

STEYNING MUSEUM TRUST

The Museum, Church Street, Steyning, West Sussex. BN44 3YB

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Registered Charity Number: 1169540



Newsletter August 2023

Message from the Chairman – Joan Denwood

We are so pleased that our long awaited refurbishment has happened and we are very happy with the results. I hope you are too. Please read our Publicity Officer Ray's report to learn more.

Another happening in the museum is that Nick has masterminded the change of internet server for emails and website. Doug and Lynda who have run the website for many years are stepping back from that role and a small group has been formed to oversee the future development of the website.

Finally, Jaki, our Exhibitions team leader, has resigned. She will continue until September to fulfil already agreed commitments. Andrew is prepared to then take over again temporarily. If you know of anyone, yourself, friend, neighbour, relative who might be interested in this role please let me know.

Don't forget to visit to see our 'new look'. And please bring children into the museum to enjoy the costumes and toys we have put out for them for the school summer holidays.

Best wishes

Joan

Education – Joan Denwood

Since our last newsletter in May, two Year 4 classes from Steyning Primary have visited to learn about Saxons, two Year 3 classes to learn about Smugglers and two Year 1 classes to learn about Timelines. A total of 161 children and 27 adults. Good fun, and learning of course, was had by all.

 **Steyning Museum** 

School Holiday Fun

Costumes

Toys



All through the school summer holiday Wed - Sun (plus BH Mon)
Open 10 - 4 Entrance FREE

We also had an organised visit of 11 adults from Worthing U3A Local History group. They heard about the history of Steyning and what there is to see in the museum. After a good look around with lots of questions, they then took themselves off in small groups for a visit around the town, armed with the Steyning Town Trail leaflets. They were very appreciative and left lots of donations. In their email of thanks, they said 'how impressed they were', with the museum and 'thank you for an excellent morning'.

For the school summer holidays we are going to put out costumes for the children to try on and a table of toys. Please bring any visiting children along to enjoy themselves.

Events & Fund-Raising Committee – Maggie Hollands

Our next social event is our Autumn coffee morning 28th October at 10:30 in the Penfold Hall. Entrance is just £2 which includes filtered coffee and biscuits, and of course, there will be the usual cake stall and raffle.

CORRECTION - DATE OF FORTHCOMING QUIZ

It is Saturday November 25thSaxon Room at The Steyning centre 7pm until 10pm

Tables of 6, bring your own drinks and nibbles.

Tickets are £5 and will be available from the museum from 1st November.

Maggie Hollands and the social events team

200 Club Secretary - Erica Gayler

Thank you to all the members that have supported this lottery over the years. I am very pleased to tell you that we have been able to donate £5000 to the Museum to assist with the cost of the reception refurbishment.

Unfortunately, we have had to hold back a small amount of funds to cover any possible bank charges. The decision was taken in April to continue to keep the bank account open for another 12 months as Standing Orders are still coming through, despite my regular reminders.

Please can everyone ensure that any standing order to the Museum with bank sort code 40 43 48 Account number 61225707 is cancelled immediately.

It costs us £5 per month just to keep the bank account open (even with no transactions). Once the account is closed, we will have no idea if any amounts are still being received and the money will be absorbed by the banks until at some stage the sender puts in a claim for a refund.

Erica Gayler

Publicity – Ray Powell

Steyning Museum – new look reception, shop and reference area

Steyning Museum are pleased to announce that after a two-week shut down for a major refurbishment of our reception, shop and reference area we are back and open for business again. Museum Chair Joan Denwood commented “We are absolutely delighted with the finished product, and we hope you like it too. It has provided the clean lines, spacious look and improved appearance we were after. Thanks to funding from a generous legacy, the Steyning Museum 200 Club, and the Steyning Society, we now have a range of new wall units to store our extensive reference files and books as well as a new desk for volunteers to welcome our many visitors from all over the world. We also have a new shop area which provides a much improved display of merchandise to purchase”.



Pictures show our new refurbished look being presented by project leaders Joan Denwood and Maggie Hollands

Maggie Hollands added “We really must thank the volunteers who came in and cleared, dismantled and disposed of all the old shelving, filled holes and painted walls, before local craftsmen fitted the whole thing out. With the extra space we have also re-organised and colour coded our extensive range of public files and reference books for easier use by visitors”.

We are always looking for volunteers to welcome visitors, or to help out behind the scenes with research and exhibitions.

Ray Powell

News from the Research Hub – Jacquie Buttriss

RESEARCH – FROM OLD HOMES TO OLD BONES

Despite the museum’s 2 weeks’ closure, we have received a wide variety of enquiries to keep us busy before and since, from old bones to old homes.

But first of all, we researched the following:

Family histories:

- Norris (possibly related to Paul Norris)
- Two of our stewards’ family trees
- The Bramber Woolgar family tree (including a number of butchers)

Buildings:

- The history of ‘Horseshoes’ in Laines Road, formerly the ‘Downlands Nursing Home’

Activities:

- Stoolball team, relating to the photo we have on display in the museum
- Aleister Crowley, witchcraft and occultism

Steining Churchyard:

- We now have two local volunteers whose mission is to locate lost or hidden graves and record their details to add to the ‘Find-a-Grave’ online register. This is an international project to list graves and

their headstones. Our two volunteers have already discovered two of our 'lost graves' – one whose headstone had sunk into the ground and the other a tiny grave, previously overlooked ... and finally we come to the:

Old Bones

Whilst looking up a burial in Steyning's parish registers, something caught Lois's eye. It was a note briefly relating to one of the Reverend Cox's articles, so she looked it up and was astonished at what she read.....

In 1938, in preparation for installing heating in the church, some workmen dug down, beneath the old Church Cottage to install the boiler. The men took up the flooring to discover four skeletons, neatly positioned: three of them side by side, pointing east to west, with another laid beyond their heads, pointing north to south.

Works stopped while archaeologists came to see the bones. They immediately judged them to be very old skeletons and analysis revealed that they were Saxons, so more than 1,000 years old.

Reverend Cox's article explains that the bodies were carefully removed and re-buried, but sadly we don't know where.

If you know anything about this, do please let us know.

Jacque Buttriss and Lois Roemer

Steyning Society - Joan Denwood

On the 21st April I was delighted to be presented with a Certificate of Merit, 'awarded to Steyning Museum for running an exceptional museum involving the community', by the Steyning Society as part of their 60th celebrations.

It was handed to me by Lady Emma Barnard the Lord Lieutenant for West Sussex who said 'well done, we are going to come and see the museum, it is on our list', but no news of this visit yet.

This is a new award evening which I understand is going to be an annual event on the Steyning Society's AGM evening.

Our certificate is now framed and displayed on the wall by our reception desk.

More recently we received some books from the Steyning Society entitled 'The Steyning Heritage List' which highlights buildings and structures which are not nationally recognised but are integral to the character and history of our town. For example the Police Station, Vine Cottage in Church Street and many more. It makes a very interesting read and is available in our shop priced £10.

Newsletter compiled by Leonie Etherington

