



MUSEUM NEWS

Steyping Museum Newsletter

February 2019

Museum Diary

- 23.03.19 Annual General Meeting
 Penfold Hall
 10.30
- 06.04.19 Spring Coffee Morning
 Penfold Hall
 10.30 - 12.00
- 08.06.19 Cream Tea
 Gluck Studio
 and Garden
 3.00 pm
- 26.10.19 Autumn Coffee Morning
 Penfold Hall
 10.30 - 12.00

200 Club

December Draw:

- 1st prize = Mrs H Lewis (£35)
2nd prize = Mr R Woolgar (£25)
3rd prize = Mrs L Slater (£15)

January Grand Draw:

- 1st prize = Ann Hanson (£100)
2nd prize = Jenny Smeed (£50)
3rd prize = Jose Peate (£25)

Additions to the Collection

from Margaret Benham

In December we received 5 donations comprising 37 objects. Of these 33 objects were formerly held by the Museum under long term loans which the lenders have kindly converted to gifts. The donors are Chris and Pat Tod and Richard Loader. In addition the Museum has received 4 objects donated by the owner of "Sweetlands" in Newham Lane and we are just waiting for him to return the gift/donation form.

Among the objects donated by Richard Loader were a number of conveyancing deeds and documents dated between 1803 and 1839 all relating to the same land and buildings in what is now Elm Grove Lane, formerly Back Lane. I spent some time examining them and they provide a very interesting insight into the way land/property was rented, mortgaged, bought and sold in that period and the interaction between the gentry – in this case Charles Goring, the rising industrialists/businessmen such as George Thomas Breach and Edward Young, (tanner/tailor /fellmonger) and the rather less well-off shop keepers /tradesmen such as the "common carrier" Thomas Newman, William Woolgar and Ralph Cook. The deeds also show that the Court of Common Pleas (roughly the equivalent of our modern day County Court) sat at Wiston in 1807 and that one of the Justices involved in the dispute

about the Back Lane property was the famous Sir James Mansfield who was then Chief Justice of the Common Pleas.

Someone kindly dropped four fine white cotton and lace baby gowns (possibly Christening gowns) through the Museum letter box on either Thursday 10th or early on Friday 11th January. It would be very helpful if the person who did that could please come forward as we would like to thank them and check where these items originated and what connections they may have with Steyning and/or the locality..

Exhibition Team Report

from Andrew Woodfield

"Centenary" is now installed and the comments in the Visitor Book are very encouraging. Since opening on November 10th, more material has arrived and I have managed to squeeze it in.

The small doll found in Spinneys in Beeding has been installed in the case near the office. Margaret Benham also suggested that the shoes could go in that cabinet, but there is not enough room and it would spoil the display.

The Chequers Menu Bill is also awaiting to be installed. Both Muriel Wright and myself feel that this small (and original) item would be at risk of being stolen if not behind glass. I am therefore suggesting that we save it and display it with the Inn sign in an exhibition about the Inn.

Margaret Benham and I visited Jeremy Knight at Horsham Museum

recently and saw a "Cabinet of Curiosities" which excited me and I am wondering whether we could create one here.

Paul Norris and I have begun to plan the refurbishment of the railway exhibit. Chris Tod is going to bring in his model and plan of the proposed "Ticket Office" which I am hoping we will be able to build in-house. It will be used to display items such as the Station Master's hat, the ticket punch machine and staff badges. The canopy will be extended so that the "Steyning Station" sign (in store at present) can be displayed.

There may be some disruption whilst we are doing this - we may have to store some of the exhibits etc. in the store room.

Centenary - creating an exhibition.

from Andrew Woodfield

There are two factors that have aided the Exhibition Team in their work to prepare Steyning Museum's current exhibition: — a brilliant museum archive and the enthusiasm of the museum volunteers, friends and the residents of the town in providing information and items to display.

"Armistice" was originally planned to be a small exhibition that was to occupy the hallway. It became clear however that the 100 year anniversary deserved a larger and more diverse exhibition.

Two other important milestones were also celebrating 100 years — the foundation of the RAF and women gaining the vote. It was clear that one large

exhibition commemorating all three events was called for.

A plea for relevant material in the Museum Newsletter gained a very good response. Many items that are not contained in the Museum archive were suitable for display and a few were not. Some of the offered material related to World War Two and has therefore been placed in our Exhibition Preparation File. We have already started collecting material for the 2020 exhibition that will commemorate the 75th anniversary of VE and VJ Day! We also gained some new oral history that was incorporated into the text of the exhibition.

Delegation was the key point of preparation.

The core Exhibition Team of five members was augmented by a further five people, one of whom is not an actual Museum volunteer. All was co-ordinated by myself. Some days were more chaotic than others! The working area within the Museum is quite tight when there are several demands on space.

However, by sheer determination and team work I think that we have created a moving and informative installation.

A request from Steyning Parish Church for joint co-operation regarding Armistice was received. The two military historians on the team had already begun to research the men named on the Church War Memorial. We were wanting to prepare a file giving details of those men who did not return. This file which, in my opinion, is beautifully

presented, is now on show and entitled "Sacrifice and Loss". It also highlights the men from the other communities that the Museum covers in its catchment area. From this research we were able to offer the church a resume of every man named on the WW1 Memorial in the church. This was the text read (in an edited form), by the two researchers, at the very moving service on October 28th.

The material that was gathered from the research for "Votes for Women" required determined editing to fit the exhibition space available. The display board is quite small but by taking some of the material and placing it with "Women in WW1" (which outgrew the designated board and took over the adjoining wall!) a solution was found. The tailor's dummy with the Edwardian ladies clothing has given that part of the exhibition a real wow factor. We are fortunate that one of our team is really skilled in fabric and presentation.

Also requiring a lot of editing was the RAF display. We could have filled the board twice over! The use of the model aircraft hopefully gives our younger visitors an idea of how flight developed within the RAF. I was determined that there should also be an image of an airship. My colleagues at the Toy Museum in Brighton were brilliant in lending (and delivering) the WW1 model aircraft that is suspended from the ceiling. Believe it or not, the rifle bayonet is also loaned via the Toy Museum!

The exhibition runs until May and I would like to thank the entire team of ten for their hard work and also all who contributed.

Note from Andrew - I am interested in hearing from anyone who remembers going to the cinema shows in Steyning Town Hall. Please leave your contact details at the Museum.

Victorian Christmas

from Maggie Hollands

Our last fundraising event during 2018 was the Victorian Christmas Talk held on Saturday December 1st. Everyone seemed to enjoy it and we raised

£354.23 for the Museum funds. Thank you to all who came and many thanks to you all who have supported us during the year.

Annual General Meeting

The Museum AGM will be held in the Penfold Hall at 10.30 am on 23rd March.

You will find the official notification at the end of the newsletter.

The Story of James Day

Lois Roemer has been busy for several years exploring the stories behind some of the names on headstones in the churchyard of our local church of St Andrew and St Cuthman. She has printed some of her findings in small leaflets available from the Museum. One particular name, James Day, has also aroused the interest of Marion Woolgar, as there seems to be some conflict in the written records about him.

The following information comes (in shorten form) from her research.

The headstone reads - "In memory of JAMES DAY of the Northants Light Infantry/ He departed this life the 3 of June 1804 aged 21 years.

This stone was erected by his comrades as a small tribute of respect due to a worthy youth like him".

Troops were certainly stationed in and around Steyning in the time of Napoleon in case they were needed at short notice. However, the Steyning Parish Register records that James Day was of the North Hants Militia not the Northants Light Infantry as recorded on the headstone.

The Rev. Cox (vicar of Steyning church) wrote in the Steyning Parish Magazine of April 1928 about "*James Day of the North Hants Militia who is said to have been flogged to death*" He didn't say where the information came from.

The work of other authors consulted by Marion Woolgar also mentioned the flogging, but again without giving their sources. An exploration of several other printed sources by Marion failed to unearth any further information about James Day. However, The Royal Hampshire Regiment Museum holds a copy of the Infantry Militia Battalions of the County of Southampton 1757-1894. Marion found an entry for 2nd June 1804 which says:

Thomas Heath, a Private in the North Hants Militia who deserted from Lewes and about a month since surrendered himself at Salisbury, being escorted back to his regiment at STEYNING, was tried by Court Martial 02 June 1804 and sentenced to receive 500 lashes, 200 of which were inflicted and so impressively, that to avoid the remainder, he deserted a second time, but was captured, lodged in Horsham Gaol, and taken back to his regiment .

The Steyning Parish Register records the burial of James Day on 04 of June 1804, but there is no record of the burial of a Thomas Heath.

Further research by Marion in the National Archives at Kew unearthed the North Hampshire Militia Pay Lists for 1804. The lists show James Day receiving £1.11.0 for the period 24 March to 24 April. In the following month he received £1.10.0 from 25 April to 24 May whilst quartered at Steyning, From 25 May to 3 June James Day earned 10s.0d and was then recorded as dead.

Thomas Heath meanwhile is recorded as being in gaol twice, once in Shoreham for 5 days, then in Salisbury for 20 days in April for desertion. Finally, the lists show that he spent 30 days from 25 June to 24 July at Ebourne Camp. On the reverse of the warrant to collect Thomas Heath from Salisbury gaol, was a detailed description of him, including the fact that he was aged 30 and 5ft, 4½ inches tall.

So what are we to make of the inscription on James Day's headstone?

Marion Woolgar wonders if the story of the flogging of Thomas Heath on 02 June has become attached to the story of James Day who died on 03 June. So James Day wasn't flogged to death as in Rev. Cox's statement, but was, in the words on his headstone, a "worthy youth".

(Many thanks to Marion Woolgar for the research she undertook to uncover the answer to the interesting James Day puzzle. In preparing this shortened version for the February 2019 Museum newsletter, I have left out some of the detail which appears in Marion's original. If you would like to see the full original version, you will find it filed with the copy of the present newsletter on the Museum shelves to the left of the sales desk.)

Tony Ketteyman

Some Recent Comments From the Visitor Book

Invaluable community support. Thank you.

Very good. Learned a lot.

Outstanding. One of the best in the county.

Very interesting. Warm welcome. Thank you.

Really interesting and so detailed. Fascinating.
Always something new to see.

An absolute Sussex gem.

Interesting, well set out. Thanks for providing an interesting insight to Steyning

Tony Ketteyman

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