

STEYNING MUSEUM TRUST

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Registered Charity Number: 1169540



Newsletter August 2025

Welcome to our August newsletter! As always, it is full of interesting news and articles which I hope you will enjoy reading. I also hope you will find time to come and explore our fascinating new exhibition, *Bunker* which is now open and well worth a visit. Finally, don't forget that over the school summer holidays we will have plenty of activities for children, including quizzes, dressing up and games, so do spread the word!

I have to say, it is always a pleasure to put together this newsletter, in collaboration with the lively and enthusiastic group of volunteers who make it all possible. Please read on to the end to find out about ways in which you could get involved too.

Leonie (newsletter compiler)

Accreditation Matters – Russell Bowman (Chair of trustees)

On the 19th June, we received news from Arts Council England that we have maintained our status of Full Accreditation. This is excellent news for the museum, and I am especially grateful to all our volunteers who helped review and update all the policies, plans, procedures, and audits that make up the accreditation submission.

The Accreditation Standard is a handbook for running a successful and forward-looking museum, and aims to ensure museums are resilient, focussed, and trusted organisations that offer great experiences.

A museum's compliance to the accreditation standard is assessed roughly every 5 years. As always, there are some areas for improvement, but nothing that came as a surprise, and most of the work needed is already in hand.

A welcome to Alison Firth – our accreditation mentor

To achieve accreditation, a museum must have access to professional advice – usually a suitably experienced professional as a volunteer or employee. Previously, the assessors have accepted Chris Tod (our ex-Curator, and now President) as suitably experienced, however, as Chris is no longer so closely involved with running the museum, the lack of professional advice prevented us from achieving an accredited status.

For museum such as ours, the Arts Council England run an Accreditation Mentor scheme through which experienced professionals can volunteer to mentor smaller museums and help them work to the accreditation standard. We are very fortunate that our Museum Development Officer at Museum Development South East found a willing volunteer – Alison Firth – and after visiting the museum and meeting the trustees, agreed to be our Accreditation Mentor.

A huge welcome to Alison on joining the team!

Alison is the Art Curator for the National Museum of the Royal Navy. As mentor, Alison will provide advice and guidance to help us work to the accreditation standard.

Exhibition news – Rachael Rainbow

June has been a busy and rewarding month for the exhibition team. We marked the end of the Steyning Art Trail and proudly launched our new exhibition, *Bunker*, on 11th June.

Bunker forms part of our programme to commemorate the 80th anniversaries of VE Day and VJ Day. It looks at how our local area prepared for the threat of invasion, not only during the Second World War but also through the uncertain years of the Cold War that followed.

The exhibition features local air raid precautions, the secretive Auxiliary Units trained to resist enemy forces, and items from the Royal Observer Corps, who watched for signs of nuclear attack from hidden bunkers across the country.

Bunker will be on display at the Museum until May next year— we warmly invite you to visit and discover this fascinating and often hidden history.



Paul in his Royal Observer Corps uniform



Phil and Ray working on Bunker

We are now moving on to the next exhibitions for the hall. Our planned exhibition to mark the opening of Bramber Brooks is postponed as the Environment Agency tell us the Brooks won't be opening in July as planned. Instead, we are now working on the new exhibition for the Food and Drink Festival in September.

Events & Fund-Raising Committee – Maggie Hollands

Our next event is the celebration of VJ Day with an **afternoon tea at the Steyning Centre** on **Saturday August 16th at 2:30 to 4:30**. We will have homemade cakes, sandwiches and endless cups of tea or coffee as well as a raffle. We will be entertained by the professional duo PJ & Rose playing popular music including 1940's which everyone might like to sing along to.

It should be a fun afternoon so please come along to support us.

Tickets £10 which are **available from the museum**

More dates for your diary:-

Autumn coffee morning on **Saturday 4th October** at 10:30 until 12.00

PLEASE NOTE ...We are now back at the refurbished PENFOLD HALL for coffee mornings.

Homemade cake stall and raffle

Entrance £2 includes coffee and biscuits

Come along to have an enjoyable morning.

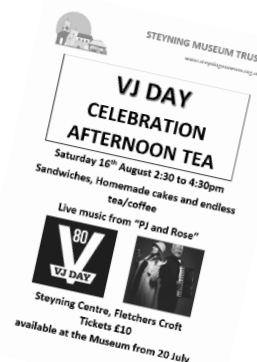
Quiz on **Saturday 15th November 6pm** for **6:30 start**.

Tables of 6 persons

The Steyning Centre, Saxon Room .

Bring your drinks and snacks to this very popular event

Tickets £5 from the museum available from the beginning of November.



Maggie Hollands, Social Events

Shop and Education team news – Muriel Wright

Education

In June two Year 2 classes from Steyning Primary School visited the Museum. The title of their topic was "Beyond the Classroom ". The children wanted to find out how Steyning had changed over the years. They studied the early buildings and how the shops had changed. Many of the children didn't know that Steyning had a railway, so that exhibit caused a lot of surprise and many questions. It was quite a lively morning!

Later that same week myself, Andrew Woodfield and Helen Holliday visited Upper Beeding Primary School to meet 2 Reception Classes. Their topic was " Toys Old and New "

We took a selection of toys from the Museum plus some of our own toys. Andrew's marionette was very popular as was his model engine. The children were very interested and asked lots of questions (luckily, we could answer them all!) It was a very enjoyable afternoon.

Muriel.

News from the Research Hub – Lois Roemer

Research Enquiries

People:

Edward Detmold
Robert Emery
Tye family, Ashurst
Mary Catherine Richardson
Knight family
Frank Duke
Adcock family
Godfrey Pearse
Morley/Finch family
George Airey
Sten(n)ing family
Member of the Home Guard killed in Church Street

Places:

Tryon School
Staplefields Farm
The Ridings
Steyning Mint
Clivedale
75 High Street
Railway Hotel
Ham Farm
60 High Street
St Cuthman's Tea Rooms
Bramber Brooks
Three Tuns
Atherton, Jarvis Lane

Other:

Books by Ted Walker
Boundary Stone marked BG
Lime kilns in Steyning

Is the Museum becoming a Literary Centre?

We sometimes get enquiries from people who are writing articles or books about people who spent time in Steyning, but it is very unusual to have three established writers contact us in a matter of weeks.

The first was Emma Bastin who has been researching the life of Alison Settle with the intention of writing a book about her. Alison Settle came to live in Steyning during the World War II, she had often stayed with her great friend Edith Heald at Chantry House, when she bought 6 Church Street. Alison was a very well-known journalist who specialized in fashion and as Sarah Linfield (museum steward and member of the social events team) had already done a lot of research into Alison and so she was able to help with information. Emma came to Steyning and visited the museum, after which she had a guided tour of Steyning and went home with the intention of persuading her husband that he would like to move to Steyning!

The second visitor was Tessa Morris-Suzuki, Professor Emerita, School of Culture, History and Language, Australian National University, looking for information about Edward Detmold, an artist, who spent a lot of time at Horsebridge Common during his life. Edward Detmold illustrated the first edition of Rudyard Kipling's Jungle Book among other things. He also had a twin brother, Maurice, who was also an etcher and painter. In a letter written by Edward, he describes walking from Horsebridge Common to Steyning in winter to go to the Post Office. Tessa also visited the museum and has promised us a copy of the book when it is published next year.



A sketch by Edward Detmold

Last, but not least, Miranda Rijks visited the museum, purely out of interest and having been shown round was delighted with what she saw and promised to come again soon. Miranda has written 24 bestselling psychological thrillers. When introduced to Steyning Man and told of his history as we know it, it was suggested that perhaps she could write about him and come up with a plausible reason for him not being buried in the churchyard, but she said regrettably that she didn't write historical stories.

The museum's reward will be an acknowledgement of our help in the books when written and the promise of further contact.

Are you ready to get involved? – Russell Bowman (Chair of Trustees)

Just about every museum relies on volunteers to operate successfully, and this is especially true for small, independent, community museums such as ours - everyone at the Steyning Museum is a volunteer.

Of course, as a volunteer there is a level of commitment needed and a willingness to work as a member of a team, but you have the opportunity to learn about the museum, the collection, and the history of Steyning. You also contribute to the museum's operation and growth, and help in meeting its objectives of caring for, researching, and displaying our collection for the delight, interest, and education of the public.

We have a number of volunteer vacancies at present and I've listed these below. If you'd like to know more about any of these roles please get in touch by email at chair@steyningmuseum.org.uk.

Chair of the Management Committee

This is a critical management role. As Chair of the Management Committee, you will provide leadership and coordination of the Management Committee - a group of volunteers, each with their own role, that manage the operation of the museum, for example: producing stewarding rotas, creating exhibitions, publicising the museum, arranging events.

The Chair of the Management Committee also communicates with the Board of Trustees – providing updates, raising issues, and seeking support or guidance.

Minutes Secretary (to the Management Committee)

Arranging and attending the monthly management committee meetings, distributing the agenda, taking, writing up and distributing the meeting minutes.

Maintenance Officer

Firstly, I would like to thank Phil Etherington for all his work as maintenance officer over the past few years. Whilst the museum has a very new building by the standards of many small museums, things do break, need tightening, need checking, and when Phil steps down in a few months, we will have a Maintenance Officer vacancy.

The role undertakes regular maintenance checks (alarm tests, lighting checks, heating, general building condition). Small repair tasks where able, or arranging repairs through suppliers or tradespeople. (As a key holder, you may need to onsite when suppliers need access for maintenance and checks (alarm and CCTV servicing, electrical checks, fire extinguisher checks, etc)

Social Events Team Leader

During the year, the museum holds a number of social events for fundraising and community engagement. For example, last year we held two Coffee Mornings, a Cream Tea, and a Thanksgiving Lunch, as well as refreshments at the Annual General Meeting.

Maggie Hollands has performed the role for the last ten years, but has now decided to step down at next year's AGM. We are, of course hugely thankful to Maggie for her work over the last ten years – and we are now looking for someone to take her place.

Exhibition Team Member

Linda is stepping back from the Exhibition team due to family commitments and we'd like to thank her for all the work she has done; she has been an invaluable member of the team. This means we do have a vacancy so if anyone is interested in joining the team please do contact Rachael via exhibits@steyningmuseum.org.uk. The team meet every two weeks on a Friday morning, enthusiasm is essential and computer literacy would be a great help.