

# Museum Times

CELEBRATING OUR 50TH YEAR | 1970-2020 | WEALD & DOWNLAND LIVING MUSEUM | 5 SEPTEMBER 1970

## A WINDOW ON THE PAST IS OPEN AT LAST!



Visitors arriving on the first day of opening

**Today marks the grand opening of the Weald & Downland Open Air Museum. Created to rescue threatened buildings and give them a new home, the Museum offers everyone the chance to see, experience and understand how people used to live.**

**The opening was a roaring success with visitors paying 4 shillings to visit and explore the buildings that a team of volunteers and craftsmen and women have resurrected and revived.**

So might have read a newspaper article from our very first day.

### Celebrating 50 Years

Welcome to a special one-off 50th Annual to celebrate the Weald & Downland Living Museum's golden anniversary.

We first opened to the public on the 5 September 1970 with just seven exhibits. Today, we have 53 exhibit buildings, all originating from the counties of Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire and Kent - the 'Weald and Downland' region - ranging from a Tudor farmstead and a 1908 tin tabernacle to the only working watermill in Sussex, each conserved and restored to working life.

Over the past 50 years the Museum has given a sense of place and wonder to many with our collection of historic buildings at the heart. It reminds and educates everyone who visits of the past which in turn connects us to our present, something that will stand the test of time in an ever-changing future. The Museum has provided the chance to witness a living past as well as being a place to enjoy a family day out or a quiet walk with the dog for over 6 million visitors. It's even been a rite of passage for many a school child to experience first-hand the iron rule of a Victorian classroom!

A constant from the very beginning has been the support of you, our Members. The Museum had just £12 in its bank account on that first day. With the inception of the then Friends of the Weald & Downland Open Air Museum, we were gifted the financial support needed to plan for the future. Your support continues to sustain us today. Thank you.

It's fair to say it hasn't been the birthday year that we had planned. However, with the chaos of 2020, we feel that it is more important than ever to celebrate. We believe the pandemic has highlighted what is important: a chance to pause, to appreciate what we have and to share it. Now, more than ever, we hope that the Museum has provided an important space for you, our community.

So, we're going to pour ourselves a glass of Babycham and put Smokey on the turntable to celebrate. Cheers!

Simon Wardell, Museum Director



Sparkles,  
just the  
way I want  
to feel.

## That was then; This is now

	1970	2020
British Prime Minister	Sir Ted Heath (Conservative)	Boris Johnson (Conservative)
UK Population	55.55 million	66.65 million
Number one	Smokey Robinson & the Miracles - Tears of a Clown	Ariana Grande - Positions
Pint of Milk	5p	49p
Pint of Beer	14.5p	£3.95
Gallon of fuel	33p	£4.31
Loaf of bread	10p	£1
Average house price	£4,500	£256,000
Most popular children's names	Sarah and Paul	Charlotte and Oliver





# Celebrations of home

It's good to know that there are some things which stand the test of time; birthday celebrations, community spirit, classic cars, sporting excellence and, of course, the rolling hills of the South Downs. And that very special sense of 'home'.

The amazing properties on display at The Weald & Downland Museum for 50 years reveal just how important our homes have always been, even if our lifestyles have changed somewhat since they were first constructed.

That's why, whenever one of our Henry Adams property experts is invited to provide a market appraisal, advise on lettings potential, or to discuss land or agricultural opportunities, we always remember your home is as individual and unique as you are.



"Henry Adams was founded in 1990 in Chichester on the cornerstone of providing excellent service to homeowners

throughout the area," says Philip Jordan, Chief Executive at Henry Adams. "And although technology has moved on so much in the last 30 years, that ethos remains the same and always will.

"Many of our colleagues have been part of the Henry Adams team for more than 15 years and their experience is invaluable in making sure our clients receive the best possible service. They've seen all the ups and downs of the market along with different trends in property styles and they know how to guide you through the ever-changing property market.

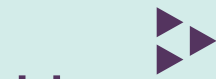
"We instil these values into every member of our team which is why you can rely on us whenever you're ready to move home, invest in property, or when you

need a planning expert or professional survey. And our new homes team works with many of the leading house builders in the UK who are, right now, building the homes of the future."

So whatever type of home you own, or would like to buy or let, get in touch with a one of our friendly specialists at your local Henry Adams office in Sussex, Hampshire or Surrey.

We'd love to hear from you. Whether that's today, tomorrow, or even in another 30 years, you can always rely on Henry Adams to help you move home.

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 **Henry Adams**  
simply different



# THE OPEN AIR MUSEUM: IDEA AND REALITY, BY J.R.ARMSTRONG



Roger Champion and Joe Thompson timber framing



Tindalls Cottage

## Extracts from a paper published by the Museum's founder in the Ancient Monuments Society's Transactions in 1975

The general idea of what constitutes an Open Air Museum will be familiar to most of us even though it is only in the last few years that the name has been applied to anything in this country. The preference has been to use terms such as "Folk Museum" or "Museum of Rural Life". Those who are familiar with the most important Open Air Museums on the Continent, where the term has been generally accepted as a descriptive title, will know that although the essential element is the erection or restoration of buildings, and the attempt to make a complete three-dimensional setting of a way of living or working, there are many differences in approach; and that no two museums are exactly alike in their aims.

In Norway and Sweden today there are nearly fifty open air museums, ranging from small groups of half a dozen buildings representing the traditions of a particular valley, to large collections of fifty or more buildings [...] The first Open Air Museum in the British Isles to be open to the public was that of St. Fagan's, near Cardiff. It forms part of the National Museum of Wales, and has the status of a national museum, and is concerned with vernacular buildings and the Welsh way of life .... During the past four years, museums within this category have been started and the first opened to the public, at Stoke Prior in Worcestershire, at Stowmarket in Suffolk, at Beamish Hall in Durham, at Hutton le Hole in Yorkshire, at Coalbrookdale in Shropshire, at Morwellham in Cornwall, at Stoke Bruerne near Northampton and at Singleton in Sussex. All these ventures are differently oriented. The only feature that unites them is that they are all concerned with groups of buildings, whether restored in situ or moved to within a landscape area capable of accommodating them.

It has not been easy to find phrases which define, or to invent any simple formulation of our aims. At the entrance, for example, there is a noticeboard saying 'Museum of Historic Buildings', on our headed paper appears 'The Open Air Museum, Singleton'. When coupled with 'Weald & Downland' (its full title) there is a fairly clear indication of the region covered. But this description conveys only a generalized purpose; the other phrase 'historic buildings' can, by suggesting some limitation, be misleading. One definition emphasizes the individual importance rather than the generic significance of the buildings

A volunteer BBQ at the Museum in 1971



exhibited, the other implies a preoccupation with buildings as something apart from their furnishings, as well as the exclusion of traditional crafts, with some of which the Museum is definitely concerned. [...] At the time of writing, the following brief formulation is being considered for Singleton. 'Our purpose is to create a museum of representative traditional buildings which it is impossible to preserve in situ, rebuilt with associated crafts and furnishings for enjoyment, research and instruction'. Every one of the key works in this apparently clear and simple statement can be differently interpreted, or the emphasis shifted - words such as 'traditional', 'furnishings', 'crafts', 'research', 'enjoyment' can all be understood in subtly different ways.



Fiona Hargreaves Museum Interpreter

In accepting only buildings which cannot be preserved in situ, logically the Museum must, whether directly or indirectly, be actively 'preservationist, ready to give advice and help to any individual, society or local authority concerned with preservation. Already we can say that three important medieval buildings, which otherwise would probably have disappeared without trace, have been preserved and will be restored though the influence and recommendations of the Museum. This we regard as an extremely important aspect of the Museum's work. But it also follows that the scope of the Museum itself must be limited by what buildings may become available, and not by what it might be able to acquire, had it the means, in order to create an ideally balance and representative collection.



# ‘INSPIRED BY FIRES’: THE FOUNDING OF THE MUSEUM



The view from Tollgate

**Taken from ‘Building History’, chapter two by Kim Leslie**

In any formal sense the Museum dates from October 1965. This was when the suggestion was first discussed at a conference of the Study Group on Timber-framed Buildings of the Weald at Balneath Manor, Chailey in East Sussex, held against an alarming background: that so many historic buildings, even those listed for protection, were being condemned to make way for new development. It was a sad and distressing story. In Surrey over 350 historic buildings had been destroyed between 1951 and 1965. The demolition rate in Kent was probably as high as three a month. Roy Armstrong underlined this catalogue of destruction by what had been happening in Sussex in the construction of Crawley New Town.

**“three buildings worth preserving – burnt on gigantic bonfires”**

Writing about Crawley in June 1965 he said that within the last six months he had seen “three buildings worth preserving... two with unique features – literally consigned to the flames, the buildings being pulled apart with cables and caterpillar tractors ... the main

timbers, although in excellent condition, burnt on gigantic bonfires”. To save others similarly threatened from the developer’s claw, Roy suggested creating an ‘Open Air Museum of the Weald’ on a site somewhere central to the Weald. There was reference to a specific house: “Bayleaf...could well become available for removal to a museum. It is threatened with submergence in a reservoir within the next two years”.

Within a year, in September 1966, Roy was convening the first meeting of the Committee for the Promotion of an Open Air Museum for the Weald and Downland. This clumsily-named committee took on all the initial groundwork that set the Museum in motion: finding a site, rescuing the first buildings, all the initial publicity and fundraising and setting up a business company acceptable to the Charity Commissioners.

**“Substantial obstacles to be overcome”**

A location for the Museum had to be found and after considerable searching the current site was agreed with the recently formed Edward James Foundation. Edward James himself, whose family had owned West Dean since 1891, was delighted at the prospect. Larger than life, a patron of the arts, poet and writer,

the eccentric backer of so much creativity, his support was vital.

There were substantial obstacles to be overcome in setting up the Museum. Roy was ideal in countering any opposition. Criticism was never a deterrent. His other strength was his ability to bring together professionals, experts and influential people to advise and guide. Many people are to be thanked in this respect, including John Lowe who generously agreed to work as the Museum’s part-time Director for the first year without a salary from May 1969. He came with considerable and prestigious museum experience behind



Ploughing the fields with heavy horses

him and his first major task was organising a fundraising appeal to further the work of the Museum and save historic buildings.

Progress on the Museum site depended on a growing band of helpers, also giving their skills and labour for nothing. Initially this started on the work for public access: cutting footpaths, coppicing woodland, planting trees, making picnic areas. The Upper Beeding toll house from near Steyning was the first of several buildings to be dismantled by volunteers. Caught up in this very specific atmosphere, the Museum changed the direction of several peoples’ lives.

A major milestone was reached in spring 1966 when Gunolt Greiner arrived on site with his tent and mobile workshop. The task: to re-erect Winkhurst, the Museum’s first landmark

building. Living and working on site was much in line with the style of itinerant medieval craftsmen – a good omen: indeed Gunolt’s skills had already earned him a reputation as one of the last carpenters in the country with knowledge of medieval craftsmanship. Roger Champion acted as Gunolt’s assistant, his first job cutting the wooden pegs for pinning the frame together. With his incredible skills and instinctive talent for handling timber, Roger soon became the key worker on the site as the Museum’s master carpenter after Gunolt’s departure. Many of the Museum’s exhibits, and furniture, as we know them today were put together by Roger.

**“We seriously wondered whether anyone would turn up”**

On Saturday 5 September 1970 the Museum opened its gates to the public for the very first time; the first of six weekends to see what was advertised as ‘work in progress’. We seriously wondered whether anyone would turn up, but were not to be disappointed. Visitors poured in. Between Saturday 5 September and Sunday 11 October a total of 7,198 visitors came through the gates, adults at four shillings each and children under 14 at one shilling. At this time there were just seven exhibits for visitors to see: Winkhurst, Littlehampton granary, Catherington treadwheel, the charcoal burner’s camp, the saw pit, the Saxon weavers’ hut and the Upper Beeding Toll House.



Destruction of medieval Crawley for the New Town development



A newspaper article from the time charting the destruction of historic buildings in Crawley

Winkhurst Hall, the first building to be re-erected at the Museum, was originally the family home of the Barrow family. See them here outside their home in 1955 and images from a newspaper article from the mid-60s charting the hall’s move to the Museum.





# Timeline 1970 - 2020



Shave horse and draw knife demonstration



A thatching course in progress

## 1970 - 1979

- ◆ The Museum opens to the public after an industrious period in the 1960s for founder Dr Roy Armstrong and his supporters who are already rescuing threatened historic buildings.

- ◆ Bayleaf Farmhouse, a significant late medieval Wealden hall house is saved from the Bough Beech Reservoir site, is conserved and re-erected at the Museum.



- ◆ By 1973 annual visitor admissions had already reached over 111,000.

- ◆ In 1975 the Museum wins the coveted National Heritage Museum of the Year Award: the prize is collected in London by the Museum's Director, Chris Zeuner.



Museum director Chris Zeuner collecting the Heritage Museum of the Year Award 1975

## 1980 - 1989

- ◆ The BBC chart the dismantling and reconstruction of Walderton house with a full-length documentary in the BBC Chronicle series.

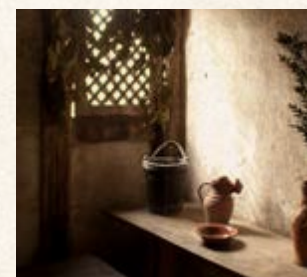


The Lurgashall Mill

- ◆ The decade sees enormous growth with a large number of buildings rescued from destruction, and the opening of many newly re-erected buildings, including the medieval house from North Cray; the medieval shop from Horsham; the Wiston wagon shed; the Petersfield brick drying shed; the carpenter's shop from Windlesham; the medieval barn from Cowfold; and Lurgashall Watermill which, after the creation of millponds, began regular production of stoneground wholemeal flour.

- ◆ The pioneering Bayleaf Medieval Farmstead project opens, following intensive research and furnishing of the house, garden, farmyard and barn, including sourcing appropriate livestock!

- ◆ The Museum wins the Times/Shell Community Museum of the Year Award.



## 1990 - 1999

- ◆ Founder, Roy Armstrong MBE, receives an honorary degree of Doctor of Letters from the University of Sussex, at the age of 90.

- ◆ Museum Director, Chris Zeuner chairs the Association of Independent Museums and is appointed president of the European Association of Open Air Museums.

- ◆ As part of the Museum's commitment to lifelong learning, the Joint Centre for Heritage Conservation & Management is launched in partnership with the University of Bournemouth. The Museum's two MSc courses, in timber building conservation and building conservation begin four years later.



Longport under reconstruction

- ◆ The Museum rescues Longport Farmhouse from the path of the 'new' Channel Tunnel development and rehomes it at the Museum.

- ◆ The Museum receives the much coveted 'Designated' status by Government, a classification that recognises 'pre-eminent' collections of special national and international importance.

- ◆ The Museum Endowment is born following a substantial legacy gift from the Minet family.



## 2000 - 2009

- ◆ Work begins on the creation of the £1.3 million Downland Gridshell, a unique modern structure designed by architect Edward Cullinan, to provide a new building conservation workshop and artefact collections store.

- ◆ Chris Zeuner OBE, MA dies at the age of 55 after leading the Museum's formative years of development. Richard Harris becomes the new Director.

- ◆ The Designation Challenge Fund supports the Winkhurst Tudor Kitchen and Pendean Farmhouse research and furnishing projects, and a conservation and access programme for the Museum's artefact collections.



- ◆ The Museum welcomes its five millionth visitor in September, 35 years after opening.

- ◆ A Knowledge Transfer Partnership with the University of Reading enables Dr Danae Tankard to research the social and economic background to the Museum's main exhibits.

- ◆ The Museum marks its 40th anniversary and hosts a conference entitled 'Building Conservation Comes of Age', and a visit from HRH The Prince of Wales, his second to the Museum.

## 2010 - 2019

- ◆ The Museum wins a Europa Nostra award for its historic building conservation training programme and is named a Grand Prix laureate by the European Commission, in recognition of outstanding heritage achievements.

- ◆ The 18th century Tindall's Cottage is conserved and re-erected on site, 38 years after it was rescued from Bewl Water Reservoir near Ticehurst, East Sussex.

- ◆ New building exhibits include the replica Anglo-Saxon Hall House, the 18th/19th century May Day Farm barn and stable from the Kent Weald, the dairy from Eastwick Park, and the village bakehouse from Newdigate.

- ◆ A review of how the Museum presents its buildings for visitors leads to an increase in craft and skills demonstrations and the increasingly popular Historic Life Weekends which focus on particular themes.

- ◆ In 2017 the Museum opens its £5.5 million 'Gateway Project', a new visitor centre with interpretation galleries, a café and shop. The project received a £4 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.



Harvest procession 2005



Woven basket demonstration



Tindalls Cottage under construction



The view from the Gateway buildings



# ICONS REVISITED

Here we take a look back at two iconic buildings at the Museum and two key times in the Museum's development: The project to set up Bayleaf Tudor farmstead in 1989, an early opportunity to show the social history of a house, as fully as possible, alongside understanding the structure, and the opening of the Downland Gridshell, our conservation workshop and artefacts store, in 2002.

A sense of the excitement of each development is there in both articles, as well as an idea of the hard work that had gone into making these achievements possible and the teamwork that enabled it. As we continue to plan new projects, it is good to look back at how these initiatives and so much more have taken place at the Museum. The encouragement of learning,

informal and formal, permeates the whole timeline of the Museum and it is this involvement that inspires people - from the 5-year-old in 1973 who now volunteers, the young man who picked up a museum flyer and became the Museum Carpenter and the Demonstrator who first came to the Museum as part of our youth group, alongside many others whose lives who have been shaped in part by the Museum.

## THE BAYLEAF MEDIEVAL FARMSTEAD

An Exciting Development in Interpretation  
Written by Chris Zeuner. First published in 1989



Bayleaf in its new home

On May 26th [1989] we shall open the recreated medieval farmstead at Bayleaf farmhouse, a new and exciting development that in many respects will change the course of the Museum.

In the early days of the Museum it was decided that the buildings should be erected as they were when they were first built, without later additions, and largely devoid of furnishings. This policy was followed with Winkhurst, Pendean, Boarhunt and Bayleaf. It was felt that if the buildings were furnished this would detract interest and attention from the structure of the building, and as the Museum set out first and foremost to be a Museum of Buildings this would weaken our effectiveness in communication to visitors about building structure and plan.

We have however found other ways of interpreting buildings and it is important to communicate the uses of buildings also.

One example is Walderton House where one

end is divided into two to show the interior at two periods, the medieval time and the 17th century, which has included furnishing on the ground floor to show the room as it might have been. It is not, however, fully furnished and only gives an idea of the room. It is far from a complete picture.

### Levels

The project divides into a number of sections - the furnishing of the house, creation of the garden, farming equipment and livestock for the farmstead, the landscaping of the area, the exhibition within the building and the Farming History Exhibition in the adjacent cattleshed. The way in which each of these elements works for our visitors will be different, and there will be a number of levels through which the Exhibition and the objects communicate with visitors.

Firstly, there will be the atmosphere of the complex - the visual delight, of course the buildings will always have an important

advantage of the recreated elements because they are real historic objects. People who come to museums expect to see and relate to real object rather than mere explanations.

Many visitors will be satisfied with this level of enjoyment, but many will not. They will be able to take advantage of the more detailed interpretative tools we will be introducing.

The second level will be the provision of an Interpreter. The role of this person will be to enable the visitor to understand what they are looking at and to assist them in enjoying their visit. She and her assistants will not be there primarily to give detailed information, (although this is part of the role) rather to lead the visitor in the way in which they can use the complex.

The third level will be an Exhibition above the service rooms in Bayleaf, which will seek to explain each of the sections of the recreated farmstead and in particular to show how we have made decisions in the selection of items and aspects on view.



Under construction

The search that has been undertaken is considerable and many people have been involved. The road to discovery for those historians concerned with this unusual project has been an exciting one, and we hope that through this Exhibition we can show something of that road to visitors and explain



Bayleaf in its original home in Chiddingstone, Kent

how many of the decisions have been based on a variety of sources of evidence, some more definite than others. [...] Richard Harris, assisted by many other people, has been engaged in the preparation of this Project over the last two years, using inventories (some of which have not been researched before), archaeological evidence, written sources, maps and manuscripts.

From these we established a "shopping list" for each section. The next stage was to find illustrations of surviving evidence for each of the items we needed to reproduce. To give some examples might be interesting for readers. One of the necessary items for the farm is the cart. Richard Harris and myself [Director, Chris Zeuner], advised by David

Clarke from the Museum of London, and from a practical point of view by Keith Randall, a local Wheelwright, used the material available to decide on a reconstruction which we feel is correct.

### Cart

The illustration of a two wheeled cart in the Luttrell Psalter is well-known. This is supported by a number of other illustrations, though mostly Flemish and French. In translating the drawing into a reconstruction the advice of David Clarke based on what little archaeological evidence there was, has been very important.

We finally agreed a drawing and Keith Randall has now completed the reconstruction. This

work led to a consideration of the size of horse that would have been used and it was decided that an animal of 14.2hh would be the maximum that would be accurate. Consulting with Stephen Hall from the Department of Mammalian Studies at Cambridge, we concluded that this animal must be of a native pony variety and agreed that a Dale or Fell, or possibly a New Forest pony would be an acceptable compromise in illustrating the smaller size of carthorse that was used at the time. Indeed, a Dale pony has been offered to the Museum and will be resident by Easter.

### Furniture

For the furniture we consulted Victor Chinnery, a well-established expert on early English furniture. Victor Chinnery produced a hypothetical inventory for each of the rooms of Bayleaf. Richard Harris compared this list with later inventories from Kent and we settled on a list of items needed for the house. Roger Champion, whose expertise in furniture making has been well demonstrated at the Museum before, particularly in Walderton, has taken this mass of information, and using wherever possible surviving examples as his models for technique, begun the reconstruction process. Once again, a combination of evidence from manuscripts, inventories and actual examples come together. Much of this furniture is already made and can be seen at the Museum.

One particular item, the wheelbarrow, has been based on surviving pieces of waterlogged timber at the Museum of London. This gave a special opportunity for reconstruction; it has been made by Roger Champion.



Roger Champion taking a break at Bayleaf mid-construction





**Textiles**

The textiles in the building will form a very interesting part of the reconstruction. We intent to furnish the beds with sheets, mattress, coverlet and blankets. There will be wallhangings, a painted cloth and bedhangings. We received particularly detailed advice from Frances Pritchard of the Museum of London, who has been able to specify the type of material and pattern that will be correct.



**Animals**

The selection of animals for the farm has given rise to another debate. At first we intended to try to find, or indeed breed, “lookalikes” to match as close as possible those animals that may have been present in the Bayleaf Farm. Discussions with Stephen Hall and others concerned with rare breeds, resulted in the conclusion that this policy was not right. It runs the risk of giving the impression that the genetic stock of animals can be lost and then recreated which is of course not so. With this in mind, it was decided to use traditional

breeds that exist today but to explain to the public through the Exhibition why this has been done, and why animals have changed so dramatically over the years. We will therefore be using for instance Southdown Sheep, some examples of Romney Sheep, and Sussex Cattle (which are thought to be descended from the cattle that were common at that period, but of course look very different because over the centuries they have been bred as meat producers rather than draught animals).

**Ironwork**

For the ironwork needed, both in the house and elsewhere, advice has been given by Ian Goodall. Ian has analysed a very large number of archaeological finds and from his drawings we have been able to select suitable items. The blacksmith working at the Museum, and John Lawson, the Museum’s tenant at Charlton, are making copies. Once prototypes have been produced, these have been checked with archaeological evidence and then reproduced in the quantity necessary.

**Successful Launch for Bayleaf Medieval Farmstead**

The Bayleaf Medieval Farmstead and the associated History of Farming Exhibition, the most extensive project yet undertaken by the Museum, was opened in May by Sir Derek Barber, Chairman of the Countryside Commission.

The Farmstead has attracted enormous interest from visitors who have appreciated the detail of the furnishings and from schools who have been able to use the Farmstead to give pupils a better idea of medieval rural life. The History of Farming Exhibition is particularly relevant to secondary schools.

The new project also attracted considerable publicity in the local and national media, which was a valuable aid to a highly successful year in terms of visitor numbers.

Items are continually being introduced to Bayleaf, and during the summer Roger Champion has made a wide variety of small items of equipment, which have helped continue the furnishing process. Roger has shown particular skill in teaching himself how to cooper buckets and barrels. Garden and orchard produce have also aided the “lived-in” feel to the house, and spinning and hand-dyeing demonstrations have helped illustrate the extent of self-sufficiency necessary for the occupants of Bayleaf.



Thelma Jack, the Bayleaf Interpreter, has tackled the task of communicating information to visitors and “keeping house” in an appropriate way extremely competently. She and her team of volunteers have had to cope with new patterns of visits to the house, intense use by school parties and thousands of questions.



# THE DOWNLAND GRIDSHELL - IN USE!

Written by Richard Harris. First published in 2002



**The Downland Gridshell building is finished - and in use! At 10.00am on 25 March a hundred and fifty members of the Museum community gathered in the new Building Conservation Workshop to celebrate the new building and discuss the forthcoming season.**



**Chris Zeuner, Museum Director 1974 - 2001, inspects the Gridshell model**

Since then the space has been used for a multitude of meetings, events, work and training. The first major event was the Sustainable Building weekend (27/28 April) which combined trade stands with a seminar programme covering subjects as diverse as straw bale building and B&Q’s social responsibility unit. Over the same weekend the first Timber Framing from Scratch to be held in the Gridshell was also taking place, showing how training activities can be watched and appreciated by the public.

On 11 May the Gridshell design team held their own party, with live music from a country band, to celebrate completion of the project, with guests from Edward Cullinan Architects, Buro Happold Engineers, project managers Boxall Sayer, main contractors E A Chiverton Ltd, and specialist sub-contractors Green Oak Carpentry Company. On 29 May Boxall Sayer held their own reception for friends and clients to view the building.

Also in May the storage racking was installed in the basement of the building and Mike Wall and his team started the long job of moving our artefact collections from Charlton. Visitors to the building are entranced by the Gridshell but equally surprised and intrigued to see the huge and unexpected volume of the store beneath. Many of the artefacts are clipped to mesh panels so that they can be easily seen, rather than being hidden away in boxes.

June was the month for the opening ceremonies. With so many people to invite, we decided to split the openings into two. On 24 June donors and supporters were invited to see Sir Neil Cossons, chairman of English Heritage, cut the ribbon and speak warmly of the Museum’s achievements, while Anthea Case, director of the Heritage Lottery Fund, affirmed the HLF’s pleasure and satisfaction in the innovative project. Carpenters from the Green Oak Carpentry Company made a spectacular gesture by abseiling into the roof space to put in place a ceremonial golden (old painted!) oak block.

At the end of that week, on 29 June, the whole Museum community of staff, volunteers and local friends and supporters were invited to attend a dinner, and the space (known as the Jerwood Gridshell Space to mark the Jerwood Foundation’s generosity in supporting the project) once again showed its versatility as

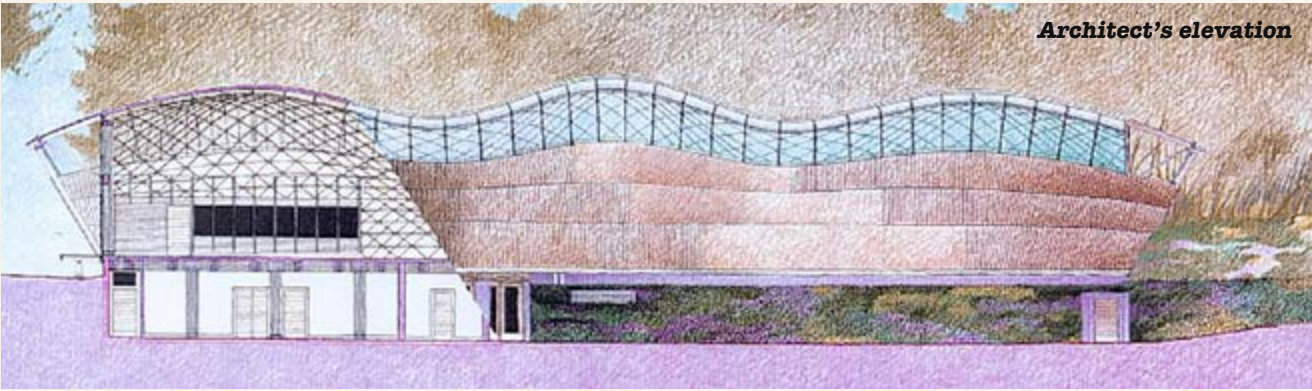
nearly 350 people sat down to dinner. The evening began with a poignant ceremony to dedicate a memorial tablet to Chris Zeuner, at which the Duke of Richmond and Tim Heymann spoke of their memories of Chris’s leadership of the Museum.

Also in that week, on 27 June, the Gridshell was the venue for an international conference on innovative timber structures called Time for Timber. This event was organised by Richard Harris of Buro Happold and again the space was transformed, this time with high quality seating, displays and projection facilities.

Finally, on 10/11 August the Museum hosted Frame 2002, the annual conference of the Carpenters’ Fellowship. The Gridshell was the main venue, although the conference also took place in a marquee in Lower Gonville field.

In addition to these highlights the space has been used almost daily for work and training of various kinds - and all this before Roger Champion and his successor, Joe Thompson, have occupied the workshop for its intended use in the conservation of timber-framed buildings.

A great deal of energy and money has been expended but the result is a building which has the character, flexibility and resilience to serve the Museum well for many years to come.



**Architect’s elevation**



# Your Community -

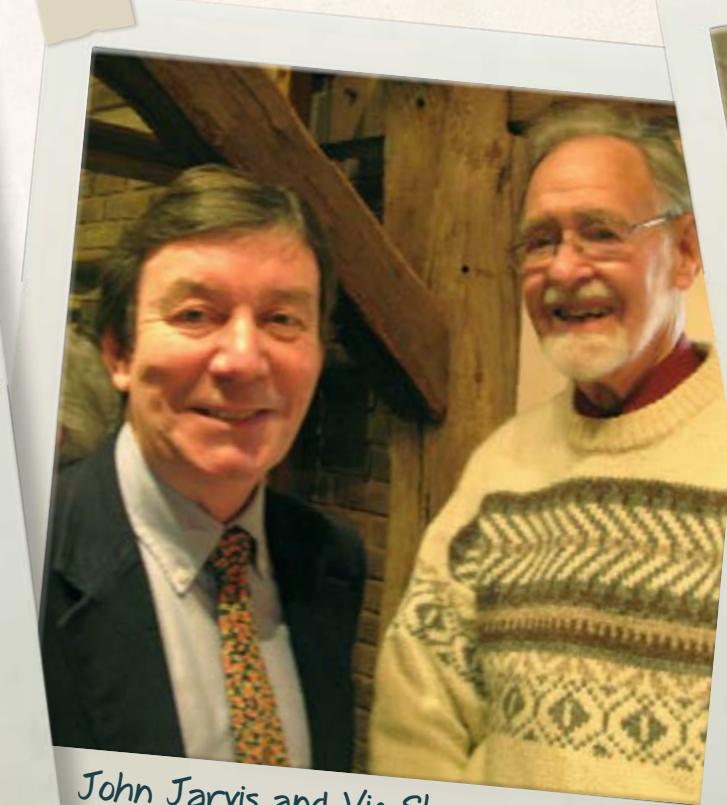
# Members Memories



Threshing at the Summer Steam Show 2007. Photo taken by Ron Turtheridge



Visiting Hangleton House in 1977. Photo supplied by Christopher and Blanche Allanson



John Jarvis and Vic Sheppard at the Building History Book launch 2010



Cutting the 'Cake' in Crawley Hall. Marie and I at our wedding on 4th September 2006. Brian Bunyan



Jackie Groes and Tim Arnold at the 50th Birthday picnic, 5 Sept 2020



"coochy coochy cow" saying hello to the livestock, April 2009. Photo supplied by Ian Holliday



Enjoying The Spring Show 2019. Photo supplied by Jackie Groes



Richard Paillthorpe and Chris Zeuner introducing a new member of the family



Enjoying the Autumn leaves. Photo supplied by Jessica White



Bayleaf Tudor Farmstead c. 1970s



Carol Brinson, Museum volunteer, thatching in the woodcraft area 1973



# Your Community -

# Members Memories



Helen O'Connell and Sharon Ridgley enjoy some festive fun at the Christmas Market. 2018



Lizzie, Alice and Caleb enjoying the Museum, June 2016. Photo supplied by Helen O'Connell



Market Square 'village' under construction in 1981. Photo supplied by Christopher and Blanche Allanson



Enjoying some hands on baking. Photo supplied by Cara Osborne



Toiling in the Victorian Smithy



Getting ready for Christmas at the Museum



Gypsy caravan fun, 2019



Halloween 2020 - Looking for ghosts! Photo supplied by Sarah & Steve Baumann



Filming at the Museum. Photo supplied by Ron Tutheridge



The Volunteers' Summer Party 2018



The Rare Breeds Show 2000



Wonderful Wednesdays at the blacksmiths. Photo supplied by Dan Bryant



# Highlights of 2020

“The harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph” Thomas Paine



**2020 has not gone to plan, but still there is much to celebrate, much to value and much to triumph**



## Reopening after lockdown

Despite the challenges that 2020 has brought, the Museum was ready to open to the public as soon as the government guidance allowed last June and we have been delighted to welcome thousands of visitors to the Museum over the Summer. Social distancing measures meant a different but not lesser experience; we all got used to being a ‘bubble’ and our team of volunteers and staff were on hand outside our historic houses with a cheerful welcome, information and support to make your visit comfortable, informative and above

all fun. Judging by your comments, emails and letters, our reopening was a huge success for the whole community – our members, our staff and our volunteers, many of whom have been kind enough to say how much you missed us.

## Lessons from Lockdown - The show must go on

Prior to lockdown at the beginning of the year, the Museum held three Historic Life Weekends. The first was a beautiful, crisp winter weekend – just right to sit around a fire and listen to stories being told. Authors, including Jane Borodale and Suzie Wilde, read their own work and a range of other stories on topics from smuggling to Norse mythology, Tudor tales and Shakespeare. The weekend was rounded off with the mummers

tales during the Wassail. We also partnered with the Museum of British Folklore to stage an exhibition of art, traditions and belief “The Maiden, The Neck and the Mare” celebrating the art of corn dollies.

## The People’s Show

The following Historic Life Weekend focussed on collections, both individual ones and the Museum’s own.

During the ‘Treasured Objects’ weekend, contributors to The People’s Show, our exhibition of visitors’ personal collections, explained why they collect and discussed their fascinating and varied items on display. The amazing collections that were contributed included bagpuss merchandise, early woodwind instruments, haberdashery, royal



Collection of men’s shaving paraphernalia loaned to The People’s Show by Dave Rudwick



Visitors arriving ready for our 1970s themed Birthday picnic

memorabilia, 1970s-1980s advertising milk bottles, cine cameras from the 1940s onwards, books with covers by Modern British Artists and many more. Staff and volunteers in the curatorial team were also on hand to open up the artefact store all day and talk about their favourite objects, which often related to items that they had helped to care for.

## Time for a brew

In March we staged The Brewing Weekend with a fantastic variety of activities from large-scale brewing in the Tudor kitchen, to learning about cider making with a producer from Kent and talks on Victualling houses, ale, alehouses and beer, alongside tasters from modern local producers, Hepworths and Langham brewery. We intend to carry on this success with The Baking Weekend and Fire and Light, both originally planned just after lockdown began, which we hope to re-stage in the coming months.

## Celebrating our 50th Birthday

Our first Historic Life Weekend after reopening, was the Museum’s 50th Birthday weekend. Over the weekend there was a series of demonstrations and displays,

showcasing all that is great about the Museum and the traditional crafts, skills and architecture we work so hard to preserve. It was a really special weekend and lovely to have so many volunteers, staff, retired staff and demonstrators celebrate, and messages from many more who could not be with us. Visitors were also spread across the whole of the Museum enjoying being here, finding out more from a range of demonstrations and having great conversations. It is always good to welcome people back, and especially important to do so on a celebration weekend, and this continued support of the Museum is really appreciated.

The weekend culminated in a 70s themed picnic with guests arriving dressed in their finest 1970s attire. Following the chance to experience the Museum at dusk, revellers enjoyed a picnic hamper lead by Museum Ambassador, Hugh Bonneville.

## Flour Power

This autumn, the work continues on thatching Cowfold barn and completing work on the Carpenter’s shop. Our Interpreters are also working hard to catch up on lost time in the historic gardens and traditionally managed woodland. We’ve been busy at Lurgashall Mill too following a higher demand than usual across the Summer. We were delighted to have been able to keep the mill working throughout lockdown and supplying flour to several local shops. The Mill is now having some TLC to keep it milling and producing flour for sale at the Museum and elsewhere.

## Historical Fiction competition

We launched our second Historical Fiction competition during lockdown, to encourage creative, imaginative activity at a challenging time. Part of the purpose of museums is to stimulate creativity and imagination. Despite

being closed we still wanted to continue to inspire those with an idea for a story, in this case one influenced by a visit to the Museum or an historical era. We have been delighted with the entries received. The panel of judges are currently reading through the stories and the winner will be announced in January 2021.

## 50th Badge competition

Another creative endeavour to which the younger members of our community responded with aplomb, was our 50th badge competition – to design a commemorative enamel pin to celebrate our 50th birthday. Simon Wardell, Museum Director, headed up the judging panel which also included actor Hugh Bonneville, artist Annie Timothy and Editor of the Observer Series, Gary Shipton. The panel unanimously choose 5-year-old Meghan Bouck-Standen as the winner. Now in production the badges will be available to buy from the Museum shop shortly.



The winning design



Actor Hugh Bonneville and Chairman Jo Pasricha celebrating at our 50th Birthday picnic



# A story in photos:

## The latest work in progress - the Carpenter's Shop

By Mervyn Mewis, Interim Curatorial Assistant



The Carpenter's Shop prior to dismantling in 1978 at Windlesham, Surrey

The building was simply constructed on a rough timber frame, using materials to-hand at the time. The main posts were dug into the ground rather than being placed on a sole plate. The frame was clad with vertical boards, the joints being closed by a cover strip and the structure protected by a coating of tar. Functionality rather than longevity was likely; it has lasted extremely well but typically was beginning to suffer from the effects of age and weather.

### Dismantling at Windlesham in 1978

The Carpenter's Shop was reconstructed in its current location at the Museum in 1980 where it has been on display with many of the original tools acquired with the building.



Dismantling at Windlesham in 1978

### Re-roofing in progress Winter 2019/20



Over time the weight of the roofing spread the wall plates. During the winter the tiles were removed from the building, which was then brought back as much as possible to vertical. Museum volunteer blacksmiths created bespoke tie-bars and the roof was reinstated using most of the original tiles.

### Western section repairs 2019

With the weight of the tiles removed the building was jacked-up and the original load-bearing uprights were dug out, replacing rotten timbers with new hardwood posts. These posts were locally sourced and converted onsite at the Museum's woodyard using steam power and a rack saw.

### Western section from inside

Once the building was upright, support beams were renovated and the roof reinstated, the flooring was then repaired where needed and work started on the vertical cladding with the original boards kept and re-used where possible.



Western section repairs 2019

### The interior

A counter front was included to enable the Windlesham Carpenter's Shop to continue as both an exhibit and a demonstration area. The counter front hatch contains some of the re-worked original cladding boards which were too narrow to be reused externally, instead continuing to be useful inside the building.

The space can now come alive to show traditional carpentry and a range of diverse traditional wood skills.



The interior following recent work

# 2021 Museum Events Calendar

ORANGE - Summer Season | GREEN - Holiday Activities | RED - Closure

January		Ticketed
23-24	Historic Life Weekend: Traditional Woodland Management	
February		
15-19	Half Term Activities	
27-28	Historic Life Weekend: Collections	
March		
14	Mothering Sunday - Free entry to Mothers	
20-21	Historic Life Weekend: Clay & Pottery	
15-21	Schools Shakespeare Week	
April		
2-18	Springtime Easter Activities	
2-5	Easter at the Museum	
17-18	Historic Life Weekend: Baking	
May		
1-2	Historic Life Weekend: May Day	
15-16	Museums at Night	T
29-31	Historic Life Weekend: Wood	
31-4 Jun	Half Term Activities	
June		
31 May-4	Half Term Activities	
12-13	Historic Life Weekend: Herbal Heritage	
20	Father's Day - Free entry to Fathers	
July		
3-4	Historic Life Weekend: Agriculture	
August		
Throughout August - Wonderful Wednesdays		
5	From West End to Broadway - outdoor theatre	T
7-8	Historic Life Weekend: Heritage Crafts at Risk	
12	The Tales of Peter Rabbit & Benjamin Bunny - family outdoor theatre	T
19	Treasure Island - family outdoor theatre	T
22	Wonders with Grimm - family outdoor theatre	T
27	Romeo & Juliet - outdoor theatre	T
29	Robin Hood- family outdoor theatre	T
31	David Walliams' Mr Stink - family outdoor theatre	T
September		
2	Into the Breach - outdoor theatre	T
4-5	Historic Life Weekend: Historic Buildings	
25-26	Historic Life Weekend: Music	
October		
16-17	Historic Life Weekend: Wool	
25-29	Half Term Activities	
30-31	Museum at Night - Family Tale Trail	T
November		
TBC	Museum takeover day (schools)	
December		
3-4	'Wonders of the Weald' - seasonal festivities including a boutique Christmas Market	
5	Tree Dressing	
TBC	Green Father Christmas	T
TBC	Green Father Christmas	T
TBC	Green Father Christmas	T
24-25	MUSEUM CLOSED	
26-27	Christmas at the Museum	
28-31	MUSEUM CLOSED	

Please note events and dates are subject to change - Please check our website



THANK YOU  
to our members for  
all your support