and partly to participation in voucher schemes involving one free entry. One of these schemes was organised in association with Goodwood House and West Dean Gardens and involved a joint voucher ticket available to visitors from a few selected local outlets such as Tourist Information Centres, camp sites and hotels, which all three participants considered to be a success. The advantage to the Museum in goodwill created by these sorts of scheme is enormous.

Visitor Statistics

	1985	1984	
Jan - March	5,297	5,184	+113 (2%)
April	11,675	22,216	-10,541 (47%)
May	28,086	22,028	+6,058 (27%)
June	29,515	29,552	+37 (-)
July	31,758	29,918	+1,840 (6%)
Aug	33,211	40,970	-7,759 (19%)
Sept	17,187	15,586	+1,601 (10%)
Oct	16,178	11,551	+4,627 (40%)
Nov - Dec	2,113	2,216	-102 (5%)
	175,020	179,220	-4200 (2%)

Throughout the year the Museum conducted a monthly visitor survey and daily ones during August, in conjunction with the Chichester Visitors Group, their primary purpose being to discover more about our visitors and assist with publicity and advertising strategies.

66% of visitors were staying in the area, of which 7% came from North America and 4% from Australia. Of these 36% were staying with friends or relatives, 23% in camp sites, 20% in hotels or guest houses, 6% in self catering accommodation and 2% in holiday camps.

42% of visitors came on the recommendation of friends or relatives, 17% from picking up our leaflet, 7% through newspaper advertising and a further 7% through advertisements seen in other publications, 6.5% through television, 4.5% on impulse whilst passing, 4% on recommendation of school children who had made previous visits, 1.5% through Museum poster, and 1.5% through radio.

In order to establish how successful our advertising and publicity was in attracting people to the Steam Threshing and Autumn Ploughing Weekend, 382 visitors were asked how they had heard about it. 53% had seen the event advertised in a newspaper or journal, 21% from a poster, 21% from other sources, mainly through the Friends Newsletter or as a result of coming previously and 5% from the "What's On" programmes on the TV and local radio.

The event attracted over 5,600 people which if applying the above percentages, somewhere in the region of 2,500 people came as a

result of advertising which cost us approximately £750.

65% of visitors were making their first visit to the Museum. Because of the Museum's dependence on the weather visitors were asked when they made their decision to visit. 29% decided on the day they came, 20% the day before, 26% within the previous week.

The majority of visitors spent between 2 and 4 hours at the Museum. Many spent more time than anticipated, whilst a few commented that they thought their visit would have taken longer.

Visitors were asked what attracted them to the Museum. The majority came because of their interest in architecture, building history or carpentry. Other reasons for coming included comparison with other Open Air Museums, personal recommendation, day out in the country, curiosity and an interest in a particular building such as Walderton and Bayleaf.

The exhibits or activities that visitors most enjoyed were the Mill (by far the most popular), Bayleaf, Walderton and the School. A number of other features were mentioned such as log fires, plumbing exhibition, shepherd's hut, charcoal burning, introductory exhibition and craftsmen at work.

Visitors were also asked for their comments. There was an overwhelming response in the form of "having had a very enjoyable" visit.

Below is a small and selective sample of those comments which were made more than once.

- "Very well organised and maintained".
- "Polite and helpful staff".
- "More taped commentaries".
- "Very worthwhile project".
- "More furniture in buildings".
- "More benches".
- "More working demonstrations such as charcoal and blacksmith".
- "People dressed in period costume".
- "Progressing well".
- "Excellent plumbing exhibition".
- "Lovely to be able to touch things".
- "Very good value for money".
- "Nice to see fires".
- "Slippery and rough paths".
- "Why wasn't the Joiner's Shop open?".
- "The addition of a church and inn would be nice".
- "More information about the social classes of people that lived in the buildings".
- "Useful to have mother's room in W.C.'s".
- "A shame to use bailer twine in Hangleton".
- "Good litter facilities".
- "Better information at entrance about the extent of the Museum".
- "Woodland area good".
- "Too many rowdy school children".
- "Refreshment facilities inadequate".
- "Refreshment staff rude".
- "Dogs should not be allowed".

West Ashling Granary

A small granary has been moved from West Ashling, near Chichester, and re-sited next to Lurgashall Mill, where it will be used for its original purpose, storing grain, for use in the Mill.

The building, which measures only 10ft by 10ft, was given to the Museum by Lady Portal of West Ashling House. It was built in the early 19th century as part of the farmstead behind the house.

The granary was prepared for removal by volunteers, and towed to the Museum in December, where it has been placed on saddles and the roof has been re-tiled by John Booker and Son.



West Ashling Granary

Changes in the Museum's Management Structure

The Museum's management structure has recently undergone changes to enable a more efficient organisation befitting the substantial enterprise which the Museum has become.

The Museum is a Company Limited by Guarantee and registered as a Charity in common with the great majority of independent museums. It has been managed by a Council of Management, numbering as many as 30 people, who have delegated authority to a General Purposes Committee. This system served the Museum successfully in the early years of development but in recent years it has been felt that the system needed revision.

One of the main problems was that the large body could meet only four times a year and was unable to respond with sufficient speed to the demands of the much greater level of activity now taking place at the Museum. The result was that many matters were decided by the General Purposes Committee which did not actually have the formal authority to act.

This state of affairs needed to be rectified and during this last year the Chairman, David Biart and Treasurer and Company Secretary, Jimmy Woollings, have been concentrating their efforts to establish a new structure more relevant to the Museum which would also enable an increased input of ideas from the many people involved with the project.

At its meeting in November the President of the Museum, Lord Watkinson, presided over the procedures necessary to make the changes proposed. These changes had already been submitted to the Charity Commissioners for their approval.

The basis of the changes are as follows:

The Museum has a group of TRUSTEES to replace the Council of Management. Up to

50 Trustees are responsible for the overall policy of the Museum. They will meet four times each year. The Trustees will elect an EXECUTIVE BOARD. The Executive Board will act as Directors of the Company and will be responsible in the same way as they would be if they were Directors of a non-charitable company. The day to day running of the Museum will be the responsibility of the Museum Director. The long standing Sites and Buildings Committee will as before advise the Director and Research Director on matters relevant to the main activities of the Museum, especially the collection and re-erection of buildings.

The effect of these changes will be to improve the way in which the Museum reaches its decisions and to expand the number of people who are involved. At present the following people are members of the Executive Board:

David Biart, Chairman
Roy Armstrong, Founder
Jimmy Woollings, Treasurer and Company Secretary
Marjorie Hallam, Hon. Librarian
Robin McDowall, Chairman, Sites and Buildings Committee
Sir James Waddell, Chairman, Friends of the Museum
Geoffrey Godber, Past Chairman
All these members hold office until the next AGM.

A complete list of Trustees will be published in the next newsletter which will be after the AGM and will therefore be completely up to date.

The Builder's Yard

The area around the Witley Joiner's Shop will be developed during the summer as a traditional builder's yard. Building materials will be stored there, including tools and equipment, lime pits and piles of sand, giving the appearance of an operating yard.

The Plumber's and Glazier's Workshop will be placed on its permanent site within this area and forming one of the boundaries of the yard. The area will be enclosed and display material developed to explain the exhibits.



The Builder's Yard area.

1986 Special Events and Exhibitions

May 5

Novice Sheep Dog Trials.

May 18

"Tools of the Trade". A special day with displays and demonstrations of traditional tools used in timber and allied trades.

June 8

Heavy Horses at Singleton. Working demonstrations in association with the Southern Counties Heavy Horse Association.

July 20

Show for Rare Breeds. In association with the Sussex Rare Breed Survival Trust Support Group.

August 22 - 25

Exhibition of Building Conservation.

October 25 - 26

Steam Threshing, Ploughing with Horses and Vintage Tractors.

Throughout the season regular craft and trade skills demonstrations will be taking place on Sundays, whilst charcoal burning and spar making will once again be happening on weekdays. (Further details about demonstrations will be available on request.)

Publicity Leaflet

The Museum's reputation for imaginatively designed publicity leaflets will surely receive another boost this year with the latest design by Bruce Williams Designs which features the door of Bayleaf Farmhouse on the front cut down the middle to open out revealing pictures and information about the Museum inside. The Museum distributes some 100,000 leaflets per year and they are a vital tool in publicising the Museum.



The Weald and Downland
Open Air Museum
Singleton, Chichester
West Sussex.

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