

# The Researcher

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



July 2011

No. 74

## A FAREWELL TO RICHARD

It was somehow appropriate that the staff's farewell party for Richard should be the last major event to be held in the classroom of the Record Office. As I write this piece the builders are in occupation and in a week or two the space will have been divided into three, two offices for the registration of births and deaths and one remaining for our use. It is all part of the County Council's office accommodation strategy contributing to necessary budget savings and as a result the room in which Richard held so many workshops for the Society is no more.

But that was not on our minds on Friday July 8<sup>th</sup> when we bid him farewell and wished him good luck on his retirement as County Archivist. And believe me this was no ordinary party. The staff excelled as never before. It was the world premiere of a Record Office film, directed by June and Clare, and starring staff past and present in a tribute which needs to be seen to be believed. It was preceded by a special salute to our leader performed again on film by our own in-house Gilbert & Sullivan star putting a novel Record Office interpretation on one of their much-loved comedy classics.



All this was preceded by a rather tongue-in-cheek *This Is Your Life* heavily indebted to his mother, wife and retired colleagues for narrative and to Clare's wizardry for illustrations. It has at least furnished me with material for this article!

Richard grew up in Liverpool where he had the distinction of attending Quarry Bank Grammar School just a few years after its most famous old-boy, John Lennon. He studied history at

## Forthcoming Events

### Events 2011

September 17th -  
Burpham Event

September 19th WSAS  
Book Sale begins

October 8th - Joint  
Conference with the  
Friends of Broadwater &  
Worthing Cemetery on  
the Worthing Typhoid  
Epidemic

November Workshop  
details to follow

December 10th -  
Christmas get together at  
Edes House, Chichester

Any queries about this  
newsletter or questions  
for West Sussex  
Archives Society please  
email  
[wsascom@btinternet.com](mailto:wsascom@btinternet.com)

Leeds University, graduating in 1977. During a summer vacation job at Freeman's famous department store he acquired have-a-go hero status by successfully apprehending a shop-lifter.

A career in archives beckoned and following the post-graduate course at Liverpool University he was appointed Assistant Archivist with Sheffield City Council. The archives were based in the central library and in out-stores in and around the city. A very amusing account of his rise through the ranks was offered by one of his former colleagues, Kim Collis.

In November 1989 came the move to a new office opened by the then Deputy Leader of the Labour Party, Roy Hattersley. In the excitement, Richard created a diversion by falling down stairs with the bottled refreshments. A hospital trip for repairs to an arm followed and during the opening ceremony Roy revealed that this was the first time someone had slashed their wrists in an attempt to avoid him.

Four years later on the retirement of Mrs Patricia Gill the post of County Archivist at West Sussex came vacant and Richard was summoned to a lengthy interview process. During a reception at County Hall it was pointed out fairly firmly that should he drop his food on the new carpet he might as well catch the next train back to Sheffield. He didn't, fortunately, and in April 1993 he became WSRO's fourth County Archivist.

At Chichester he inherited an experienced team of senior staff and in filmed tributes from Mrs Gill and Peter Wilkinson, the Deputy County Archivist, both praised the way in which he supported the team and didn't rush into immediate changes. Richard did though bring with him new ideas and in time these would lead the Record Office in new and fruitful directions. In June 1994 Caroline Adams was appointed as our first Outreach Archivist. Community engagement and project work increased. The blue plaque scheme and the Parish Maps project enhanced our growing reputation in this area of work. Just as Gillian Edom's Joining Up Our Heritage project does today. Popular publications succeeded more formal catalogues. The partnership with the Regional Film Archive was encouraged. Videos and DVDs helped boost income generation.

Alongside all of this, our traditional work, in archive preservation and access continued, as did our increasingly important role in records management. Our standing within the county, with our depositors, with high profile estate collections such as Petworth and Goodwood; our reputation for expert and friendly service in the search room; our name for efficient and quality research, all of these remained at the core of our work under Richard's leadership.

Indeed, our reputation with the public was never in doubt but Richard realised we needed the badges to go with it. First up was Investors in People in 1994, followed by Charter Mark. And when The National Archives brought in national assessment WSRO went straight into the premier league and into the top five.

With all this our profile within the County Council was raised while on the national stage his prominent standing in the profession brought further recognition to the Record Office.

Indeed, users of West Sussex Record Office – past, present and future – owe a debt of gratitude to Richard, just as do we his staff, for his inspired leadership over these

last eighteen years. Living as he does in Chichester we know he will be back lending his support in a variety of ways and I for one will always look to him for advice. But for the moment I am sure all members of the Society will join the staff in wishing Richard and Jeannette every happiness for the future.

Alan Readman  
West Sussex Record Office.

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## **THE DAVID JOHNSTON COLLECTION OF WEST SUSSEX BARN PHOTOGRAPHS**

West Sussex Record Office has recently acquired this unique collection of photographs depicting Sussex barns and farm buildings. The photographs were taken by local author and photographer David Johnston between 1985 and 2000. Some were used to illustrate the book *West Sussex Barns and Farm Buildings*, (The Dovecote Press Ltd., 2002), which David produced with architectural historian, Dr Annabelle Hughes.

The collection consists of over 2500 photographs of agricultural buildings in the form of slides, from which full size colour photographs can be produced. The copyright has been passed to West Sussex Record Office. The barns are situated throughout the county and hundreds of farms are represented. They include places as far apart as Harting and Horsted Keynes; Selsey and Worth; Itchenor and Keymer; and Warnham and Clapham, with a myriad of places represented in between.

There are also a few barns from places in neighbouring counties, including Alciston, East Sussex, Dunsfold, Surrey and Penshurst, Kent.



*Selscome Farm Fox Hill, near Petworth*

The collection forms an unrivalled visible record of the agricultural heritage of West Sussex and shows the use of local materials: oak, flint, chalk, brick, thatch, stone and clay. It also illustrates the changing character of farming as many farm buildings have undergone a change of use, decay or restoration.



*Peacocks Farm Northchapel*

Those shown here today represent a small fraction of the whole collection. With the help of volunteers, West Sussex Record Office staff will soon be cataloguing and scanning them to make them more widely accessible to the public.

*Copies can be supplied on photographic paper, as displayed, for £10 (plus £2 postage), or e-mailed for £6 each. Contact West Sussex Record Office 01243 753631 and ask for Susan Millard.*



*Beech Barn Harting*

## Record Office Update

As many people reading this will be aware, the Record Office is in the midst of a period of upheaval. Over the past few months, we have been restructured staff-wise, building-wise – and mentally!

As Alan has said elsewhere in this magazine, we have had to lose our County Archivist. The staff gave Richard an evening to remember, with a souped-up version of *This is Your Life*, complete with contributions from members of staff who couldn't be there; and after the buffet, two short videos, one a solo from Bill, and another by all the staff. In the latter, each of us, past and present, sang a line of 'When I'm 64' in various locations around the office, which was put together by Clare Snoad and June Hay; and it would be a best-seller if only you could see it – but alas, it's private!

Upstairs, the changes have begun in earnest. On Thursday 21 July, the Coroner moved into Richard's office, and her assistants into my old office. This meant that Alex and I had to be re-located. Alan decided that we should keep the archivists together, so I have joined Alison in her office, and once the new post of junior archivist is filled, Sue will move up to join us. This meant that Katherine Slay, who is in charge of our online cataloguing service, had to move out of said office, so she and Alex will be moved into the records management office with Roland and Matt, the RM staff. Some of you will remember that this is where we held the WSAS workshop on Elizabeth I recently. However, the registrars have also moved in there recently (these are the registrars dealing with copies of certificates), so they will soon be relocated into what used to be our admin room. The admin room had five people in it up to 2007, but once Gail retired a few months ago, only Steve, who is often in reception, was left. Steve too will move in the RM room.

So – quite an upheaval! Tempers frayed, and lots of black bags (for waste), white bags (for recycling) and red bags (for pulping) in evidence. Half-listed small archive collections now make their way back into one of the upstairs strongrooms, where we keep uncatalogued accessions – but space is short, as the registrars now have all the historic registers in there! To make matters worse, the Council IT can't keep up with this, so the registrars cannot move offices until September! Alex is therefore occupying the admin room with Steve until this happens, and Katherine has managed to squeeze into her new home.

The changes downstairs will have been noticed by all who are within 100 yards of the Record Office – and it's not only all those vans taking up room in the staff car park! The big public room downstairs is to be divided into three rooms – two for the registration of births and deaths respectively, and the remainder of the room to be used as a workroom for our volunteers and ourselves. Work is going on apace, and the three rooms are beginning to take shape. It has entailed new radiators, new lighting and a new PIR system in there. All the chairs and tables have had to be taken upstairs and are now occupying our smaller public room, the Library upstairs – but we hope to sort this out, and be using it properly by the beginning of August.

To put this in context, the Record Office has lost 45% of its budget and a third of its staff since 2007. These are difficult times for all of us, but the changes also herald new ways of working. Alison McCann is now in charge of Customer Services within the building, including responsibility for the searchroom. Bill is still in charge of records management, but has inherited the huge problem of archives and semi-

current records from other departments being moved within the council (the Council is reducing 49 buildings to six). Presently he is responsible for a temporary outstore at Willow Park in Terminus Road in Chichester. Simon is responsible for conservation, and for the building – so he has a lot on his hands at the moment.

I have a new team, consisting of Katherine, Gillian Edom (who is in charge of the *Joining Up Our Heritage project*), Alex, and Sue who will be joining us in the autumn, to which I look forward very much. Together, we are responsible for 'Outreach and Collections Management'. This entails moving towards community engagement and partnership working, rather than the work-intensive exhibitions and publications that we used to do. It also entails 'exploitation' (in the nicest possible sense) of our holdings, to bring them to a greater number of people, and our Marketing and Publicity friends in the County Council will help us do this. Watch out for changes on our website, packages and deals which involve the Record Office, and features in national magazines and local papers. Meanwhile we will continue to make as much as possible available in the searchroom by continuing to list the archives online, and increase digitisation of the most popular records, especially photographs. Despite the loss of our biggest public room, we hope to bring many more people into the Record Office, because there's nothing quite like handling the original documents, examining the paper and parchment to work out how the writer formed his letters, and finding out what people in the past thought of the events that overtook them in their own lives.

Caroline Adams

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## **WSAS Book Sale**

WSAS is holding a Book Sale at the West Sussex Record Office, to raise funds, from Monday, September 19<sup>th</sup> to Saturday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

The books, which are surplus to requirement at the record office, have all been sorted into categories and priced accordingly. They will be on sale in the Tearoom and in the Reception at WSRO.

It would be enormously helpful if members of WSAS would volunteer to be in the Tearoom and Reception for half a day at a time, either 9.15 am to 1.00 pm, or from 1.00 to 4.45 pm, on a rota basis, in order to take the money for any books sold. We hope to have at least two members of WSAS on duty at any one time.

If you would like to help with the Book Sale, please would you give the date(s) and day(s), stating morning and/or afternoon, to Richard Mant, email address: [wsascom@btinternet.com](mailto:wsascom@btinternet.com) He will then confirm the dates, days and times when you are "on duty", once the rota has been drawn up.

Whilst spaces remain, car parking will be free for members of WSAS whilst helping with the Book Sale. Please book in advance in the usual way with Reception.

Richard Mant

# Events Review

## Swanborough Manor 19th June 2011

It was the turn of the Friends of East Sussex Record Office to host our annual joint meeting this summer. We enjoyed the rare opportunity of visiting Swanborough Manor at Iford near Lewes, in the private ownership of the Abercrombie family who generously allowed us to explore part of their beautiful house at the foot of the Downs.



Dodging the showers John Houghton and Colin Brent explained the history of the building. The west wing dating from about 1200 was part of a Grange of St Pancras Priory, Lewes. The mediaeval hall remains, with a massive stone fireplace and part of the chapel. The room above has an impressive barrel vaulted ceiling and leading from this is a spiral staircase and a dovecote with chalk block nesting holes.

We learned that the name has nothing to do with swans but rather derives from swain or peasant – so probably means the hill top of the people.

Swanborough has had many owners, including Henry VIII, Thomas Cromwell, the Earl of Arundel, the Carylls, the Sackville family and more recently Sussex University. It was left to the university by Lady Reading, Baroness Swanborough, for the use of vice chancellors. Controversially it was sold some years ago, it not being practical to maintain the old building for university purposes.

In the beautiful oak panelled hall, Colin and Judy Brent had laid out a fascinating display of documents relating to Swanborough.

When the sun came out we enjoyed the extensive gardens before driving down the road to Spring Barn Farm Park for an excellent cream tea.

Leigh Lawson



*The oak panelled hall*

## The Wey and Arun Canal June 11th

How wonderful is the blissful relaxation of a canal boat ride in the sunshine, especially if someone else is doing the locks! And so it was that on Saturday June 11th our intrepid band of WSAS members and guests took to the waters of the Wey and Arun Canal. The journey began on board the Zachariah Keppel at the quayside by the Onslow Arms, Loxwood. Our gentle paced trip took us through several locks including the quaintly named Baldwin's Knob, under several restored bridges and stopped just before the Drungewick Aqueduct. At this point we were able to disembark and observe at close quarters the newly restored aqueduct. Even a passing shower on the return journey could not take the edge off a marvellous journey into both history and restoration.

The Wey and Arun Canal was built during the Napoleonic Wars primarily as a route to enable ordnance to be transported safely from London to Portsmouth. Previously this was



*Our Vessel the Zachariah Keppel*



*Inside the Zachariah Keppel*

usually transported by ship sailing around the coast from the Thames to Portsmouth. This however could put ships at risk from French privateers and hence the new route was sought. Sadly after considerable overspend the canal opened more than a year after the end of the Napoleonic Wars on 29th September 1816.



*The recently restored Drungewick Aqueduct*

Sadly the canal was never a commercial success and by 1888 all of the canal had been closed.

Fortunately our day had a far happier ending with a wonderful selection of sandwiches and cakes at the Onslow Arms.

Barrie Keech

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## **Sussex Families during the Civil War - 6th July**

On Wednesday 6 July, about twenty members gathered at the Record Office for a lecture by Helen Whittle on 'Sussex Families during the Civil War'. Helen is nearing completion on her PhD on this subject, and she gave a fascinating account of the various families in Sussex at the time, and how they had links with each other through marriage or patronage. The effect of being on the wrong side during the period meant that some families struggled to survive, because of sequestration or heavy fines - but on the whole those that had started with a strong base in the early 1640s were still doing well in the 1660s. Helen showed that she had detailed knowledge of Sussex gentry in the period.

The meeting was preceded by coffee and cakes at 7 pm, and ended about 9 pm. Because the Record Office no longer has the classroom, WSAS may hold more evening meetings in the reception area of the Record Office.

# Events Programme 2011

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Saturday September 17th, The Burpham Event, beginning at 10.00 am for tea or coffee at Burpham Village Hall. Provisional agenda

10.00 am arrival for tea or coffee

10.30 am Burpham History and Folklore - Chris Hare

11.45 am Tea or Coffee

12.15 pm The film - *Tansy*

12.45 pm Lunch

Please try and make your bookings by the September 3rd at the latest  
Any queries contact - [wsascom@btinternet.com](mailto:wsascom@btinternet.com)

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Saturday 8th October at 10.00 am, **Worthing Typhoid Epidemic 1893**, a joint conference with the Friends of Broadwater and Worthing Cemetery to be held at Broadwater Parish Rooms, Broadwater Street West, Worthing. Provisional agenda:-

10.00 am arrival for tea or coffee

10.30 am Chris Hare

11.30 am Martin Hayes

12.45 pm lunch

14.00 pm Assemble at Broadwater cemetery, South Farm Road for tour

15.15 pm return to Broadwater Parish Rooms for roundup

Cost £10 members and £13 for non-members and guests

Please try and make your bookings by September 24th at the latest

Any queries contact - [wsascom@btinternet.com](mailto:wsascom@btinternet.com)

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## ***WSAS Committee***

*Caroline Adams - Chairman*

*Richard Martin - Vice Chairman*

*Liz Collison - Treasurer*

*Stella Elliot - Secretary*

*Barrie Keech - Newsletter & Website*

*Helen Whittle - Journal Editor*

*Richard Mant - Committee Member*

*Joy Eccleston - Committee Member*

*Leigh Lawson - Committee Member*

*Richard Howell - Committee Member*

All contactable using [wsascom@btinternet.com](mailto:wsascom@btinternet.com)

# Booking Slips

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Saturday 17th September, 10.00 am Burpham Event to be held at Burpham Village Hall

Costs to members & non-members £10 to include lunch

Name/s of members attending.....

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

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

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

Please return slip by 3rd September to, The Honourable Treasurer, WSAS, c/o West Sussex Record Office, County Hall, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 1RN

Any queries contact: [wsascom@btinternet.com](mailto:wsascom@btinternet.com)

If anyone is able to offer a lift to other members or is in need of a lift please contact WSAS using the email address above.

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Costs to members £10 & non-members £13

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 24th September to, The Honourable Treasurer, WSAS, c/o West Sussex Record Office, County Hall, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 1RN

Any queries contact: [wsascom@btinternet.com](mailto:wsascom@btinternet.com)

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