



THE STEYNING SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Registered Charity No. 269859 www.steyningsociety.org.uk

September 2023

Dear Members,

The Committee hopes that you all had a very enjoyable summer.

Talks

We started our autumn programme of talks earlier this month with a fascinating talk by Justin Russell about the early history of the Rifle Range and the Rifle Volunteers. Our next talk will be on Friday, 20th October, when Sarah Leigh will talk to us about the real St. Cuthman. Sarah has researched the history of Steyning Church extensively and wrote the current guide for the Church. We will then be hearing from Brian Lavery, our local naval historian, about Royal Yachts under sail on Friday, 17th November. There will be no talk in December because of the Christmas Supper.

The Christmas Supper

We will be holding our annual Christmas Supper jointly with the Museum on Friday, 15th December. Drinks will be served from 7.00pm and supper will be served at 7:45pm. Catering will be provided by SuperDoux of Brighton. At the end of the meal, we will be entertained by a performance of magic by David Croucher. Tickets will cost £27 each, to include refreshments, and will be available at Steyning Bookshop at the beginning of November. As usual, guests will be welcome. Further details will be announced nearer the time but please save the date.

Trips

Brian Lavery has kindly offered to organise three trips during the forthcoming year.

The first will be a short trip to Brighton to see Embassy Court which was built in 1935, when it was a controversial Modernist building. It is on the seafront and has fabulous views. At various times Max Miller, Terence Rattigan and Keith Waterhouse lived there. This trip will probably be on 21st or 23rd November. It will be hosted by Maddie Blackburn and Paul Dennison, Steyning residents who are members of the Society and who also have a flat in the Court.

The second is to Brighton & Hove Reform Synagogue which is home to a remarkable stained glass window which is a memorial to the Holocaust and was designed by John Petts (1914 –

1991). It has been compared to Picasso's Guernica. You can find out more about this window in the Architects' Journal, using the link [Campaigners call for listing to save 1960s synagogue from demolition \(architectsjournal.co.uk\)](http://architectsjournal.co.uk)

The Synagogue intends to hold an open day to which we are invited, details not yet known.

We do not envisage hiring a coach for either of these trips so members will have to bring their own cars or make their own travelling arrangements. We will, however, have to make a small charge to cover admission charges and/or gratuities.

The third will be a coach trip to Chatham Historic Dockyard sometime next spring. Brian was the curator there some years ago and will be sharing his knowledge with us. This will be a whole day trip (seven or eight hours).

Anyone interested in joining any of these trips or wanting to find out more about them should contact Brian, by email address on brianblavery@aol.com or by text on 07702 160464

Bring & Buy Stall

As announced at our talk in September, we have decided to reinstate the Bring & Buy stall at future talks, starting in October. We intend to change the format by disposing of items which remain unsold after being offered at two meetings so that the stock does not become "stale." We hope that this will result in a more interesting stall. Unsold stock will be given to a charity shop. We therefore ask that Members who want to give something to the stall bring it to a meeting and hand it to the person running the stall.

The Heritage List

The local heritage list has now been adopted by Horsham District Council. Printed copies of the list are available to buy at our monthly meetings at a cost of £10 each.

Treasures from Your Home



At the end of June, we organized a fund-raising event, Treasures from your Home, in conjunction with local auctioneer, art expert and valuer Rupert Toovey to help finance the grants we regularly offer local organizations. We are enormously grateful to Rupert for his guidance and support. On the evening he excelled: hugely knowledgeable about a wide range of antiques, very interesting to listen to and he made us laugh - always a good thing!

In all, over seventy-five people came along bringing with them a large number of varied treasures from their homes. All with a good story attached. Rupert talked about each item and sometimes asked the owner to tell the story. The top right photo above shows the silver salver belonging to the great-great grandfather of our treasurer, Adrian Gobat, who was the first Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem in 1846. The playing cards were hand-painted by the Bishop's son, Samuel Benoni.

After an interval during which food and wine were served, we moved on to a short auction. Local individuals and businesses gave items for this; these included a lovely water colour painting of Steyning High Street by Dennis Lascelles, dinner and theatre tickets for two to see the Sound of Music at Chichester, signed copies of Julia Donaldson's books, a professional family photo shoot by Focus Photography. Shoreham, and afternoon tea at the Grand. We are very grateful to those who provided these items and to those who bid so generously for them.

The evening was great fun and much enjoyed by all who attended. We hope to organise similar fundraising events again. This event raised £1,500 to help fund future Steyning Society Grants. The next time the Committee will consider applications for one of our grants will be in November. Do encourage any local organizations which improve the amenities in our town to apply.

Grant to Steyning Air Cadets



The Society awarded one such grant to Steyning Air Cadets at the end of July to fund a new display screen in their main hall to assist training and development of the cadets. Our treasurer presented the cheque for the grant to the Cadets on 20th July at their centre. He told the Cadets a little about what the Society does and how it supports organizations like theirs which contribute to the wellbeing of Steyning.

Steyping Festival 2024

Steyping Festival needs volunteers to help with next year's festival. Anyone interested in helping, should contact the Festival directly. This can be done by using the volunteers page on the Festival's website (steypingfestival.co.uk/volunteers).

Finale

We hope that you will enjoy the programme of events which has been planned for the year ahead. The programme is available on the website but printed copies are available at meetings.

There are two vacancies on the Committee. We very much hope that members will come forward to fill these vacancies and help run the Society. The work of the Committee is fun and rewarding but there is a lot to be done in running our programme. Anyone interested in finding out more about joining the Committee or what it entails should contact Catherine Mant, the membership secretary, on cmantsteypingsoc@gmail.com.