

NEWS



Immediate release

SURREY MUSEUM EXHIBITS RESCUED

KEY exhibits from a popular Surrey museum have found a new home in a tourist attraction showcasing everything connected with bygone life in the region.

The secrets and skills of a former age are being recreated at a new heritage centre in Hassocks, West Sussex. The exhibition will include several prestigious items of rare farm and horticultural machinery rescued from Blindley Heath.

Robert Bannister was forced to curtail his business, near Lingfield, due to ill health, and the future of the museum's collection which had been built up over half a century was unsure.

Now Jonathan Tate has the prize exhibits safe and sound and they will take pride of place at his new South Downs Heritage Centre. "I am delighted to have saved these items", says Jonathan. "It was simply too awful to think that they may be lost for ever."

Work is underway to prepare the heritage centre for its official opening next spring (April 2008), when it becomes an integral part of the popular South Downs Nurseries on the A273 at Stone Pound.

The new centre will concentrate on traditional crafts and trades such as the blacksmith, the wheelwright, the trug maker and the carpenter, with a Heritage Garden outside will displaying interesting plants such as old local varieties of fruit, local plants from times gone by, such as medicinal herbs.

"I want as many people as possible to find out about the heritage of the local area, so admission to the exhibition will be free," says Jonathan. "And people who used to visit the Bakery in Blindley Heath will be able to see many of their favourite exhibits in a new setting."

Rather than charging for entry, the Heritage Centre will ask for donations, which will be given to charities in the area.

Details about the development of the new attraction are being posted on the website at www.south-downs.co.uk or pop into South Downs Nurseries to find out more.

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IMAGES – a selection may be downloaded from www.tbutlerpr.co.uk/southdowns