



THE STEYNING SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER FROM THE COMMITTEE

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

November 2023

Dear Members,

Christmas Supper

This year's Christmas Supper will be held jointly with the Museum at The Steyning Centre on Friday, 15th December 2023. The evening will start with a reception at 7p.m., supper will be served at 7.45p.m. and the evening will end with a magic show by David Croucher. There is a choice of vegetarian, non-vegetarian and vegan menus. Please state your preference when you buy your ticket. Tickets cost £27 each, which includes refreshments, and are available at Steyning Bookshop and at the Museum. As usual, guests are welcome. *Please buy your tickets early to avoid disappointment and, in any event, before 8th December because this is the date when we have to confirm numbers to the caterer, so tickets will then become scarce.*

Talks

Our autumn programme of talks started with a fascinating talk by Justin Russell about the early history of the Rifle Range and the Rifle Volunteers. Our next talk was by Sarah Leigh about St. Cuthman. Sarah told us that he was probably an ordained clergyman who was deputed by Bishop Wilfrid to oversee the building of a church in 7th Century Steyning as part of the bishop's church building programme, and not the shepherd boy of the legend. In November, Brian Lavery told us about the history of royal sailing yachts, starting with the 25 yachts built for Charles II after the Restoration, and the role they have played in our history since then, including bringing William and Mary here after the Glorious Revolution and then George I as our first Hanoverian king.

There will be no talk in December because of the Christmas Supper so our next talk will be on Friday, 19th January 2024, when Geoff Mead will be telling us about Daniel Defoe. The talk will start at 7.30 pm, with drinks being served at 7pm. As usual, guests are most welcome and there will be a bring-and-buy stall.

Trips

Brian Lavery arranged for a group of twelve members to visit Embassy Court in Brighton towards the end of November. This is a block of flats which is on the seafront and has splendid views of the coast. It was built in 1935, when it was a controversial building. It was renovated recently and was restored to its former glory. Famous past residents include Max Miller, Terence Rattigan and Keith Waterhouse. The visit was hosted by Maddie Blackburn and Paul Dennison, who are Steyning residents and members of the Society. The visit was greatly enjoyed by those who went on it. We will be posting an appreciation from one of them on the website shortly. Another visit is planned for the end of January, probably on 30th January.

Brian hopes to arrange a visit to Brighton & Hove Reform Synagogue this winter. The Synagogue is home to a remarkable stained glass window which is a memorial to the Holocaust and was designed by John Petts (1914 – 1991). The window has been compared to Picasso's Guernica. You can find out more about the window in the Architects' Journal, using the link [Campaigners call for listing to save 1960s synagogue from demolition \(architectsjournal.co.uk\)](https://architectsjournal.co.uk). Unfortunately, the Synagogue is unable to receive us at present because of recent events in Israel and Gaza.

Brian is also planning 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 on brianblavery@aol.com or by text on 07702 160464

New Committee Member

We are very pleased to say that Lynne Broome agreed to join the Committee earlier this month. Lynne has lived in Steyning for many years. She is a keen gardener, is actively involved with Steyning in Bloom and, for the last five years, has opened her garden to the public as part of the National Garden Scheme. We believe that she has much to offer the Society and look forward to working with her.

Membership Survey

We are conducting a survey to find out members' views about what the Society does, how this could be improved and whether members would like the Society to do anything else. We welcome constructive criticism, whether favourable or otherwise, so please do reply to the survey before we close it at the end of the year. The survey form was sent to members by email on 19th November 2023. Please contact us on cmantsteyningsoc@gmail.com if you would like another copy.

The Heritage List

The local heritage list has now been adopted by Horsham District Council. Printed copies of the list are on sale at our monthly meetings for £10 each.

Grants

At our meeting in November, we decided to make a grant to Steyning Area First Responders to help them defray the cost of repairing and renovating the old telephone box on the High Street which now houses a defibrillator and which was damaged by a storm last year. We also made a grant to Zoe Peate to help her organise a string ensemble workshop as part of next year's Festival.

Steyning Festival 2024

Steyning 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 (steyningfestival.co.uk/volunteers).

And, finally, we wish you all a very happy Christmas and New Year. We hope to see you at the Christmas Supper and at next year's talks.