

The Researcher

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

Website: westsussexarchivessociety.webplus.net



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WEST SUSSEX RECORD OFFICE BECOMES AN ACCREDITED ARCHIVE SERVICE



Hot off the press I am delighted to be able to share with you the very good news that on 24th July The National Archives announced that West Sussex Record Office has been awarded Archive Service Accreditation.

Accreditation has long been a benchmark in the museum world but it was only introduced into archives in 2013 and is just coming to the end of its first programme. We submitted our application on Easter Saturday and had a follow up validation visit at the Record Office on 18th May. The Accreditation Panel met on 5th July to assess all of the latest applications and since then we have been watching our inboxes with bated breath. The good news has come through with perfect timing for the WSAS newsletter.

Accreditation is the UK quality standard which recognises good performance in all areas of archive service delivery. Achieving accredited status demonstrates that we have met clearly defined national standards relating to management and resourcing, the care of our collections and the service that we offer to all our users.

**General Data
Protection
Regulations 2018
The WSAS Privacy
Policy can be found
on the society's
website**

Forthcoming

Events

Saturday September 8th -
WSAS Conference, *In
Steining and Beyond.*

Friday/Saturday October
12/13th - WSAS Book
Sale

Saturday November 17th -
WSAS Workshop,
*Parish Records after the
Registers.*

Saturday December 8th -
Christmas Get Together

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

I am delighted that we have been able to achieve this and it is a testament to the hard work of all the staff and the fantastic support that we receive from our volunteers, depositors, friends and partners and from the County Council itself. This is in every sense a joint achievement and being an Accredited Archive Service will also enable us to plan for the future with a firm foundation and to continue to build on our work with everyone in West Sussex.

Whilst the Accreditation Panel were preparing for their deliberations a further news story was breaking on the Sussex Declaration much of it coinciding with Independence Day on 4th July. Following the initial story that hit the headlines in April 2017 further research has been undertaken by Harvard researchers, Danielle Allen and Emily Sneff, and detailed scientific tests have been carried out and analysed by conservation scientists at the British Library, Library of Congress and the University of York. These non-invasive tests included multi-spectral imaging, X-ray fluorescence (XRF) capture, and protein analysis (DNA testing). The results of this latest work have now been published on the Declaration Resources Project website: <https://declaration.fas.harvard.edu/resources/sussex-dec>.

Scientific testing of the manuscript supports the hypothesis of the Harvard researchers, who propose that the document was produced in the 1780s. Imaging has also revealed a date beneath an erasure on the document. The date reads either "July 4, 178" or "July 4, 179". It is impossible to say whether there was originally a fourth digit in the year. Analysis of the ink shows that this lettering together with the final lettering and corrections were all written in a relatively short window of time. X-ray fluorescence analysis showed that the parchment was hung up using iron nails at some point. The DNA testing has also revealed that the parchment was prepared from sheepskin, rather than more expensive calfskin.

The Sussex Declaration, as it has become known, is the only other contemporary manuscript copy of the Declaration of Independence on parchment apart from the signed copy at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., known as the Matlack Declaration. There are other printed parchment copies and other handwritten copies on paper but the Sussex Declaration and the Matlack Declaration, are the only two ceremonial parchment manuscript copies. It is believed that the document may have originally been held by the Third Duke of Richmond, who was known as the "Radical Duke" for his support of the Americans during the Revolution. The parchment is thought to have been produced in New York or Philadelphia and the team is continuing to work on the question of when and how the parchment moved to the UK.

We have very much enjoyed working with our colleagues at Harvard, the British Library, Library of Congress, and the University of York and look forward to sharing more with you on this fascinating story in due course.



The Sussex Declaration undergoing tests at the British Library

Introducing Katie Bishop

Hello, I am Katie Bishop and I am the new Searchroom Assistant at the Record Office, helping members of the public when they visit us.



I'm originally from Suffolk so the move to Chichester has been very exciting! I have always loved heritage and studied Archaeology and History at the University of Reading. Whilst there I undertook a work placement at Berkshire Record Office and this is where my love for archives began. Having worked in a variety of heritage settings, my passion and enjoyment of archives grew. Archives allow a connection to the past; the documents highlight someone's thoughts, feelings or emotions and getting to work with these types of collections is fascinating.

I have been here for two months now and feel right at home, both in the city and at the Record Office. Everyone is absolutely lovely and quick to support me if I have a question or need help. I look forward to learning about the variety of collections we hold and helping the public to access them.

I look forward to meeting you all and will just share one of my favourite quotes with you. It sums up my passion for archives and is rather fitting for my new role:

"Our archives are treasure troves – a testament to many lives lived and the complexity of the way we move forward. They contain clues to the real concerns of day to day life that brings that past alive." – Sara Sheridan, historical novelist.

Introducing Alice Millard



Hi, my name is Alice and I am the new Searchroom and Research Assistant, filling the post after Holly. I started in May alongside Katie. I've come from a position at Littlehampton Museum where I was Archives and Exhibitions Officer whilst I completed my Masters in Cultural Heritage. I also worked and volunteered at The Novium Museum for several years, so you may have seen me around!

Having had a lot of experience in museums, I'm adapting to the way archives work and I'm really enjoying it here. I'm interested in early modern history in particular, as well as anything to do with crime, literature, and women's history – although not necessarily at the same time!

I'm thrilled to be working with the Record Office team as I had often thought it would be a rewarding place to work. Now I'm here, I've enjoyed answering a variety of research commissions, assisting the public, and everyone has made me feel very welcome.

MEMBERS HELP NEEDED AT THE BOOK SALE!

For the last eighteen months WSAS members have been working hard with the Book Sale, donating books, collecting books and bringing them into the Chichester Cathedral Friends' Office and a big 'thank you' to all who have helped in this way. We are of course working with the Chichester Cathedral Friends and their members have also been working hard in laying the foundations for a successful Book Sale.

Books are still coming in, which is excellent, but we hope they will all be in, or most of them, by the end of August so that we can then start to sort and catalogue them.

We will be working in two hour shifts at the Book Sale so that no one is 'on duty' for too long and we have now reached that stage when we need to ask members to volunteer to help:

Please choose from the following:

ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11th we shall be setting up the Book Sale, moving the books from the Chichester Cathedral Friends' Office to Vicars' Hall. We need help either from 11.00 am to 1.00 pm, and/or 2.00 to 4.00 pm.

ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12th at Day 1 of the Book Sale, we need help either (1) to run the WSAS Desk from 9.00 to 11.00 am, or 11.00 am to 1.00 pm, or (2) to sell the books from 9.00 to 11.00 am, or 11.00 am to 1.00 pm, or 1.00 to 3.00 pm, or 3.00 to 4.30 pm.

ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13th at Day 2 of the Book Sale we need help either (1) to run the WSAS Desk from 9.00 to 11.00 am, or (2) to sell the books from 9.00 to 11.00 am, or 11.00 to 1.00 pm, or 1.00 to 3.00 pm, or 3.00 to 5.00 pm which will also include tidying up at the end of the sale.

Your help at the Book Sale would be invaluable. If you can help, please make your choice(s) and tell me the day, the time and what you would like to do. Please give me this information by email (jkbmant@ukgateway.net) as soon as possible and certainly by the end of August.

Richard Mant

A DISCOUNTED MEMBERSHIP SCHEME

How much WSAS can do to help the Record Office is often determined by the society's finances. Our best source of income is our members' subscriptions, but it is difficult to increase the size of the WSAS membership.

In an attempt to boost our numbers, and therefore our income, the committee has decided to follow the practice adopted by some other societies of a similar size and offer a reduced rate for the first year of membership to new members who join at a particular WSAS event.

The two events we have chosen in 2018 are the September conference at Steyning and the October Book Sale in Chichester. We have chosen these events as it is likely that they will attract more than the usual number of non-members.

New members who join WSAS on or after October 1st each year have always enjoyed a full year's membership for the forthcoming year.

Now, by joining WSAS at the Steyning Conference in September or at the October Book Sale in Chichester, new members will enjoy a full year's membership for the forthcoming year and the subscription will be £5 less than the going rate. So a new member will pay £13 and joint membership will cost £15.

This is a limited opportunity and something of an experiment which may or may not be repeated. Please tell your friends, some of whom may have been wondering if to join WSAS, that now is the ideal time to join WSAS by coming to either of these two events this year.

Richard Mant

Forthcoming Events organised by the Record Office

Family History Workshops

If you're new to family history or want to find out more about the sources available and how best to use them, you may be interested in the Record Office 'coffee time' workshops. They start at 10am on the first Monday or Wednesday of the month and cover a wide range of sources. The remaining programme for 2018 is as follows:

3 September 2018: Beginners guide to Ancestry.co.uk - ***SOLD OUT***

3 October 2018: 'Granny was a pauper': exploring poor law records

7 November 2018: Reading old handwriting

Tuesday Talks

WSAS members are also invited to our ongoing series of Tuesday talks, starting at 7pm. The next few talks are as follows:

- 18 September 2018: **Bernstein, Hussey and the Chichester Psalms** by Nigel Simeone
- 30 October 2018: **Returning home: exploring the First World War's aftermath in West Sussex** – illustrated talks by Emma Worrall and Professor Keith Grieves, focusing on the experiences of soldiers returning home from the front and the sometimes lively debates in local communities about the best way to honour the fallen.
- 27 November 2018: **West Sussex Women: A Centenary of Suffrage**
- 29 January 2019: **The Little Churches of Chichester** by Alan Green
- 26 February 2019: **The High Sheriffs of Sussex** [holding title] by Dr John Godfrey and Caroline Nicholls
- 26 March 2019: **The abolition of British slavery and West Sussex archives** [holding title] by Dr Richard Huzzey

Book now!

If you'd like to come along to a coffee time workshop or a Tuesday talk, please call 01243 753602 to book and pay (advance booking essential, tickets non-refundable). Tickets for coffee time sessions cost £7.50 and for Tuesday talks £8.00, which includes refreshments. Visit www.westsussex.gov.uk/ro and view the 'What's on at the Record Office' page for more details.

***** Discount for WSAS members *****

Please tell us that you are a WSAS member when you book to benefit from £1 off the price of your ticket

WSAS Events Review

HOUSE HISTORY AND TITLE DEEDS WORKSHOP 14th APRIL 2018

This fascinating workshop was jointly run by Imogen Russell of the Record Office and Dr. Caroline Adams and was divided into two distinct parts.

The morning session was enthusiastically presented by Imogen, who took us through the many and varied sources that one can turn to, to discover the history of a house or building. Beginning with maps such as the different series of Ordnance Survey maps and 19th Century Tithe maps, Enclosure maps and perhaps Estate maps. From these it is possible to build up a picture of how a building may have changed over the years. From the Tithe maps it is usually possible to discover who owned and occupied the property at the time of the survey by referring to the Apportionment books that will accompany them.

Sometimes plans, such as architects plans, or County Council plans may have survived as well as sales particulars.

The detective work continues by referring to the many documentary sources that are usually available, and from these it should be possible to establish who may have occupied the property and what they did. The most obvious source is the National Census which is taken every 10 years. The first one that lists names and occupations is the 1841 Census and these can be followed up to the most recently available, that of 1911. These, of course, are available on-line through Ancestry or Find My Past, the latter site now publishing the National Register of 1939.

However, there are also a significant number of less obvious sources that can be consulted, which include parish and council Rate Books, manorial records, Taxation records such as the Land Tax Assessments of 1780 – 1832, the Window Tax and the 17th Century Hearth Tax. Then there are wills and probate inventories and Title Deeds.

Title Deeds formed the second half of the workshop and was presented by Caroline Adams. Today property ownership details are deposited with the Land Registry and are now digitised. In days gone by, however, Title Deeds were laboriously written on parchment. It seems that their history goes back to the Feudal System when officially the King owned all the land, and they were kept as records as to who occupied what.

Caroline produced several examples for the group to pore over. The various documents relating to a property are kept in bundles, the writing is not always easy to read, and the language is archaic.

Until 1733 Latin was used. Clearly patience is the watchword when trying to extract the information that these documents can yield, and yet this patience will be well rewarded as they will probably produce information that may not be available elsewhere.

The workshop covered a lot of ground and produced much useful information for both beginners and more experienced researchers. The most encouraging outcome was that it is possible to find some information about any property in the land, although the extent of that information can vary depending on what records have survived. Imogen and Caroline are to be thanked for their enthusiastic and informative presentations and pointing the way to new research areas.



Shoreham Fort visit, Tuesday 8th May 2018

For those of us who attended the illustrated talk by Gary Baines of the Shoreham Fort Restoration Project, 'Shoreham Fort - past, present and future' back in February this year and came away itching to actually see this remarkable piece of Sussex military and architectural history, May couldn't come quick enough. For those of us unable to attend that talk a guided tour and talk on the history of Shoreham Fort, its restoration and a glimpse of its future, again led by Gary Baines, were in store for us.

Leigh Lawson's report of the February talk appeared in the April issue of *The Researcher* and I will refer you to that rather than repeat the details of the fort's history. However, on this inspiring site visit we found that there was so much more to the Shoreham Fort Restoration Project than the uncovering of a neglected piece of local history. That though had to be the starting point for the Project's ambitious plans.

The site is at the end of a shingle spit and, appropriately enough, overlooks Shoreham Harbour. Gary met us on what was fortunately a sunny but breezy day and it soon became apparent why such a site was chosen for the defence of the harbour, the River Adur and ultimately the entire nation.

We were guided around the key features so far restored or still undergoing restoration. From ground level - the former parade ground - we climbed a flight of rather steep steps, each cut from identical-sized solid blocks of granite, onto the terreplein, the gravelled top of the ramparts which connected the 6 gun emplacements and from which the Master Gunner would direct the 6 gun crews in the heat of battle. From this vantage point we could see what a commanding position these guns would have had.



A cautious descent of those steps, deliberately steep to discourage careless dashing around with high explosives, and from the parade ground we could see the shell recesses from which young lads, often the sons of Gunners, would pass the live shells up onto the terreplein. Ironically these recesses were pock-marked with bullet holes from shooting practice by troops from the nearby First World War camp.

Next we were escorted down the tunnel leading from the parade ground into the central caponniere, one of three protruding from the carnot walls of the fort. Quiet and extremely dark, these defensive features were manned on a strict rota basis and from them, enemy soldiers who had advanced as far as the beach and descended the ditch to the fort walls, could be shot by rifle from the numerous embrasures in any one of the caponnières. The embrasures themselves were cleverly designed to reduce the noise of gunfire while maximising both protection for the marksman and his field of vision. Many tons of rubble had to be removed from this and other buildings, not to mention from around the carnot wall itself, as part of the initial restoration effort, every bucket of rubble removed also having to be painstakingly sifted for material of potential archaeological importance.

Taken up onto the beach in front of the fort we were surprised to hear that the shingle beach was at about much the same level as it was in the mid-nineteenth century. Given that fact we could then see that an enemy approaching by sea could not easily appreciate the size or shape of the fortification they were about to encounter. We could also see the difficulties the enemy would face when descending the ditch. Suffice to say this was never attempted.

Finally, passing the white National Coastwatch Institution station, formerly one of several aiming light towers in World War Two, we returned to parade ground level and assembled in the Project's recently acquired accommodation which turned out to be a Nissen hut with its own interesting history. It is now thought to be the only Great War-era Nissen hut still in use.

The acquisition of the hut was a blessing that allowed the Project to advance its important educational role for schools, accommodating them now in all weathers. It has also given Project volunteers a break from the elements and provided a space where more information boards about the history of the Fort and its occupants can be displayed. Here we also watched a short computerised presentation of the longer-term ambitions that the Project has for the site.



This was a fascinating visit led by the entertaining and knowledgeable Gary Baines, Founder, Chairman and Future Management Coordinator of the Shoreham Fort Restoration Project. Gary was assisted with both efficiency and perfect timing throughout the afternoon by the Friends' secretary, Sharon Penfold, who showed the diversity of skills required by volunteers when she turned up in the Tea Hut and served most welcome cups of tea to round off a very rewarding visit.

John Henderson

A Walk round Hothamton

On the afternoon of Saturday 9th June seven of us, plus dog, met at the car park on the corner of Hotham Park for a walk to be led by Susan Millard and Ron Iden. As both leaders are former members of staff at West Sussex Record Office, we knew the afternoon was going to be high quality, and so it proved. Based around the area that Sir Richard Hotham purchased and developed, we looked at some lovely 18th and 19th century buildings. The best thing about the walk for me was that we were given copies of maps of various dates, including an excellent one by Ron himself - and this brought clarity and understanding, as we matched up the roads and buildings that made up the estate.

We started on the corner of Gloucester Street and Sue explained about Bognor Lodge, the house that Sir Richard Hotham rebuilt, which was demolished in 1937. We then walked into the park and stood in front of what is now Hotham Park House (it was Bersted Lodge in 1841, and Aldwick Manor in 1917). Ron supplied us with copies of 19th century prints of it under its different names, looking absolutely gorgeous with a double-storey veranda (sadly the one on the first floor was demolished).

The theme of buildings under different names continued when we walked northwards out of the park and across the Upper Bognor Road. We went to look at three houses originally built as Hothamton Crescent, and now owned by the University. St Michael's on the east side was also now on its fourth name. Its matching house on the other side of the larger 'The Dome' building was called Mordington, wrongly written as Mornington in some directories, bringing Radio 4's *I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue* to mind. Further west lovely Spencer terrace, built by Sir Richard as accommodation for visitors to the resort, is now converted to modern flats, but still looks beautiful. Unfortunately 'Hotham Way (or the 'racetrack') was noisy and busy and must make a difference to the people lucky enough to live in one of those flats. Other early 19th century buildings have survived on this northern part of the town, and we can imagine what Sir Richard planned: Jane Austen's *Sanditon* (actually based on Worthing) gives a good idea of how things might have panned out.



Dome House, Hothamton Crescent



St Michael's Hothamton Crescent

We cut back south through a footpath on the west side of the park, where smaller estate cottages and the ice house were built to our right, and we ended the afternoon with tea and cake at the café. Sue and Ron have so much material not used on this walk, that I'm hoping they will do Parts II and III in future years, on Sir Richard's developments on the south-west side of the town, and on the planned Arran estate, where only two of the dozen houses were built. Certainly we were very privileged to have had their expertise for part one.

Caroline Adams

Events Programme

Saturday September 8th - WSAS Annual Conference, *In Steyning and Beyond*. To be held at the Steyning Centre, Fletchers Croft, Steyning, BN44 3XZ

9.30 Coffee/tea for 10.00 start

10.00 introduction

10.15 Peter Crowhurst, *Olaf Caroe and the Great Game*.

11.00 refreshments

11.30 Dr Janet Pennington, *'Walter Gibraltar': from Sussex to the Bishop's Palace, Malta (1804 – 1877)*

12.15 David Randall, *Local History and the National Curriculum at Steyning Grammar School*.

12.35 lunch

2.00 Professor Brian Short, *The Middle Adur Valley and Beyond: A Farming Dynasty in two World Wars*.

2.45 refreshments

3.15 Chris Tod, *Archives at Steyning Museum*

4.00 Conference closes

The Friends of the National Archives and British Association for Local History will be in attendance with their displays, alongside local history societies.

Parking. There is a pay and display car park beside the hall or there is free parking in nearby roads.

Members £15 non-members £18 includes tea, coffee and biscuits throughout the day.

Please bring a packed lunch, or wraps will be available for purchase and there are pubs nearby.

Friday/Saturday October 12/13th - WSAS Book Sale - see last page. Please come and support the booksale

Saturday November 17th - WSAS Workshop, *Parish Records after the Registers*, to be held at WSRO

Parish registers get the most publicity, because they are the bread-and-butter documents for family historians. However the parish authorities influenced our lives for centuries in lots of different ways, and the result is a wealth of under-used material. These documents tell us about the lives our ancestors led from the constraints of poverty to the ways in which the wealthy wished to be remembered.

10.45 Arrival and coffee

11.00-11.30 Introduction – how to find parish records, quick overview of registers and BTs

11.30-12.15 Churchwardens, church history

12.15-1.00 Vestry and successor records, charities

1.00-2.00 Lunch

2.00-2.45 The Poor - settlement

2.45-3.30 The Poor - overseers, rates, apprenticeships

3.30-4.00 Tea and round up

Cost Members £12 Non-members £15 to include coffee, tea and biscuits

WSAS Committee

Richard Mant - Chairman

Leigh Lawson - Vice Chairman

Susan Nicel - Treasurer

Richard Howell - Secretary

Barrie Keech - Newsletter & Website

Jeff Staniforth - Committee Member

Jane Mant - Membership Secretary

Stella Elliot - Committee Member

Helen Whittle - Journal Editor

Gillian Thompson - Committee Member

Ruth Brown - Committee Member

Susan Millard - Information Manager

Wendy Walker - County Archivist

All contactable using wsascom@btinternet.com

Further Society information is available at the website, including the WSAS Privacy Policy:

westsussexarchivessociety.webplus.net

Booking Slips

**Any query about any event please contact: wsascom@btinternet.com
Events can also be seen at: westsussexarchivessociety.webplus.net**

Saturday September 8th - WSAS Conference, *In Steyning and Beyond*

Cost £15 members £18 for non-members

Names of members attending.....

Tel. No.....Email or home address.....

Names of non-members attending.....

Tel. No.....Email or home address.....

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

Please return slip by 1st September to, WSAS, c/o West Sussex Record Office, County Hall, Chichester,
West Sussex, PO19 1RN

Saturday November 17th - WSAS Workshop, *Parish Records after Registers*

Cost £12 members, £15 for non-members

Names of members attending.....

Tel. No.....Email or home address.....

Names of non-members attending.....

Tel. No.....Email or home address.....

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

Please return slip by 10th November to, WSAS, c/o West Sussex Record Office, County Hall, Chichester,
West Sussex, PO19 1RN

SALE

OF SECOND HAND HISTORY BOOKS

Friday 12th October 9:00 - 4:30
Saturday 13th October 9:00 - 4:00

Vicars' Hall, Cathedral Green, Chichester

Free entry

Refreshments available to purchase

All proceeds will go to Chichester Cathedral Friends,
supporting the Cathedral, and West Sussex Archives
Society, supporting West Sussex Record Office

enquiries email wsascom@btinternet.com