

# WEALD & DOWNLAND OPEN AIR MUSEUM MAGAZINE

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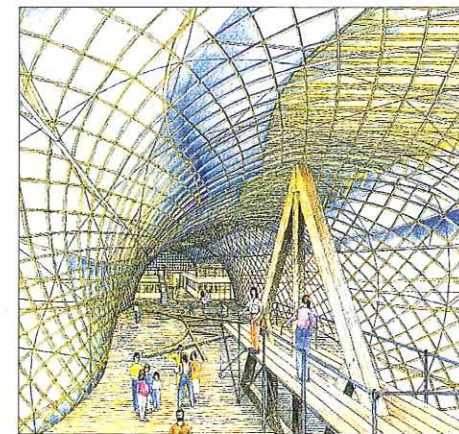
## GREEN LIGHT for the Gridshell!

*Heritage Lottery Fund awards the  
Museum £1.05 million*

The Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded £1.05 million towards the Museum's most ambitious project in its history - the creation of a building conservation centre and museum store within an innovative timber gridshell - a spectacular modern structure to complement our historic building exhibits. The announcement was made just as the Magazine was going to press.

This is the second time the HLF has aided the project, allocating £69,000 for the detailed design work over a year ago. This latest award is 75 per cent of the total cost.

Designed by a distinguished team drawn from Edward Cullinan Architects and Buro Happold



*Artist's impression of the interior of the gridshell, produced by Edward Cullinan Architects.*

Engineers, the building has caused considerable interest in the architectural, engineering and arts press. In an extended article on the work of Buro Happold in the Architects' Journal (AJ) the lightweight timber gridshell was described as complex to engineer but simple to erect. The project "pushes existing computer software to its limit," it said. RIBA Connect (the computer magazine for architects) said the gridshell would show that it is possible to use traditional materials in a new way. The structure by Cullinan is phenomenally strong and makes very efficient use of timber." The building would be the largest of



## MUSEUM GIVEN DESIGNATED STATUS BY THE GOVERNMENT

**I**n June the Museum was delighted to hear that it has been accorded Designated status by the Government for its outstanding collections, one of only 43 to achieve such distinction.

The Designation scheme is intended to focus attention on museums regarded as pre-eminent in the richness and high standards of their collections. It recognises their work as being of national significance and strengthens their claims for support. Designated museums can expect priority consideration by the Heritage Lottery Fund and special attention by Government and other organisations responsible for awarding grant aid. The Department for Culture Media and Sport, in its July spending review, earmarked £15 million challenge funding for designated museums.

The Museum, which celebrated its 30th anniversary last year, is one of the UK's

leading independent museums, receiving no regular local authority or central government support. One of the principal museums of historic buildings in the country, it has achieved a national reputation for the quality of its building restoration work, especially timber-framing, and recognition as a leader in the study of building conservation.

Museum Director Chris Zeuner said: "We are delighted that our work has attracted Designated status. It is especially thrilling for an independently funded museum such as ours to demonstrate quality high enough for national recognition in this way. All our supporters who put in so much time and effort will be very pleased with this announcement."

The certificate of Designated status was formally presented to the Museum by TV broadcaster and ardent museum campaigner Loyd Grossman at the Autumn Countryside Celebration in October.

its kind to be built in the UK.

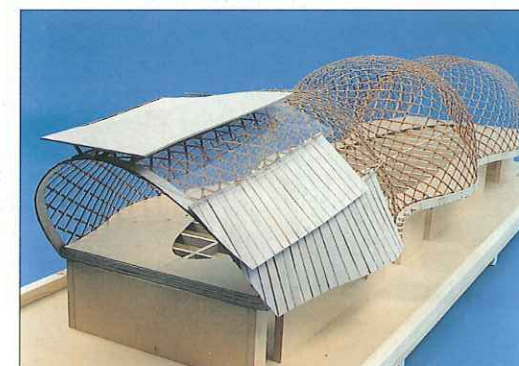
The Museum hopes the gridshell will be seen as a spectacular and appropriate modern building for the countryside. Considerable research has gone into the design, including specialist timber testing at the University of Bath.

The process of erecting the gridshell, set into the hill above Longport House, will be fully accessible to visitors, with special interpretation and "guided tours." Once completed, visitors will be able to watch timber-frames being restored inside; training courses will take place there and the public will have full access to the Museum's collection of building materials and rural life artefacts.

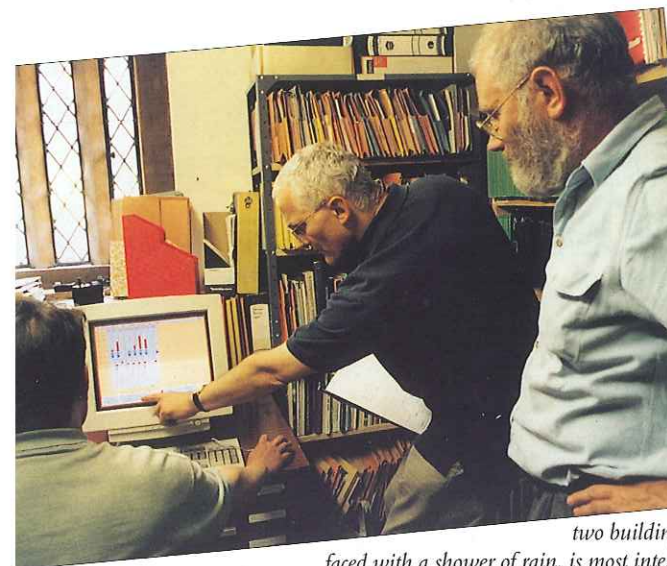
The Museum is now redoubling its efforts to raise the remaining 25 per cent matching funding needed for the project. Promises of assistance have already been made by a number of

foundations and trusts and some materials will be donated in kind. With all falling into place, work is expected to start in Summer next year and the structure should be ready to function in 2000.

*The engineering model for the gridshell, built by Buro Happold Engineers and currently on view in Longport House Reception Centre at the Museum.*







## Buildings Alive! Project moves forward

An important first stage in the Museum's Buildings Alive! project was completed this summer. Using sensors in the Walderton and Whittaker's Cottages, a specialist computer programme compares how the two buildings react to weather, sounds and wear and tear. Eventually visitors will be able to use an interactive programme to discover the results for themselves in an interesting and educational way. In the photograph Museum Research Director Richard Harris (centre) and Museum Director Chris Zeuner (right) discuss the results of the initial monitoring programme with Chris Michael of Meaco, museum exhibition monitoring specialists. "The behaviour of the

two buildings, roofed with very different materials, when faced with a shower of rain, is most interesting!" says Chris Zeuner.

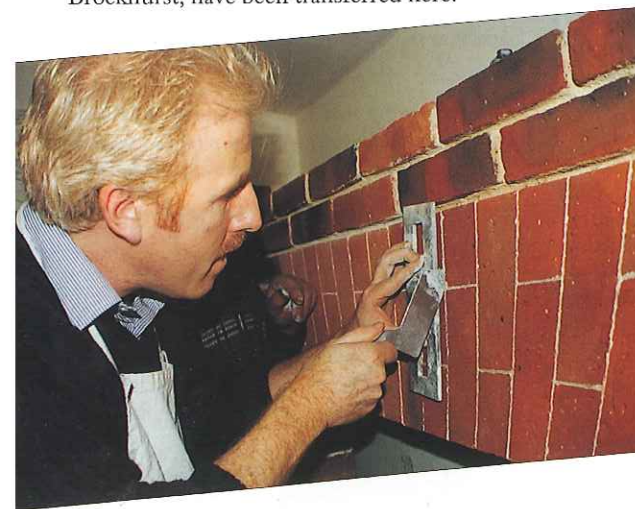
## Building Conservation Masterclasses launch brings new role to West Dean Valley

The villages of West Dean and Singleton now hold the greatest concentration of practical building conservation tuition in the UK.

With the launch in September of the Building Conservation Masterclasses at West Dean College, in partnership with English Heritage and the Weald and Downland Museum, Sir Jocelyn Stevens, chairman of English Heritage, expressed his wish that the partnership's success would play a major role in reversing the "crisis in building craft skills" in the UK.

The Museum will be providing the programme's courses in timber conservation and traditional brickwork on our site, led and taught by Richard Harris, Museum Research Director, with Gerard Lynch, internationally acknowledged leader in the field of historic brickwork conservation and Peter McCurdy, specialist in timber buildings including the reconstruction of the Globe Theatre.

Courses in stone masonry conservation, conservation mortars, flint buildings and conservation engineering will take place at the newly converted Old Dairy at West Dean. The masonry "ruinettes", on which stone conservation can be practised, first established by English Heritage at Fort Brockhurst, have been transferred here.



Gerard Lynch demonstrates pointing during one of his historic brickwork courses at the Museum

□ The Museum has appointed a new member of staff, Diana Rousell, to co-ordinate our wide range of training activities and to develop this aspect further. The post has been made possible through the generosity of the Radcliffe Trust and the Mitford Foulerton Charitable Trust which together have provided the funding.



## Hands-on timber framing

Our second seven-day workshop Timber Framing From Scratch - in which participants create a small timber-framed building from scratch starting with the tree - took place in May. Here tutor Paul Price

demonstrates cross-cut sawing. The workshops offer a rare opportunity for hands-on experience of timber framing. Another workshop is planned for 9-15 November.

## Third MSc course begins

The third MSc in Timber Building Conservation course to be run by the Museum through its partnership with Bournemouth University begins this Autumn. The growing reputation of the course is reflected in the increasing number of students, says Museum Research Director, Richard Harris.

The two-year course, launched in 1994, now attracts four times as many students. The University provides the academic validation of the course and student enrolment and the Museum provides the teaching and assessment, led by Richard Harris with specialist outside lecturers.

The course is intended primarily for people with a practical involvement in the building conservation industry. Fourteen of the total 23 students have

been carpenters or building contractors. Most have been in their 40s and 50s and have brought a wealth of varied experience to the course.

One of the attractions of the course is the arrangement of the teaching in eight four-day units, taking place Thursday-Sunday at two-month intervals, making it easier for busy working people. The units cover: the biology of timber and its decay, the history and development of timber buildings and framing systems, workshop and site organisation and equipment, and methods of conservation and repair.

The full course costs £3,600, plus accommodation and books and materials. In the expanding world of building conservation ability and experience are valued but formal qualifications and specialist knowledge are increasingly demanded as well. Further information 01243 811363.

## Lectures and courses

Building conservation practical/theory courses for professionals and others with an interest in the subject.

19 Nov Recognition and Use of Local Building Materials: Richard Harris

4 Feb Thatch: The Management and Conservation of Thatch in Historic Buildings: James Moir, Nick Molyneux, Terry Hunt and Jo Pollock

11 Feb Design and Specification of Leadwork: Nigel Johnston

12 Feb Leadwork seminar repeated from 11 Feb

25 Feb Repair of Timber Framed Buildings: Richard Harris and Roger Champion

4-6 May Historic Forms of Joining and Pointing Historic Brickwork: Gerard Lynch

### Specials

9-15 Nov Timber Framing from Scratch - 7-day workshop creating a small timber-framed building from scratch starting with the tree - superb opportunity to gain hands-on experience of timber framing: Joe Thompson

Dealing with Change in Historic Buildings - first of two linked day schools: James Strike

15 Feb Design and town planning

24 Mar Building works

Recording Vernacular Buildings for Conservation - three linked day schools: Richard Harris

21 Jan Observing and sketching

11 Mar Imposing a grid  
29 April Studio techniques

### Heavy Horse and Country Skills Courses

7 Nov Horse Ploughing - An Introduction: Peter Albon, Rob Dash

5 Dec Horse Ploughing - "Taking it Forward": Peter Albon, Rob Dash

6 Dec Good Coppice Management: Alan Waters

16 Jan Introduction to the Care and Management of Heavy Horses: Peter Albon

23 Jan Continuous Hurdle Fencing: Alan Waters

20 Feb Heavy Horses - Introduction to Driving: Peter Albon, Rob Dash

12 Mar Charcoal - A Practical Training Day: Alan Waters

20 Mar Heavy Horses - Chain Work: Peter Albon, Rob Dash

10 Apr Heavy Horses - Shaft and Pole Work: Rob Dash

15 May Heavy Horses - Plaiting and Show Preparation: Rob Dash

Further details and costs of the Museum's lectures and courses can be obtained from the Museum office on 01243 811363.

## The Big Burn!

The biggest traditional charcoal earth burn since the 1930s took place at the Museum in August, led by Museum charcoal burner Alan Waters and Cumbria woodcollier Arthur Barker. The kiln was three times the size of the regular two-day charcoal burns at the Museum. Using a variety of hardwoods to build a 10ft high kiln, the process took four days and yielded 2,270 kg of charcoal. The Museum's charcoal is sold mostly for barbecue use through a number of B&Q stores, BP garages and local outlets. The kiln offered a chance for training for a number of potential and established charcoal burners. Alan Waters' next course is on 12 March.



## All a question of poise

This year the super interbreed champion pig - Exfold Princess 53, stood still for the photograph! Dave Overton of Dorking, who has had considerable success nationally with his Gloucester Old Spots pigs this year, received his trophy from Museum Director Chris Zeuner. Meanwhile, in the young handlers ring (inset), some people have to resort to interesting tactics to persuade their animals to move at all!



## Getting stuck in

Our new Visitor Services Manager, Bob Easson, wasted no time in acquainting himself with the fascinating story the Museum tells visitors about historic buildings. Here he discusses the Museum's activities with his opposite number (also new) at the Museum of Norfolk Rural Life, Gressenhall.

Bob comes to us following a distinguished career with the Royal Navy, during which time he gained considerable experience of organisation, motivation and direction of both naval and civilian personnel. A seaman officer and physical training specialist, he organised and ran major Naval sporting events including training large

teams of naval ratings for mast manning, field gun and cutlass swinging at major shows, the Cardiff, Edinburgh and Berlin Military Tattoos and the Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall. He was responsible for sporting policy, general welfare and adventure training within the fleet of 30,000 personnel as well as the financial administration of all fleet sport and Bob spent three years in Her Majesty's Yacht, Britannia, as the Boats and Seaman specialist (Bosun) with particular responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of the Royal Family, and he was the commanding officer of a large amphibious warship, HMS Intrepid. Elected the Armed Forces Man of the Year in 1986 for organising the shoreside evacuation of British and Foreign Nationals during the civil war in South Yemen, he was awarded the Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct a year later. We think he'll have no difficulty coping at the Museum!





## FRIENDS NEWS ...

The Friends is offering a fantastic opportunity to see the beauty and experience the culture and friendliness of Northern Ireland for its 1999 Spring Tour. The visit, from 22-27 April, includes day-long trips to two open air museums, the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Cultra and the Ulster American Folk Park.

Leaving the Museum by coach and flying from Gatwick to Belfast City Airport, participants will stay at the Clandeboyne Lodge Hotel, near Bangor. The visit includes a guided tour of Belfast with a Blue Badge Guide and a trip along the beautiful Antrim coast with a stop to see the Giant's Causeway.

A whole day will be spent at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum with an illustrated talk from Dr Philip Robinson the evening before on *Vernacular Houses in Ulster*. A morning will be spent at Castle Espie, part of the Wildfowl and Wetland Trust, and an afternoon at Mount Stewart, the 18th century home of Lord Castlereagh, now belonging to the National Trust. The Ulster American Folk Park provides an opportunity to understand life in Ireland at the time of the potato famine and the emigration of families to America. En route there will be a visit to Tyrone Crystal. During the trip there will also be a visit to the Irish Linen Centre, Lisburn.

The cost is £400 per person (single room supplement - £50), which includes air and coach fares, lunch on Sunday and visits to all properties except the National Trust and lunch on Sunday. You are advised to make your own arrangements for travel insurance. For further information contact Jean Piggott on 01730 813126. An application form is

enclosed with this magazine (Friends' copies only).

□ In between supporting the Museum members of the Friends have been occupied on a variety of visits to interesting places elsewhere - the Spring tour was in South Wales and included visits to the Welsh Folk Museum at St Fagans, the exotic Castle Coch and the spectacular Gower peninsula. Later in the year they visited Mottisfont Abbey, Whitchurch Silk Mill and Highclere Castle in Hampshire, and Syon House in London, plus the now almost obligatory annual trip to the home of Gospel Green Cheese. Full details of next year's excursions will be in the March 1999 magazine.

□ The Museum's flourishing Junior Friends group has been busy on a wide range of activities this year - making knot gardens, weaving, paper making, blacksmithing, lead casting, cooking, bricklaying, school role play and a Victorian laundry day. The annual summer camp had a Tudor theme, taking advantage of the assistance of the History Re-enactment Workshop based at Pendean Farmhouse. They led sessions on Tudor costume, role play, Tudor games, butter making and Tudor dances. The children built shelters in the woods and slept in them overnight or in the North Cray House. The Saturday night feast included spit roast pork and chicken cooked by parents and Marjorie Pither read traditional stories by candle light.

□ Date for your diary - the Friends annual general meeting will be on 17 April. Full details in the March 1999 magazine.

## Gardening tours attract green-fingered visitors

Every gardening year has its high and low points, reports Museum Gardener, Bob Holman, who with his team of volunteers cares for the five historic gardens at the Museum.

This year there was no need to water the gardens, but there was a plague of caterpillars (nice to have the butterflies though!) There was no blackfly on the beans or slugs in the potatoes but a poor crop of onions and poor germination with brassicas. Those that did come through were relished by the pigeons! The kale and collards at Bayleaf were untouched and regenerated well after the caterpillars had had their share.

A new introduction this year was gardening tours every Monday, enabling keen visitors to discover more about this fascinating aspect of the Museum. Among the interesting people the gardening team met were a Swiss psychiatrist studying

herbal remedies, a lecturer in Medieval studies at the University of London and many Americans who were fascinated with the whole Museum.

Whittaker's garden is still in its infancy but good crops of beans, peas, potatoes and onions were produced. A permanent fence will be put up around the vegetable plot this winter and a lawn sown at the far end under the cherry trees. Bulbs will be planted and a couple of seats introduced beneath the trees to enable visitors to enjoy the atmosphere of the cottage garden.

Bayleaf garden is to be refenced in the winter and a rabbit-proof fence introduced at Hangleton Cottage, where the gardeners have a hard task fighting the appetites of the rabbits and deer. Thinning of the shaws around Bayleaf will continue, and watch out for Gill and Thelma's spectacular bonfires this Autumn.

## News in brief

□ The Museum welcomed 250 curators and museum directors from around the UK during the Museums Association annual conference at Portsmouth in September. Chris Zeuner, Richard Harris, Sue Shave and others guided them around the site including Bayleaf Farmhouse, the Mill, the charcoal burner's camp, Whittaker's Cottages and the Market Square ending the evening with a buffet in a marquee. The group included directors of national museums and many museum professionals who had not had an opportunity to visit the Museum before. They clearly very much enjoyed their visit, many regarding it as a highlight of the conference.

□ During a visit by trustees of Amberley Chalk Pits Museum, their Chairman Brian Johnson presented the Museum Director Chris Zeuner



with an item from their collection which was felt to be more relevant to the Weald and Downland Museum - the cast iron top of a Singleton road signpost! We hope to display it somewhere appropriate in the future. Brian Johnson visited the Museum again in August when he provided excellent commentary at the Downs Steam Show.

□ Another Out of the Wood Show is planned for next year - this time to be held earlier, on 15/16 May. Following last year's success it will again be sponsored by Chichester timber merchants D Cover and Sons, and presented in association with *Downs Country* magazine. The event is a festival of wood - from buildings and furniture, garden products and sculpture to timber production, conservation and conversion - an occasion not to be missed.

□ The Museum hosted a seminar for Chichester District Council designed to help parish councillors engaged in producing Village Design Statements. Museum Research Director Richard Harris concentrated on identification and recognition of local traditional building materials.



## Education Department buzzes as Winter sets in

The Museum's vibrant education department has launched yet more new initiatives ready for the Winter and next season!

□ Schools have the opportunity to try something new with Victorian Rural Life workshops every day of the week except Wednesdays from the beginning of November to the end of February, 10.00am - 2.00pm. Activities will be based on the Museum's excellent resources for this period - the West Wittering School, Whittaker's Cottages and the agricultural and rural crafts exhibits. Children will be able to cook puddings



and stews on top of the range at Whittaker's, take part in a Victorian lesson in the school, experience laundry with the Education Department's handling collection of laundry equipment and try some Winter agricultural tasks, such as fence mending. They will even be able to choose sewing, carpentry or blacksmithing to do and full sessions on agriculture will be available on request. These new activities will run alongside the established Bayleaf Farmstead Workshops.

Sue Shave expects the workshops will be very popular as children often study the Victorians at Key Stage 1 (5-7 years) and Key Stage 2 (7-11 years). Sue and her tireless team of education volunteers are keen to recruit new helpers to enable the Museum to run as many workshops as possible. Briefing sessions will be held for them. If anyone would like to help please contact Sue at the Museum office.

**Sue Shave would welcome more volunteers for her busy education department. If you would like to help please contact Sue at the Museum office on 01243 811363.**

□ The new National Literacy Scheme set up by the Government to promote literacy skills in primary school children requires schools to spend an hour a day in structured work for this - concern has been raised that this has affected museum visits. But at a recent



### Gathering in the harvest

The small paddock in front of Bayleaf Farmhouse yielded a bountiful crop of Chidham wheat - an old long-stemmed variety suitable for thatching - in August (see front page). The corn was cut by scythe and tied by hand in bundles using straw rope. Our sparmaker Albert Peacock brought his long experience to bear in teaching the hand harvesting methods. Peter Albon (inset), Nick Conway and Pete Betsworth all helped. To complete the traditional processes members of the History Re-enactment Workshop, based again in Pendean Farmhouse, demonstrated gleaning (above), a task usually carried out by women and children.



### Moisture in the air!

The Museum hosted the Downs Steam Show for the first time in August. One of the major events for steam enthusiasts in the south, it attracted over 5,000 people. Pictured is the line-up in the main ring of magnificent steam engines and lorries; and, below, a steam roller is used to improve the track leading to the Museum's stables.



conference of the Group for Education in Museums attended by Sue Shave, it was made clear by literacy consultants that time was being allowed for at least one day a week when other aspects of English teaching could be explored. So museum visits are expected to increase again soon.

We have responded rapidly to the challenge and Sue and a small group of volunteers who currently teach in schools have met to develop ideas for assisting teachers with the literacy hour. Feedback from teachers suggests that their main need is for non-fiction materials to use in class - there does not seem to be much demand for the Museum to begin teaching a literacy hour. So Sue, Jon Roberts and Pat Goodwin will be developing packs with archive materials and photographs of Bayleaf Farmhouse and suggestions for related literacy work to be carried out in class.

□ Sue Shave is launching a new scheme to provide workshops for school/ nursery groups of very young children between the ages of 4 and 7. She hopes eventually to have a hands-on building materials workshop for them. In the meantime volunteers are being recruited to help children in these groups study one or two buildings or take part in some short buildings activities during their visit. If you are interested in helping with young children at the Museum please contact Sue at the office.

## Gently does it . . .

The 18th century windpump was lifted back into position by the millpond early in the summer following restoration after damage during the winter storms of a year ago.

The work was carried out by Robert Demaus, engineer and building diagnostics specialist, who repaired the timbers and maintained the machinery at his workshop in Leominster, Herefordshire. The structure was lifted back into position by crane with the help of staff and volunteers who steadied it on ropes. Since then volunteer Alan Woods, a retired engineer, has restored the pump machinery at the base and made a new wooden leat. Finally reeds have been planted around the windpump to improve the surrounding landscaping.

The windpump has been a familiar feature at the Museum for several years. A rare survival of a piece of wooden machinery once common in the south east, the pump is from an old clay pit near Pevensey. Today it is thought only three survive. The windpump was rescued for the Museum by the late Frank Gregory.

### Christmas shopping and tree dressing

One of the busiest weekends at the Museum in the run-up to Christmas is Saturday/Sunday 5/6 December when the annual tree dressing ceremony combines with special Christmas shopping opportunities in the Museum shop.

Earth, Air, Fire and Water is the theme for this year's tree dressing ceremony on Sunday, 6 December from 12 noon - 4.30 pm. The day includes morris dancing, songs, stories and plays with a lantern procession at the end of the day at 4.00 pm. To join the lantern-making workshop (12 noon - 3.30 pm), don't forget to bring a jam jar and night light! Rabble Folk Theatre will lead the day with the help of the Museum's Junior Friends. Mulled wine and mince pies will be served and everyone is welcome.

The Museum shop will be in festive mood for the whole weekend, offering an excellent opportunity to buy Christmas presents with a buildings or countryside theme. The shop has a reputation for its wide range of books on these subjects, which is continually expanded with new titles and could provide just the gift needed for a friend or relative keen on architecture or the countryside.

## A very popular cottage

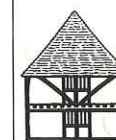
Museum carpenter Roger Champion has worked steadily at the restoration and repair of 16th century Poplar Cottage during the Summer beneath a temporary structure in the backyard of the market square. Visitors have

been able to watch the process and Roger has interpreted the methods and techniques he uses to conserve timber frames. The frame of the cottage will be rebuilt on its new site at the Museum next Easter.



## Winter diary

- |                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>6 December</b>              | Tree dressing. Museum shop opened for Christmas shopping. |
| <b>21 December</b>             | Christmas Carols at North Cray House. 7.00 pm.            |
| <b>26 December - 3 January</b> | Christmas and New Year Opening. Daily 10.30 am - 4.00 pm. |
| <b>13 - 21 February</b>        | Half Term Opening. 10.30 am - 5.00 pm.                    |



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