

STEYNING MUSEUM TRUST

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

T: 01903 813333: www.steyningmuseum.org.uk

Registered Charity Number: 1169540



Newsletter November 2023

Message from the Vice Chairman – Muriel Wright

Time certainly flies by!!

It will be the Museum's 40th Anniversary in November. We will be holding a small celebration in the Museum on 17th November. Maggie Hollands will give more details in her report on Social Events.

We still need more Stewards so if you know anyone who has 3 hours a month to spare and enjoys talking to people about our local history, please ask them if they would be interested in volunteering in the Museum. They can be assured of a warm welcome.

The Museum's website has had a "makeover". Please have look when you have a moment to spare. We would like to thank Nick Quinn, Barbara Chandler, and Philip Hoare for all their excellent work.

Muriel Wright (Vice-Chairman)

STEYNING MUSEUM is looking for a new Curator of Exhibitions

Do you have experience of designing, creating and mounting exhibitions?

Would you like to volunteer some of your time in our friendly, informative museum?

Would you like to lead a small, dedicated exhibitions team, with extensive collections and archives at your disposal?

This is an honorary position, with responsibility to create new temporary exhibitions and maintain our permanent exhibitions and displays. Our main aim is to tell the story of Steyning and its surrounding area, from Saxons through the ages to the present day, linking with local and national events.

If you are interested, please contact Jacquie Buttriss, our Chair of Trustees on jacquie.buttriss@talktalk.net for an informal chat and a more detailed job-description. You will be very welcome to come and visit the museum to meet Andrew, our current Curator of Exhibitions, by appointment.

If you would like to visit the museum to look around, we are open five days a week, Wednesday to Sunday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Entry is free.

EXHIBITION NEWS – Andrew Woodfield

We are currently preparing two new exhibitions and a further one is proposed.

Replacing “Women of the Downs” will be “ANIMAL FARM”.

This will look at local farming through images and items relating to animals.

As the Young Farmers Group are visiting the museum on November 23rd, we have brought the installation forward and all should be on view (hopefully) by the time you receive this Newsletter.

The splendid “From Land to Loaf” exhibit will remain as it also has animal images.

Our permanent Downs exhibit (by reception) will also be incorporated into this exhibition.

Our Christmas/New year theme will be “WINTER WONDERLAND”.

This will feature photographs and art work of Steyning and the local area in the snow.

(Remember that stuff? I wonder if we will have any this Winter?!!!).

As this November marks the 40th anniversary of the Museum opening we will have a celebratory exhibition.

As I write this article (on October 2nd) we have not yet started research.

If you have any photographs (especially from the early years) that I can copy and use, I would love to hear from you asap.

Please contact me direct on richardaw756@gmail.com or 01903 812638 (leave a message if I am out).

This exhibit needs to be on display soon so if I have images after the installation I will re-shuffle the exhibition to accommodate them. Andrew Woodfield – Exhibitions team

Events & Fund-Raising Committee – Maggie Hollands

There are lots of exciting events coming up!

Quiz Saturday 25th November at 7pm at the Saxon Room Steyning Centre

Tables of 6, bring your own wine and nibbles. Water will be supplied on the tables.

(If there are less than 6 of you, no problem you can join in with others)

There will also be a raffle. If anyone has any items suitable for the raffle, they will be very gratefully received.

Tickets on sale at £5 per person from the museum from 1st November.

The **Steyning Society/ Museum dinner is on December 15th** at the Steyning Centre - Tickets £27.50 from the bookshop.

Steyning Museum 40th Anniversary

On Friday 17th November between 4:30 and 6 pm we are holding a small celebration at the museum marking 40 years.

We would be delighted if you could join us for wine nibbles and celebratory cake.

To enable us to organise the catering can you please email me at margarethollands@btinternet.com by November 10th if you would like to attend.

Maggie Hollands and the social events team

Membership – Leonie Etherington

As Muriel said in her message, time certainly flies by, and it won't be long before everyone is in full Christmas swing!

Before that happens, I would like to remind all our members that payment for Museum membership 2024 will be due on the 1st January 2024 and I would be very grateful if all our wonderful members would take a few moments to check that their contact details are up to date (address, phone number, email address). If you need to make me aware of any changes, please let me know by dropping me a note at the museum or by email (membership@steyningmuseum.org.uk) as soon as possible.

I would also ask that any members who pay by standing order please check that this is in place for 1st January 2024. If you currently pay by cash or cheque, look out for reminders dropping through the door in the next few weeks, and if you would like to consider switching to online payments then please use the details below.

Steyning Museum Trust

Sort code 20 – 79 – 31

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News from the Research Hub – Jacquie Buttriss

The past three months have been a busy time, during which Lois and I have both been working on a wide variety of emailed and visitors' enquiries. These include:

Family Histories

- The whereabouts of Mary Levett
- The whereabouts of Alan Norris – a query from Australia
- Photo of Peggy Weekes
- Sarah Barfoot
- Grandfather Goacher
- Winton family graves
- Burtenshaw family
- Elston family
- Cuddington, Light, Short and Teague (all one family)
- John Prior Martin (see below)

Places

- The river Adur in the `1950s
- Fetham Station (planned but only a platform built)
- Ashurst War Memorial
- Southdown Terrace

- Beeding Court (graffiti)
- Dairies in Steyning
- St George's Place
- White Bridge
- Botolphs - Search of old maps for a right of way near Botolphs church.

-Events and Activities

- WW 2 Heinkel Bomber's crash at Wyckham Farm
- Age of trees in Steyning churchyard

A MYSTERY SOLVED AT LAST!

Two years ago, I received a query about John Prior Martin, who died in 1860. The enquirer asked me to find out how it was that he had suddenly died of a broken neck in Steyning High Street.

I downloaded John Prior Martin's death certificate which, sure enough, stated that he had died there of a broken neck. It also stated that the death was witnessed by Fanny Young, who appears to have been with him at the time. Who was she? Was there an accident, or a crime? Or was it a heart attack that caused him to fall down dead?

Looking into this further, I found no post-mortem into his death, so I responded to the original enquirer, explaining that, with the little we knew, the cause of his death would remain a mystery.

Now, two years later, we have received an enquiry from an amateur genealogist, seeking any information we might have of this same Martin family. When I responded to this new enquirer, I told her about the previous enquiry and asked if she knew anything about the cause of death of John Prior Martin. It was a long shot, but even the smallest clue might help.

Bingo! The reply came through within hours, containing a newspaper cutting from *The Sussex Advertiser*:
"Steyning. Accidental death – labourer named John Martin, in the service of Mr. John Winton of Newham Farm, fell from a barley mow in the barn on Thursday last, onto the floor of the barn and dislocated the vertebra from which he survived only 24 hours."

"Thursday last" was 13th September 1860 and the death certificate was written on 14th September. It therefore seems that he alone, or with help, picked himself up from the hard barn floor and either walked or trundled the distance home in a farm wagon, he went to bed that night, got up, dressed and walked down the High Street (100 yards from his house), all with a broken neck, accompanied by his eldest (married) daughter and only then he fell and died.

It is a sombre ending, but the Martins were a large family with several living in Steyning, so he would have had a good send-off in the churchyard.