

The Researcher

Newsletter of the
West Sussex Archives Society
The Friends of
West Sussex Record Office



November 2010

Joining up our Heritage at the Record Office



Joining up our Heritage is the latest project taking place in the Record Office, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and a generous donation by WSAS.

The aim is to locate, with the help of volunteers, external archive and other historic sources that exist outside of the Record Office and add this information to our new tithe maps database. We are living in a digital age and the project is an example of how a greater range of archive material can be accessed by the mere click of a mouse.

The project is past its halfway mark and due to the large number of parishes in the County and the limited timescale for the project, we will be unable to produce a database for every tithe map area.

Forthcoming Events

November 13th - A workshop by Richard Childs on Electoral Records.

December 4th - The Christmas Symposium

Events 2011

February 12th Halnaker House presentation - Dr Andrew Foster

March 26th 'Parish Registers: the other side'

April 9th AGM

Any queries about this newsletter or questions for West Sussex Archives Society please email

wsascom@btinternet.com

In spite of this, the project is making unexpected waves...

We have linked up with several local archive groups and provided support and advice with their cataloguing and storage of material. Some communities have been inspired to try and capture more of their local history before it is too late, through the media of oral histories and collection of photos and other documents. Volunteers on the project have become inspired to dig deep into the history of their own local communities. They have formed relationships with groups and individuals within these communities that will continue beyond the end of the project. Several students have carried out work experience with the project and learnt new skills that can be put to use in the future. The Record Office has also benefited with the wide range of new material that has been added to the archives either through deposits or loans for copying.

The project will finish at the end of July next year. The waves, hopefully, will continue.

Gilliam Edom



Manor Farm, Chidham, approximately 1945. Used by permission of Audrey Sykes

Meet the Committee

The WSAS Committee works together both to support West Sussex Record Office projects and an active membership through various events, newsletters, conferences etc. The committee meets regularly to manage and to undertake various activities on behalf of its membership.

Caroline Adams - Chairperson and profiled in our last edition.

Richard Martin - Vice Chairman

I was born in Chichester. I graduated from the University of Kent at Canterbury in 1993 with a BA in Geography. I also hold a Certificate in Local History (1996) and an MA in Human Geography (1998) from the University of Sussex. I live in Worthing and work for West Sussex County Council. As well as being vice-chairman and minutes secretary for WSAS, I have recently become the secretary of the Sussex Record Society, and I am a member of the Friends of ESRO and Sussex Archaeological Society.

Stella Elliott - Our New Secretary

I was born in East Anglia where I worked on the Administrative side of a Printing and Publishing firm. During a spell in London where I indulged my love of music and singing, I took up teaching Business Studies before marrying and later moving to Chichester. After moving to Sussex I became more interested in history and my first piece of research was prompted by learning that the founder of the firm I had worked for was born in Chichester. I have been a member of WSAS since the 1980s and may be one of our longest standing members.

Leigh Lawson

In 1989 I was asked to help with the research for a history of the Petworth Emigration Committee (PEC), sponsored by the University of Toronto. In Sussex, we tried to establish the names of the 1,800 emigrants who were sent to Canada under the auspices of the PEC. Two books were published in 2000, one a history of the emigration scheme containing details of the names we found, and the other edited letters written by the emigrants which were published at the time as pamphlets and in local newspapers. Since then I have assisted my colleague Sheila Haines, with a biography of Thomas Sockett, rector of Petworth and a member of the PEC. Currently we are writing a biography of Elizabeth Ilive, wife of the 3rd Earl of Egremont. One line of my family has lived in West Sussex since at least the mid 17th century moving eventually to Littlehampton where I was born. My grandparents went on the stage, touring in Musical Reviews but they came back to Littlehampton in the 1920s so my father could attend school. My grandfather was the children's entertainer and Punch and Judy man 'Uncle Charlie'.

Barrie Keech

After a career of 35 years in IT it became very special to me to indulge a passion in almost all things historic. However my fervent interest is of my home parish of Worthing and its mother parish Broadwater. My past IT experience has made me a natural for producing newsletters and building web-sites. Currently I am actively involved in two lottery funded projects; The All Our Yesterday's Project and The Worthing Heritage Village Project.

Richard Mant

Having taught History in various schools for the best part of forty years, I now teach part-time and this allows me to pursue my other interests which include sailing, fell walking, rugby football, hockey and last but by no means least, various aspects of West Sussex history. Currently my interests are the Deposition Books, the Monarch's Way and the growth of literacy in various families and villages. My on-going interest is to investigate and record with biographical detail every branch of the Mant family in West Sussex since their arrival in c.1500 from France . I have been involved in this study for the last thirty years, with the help of the staff and the resources of the West Sussex Record Office.

Liz Collison

I have been married to Noel for 50 years. We have 3 children and 6 grandchildren. I have lived a great part of my life in Sussex, first as a child in Bexhill, then when my children were young in Ashdown Forest and finally in 1986 we bought a weekend cottage in Burpham where we have lived permanently since we retired. Having studied law at University I decided once my youngest child was eight to take up teaching and spent 20 happy years with primary school children. Since retiring I have spent a lot of time researching our family history and otherwise my hobbies are gardening, walking, cooking and reading.

Alex Barford

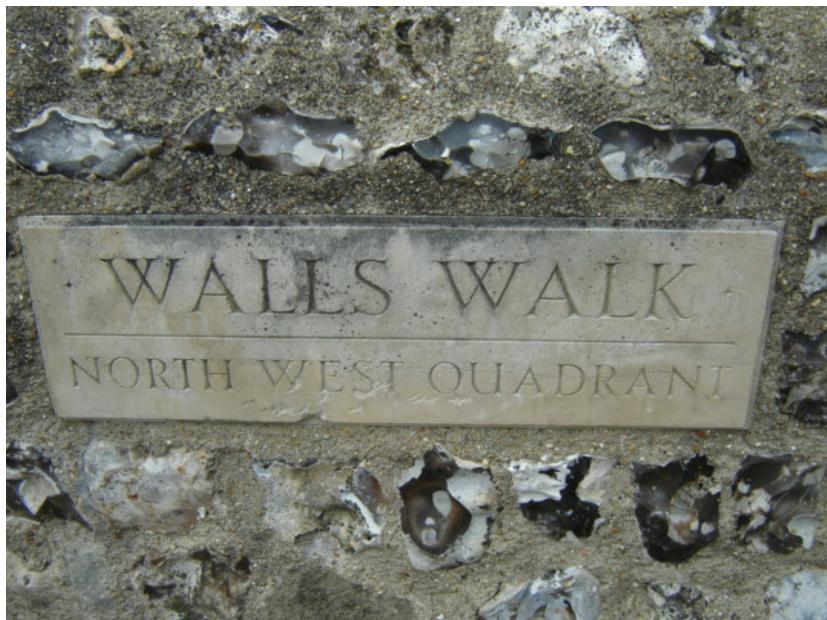
I'm a West Sussex girl, born and bred, with my dad's family being from Worthing, and mum's originally from the Midhurst area. I've always been interested in history, and long walks with my dad and the dog over the downs when I was small meant that Sussex is where my heart is, so working for the Record Office is my dream job! When I was away at University, and some how managed to do my dissertation on the Earls of Arundel in the 14th century, I always knew I was home when we spotted the spire of Chichester Cathedral on the long drive back from Cardiff. I'm currently studying for my Mlitt in Archives and Records Management by distance learning with Dundee University, which translates as whenever I'm not at work, I'm thinking or reading about work. So I've said goodbye to a social life for the next three years! Any spare time is spent walking my small dog and trying to find interesting bits of Worthing that haven't yet been demolished.

Stephanie Cecil

I have lived in Chichester all my life up until 5 years ago when I moved to the neighbouring village of Chidham. I have also been the Society's meetings coordinator for 4 years up until 2009 and I still take an active interest in the Society's events. I have always been interested in anything historical. I like to travel to old churches, castles and historical buildings of interest here in the UK and abroad. Apart from all this, my family must come first, especially as I now have two new grandchildren born at the end of the summer 2010, totalling 4 in all now. I believe that the need to know one's own history and surroundings is very important, this I hope to pass on to my future generations.

Society Events Review

A Walk around the Walls of Chichester Saturday September 11th



A small group of WSAS members braved the elements (the forecast was solid rain!) to walk round the walls of Chichester on Saturday, September 11th. We were led by one of the Chichester Tourist Guides, Margaret Henderson, who had a great wealth of information to tell us about the walls and the history of Chichester. Having met at the west door of the cathedral, we walked round the south side of the walls where Margaret pointed out the door in the wall which allowed Sir William Waller to enter and capture Chichester in 1642 on behalf of Parliament.

We noticed the bastions in the walls as we made our way round to the west side and as we walked up the rampart opposite the WSRO, Margaret drew our attention to the bastion which has become detached from the wall and is now in one Chichester resident's back garden.

We found our way blocked along the north wall (repairs were being carried out) so we dropped down into Priory Park and talked about the Guildhall and its history. By now we had been walking for an hour and a half and officially our time was up, but Margaret very kindly offered to complete the walk with those who wished to carry on.

Some went ahead with Margaret, rejoined the wall and continued down the east side – and still the rain held off – others had commitments elsewhere and left the party at this stage.



We were extremely fortunate to have Margaret as our guide for the walk and we were very pleased that she joined a number of us for coffee and lunch in the cathedral refectory at the end of the morning.

Richard Mant

Bourne Conference October 9th



On a bright autumn day WSAS members, and some locals, met at Southbourne Village Hall for a series of talks about The Bourne Villages.

First Geoffrey Bell spoke about a new book he had helped to write with archive pictures of Southbourne. He talked about how the village had developed after the opening of the railway station, and especially since the second world war. This is within living memory, and his talk was full of stories about village characters that he had met over the years.

Peter Barge talked about the history of Westbourne. He noted that it was one of only two places that were exempt from Henry VIII's tax, but while that was good

for the village at the time, it was less helpful for local historians now as these taxation records are useful and none exist for the area. He also pointed out important buildings in the village.

After a refreshment break, Philip Macdougall presented an illustrated talk about Chidham. He talked about the influence of Rev. Walker on the village in the nineteenth century. He was the first vicar to live in the village for many years, and restored the church and founded the village school. Again, Philip discussed the impact of the second world war on the area, how plans to evacuate the area were prepared, and how the famous Battle of Britain pilot, Billy Fiske, lived in the area. He was based at Tangmere, and was the first American pilot to be killed in the battle.

After lunch, the group met at Bosham Church where Angela Bromley-Martin gave a talk about the history of the church and the village. The church is shown on the Bayeux Tapestry (see above), and she was certain that King Canute visited the area. Angela pointed out important buildings and events in the village before leading the group down the high street.

This was a very enjoyable day, which showed the advantage of spending a day examining the history of a specific area or a particular topic. Members should be most grateful to everyone who was involved in the organization of the day, and especially to those who worked hard at the hall to provide refreshments, move furniture and all the other things that make such an event a success.

Richard Martin



Bosham Church Chancel Arch



Walkers enjoy a sunny afternoon in Bosham

Chairman's Thoughts

Our committee is nearly complete, as you will see elsewhere in this Newsletter, as Stella has agreed to take on the task of Secretary. We are still looking for a Journal editor, but this autumn's issue will be distributed at the same time as this Newsletter or soon afterwards. We are presently planning an exciting calendar of meetings for next year, and we feel the society is going from strength to strength. Speaking personally I would like to say that I owe a great deal to the willingness, enthusiasm and sheer hard work that the other members show.

As I write this I'm suffering from the trauma of moving house. Computerisation, which should have made life easier, has pushed the stress levels through the roof. My estate agents happened to show me some 'old documents' from the attic of their business in Horsham, and a letter of 16 April 1911 read approximately thus:

'Dear Sir,

Please would you advertise our house? We are looking to move 30th inst...'
Happy days!

The biggest move this office was involved in was its own, from Edes House, a large Jacobean family house on West Street, to the present purpose-built building, with its temperature- and humidity-controlled strongrooms. There are, we think, eleven miles of shelving here, and several million documents. That is why it is necessary to have those order slips, and to know who has ordered what during the day. It is imperative that the slips that you complete as a reader, are filled in correctly and it still holds today that if we, the staff, return something to the wrong box, it's as good as lost. That has happened mercifully few times in all the years we have been here. There was an incident recently where a searcher found the wrong document inside the folder she was handed, but luckily both the folder and the contents had been marked with a reference number (different in each case, of course), and it was an easy step to find the 'other' folder with the requested document inside.

Phew!

I'm fed up with boxes at the moment. But I can see that if you muddle the contents inside each box (even to fill an address-book sized hole in a box marked 'bathroom') you are inevitably going to be in trouble sooner or later. At the Record Office the problem could be magnified thousands of times, but for the dedication of the Searchroom staff.

Caroline Adams

(wsascom@btinternet.com)



Bill Gage has just celebrated forty years of working in records management for the County Council. On 14th September 2010 he wrote this:

Forty years ago to the day I commenced working for WSCC.

I was then employed as a Junior Entrant and was attached to the Record Office/Clerks Dept where I worked in the newly formed 'Modern Records Centre', which was located in the central attic and basement of County Hall.

I remember one of my early jobs, which I hated, was hauling up to the top floor batches of newly delivered storage boxes from a flat roof at the rear of County Hall by means of very coarse string - later on we got an electric winch. I didn't like the job as the flat roof was so slippery with moss etc (even worse when it had been raining) and peering over the side of the building made my head spin

At that time we were not responsible for the legal records of the County Council and we took these over about two years later. Much of my work at this time was taken up cataloguing all the files of the Clerks Dept which had been untouched since the Second World war and were thick with dry dust which didn't do a great deal for my hands - it was not considered appropriate to issue me with gloves nor did I think it was my place to ask for any - I just got on with it.

Another early memory was cataloguing the 10,000 files that came over from the Children's Dept. I carried out this work in the basement with light from just one overhead bulb and my desk was a packing case with a flat board resting on top of it. Confidentiality was a prime concern so no names were entered onto the transfer sheet, only the Dept Ref Number - which gave us some problems in the years to come. Needless to say all of the work of the Modern Records Centre was carried out by manual processes - no computers existed so catalogues were typed out on a manual typewriter (electric devices were only for the typing pool).

I worked with one other person, namely Frank Dines who had risen through the ranks in the Navy to become an officer so he was used to giving orders and for them to be obeyed. It was not as bad as it sounds. However he used to be out of the office quite a bit, carrying out other duties such as being a Census Officer. When this happened I felt that I had to complete it all the work he had allocated to me and would work my socks off - needless to say that I was just given so much to keep me out of mischief and wasn't expected to complete even half of it!

Frank (by the way I was never permitted to call him by his Christian name) became ill in 1972 and he struggled on and sometimes fell asleep at his desk. If anyone came in I tried to make sure he wasn't bothered or that he was seen sleeping as people really didn't know how ill he was. It was cancer and in about April 1973 he passed away. By now I had been placed on the books of the establishment. As I had been running the place quite reasonably while Frank had been on many periods of sick leave, I just sort of took over the day to day running of the place with an assistant to help me and as a line manger I was allocated an archivist - David Butler.

David left in 1975 by which time Modern Records was well established, being responsible not only for all the non-current records of the Clerk's Dept but those of

the Fire Brigade, Education Dept, Treasurers and various sections of Social Services. With all this cataloguing work we had run out of storage. Whilst Paddy Gill and Peter Wilkinson had come over in 1970/71 to identify records of archival value, we still hadn't come to the first review/destruction of records so we were just accumulating them.

The fact we had run out of storage accommodation wasn't a problem for the authority - the problem was that our basement storage was required for a new telephone exchange so we were moved out to Tangmere.

I actually enjoyed using my technical drawing skills planning the shelving layout etc, and a small team, including the County Archivist, dismantled shelving and took it out to Tangmere where it was re-erected. The boxes of files followed later and the subsequent Modern Records Service worked very well. Computers came onto the scene in the 80s and Gail Simmons joined us as a cataloguer to enter all of our backlog entries. With computers we were able to review files much more easily. We just grew then until 1989 when we were moved back to Chichester. The rest you know.

During my 40 years I have worked with numerous people and on the whole I have been most fortunate with my colleagues- the people just got better and over the last 13 years I've had some brilliant teams. Thank you all for being such great colleagues and friends, for I know you will always be that rock upon which I can always depend.

Bill Gage

Notes from the Editors

Thank you for all your kind comments on the new look newsletter. Thank you to those of you who kindly supplied your e-mail addresses to the Society. We still plan to go for electronic distribution for our newsletter and we would like to appeal to you again to send to us your e-mail address if for any reason you think we might not have it. There are some real benefits to the Society through electronic distribution both in saved time and cost. This in turn allows us to provide more events and make more money available for Record Office projects. To enhance communication generally between the Society and our membership we have introduced an e-mail address of our own:-

wsascom@btinternet.com

This e-mail address can be used to supply your e-mail address to the Society or for any communication you may wish to have with the Society. You may for example wish to pass comments on Society events past or indeed suggest ideas for events in the future.

Lastly for those of you who plan to **re-new** their subscription and we sincerely hope that is all of you, then you will find in your journal a **renewal** form for that purpose.

Alex Barford & Barrie Keech

Remaining Programme for 2010

Saturday 13th November 10 am - 4.00 pm. Workshop led by Richard Childs, County Archivists on Electoral Records" held at the West Sussex Record Office. Authentic documents to 'touch and feel'.

Cost £5 for members, £8 for non-members and guests, to include tea and coffee.

Saturday 4th December 10.30 am. Christmas Symposium held at Edes House, Chichester. Come along to this lovely house for our annual get-together with coffee, wine, mince pies and a quiz.



2011



Saturday 13th February 2.00pm-4.00pm, An illustrated talk and current research on Halnaker House, followed by tea & coffee. To be held at the record office, Chichester.

Free to members, £3 guests and non-members

Saturday 26th March, 10.30 am - 4.00pm, a workshop entitled "Parish Registers: the other side" to be held at the record office, Chichester. Access to some original registers.

Cost Members £5 Guests and non-members £8

Future Events

Saturday April 9th - Next AGM, venue etc to be confirmed

Booking Slips

Some of these are repeat slips so please do not worry if you have already submitted previous slips

Saturday 13 November at 10 am Richard Childs, County Archivist will lead a workshop on "Electoral Records". Opportunity to explore authentic documents housed at the record office.

Costs £5 members, £8 for guests and non-members

Name/s of members attending.....

Tel No.....E-mail.....

Amount paid, cheques payable to WSAS.....

Please return slip as soon as possible to; The Honorary Treasurer, W.S.A.S., c/o West Sussex Record Office, County Hall, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 1RN

Saturday 4th December 10.30 am, Christmas Symposium, Edes House, Chichester



Name/s of members attending.....

Tel No.....E-Mail.....

Name/s of guest/s.....

Please return slip by 20th November to; The Honorary Treasurer, W.S.A.S., c/o West Sussex Record Office, County Hall, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 1RN

Saturday 13th February 2.00pm-4.00pm, An illustrated talk and current research on Halnaker House, followed by tea & coffee.

Free to members, £3 for guests and non-members

Name/s of members attending.....

Tel. No.....E-mail.....

Name/s of guest/s.....

Amount paid, cheques made payable to WSAS.....

Please return slip by 30th January to; The Honorary Treasurer, W.S.A.S., West Sussex Record Office, County Hall, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 1RN

Saturday 26th March, 10.30 am - 4.00pm, "Parish Registers: the other side"

Costs £5 members, £8 guests and non-members

Name/s of members attending.....

Tel. No.....E-mail.....

Please return slip by 12th March to; The Honorary Treasurer, W.S.A.S., c/o West Sussex Record Office, County Hall, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 1RN