

The Researcher

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



April 2011

No. 73

37th AGM

The 37th AGM of the society was held at Capron House in Midhurst on 9 April 2011.

Caroline Adams chaired the meeting and gave her report. A summary will be included in the AGM minutes and a full copy appears later in the newsletter. Caroline thanked the committee for all their work over the year. The society had gone from strength to strength. Important events included the establishment of a WSAS e-mail address, an improved website and a new look newsletter and journal. Caroline talked about the changes to WSRO's staffing, the most significant being Richard Child's early retirement on 1 July.



Rear view of Capron House with members in the gardens

Forthcoming Events

Events 2011

June 11th Wey & Arun
Canal boat trip

June 19th - Joint
Meeting with the friends
of East Sussex Record
Office.

July 6th - WSAS
Summer Evening
'Sussex Families during
the Civil War'.

September 17th - Event
at Burpham - details to
come.

Any queries about this
newsletter or questions
for West Sussex
Archives Society please
email
wsascom@btinternet.com



During the year WSAS donated a further £1500 to Chris Hare's 'All Our Yesterday's' project and agreed to support the purchase of laptops for volunteers in the searchroom. The meetings had been well attended, including Janet Pennington's walk around Steyning in May, the day conference on The Bourne area at Southbourne in October, the always enjoyable Christmas symposium and two workshops.

Liz presented the accounts, which have been independently examined by Trevor James.

The current vice-chairman, Richard Martin, and treasurer, Liz Collison were happy to stand for re-election and the committee nominated Stella Elliot as secretary. They were unanimously elected. There were no further nominations or offers to join the committee, so there was no requirement for any further elections. Liz said she would only do a further year as treasurer and Stephanie Cecil had recently resigned from the committee due to ill-health.

Richard Martin said that the proposed date for the 2012 AGM was 14 April, details to be confirmed.

Members enjoyed an excellent buffet lunch and refreshments in the garden as it was a beautiful sunny day.

Richard Martin - Vice Chairman



Members enjoy the opportunity for discussion in the wonderful sunshine

WSAS Chairman's report - Caroline Adams
From the AGM 9 April 2011

I became Chairman this time last year at the AGM, and the first thing I want to do is to say what a brilliant committee you've got. I would like to thank particularly Richard Martin, who as vice-chairman, has been unfailingly helpful and considerate, and very tolerant of my mistakes in the first year. Huge thanks also go to Barrie Keech, who in the space of twelve months has established an email address, a website and the *Newsletter* for the society, and has done it with much hard work at home, and the minimum of fuss. Many thanks to Liz for her financial acumen, and for looking after the new members and membership database - Liz also finds time to come in and stuff envelopes. Leigh and Stella have both been willing to come in to the Record Office to do all the odd jobs like checking the post, stuffing envelopes, and distributing Newsletters, with all the extra work that those things entail. Richard Mant took the role of the society supporting the Record Office seriously enough to organise a letter from the WSAS committee to the Chairman of the County Council expressing the society's concern at possible staffing cuts in the Record Office. Thanks go also to Stephanie, who did her best to organise the October day conference from her sick bed.

Richard's letter brings me on to the changes at the Record Office. It has not been an easy time for the staff, and the uncertainty continues as I write this. We now know that we will lose the post of County Archivist. This is not the first Record Office to do so; in fact the title County Archivist is disappearing with alarming frequency all along the south coast and further north. Richard Childs will be taking early retirement on 1st July, and I am sure the society will want to wish him well in the future.

The Record Office is now absorbed into a sub-directorate, Information Services, within the Directorate of Communications and Infrastructure. The Record Office is now under Lesley Sim, who was formerly County Librarian. She has been very careful to build up her knowledge of how the Record Office operates, making several half-day visits. Under her there is a sort of triumvirate of the three former assistant county archivists, now Team Leaders, Archives. Out of them, Alan Readman has become Lead Manager Archives, and we are currently looking afresh at the way the Record office can move forward with less staff. However, having said that, the rest of the staff have escaped redundancy - they are hardly unscathed as it has been a difficult period for everyone. We hope there will not be too many changes to the services we can offer the public.

As for WSAS, it has gone from strength to strength this year, with an increase in members, a varied and exciting programme, and the afore-mentioned establishment of the email address, website, and Newsletter. I hope everyone has looked at the website, as this will contain the latest news on meetings. The email address, given on the newsletter, journal and membership forms, is yours to use for enquiries and comments, so please get writing - we'd love to hear from you. We would also very much like your email address, so that we can send you the Newsletter via email - it's much cheaper for the society to do this.

As a committee, we feel very self-congratulatory on the Newsletter, which will be quarterly. Barrie has been prepared to put a great deal of time and effort into this, and has been gracious in his acceptance of people's comments and suggestions for

improvement. We also hope that you will make the Newsletter much more interactive and write in, so that it isn't just full of committee concerns. But the Journal is a different problem. We lost Philip MacDougall as Journal editor after he had done it for several years, and now, nearly a year later, we do not have an editor. It isn't an easy job, but we do now have a job spec for anyone interested, and the offer of an honorarium. We want the Journal to look smart and attractive, with fresh articles, and I think the one the committee managed to produce in the autumn reflected that with a new look, and some engaging articles in it. We thought it was a good read, and we hope you did too. A new editor would be hopefully be literate and able to work to deadlines, and would be able to easily engage with people in order to draw in articles. They would have help from me, and all they have to do is produce text, for we now have a 'typesetter' who sorts out the look and style, and deals with its printing. Chances are that amongst you sitting and looking at me, there is perhaps not an editor, but maybe you know someone who might be interested?

Finally just to relate one or two things the society got up to in the last year. We had a salacious walk round Steyning with Janet Pennington in May - I had never realised before what the gargoyles on the corbels of Steyning church were up to! In September, members enjoyed a guided walk around the walls of Chichester, and in October we had our day conference on the Bourne area, which included a walk round Bosham harbour. Again we have to thank Barrie for taking over from Stephanie, and finishing the organisation, and Richard Martin for running the day itself. The two bi-annual workshops take place in November and March, and members will be interested to hear that I have snaffled the County Archivist Emeritus (his choice of title) for November this year - although being a little way ahead, he may change his mind and go off on holiday instead! But anyway he has promised to do one of next year's two. Last month saw Alan contributing to a workshop on parish registers and producing all sorts of entries which had nothing to do with baptisms, marriages or burials. My favourite was the Horn family of - 27 children in all (some were twins), although sadly not all alive at the same time. The vicar began counting at 21. Alan said that when he was relating this story to a group sometime ago, someone said their ancestors had had 24 - all of whom had survived, and not one twin between them.

The December meeting at Edes House was good fun as usual - this is always a real pleasure and it usually involves two light-hearted quizzes, mince pies and wine, and a get-together in a Christmassy spirit. This year, we are going to go back to the old idea of bringing some seasonal readings, as well as a quiz and lots of chat. I really recommend taking time off Christmas shopping for this one. The February meeting had a nearly full house of 40 members coming to listen to Dr Andrew Foster talking on a project to write up the history of Halnaker House north of Chichester - now ruins in a private garden, it was the biggest and most important house in West Sussex for three hundred odd years.

The society has also been engaging in another activity: supporting the Record Office financially. We have given Chris Hare the second tranche of money promised to him a couple of years ago, and Chris in return in speaking at both the September and October meetings - in different contexts as you will see! We have also promised to support the hard-pressed staff at the Record Office, by funding a second-hand laptop computer. The volunteers who come in to help in a variety of jobs use computers and laptops that are not funded by the Record Office or County Council, and many of them are on their last legs - the computers, not the volunteers! Can you help by donating unwanted PCs or laptops? The Record Office just needs basic ones

with Excel on them, and WSAS has a member willing to overhaul them and get them ready for use in the Searchroom.

Finally I would just like to say how good it is to see you all here, and we hope that you will feel able to support the Society by coming to its meetings and in its efforts to help the Record Office.

What's happening at the Record Office

Caroline has touched on the management changes at the Record Office and it is for me the privilege of saying the first words of thanks and appreciation to Richard for his hard work and inspiration in leading the Record Office through his many years as County Archivist. He is with us until mid-July so this is a little early for anything more, other than on behalf of the staff to express our sincerely felt gratitude for his support and guidance to us throughout this time.

We look forward to the future, as we always do at WSRO, and to ensuring that we continue to provide the high quality of public service that year on year has been our trademark. Indeed, we are currently basking in the warm glow of retaining our top-ranking, four-star status in the latest national assessment of local authority record offices conducted by The National Archives. This was confirmed in March. A place in the top ten out of over 120 such record offices is no mean achievement and is testimony to Richard's leadership and to the continuing dedication and commitment of all the staff.

We are wedded to the concept of continuous improvement and are always looking for new ways of delivering and developing our services. A recent introduction has been the monthly series of coffee time sessions for family historians. Held on the first Wednesday of the month, with a £7 per head charge, these have already proved to be very popular. They are a means of sharing the knowledge of our staff, of recruiting new regular visitors and of generating much-needed income. Perhaps above all, they are an excellent opportunity of introducing both new and experienced researchers to the joys of our treasures here in the Record Office and to the concept that not everything in the world of genealogy is as yet to be found on a computer.

The WSAS workshop on parish registers last month for me proved a point. How lucky we are to have this archival heritage. I was a stand-in only because Alex was unfortunately ill but I have to say I really enjoyed the contact with original records. Parish records have always been a favourite. And W.E. Tate's book, *The Parish Chest*, is one of the books I best remember from the archives course.

In all our plans for the future we really look forward to the continued, much valued support of our Friends. West Sussex Archives Society has played a key role in the growth of the Record Office over the years and Caroline, I know, is keen to develop this very important partnership still further.

I well remember my first introduction shortly after first joining the Record Office. The Reverend John Bishop, chairman at the time, cornered me in the Map Room of the old Record Office with the words; "You will be pleased to know that at the meeting last night you were elected to be a member of the Committee." Not so much an invitation, more a royal command! Nonetheless, I enjoyed my time then and I look forward again to closer involvement in the future.

Alan Readman

All Our Yesterdays Project (supported by WSAS)

The All Our Yesterdays project has now been running for sixteen months, and is about to publish the first of a series of West Sussex Heritage Booklets.

For those unfamiliar with the project, *All Our Yesterdays* is a project focused on oral history interviews stored at WSRO, and documentary material kept at Worthing Library. The oral history interviews were recorded in a period that spans the late 1950s till the present day. Those interviewed were generally in old age when interviewed (70+), with the oldest interviewees having been born in the 1870s. The majority of interviewees were born in the period 1900 – 1930. The exact number of interviews is not known, as, in more recent years, village projects have interviewed older residents and deposited these with WSRO. So far, *All Our Yesterdays*, has concentrated its efforts on the interviews recorded before 1975, as they are the ones most liable to loss of quality. However, it is estimated that WSRO retains around 700 recorded interviews.

Since January 2010, 82 of these interviews have been transcribed by a professional transcriber. As some of these interviews are very long – over three hours – this is a far more impressive total than might at first glance appear to be the case. Thanks to a generous grant of £3,000 from WSAS - £1,500 received last financial year - £1,500 received in this financial year – it has been, and will be possible, to transcribe far more of these interviews than the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant alone would have allowed.

While the oral history and research part of the project has progressed very well, the indexing side of the project has been less successful. Although 27 volunteers signed up to help index old newspapers and periodicals held at Worthing Library, only five of them are still working with the project. The reason for this high drop-out can simply be explained by the hard work and meticulous eye for detail that indexing demands. Those happy to make notes from old newspapers for the research side of the project, have baulked at the implications of indexing work. In order to keep this side of the project afloat, the project budget has had to find extra funds to pay for the services of a professional indexer. It is in this context that the WSAS funding has been a lifeline, ensuring that the transcribing side of the project is not disadvantaged by this shifting of budget priorities.

The *Heritage Booklets*, already referred to, draw on the material in the oral history interviews and the documentary sources. The first booklet, which I have written, will be entitled: *Worthing Under Attack – eye-witness history of the 1930s and 40s*. The main sources for this book are 21 oral history interviews and the *Worthing Journal* (a columnist-based magazine published in Worthing 1932-1940). All subsequent booklets will have a West Sussex or Sussex-wide theme, rather than concentrating on one town. The next in the series will be entitled *Doctors, Dentists and Death*, and is being written by WSAS member, Barrie Keech.

Worthing Under Attack will be officially published on Tuesday 24th May, with a launch event at Methold House, North Street, Worthing at 1.30pm. It will retail at £6.50.

For general enquiries about the project, please contact me at chris.hare@yahoo.co.uk or call 07794 600639.

Chris Hare, Project Manager, *All Our Yesterdays*.

Events Review

Halnaker House

On Saturday, February 12th, 2011, we were given a fascinating talk on Halnaker House by Dr Andrew Foster, assisted by Caroline Adams.

This intriguing building started life as a fortified mansion and was owned by Robert de Haye in 1105. It had a massive deer park (which became Goodwood Park), a well that was 219 feet deep and a chapel where the marriage of the Lady Mary, daughter of the Earl of Derby, took place in 1705. An inventory of 1701 shows that the house had 39 rooms.

Until circa 1800, when it fell into disrepair, Halnaker House was the best house in the Chichester area and was comparable to Amberley Castle. It was more important than Goodwood and both Henry VIII and Edward VI liked to visit the place. It has an impressive list of former owners, including Lord de la Warr, Lord Lumley and the Duke of Richmond.

Today, Halnaker House is still somewhat mysterious and shrouded in history. It stands on private property and can barely be seen from the road. Within its grounds are various buildings. One of these other properties was built in the 1770s for Lady Sarah Lennox, daughter of the Duke of Richmond, for it was thought she might benefit from a place of her own. Another property on site was built in 1938 to a Lutyens' design.



Halnaker House

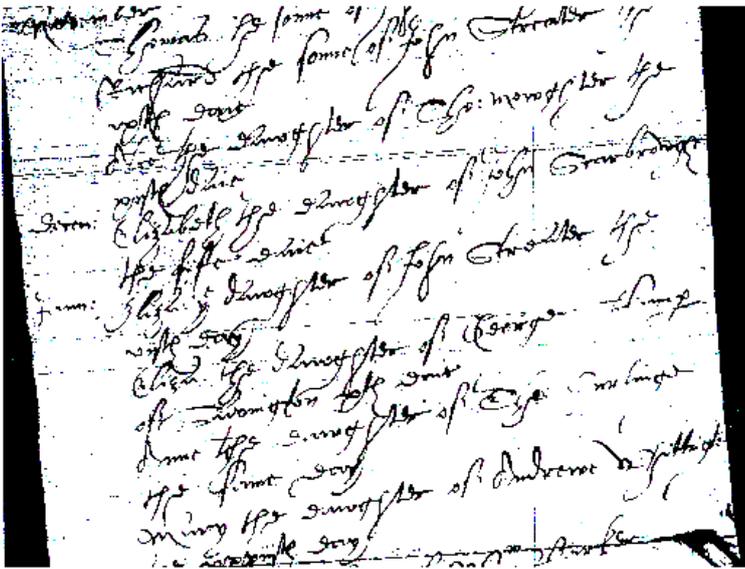
We very much enjoyed seeing Caroline Adams' photos which illustrated Andrew Foster's talk. The photos showed us clearly what remains of Halnaker House today.

This interesting meeting culminated in a question and answer session and a look at the place of History in our schools today.

Richard Mant

Workshop. 'Parish Registers: the other side'

Susan Millard opened the workshop by giving us a background to the history of parish registers. In 1538, Thomas Cromwell issued a mandate that all christenings, marriages and burials should be recorded after Sunday service and kept in a locked wooden chest. Usually these were written on loose sheets and copied into bound books at another time. Sue showed us examples of early composite registers written on parchment, dating from the late 16th century. Many of these registers are still in remarkably good condition. Later registers were made of good quality hand-made rag paper and they too have survived well, although after George Rose's Act of 1812, all registers were required to be kept in an iron chest which sometimes resulted in damage caused by damp.



Here we can see how parish registers have evolved. The top example from 1592 illustrates the totally freeform of entry used at that time. Below shows the the pre-printed form still in use today.

Page 9.

BAPTISMS solemnized in the Parish of *North Mundham* in the Year 1817 in the County of *Surfex*

When Baptized.	Child's Christian Name.	Parents Name.		Abode.	Quality, Trade, or Profession.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
		Christian.	Surname.			
1817 April 2.	William	William	Horn	Kaakton	Laborer	J. J. Jafa
No. 65.	son of	Elizabeth	27 th child			
April 4.	Emma	Edmund	Esther	Kaakton	Blacksmith	J. J. Jafa
No. 66.	daughter of	Catherine				

After coffee Alan Redman gave us a fascinating variety of extraordinary comments to be found in parish registers. We saw the North Mundham register of 1817 which records the baptism of William, 27th child born to William and Elizabeth Horn. A young girl at Horsham in 1615 'was killed with thunder and lightning when the steeple was fired, she standing under the belfry door' and a man was 'killed with the fall of a maypole as it was being set up'.



Workshop participants get the opportunity to examine the original parish register books

An intriguing entry in the Cocking burial register of 21 September 1833 records that William Marshall aged 61 was 'accidentally killed by the falling in a chalk pit on Cocking Hill supposed to have been caused by the Earthquake'. Alan told us that the minutes of the Chichester Literary and Philosophical Society Select Committee, state this earthquake happened at 10am on Wednesday 18th September 1833 and the shock was felt from Liphook in the north to Birdham in the south.

The vicar of Lodsworth kept a list of vagrants and wandering persons found in his parish in 1618. He noted where they had come from and characteristics that would make them a burden on the parish such as 'blind woman' 'lame woman', 'man sick in body'.



In the afternoon we worked through a series of questions and used the search room facilities to try to find some answers. Caroline Adams discussed the examples of original registers she had brought out from the strong room and we had the now rare opportunity of looking at them for ourselves. Nothing can beat the pleasure of handling these old documents; feeling the texture of parchment and seeing the subtle difference in the colour of the pages with your own eyes – an experience lost when you read them on film.

We are very grateful to the staff of the record office for a most interesting day.

Leigh Lawson

Events Programme Early 2011



Saturday June 11th, Wey & Arun Canal, boat trip with speaker on board. Park in the Wey & Arun Trust car park behind the Onslow Arms. The boat leaves Loxwood at 2.15pm and the journey is approximately 2 hours. On return tea is available at the Onslow Arms.

THIS EVENT IS NOW FULLY BOOKED YOU MAY ALWAYS CHECK USING:-

Cost £15 ALL persons

wsascom@btinternet.com

FOR POSSIBLE CANCELLATIONS

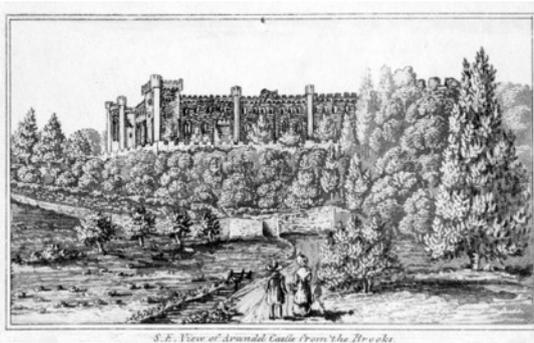


Sunday June 19th at 2.00pm, joint visit with the Friends of East Sussex Record Office to **Swanborough Manor, Iford near Lewes**. By kind permission of Mrs Abercrombie we will visit the remaining wing of the manor house owned by the Cluniac Priory of St Pancras in Southover, Lewes. Members will see architectural features dating from the 13th- to the 15th-century and hear of the important part the manor, with its arable and sheep runs, played in the economy of the priory before the Dissolution. Copies of maps and documents from the Record Office will be displayed. Members will adjourn to the Farmhouse Kitchen at nearby Spring Barn Farm Park for cream

tea. **Cost £8.50 per person.** Slip and payment (cheques payable to FESRO) should be sent to: -

FESRO Events
c/o Judy Brent
9 Southdown Avenue
Lewes
East Sussex BN7 1EL

Please try and make your bookings by the June 5th at the latest
Any queries contact - wsascom@btinternet.com



Wednesday 6th July at 7.00 pm, WSAS Summer Evening entitled '**Sussex Families in the Civil War**'. A talk by Helen Whittle, with original documents from the 17th century on display.

7.00 pm arrival for coffee and cakes

7.30 pm Talk by Helen Whittle

8.30-9.00 pm adjourn to local tavern

Cost £3 members and £5 for non-members and guests

Any queries contact - wsascom@btinternet.com

WSAS Committee

Caroline Adams - Chairman
Richard Martin - Vice Chairman
Liz Collison - Treasurer
Stella Elliot - Secretary

Barrie Keech - Newsletter Editor & Webmaster
Richard Mant - Committee Member
Alex Barford - Committee Member
Leigh Lawson - Committee Member

Booking Slips

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

Sunday 19th June, 2.00 pm joint meeting with the Friends of East Sussex Record Office at **Swanborough Manor, Iford near Lewes.**

Costs to members & non-members £8.50

Name/s of members attending.....

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

Name/s of non-member/s or guest/s.....

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

Please return slip by 5th June to; FESRO Events, c/o Judy Brent, 9 Southdown Avenue, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1EL

Any queries contact: wsascom@btinternet.com

Wednesday 6th July. 7.00 pm the WSAS Summer Evening at the West sussex Record Office entitled '**Sussex Families in the Civil War**'. A talk by Helen Whittle with original documents from the 17th century on display.

Costs to members £3 & non-members £5

Name/s of members attending.....

Tel No.....Email.....

Name/s of non-member/s or guest/s

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

Please return slip by 22nd June to Liz Collison, Fosse Cottage, Burpham, West Sussex, BN18 9RR

Any queries contact: wsascom@btinternet.com
