

WEALD &  
DOWNLAND

OPEN AIR  
MUSEUM

MAGAZINE

Vol. 7 No. 17 November 1996



## The Prince of Wales' visit

The museum was honoured with a visit by The Prince of Wales in August, giving us an opportunity to show him the many facets of the Museum and its work. Much of what we do - the conservation of historic traditional buildings, the presentation of historic gardens, the demonstration of rural skills, such as charcoal burning, spar making and thatching, is close to his heart. He spent an enjoyable hour and a half meeting staff and volunteers, whose role he was particularly interested in.



*From top, walking to the market square with, left, Museum chairman David Tomlinson and right, Museum director Chris Zeuner, meeting Chris Tompkins during the thatching of Walderton House; discussing Whittaker's Cottages with carpenter Roger Champion and research director Richard Harris; watching Albert Peacock making spars; examining the Museum's new Norwegian horse-logging equipment with Peter Albion; sharing a joke at the charcoal burning site with Alan Waters and discussing medieval gardens with Thelma Jack.*





## New visitor trends this summer

1996 has been a year that has improved as we went along. After a disappointing start from the visitor attendance point of view owing to unattractive weather we saw some encouraging improvements. August has been a declining month for some years but this year saw a change in trend with a modest increase in overall attendance. The first half of September also showed a healthy increase over 1995.



*The new visitor reception area and shop in Longport House has made a huge difference to the way we receive our visitors.*

Changes in our publicity and advertising policies are likely to have played a part in this new trend for the second half of the season. Trustee Michael Burton has been organising a visitors' survey which we expect will illuminate further the reasons for this change.

The most significant event this year was the opening of Longport House as the new visitor reception and shop, and the new ship

has performed well. The decision to design and fit the shop "in house" has resulted in an interior which has attracted many positive comments. The hard work of all those involved in running the shop has also helped to produce very substantially better results from our sales, which had always been good.

The bookshop has continued to thrive and its new dedicated area has enabled us to provide

a much better service. The shop is a very important source of revenue for the Museum and at the same time serves as one of the ways in which we communicate with the public on a variety of subjects. As part of the Museum's information service it assists in fulfilling the Museum's core objectives.

**Christopher Zeuner**  
Museum Director

## Chameleon staff!

*Jean Piggott swops her part-time work in the Museum office and secretarial duties for the Friends with a spot of traditional cooking during the Children's Activity Weekend.*



## SUPPORTING THE WEALD AND DOWNLAND MUSEUM

**We are most grateful to the following for their generous assistance to the Museum during 1996.**

### *Poplars Cottage*

The Havencroft Trust  
Basil Shippam Trust  
Peacock Trust  
Three T's Charity

### *Ovingdean Chapel*

Museums and Galleries  
Commission/PRISM Fund  
Ovingdean Hall School

### *Education*

Radcliffe Trust  
West Sussex County Council  
Prebendal School PTA

### *General*

Estate of Lyn Armstrong  
Aldwick Quilters

### *Lottery application*

Friends of the Museum

### *Walderton thatch*

Friends of the Museum

### *Livestock*

Solway Veterinary Ltd

### *Gardens*

Lilliput Lane

### *Plumbing exhibitions*

Worshipful Company of Plumbers  
Lead Sheet Association

### *Event sponsors*

Natwest Bank  
Whitbread Charitable Trust  
West Sussex Gazette  
Bartholomews of Chichester  
Nationwide Building Society  
Franchise Manor Farm  
Zeneca

### *Grant for Coppice Management*

Forest Enterprise

**Further information about making a donation, gift aid or sponsoring projects at the Museum can be obtained from the Museum director at the office. Tel: 01243 811363.**



## Active place!

Left, The History Re-enactment Group again proved to be of great interest to visitors at Pendean Farmhouse. Portraying characters researched from documents relating to the house and its area in the 16th century, members of the group split into costumed and modern interpreters.

Below, Junior Friends get clued up about bees and honey production in medieval times from Melanie Ridley. Junior Friends' activities have increased this year with Saturday morning activities ranging from a Victorian day to learning how the Museum dismantles and re-erects buildings. They ran the children's games at the Children's Activity Weekend and enjoyed an exciting summer camp.

## News in brief

□ The Museum hosted the Traditional Cornmillers Guild's annual meeting this year. Sixteen delegates representing eight mills attended. After a guided tour of the mill by miller Mike Tighe, and a welcome from Museum director Chris Zeuner, the members enjoyed a visit to the other buildings on the Museum site.

□ Popeluc, the English/Romanian folk music group which performed at the Museum earlier in the season described their performance here as "the most satisfying of the whole tour." The material, especially the English songs "seemed very at home in that setting," said Pete Castle in their newsletter.

□ We are sad to report the death of Bert Dibben, threshing contractor from Dorset, who for many years was the mainstay of the steam threshing demonstration during the October harvest weekend. His threshing box was always immaculately turned out and the threshing process always went with a swing. The Museum was the furthest point east he was prepared to travel.

□ The Museum grew 23 acres of wheat to produce good quality thatching straw this year - 10 acres on Karova Farm land adjacent to the Museum and 13 acres on Cucumber Farm, Singleton through the generosity of Lady Elizabeth Benson. We had special assistance from Peter Lovejoy, who farms at Heyshott, who harvested the Cucumber Farm crop with his own binder.

□ Richard Murdoch, former director of the Lead Development Association and greatly involved with the development of our plumbing exhibitions, is a regular volunteer demonstrator at the Museum, and this year completed more than 60 demonstrations of lead working.

□ Two hundred children enjoyed a teddy bears picnic at the Museum organised by the Pre-School Learning Alliance. Sarah Stewart said everyone enjoyed themselves, especially those who had never been before. She anticipated many return visits!

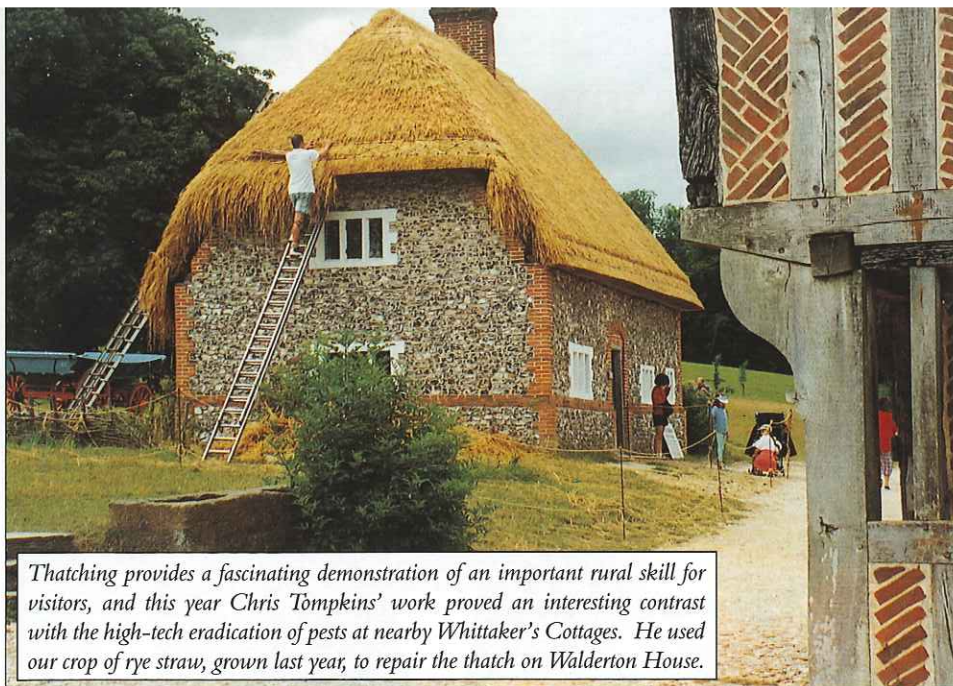
□ Shortly before his sudden death recently gardening expert and broadcaster Geoff Hamilton chose the Museum as his favourite summer retreat in a feature in the Radio Times. Always fascinated by the lives of ordinary people, he said he thoroughly enjoyed the museum with its historic homesteads giving people an idea of how farm workers lived in medieval times.

Below, making music in the Lavant building, now used regularly for educational groups, during the Children's Activity Weekend. Musician David Asher, right, is a regular demonstrator at our events.

Below, Illyria presents Macbeth in front of the millpond in August to a capacity audience - part of the Dovetail arts programme held at the Museum each summer. Roll on 1997 when more open air Shakespeare will be performed.

Carol Hawkins





Thatching provides a fascinating demonstration of an important rural skill for visitors, and this year Chris Tompkins' work proved an interesting contrast with the high-tech eradication of pests at nearby Whittaker's Cottages. He used our crop of rye straw, grown last year, to repair the thatch on Walderton House.

## Getting Shipshape

Repairing fences made of natural material is no less a task today than it was in medieval times! A regular winter activity at the Museum, Bob Holman, gardener, is seen here renewing the fence around the Bayleaf paddocks with hazel cut from our coppice.



Another type of thatching - Albert Peacock, spar maker, covers the hay rick with a thatch against the weather. The hay is used to feed the livestock through the winter.

## Friends news

□ A busy programme of activities for Friends is planned for the winter and first half of next year. A separate sheet is enclosed with this magazine giving full details. Please book as early as possible to ensure your place at these events.

□ Mike Doran, Friends Hon. Treasurer for eight years, is to stand down at the next AGM on 22 March 1997. We are grateful to Mike for not only looking after the Friends' financial affairs but

also for devoting two or three days a week to managing the Friends' membership office. Maurice Pollock, a committee member since 1994, has kindly agreed to stand for the post. The management of the membership office requires someone who can provide continuity and more hours a week than is available from a volunteer. The committee has therefore decided to appoint a suitably qualified person to a newly created post of Membership Secretary.

Virginia Lyon

## Training sessions for volunteers in the New Year

The Museum now has 200 volunteers to call on for the wide variety of tasks needed to run an ever-busier programme of daily openings and special activities. This year, following a very successful recruiting campaign, we welcomed 30 new volunteers. Special training lectures have been organised in the New Year for both new and experienced volunteers to help them get the most out of their activity and to benefit our visitors.

A full list and booking form for the lectures is enclosed with the magazine. Please book early to avoid disappointment, as they are expected to be in great demand!

**Tuesday 14 January 11am - 12.30pm**

Christopher Zeuner (Museum Director):

Museum History and Structure

**Tuesday 21 January 10am - 1pm**

Bob Powell (Curator):

Museum Collections Management

**Wednesday 22 January 10am - 1pm**

**and Saturday 1 February 10am - 1pm**

Sue Shave (Interpretation Officer):

Museum Education Services

**Wednesday 5 February 10am - 1pm**

**and Saturday 8 February 10am - 1pm**

Richard Harris (Research Director):

Historic Construction Methods and Museum Tour

**Monday 10 February 10am - 1pm**

**and Saturday 15 February 10am - 1pm**

Bob Holman (Museum Gardener):

Museum Gardens

Coffee will be served half an hour prior to each session. For further information about the lectures contact the Museum office on 01243 811363.

If you are not one of our volunteers and would like to know more about volunteering at the Museum please contact Keith Bickmore at the Museum office.



In summer the newly re-erected framework of Whittaker's Cottages was subjected to a most unusual treatment. Wrapped in silver foil, with hot air and moisture blown inside through giant caterpillar-like tubes, the 19th century semi-detached building was on the receiving end of a new environmentally friendly method of eradicating pests from timber. Although the treatment is tried and tested on smaller objects this was the first time a historic building had been treated in this way by the leading company in the field, Thermo Lignum UK Ltd.

Controlled heating of objects at a constant humidity level solves the problem of insect infestation in wood, paper and textiles. Behind this patented system, which uses no harmful gases or chemicals, lie eight years of development and nearly two years' commercial application in the UK.

The timber frame of Whittaker's Cottages was sealed in heat retaining foil in the form of a big silver bag applied to avoid contact with the outer walls. An external heater fed air into the bag, and using the latest technology a finely tuned computer programme linked to a master computer in Austria, stabilized the humidity levels throughout the process.

During the 24-hour treatment the temperature was gradually raised to 52c - the level at which Thermo Lignum can guarantee all insects and eggs will have been eradicated. The temperature is then lowered slowly back to normal.

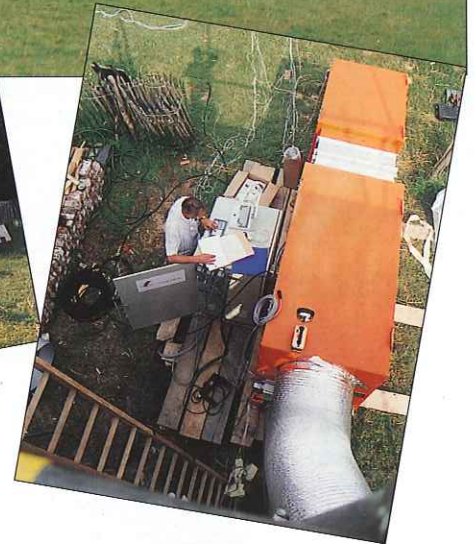
The event attracted much media interest and a seminar on the technique was organised for professionals. This was an important collaboration between the Museum and a commercial company working towards an environmentally conscious aim very much in tune with the Museum's objectives and interests. We were pleased to demonstrate a new method linking modern technology and a green approach to an area of our work which has previously relied on chemicals. The event supported the United Nation's move to ban the use of the chemical pesticide Methyl Bromide from the year 2005 because of its huge impact on the ozone layer.

□ Thermo Lignum has sponsored an experimental monitoring of woodworm infestation in some of the Museum's buildings involving ferromone traps to capture male beetles. The work has been conducted by specialist, David Pinniger, and complements infestation monitoring work generously conducted at the Museum over a number of years by Hutton and Rostrum.

## Whittaker's Cottages move into the space age!



*The timber frame of Whittaker's Cottages surrounded in silver foil and linked to a computer ready for the environmentally friendly eradication of pests pioneered by Thermo Lignum.*



## Second MSc course gets under way

**Bournemouth University's MSc degree course in building conservation, partly taught at the Museum, moved into its second phase last month with a new group of seven students taking the timber building conservation option, again taught by research director, Richard Harris.**

Another group of 30 students has been taught timber and lead units as part of the building conservation practice module, with teaching undertaken by Richard Harris and Richard

Murdoch. This year work on recruiting students and preparing the prospectus has been done by the Museum itself rather than the University. Individual units taught count towards CPD (Continuing Professional Development), now becoming increasingly important for professionals working in the field.

The Museum wishes the first students who have completed their courses well in their careers. Further information - Carol Hawkins at the Museum office.

*Demonstrating the use of lime during our Master Classes Day is Bob Bennett of The Lime Centre with James Clancy. Their audience included professionals and a wide range of people interested in historic buildings.*



## Walderton garden

Lilliput Lane, whose annual collectors fair was held at the Museum in September, has generously agreed to sponsor the creation of a new garden at Walderton House. The garden, currently being researched by Dr Sylvia Landsberg, who was responsible for the garden at Bayleaf Farmstead, will be set at a 17th century date and will stretch from the house south towards the main site track.

*Heather Vincent*



# Winter courses and lectures programme

An especially busy winter is forecast for the Museum this year, with extended openings to cater for extra demand from school groups and tours as well as family parties, and two programmes of courses and lectures, designed to inform and entertain all those interested in historic buildings and rural life and skills.

## PROFESSIONAL COURSES

### Friday 8 November

*The Use of Draught Horses in Public Places:* Christopher Zeuner and others. Seminar for managers and landowners considering using working horses.

### Thursday 21 November

*Traditional Wood and Timber Products:* Henry Russell and Joe Coyle of Carpenter Oak and Woodland. Demonstrations and hands-on opportunities - splitting shingles and laths, making hurdles and pegs, hewing timber.

### Wednesday 22 January

*Timber - Identification of Species:* David Woodbridge

### Thursday 23 January

*Timber - Strength Grading:* David Woodbridge

### Wed/Thurs 19/20 February

*Re-pointing Historic Brickwork:* Gerard Lynch

### Friday 14 March

*An Introduction to Charcoal Burning:* Alan Waters Museum Charcoal Burner and Pooran Desai of the Bioregional Charcoal Company.

Further details from Carol Hawkins at the Museum office.

## SATURDAY LECTURES

### 26 October 10.30-12.30

*Medieval and Tudor Gardens:* Dr Sylvia Landsberg. With particular reference to the Bayleaf Farmstead at the Museum. £5

### 16 November 10.30-12.30

*Stand and Deliver Us!* Tony Douglass. A detailed and entertaining study of a parson-highwayman legend of the Sussex/Surrey borders, the Rev. James Fielding JP (1740-1817). £5

Museum volunteer Brian Weekes takes a break at Bayleaf Farmstead to light up his pipe and have a chat with bee skep demonstrator, Dick Tutton.

### 7 December 10.00-5.00

*The Ritual Protection of the Post Medieval House:* Timothy Easton and June Swann. An exploration of how shoes, animal bones, and scratchmarks on doors and chimney beams were intended to give protection. £20

### 25 January 10.30-12.30

*Tree Trunks to Tallboys:* David Olby and Andrew Cossar. The history and construction of early furniture: an illustrated talk and demonstration with a woodturning lathe. £5

### 22 February 10.30-12.30

*Enjoying Buildings - an Introduction to Architecture:* Celia Clark. £5

To book send cheque (payable to Weald and Downland Museum) and sac to Carol Hawkins at the Museum office, or ask for more details. All charges include refreshments.

*Buildings in the Landscape - The Western Weald:* Marjorie Hallam. A repeat of this popular four-part course, starting 8 March. Please request leaflet.

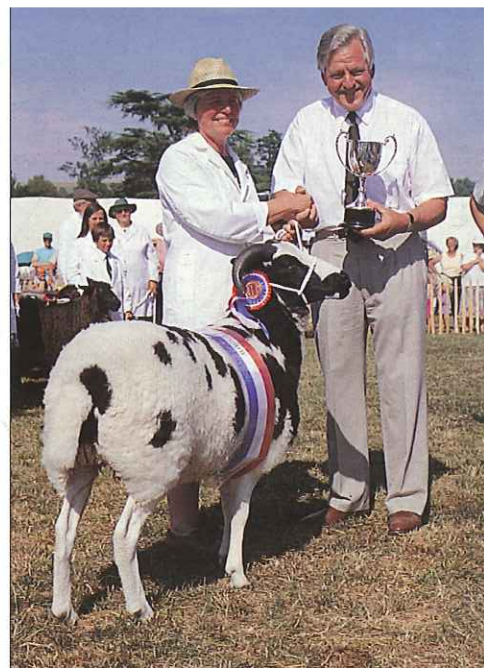
Date for your diary: *Human Beings and the Landscape* is a four-day course of lectures and study visits on the social history, cultural geography and archaeology of the South Downs on 29 May-1 June organised by the Museum in conjunction with West Dean College where it will be based.

*Shire horse work experience days:* enquire for details.

## Christmas shopping and tree dressing - 30 November-1 December

This year's Christmas shopping weekend promises two entertaining and fruitful days out for visitors. The Museum shop will be a must for Friends and visitors seeking unusual seasonal gifts with a rural life or buildings theme and will include some special extra stock for the occasion. In addition craft producers and demonstrators will be selling a wide variety of gifts from their stalls in the market square and hot chestnuts will be for sale alongside the Museum's Christmas refreshments. As before there will be a specially reduced entrance fee for non-Friends of £2.20 for adults and £1.75 for children.

On Sunday visitors are invited to take part in traditional tree dressing activities. The theme of this year's tree dressing is The Green Man, otherwise known as Jack-in-the-Green, the spirit of the trees. Organised by Traditional Arts Development South East, green man masks will be made from 10.30 am, followed by learning songs and dances ready for the afternoon. Participants should bring green paper or paint, fresh or artificial leaves or flowers, berries, feathers, ears of wheat or barley or anything else natural. Dancing will be at 1.30pm and masks will be hung on the tree at 2pm. Dress in green, brown or yellow if you can.



Mr Nigel Clutton, trustee of the Edward James Foundation and supporter of rare breeds, presents the trophy for the overall interbreed sheep championship at this year's Rare Breeds Show to Linda Beagley of Sherington, near Warminster for her Jacob, Ewe 1.

## EVENTS DIARY

See this page for dates and details of professional courses and lectures.

**28 Oct - 1 Nov** Half Term Opening. Childrens Activities. 10.30am - 5pm

**23 November** Friends' event - Harps through History: Frances Kelly. Crawley Hall. 7.45pm

**30 Nov - 1 Dec** Christmas Shopping and Crafts Weekend. 10.30am-5pm

**1 December** Tree Dressing

**16 December** Carols at North Cray House. 7pm

**26 Dec - 3 Jan** Christmas and New Year Opening. Daily 10.30am - 4pm

**10-15 February** Half Term Opening. 10.30am - 5pm



WEALD &  
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MUSEUM

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## SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY TO PROMOTE YOUR PRODUCT OR SERVICE in the March Magazine

The Weald and Downland Open Air Museum Magazine is mailed annually to 5,000 people and organisations with an interest in historic buildings or countryside skills

To advertise in this magazine contact  
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Sponsorship Trustee at the Museum office  
Tel: 01243 811363 / Fax: 01243 811475