

## STEYNING MUSEUM TRUST

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

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Registered Charity Number: 1169540



### Newsletter May 2025

Hello everyone, and welcome to the May edition of our newsletter. With longer days and (hopefully!) some good weather, I hope you will be able to make the most of the exciting exhibitions and social events that we have coming up. Read on to find out more!

Leonie (newsletter compiler)

The Trustees are still looking for a Chairperson for the Management Committee, a Minutes Secretary for the Committee and a second Maintenance Officer. If anyone would like more information on any of these roles, please contact [trustees@steyningmuseum.org.uk](mailto:trustees@steyningmuseum.org.uk) or you can email [ian.wright\\_smoke\\_steam@btopenworld.com](mailto:ian.wright_smoke_steam@btopenworld.com).

Muriel

### Exhibition news – Rachael Rainbow

In June we'll be launching our new exhibition *Bunker* as part of our 80th anniversary of VE Day programme. Back in May 1945, the country celebrated VE Day and the end of the Second World War in Europe. But the peace that followed was soon clouded by new tensions and the long shadow of the Cold War. Our new exhibition, *Bunker*, looks at how people prepared and protected themselves in both these uncertain times. From local air raid shelters to Cold War bunkers, it's a fascinating glimpse into how our communities stayed safe, stayed strong, and stood ready—even underground!



*Museum volunteers examining a collapsed operating base used by the Wiston Auxiliary Group in the Second World War as part of our research*



To mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day, we're running a special programme of exhibitions and events throughout the year. From a look at local Commonwealth War Graves and underground bunkers to a commemorative afternoon tea and our Armistice exhibition in November, there'll be plenty of ways for us to reflect and remember.

May - Commonwealth War Graves exhibition in the front hall

May 23<sup>rd</sup> – June 1<sup>st</sup> – Art Trail hub exhibition

June onwards - Bunker exhibition

16<sup>th</sup> August - VE Day Afternoon Tea

November - Armistice exhibition in the front hall.

### Events & Fund-Raising Committee – Maggie Hollands

Thank you all for coming to our recent successful Coffee morning at The Steyning Centre. We raised over £166 for Museum funds.

Our next social event is our **Afternoon Tea** (so keep the date free!) on **SATURDAY 16th AUGUST at 2:30**. Join us at The Steyning Centre, where we will be celebrating the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of VE AND VJ DAY. We will have PJ & Rose a “New -Vintage” sound playing for us .... So live music, sandwiches, cakes and unlimited tea! Tickets £10 and will be available from the museum from 20th July.

Future events are the **Autumn Coffee morning** on **4th September**. Also a **Quiz** is being arranged for **Saturday 15th November** at The Steyning Centre **5:30pm** for 6pm start. Tickets £5 per person.

Thank you all for your support of Steyning Museum.

### Shop and Education team news – Muriel Wright

I hope you all, had an enjoyable Easter. The Easter Quiz was very popular and the chocolate eggs were gratefully received by the children. A few adults completed the quiz and they were rewarded with sweets. Some of our younger visitors tried on the costumes and had their photograph taken.

### News from the Collections team – Margaret Benham

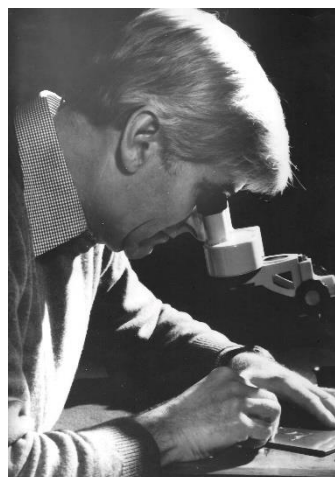
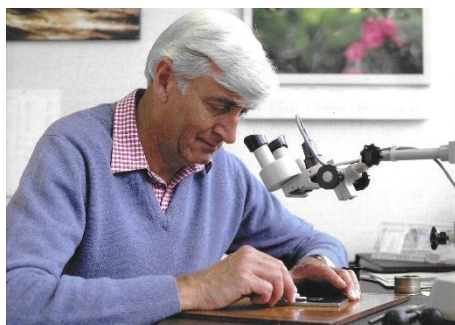


Nigel Alan Dow, one of the Museum's late members and a steward, died on 10.04.2023. In February 2024 the Museum was informed that Nigel Alan Dow (known as 'Alan') had left the Museum a pecuniary (cash) legacy and a specific legacy under his will. Nigel was a professional engraver of mainly vignettes and portraits who had devoted his career to designing and creating metal engraved plates mainly for bank notes and stamps for his employer's national and international clients. These clients included the Bank of England, for whom he created engravings of the head of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for UK bank notes. He also created engravings of historical and international figures, heads of state including the King of Qatar and several other notable personages, royal and otherwise for use on bank notes and stamps.

Nigel's legacy to the Museum included all his collection of engraving equipment, engraved plates and several examples of the bank notes and postage stamps that he had designed and produced over the years. Whilst Nigel had lived in Steyning for several years before he died, his work was not connected with Steyning or the locality and he had never worked here. Therefore, the Trustees decided that the objects comprised in Nigel's legacy were outside the Museum's Collections Development Policy and accordingly, (apart from a few of Nigel's personal possessions, a couple of examples of his work and some photographs

of him at work) should not be accessioned and would be disposed of by sale. The terms of Nigel's legacy permitted such a sale for the benefit of the Museum.

The Trustees obtained expert valuations and instructed Toovey's auctioneers to sell Nigel's collection. The sale of these objects has raised a total of £118,898.84 (gross proceeds of £136,652.40 less auction costs of £17,753.56) for the Museum's funds. The proceeds of the final sale were received in February 2025. In addition, the Museum received the pecuniary legacy of £5000.00 under Nigel's will. The Trustees are very grateful for this extremely generous gift. Rachael, the Museum's Curator of Exhibitions, has agreed to consider creating a temporary exhibition devoted to Nigel and his work, possibly combined with the history of banking in Steyning, the Anglo-Saxon Steyning Mint and the use of coins and tokens in Steyning and the area. However, this is unlikely to be possible until 2026 due to the Exhibitions' team's tight schedule for 2025.



## News from the Research Hub – Lois Roemer

### Research Enquiries

#### People

Alison Settle  
The Stenning Family  
Bertram Nicholls  
Ann Rogers  
The Dockerill Family  
The Mitchell/Etherington Family  
St Wilfrid  
Mabel Edith Spooner  
Edith Blanche Blunt  
The Adams Family  
Dr Christopher Penfold  
William Bailey Watson  
Edward Sharp and Elizabeth Churcher  
Hubert E Scott

#### Places

The Clock Tower  
Highland Croft  
Gleve Farm  
The Old Bank  
Chanctonbury Ring

#### Other

Wharves on the River Adur  
St Cuthman's Statue  
History of the Railway  
Pink Lady apples  
British Auxiliary Units  
Trevor Hardy's registers  
Old cricket photos  
Aethelwulf's Stone  
Post box outside the Post office  
Photos of Steyning in the 50's and 60's

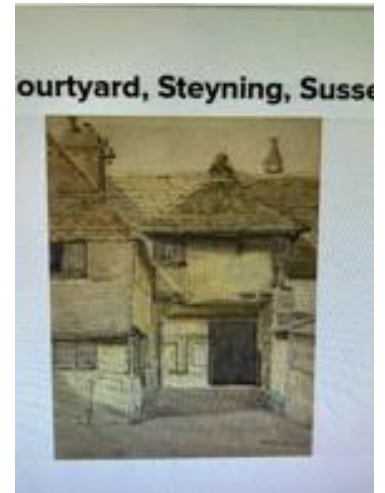
### A Courtyard in Steyning

In a recent newsletter we asked people to look out for any connections to Steyning whilst on holiday in foreign parts. Shirley Blomfield, a museum volunteer who works on our Modes Database, was recently on holiday in New Zealand and found a reference to an undated watercolour painting on display in the

Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu entitled 'A Courtyard in Steyning' by the artist Edith Blanche Blunt.

At first it was assumed to be of the yard behind the Chequer pub but looking closely at the picture through the open doorway on the left it appeared to show meat carcasses hanging up in a butcher's shop. The Chequer yard was visited, as well as the yard behind the now closed Cancer Research shop, but neither building matched the picture. When in doubt always ask the Oracle and Chris Todd identified it as the entrance between the Post Office and the shop next door.

The next thing was to identify the artist. Had she lived in Steyning? Edith Blanche Blunt, nee Wilkinson, was born in 1864 in Great Ouseburn, Yorkshire. In 1896 she married Thomas Gaire Rockstro Blunt, a school master and, together with their baby son, they emigrated to New Zealand in 1901, where they lived in the Christchurch area.



Edith returned to England in 1919, travelling alone, her eldest son Brian was a student in London at the time. There is another painting in the Christchurch Art Gallery depicting St Michael's Mount in Cornwall dated ca 1920. Did she come to Steyning during her visit to England and paint the courtyard? She was then an established painter in New Zealand exhibiting at the Canterbury Society of Arts between 1904 and 1933 and at the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts between 1919 and 1933.

In 1931 Edith was living with her husband, now a professor, in Christchurch, but by 1932 she was living at 22 High Street, Steyning on her own. By 1933 she had moved to 30 Church Street before settling at 10 Highland Croft where she lived until her death in 1946.

*Attention cricket fans:*

Edith's second son Roger Charles Blunt MBE was a famous cricketer playing in 9 test matches until 1930 when he moved to England and became a BBC commentator. He was Cricketer of the Year in 1928, awarded the Queen Elizabeth Coronation Medal in 1953 and in 1965 awarded the MBE.