

The Midhurst Society is fortunate enough to own the original cartoon of the Angel on the front cover of Issue 20 of Midhurst Magazine (Autumn 2014). It was drawn by the artist Adrian Hill in 1953 as a sign for the Angel Hotel in North Street, but apparently was never used there. It was given to The Midhurst Society by Mr and Mrs Timothy Ades in about 1993. As The Society owns no premises of its own, the painting was placed on permanent display in the Library in Knockhundred Row until the Library moved to the new Grange Centre.

Mrs Ades, who is well known as Professor Dawn Ades FBA CBE, tells us that her mother and stepfather were close friends of Adrian Hill and “his South African and very glamorous wife Dorothy”. The Hills lived in Laundry Cottages in Cowdray Park not far from her parents in North Mill House, Easebourne, which is now Professor Ades' home. Frank Beakwell, Professor Ades' stepfather, was an artist like Adrian Hill, so the two men had a common bond.

Adrian Hill was a Londoner by birth (24 March 1895). He was educated at Dulwich College and went on to study at St John's Wood School of Art and the Royal College of Art. During World War I he joined the Scouting and Sniping Section of the Honourable Artillery, but by 1917 he was appointed an official war artist. Between 1917 and 1919 he produced numerous paintings and sketches on the Western Front and many of these are now in the Imperial War Museum in London.

After the War he took up painting professionally and exhibited at the Royal Academy and elsewhere in England and further afield such as at the Paris Salon. He also found time to teach at the Hornsey School of Art and the Westminster School of Art.

Illness struck him shortly before the beginning of the Second World War when tuberculosis brought him to the King Edward VII Sanatorium at Midhurst. Here he met Frank Beakwell, a fellow TB patient. Whilst convalescing Adrian Hill passed the time by drawing nearby objects from his hospital bed and “found the process helpful in aiding his own recovery. In 1939 occupational therapy was introduced to the sanatorium for the first time and Hill was invited to teach drawing and painting to other patients”.

By Sheila Ryan
(then Chairman of The Midhurst Society)

Note: The Angel (on loan from The Society) now hangs on the first floor of the Angel Hotel in North Street