

The Researcher



NEWSLETTER OF THE WEST SUSSEX ARCHIVES SOCIETY
THE FRIENDS OF THE WEST SUSSEX RECORD OFFICE

History in the Making

This is most definitely not the update that I had been expecting to write this month, but these are extraordinary times for us all. On 17th March the Record Office closed its doors for the first time in over 70 years. As we put up notices, sent round information and prepared ourselves for working from home we had no clear ideas about when we would see you all again.

However, our work continues and we are finding new ways to deliver our service and to document the history of West Sussex. We are putting out an appeal for people to help us build a community archive to record the events that we are all living through. We are asking people to keep a diary of their experience of the pandemic and how it is affecting them, their family and friends and their local community. It would be wonderful if WSAS members could help us with this. You could record your experiences, thoughts and feelings either on paper or on your phone as an individual, as part of a family project within the same household, as a creative outlet or simply as a daily record.

We are joining forces with our partners at Screen Archive South East (SASE), who look after all the moving image archives for the region. We have diaries at the Record Office dating back over 300 hundred years while the SASE collections cover life and leisure, work and travel, events and film-making from the 19th century to the present day.

We would also like your help in collecting other material such as leaflets, flyers, posters and photographs. You can find out more about taking part by visiting our blog post (<https://westsussexrecordofficeblog.com>) or contacting Jenny Mason at record.office@westsussex.gov.uk. You can find out more about SASE and watch over 1200 archive films online at <https://screenarchive.brighton.ac.uk>.

Alongside this we are all having to develop new ways of working. Life at WSRO revolves around the original documents in our care and, of course, our researchers so the current crisis has meant that we have had to confront the almost unthinkable – what work can archive staff do from home when we can no longer access any of the archives? Fortunately we have been able to identify some really useful tasks, which will help users and staff alike and which can be done remotely.

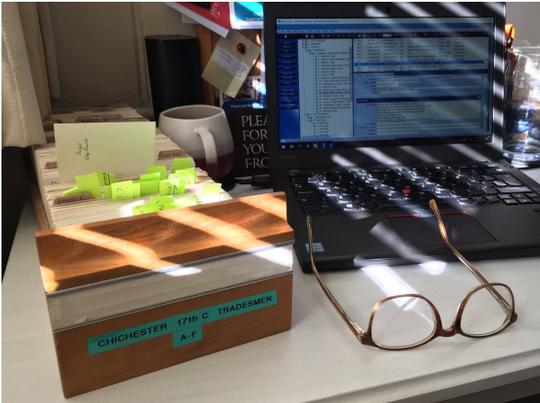
FORTHCOMING EVENTS:

SAVE THE DATE:

26th September 2020
ALL-DAY CONFERENCE
'Reconstructing Chichester
The Cathedral and Close
1660-1700'
The Assembly Room,
Chichester

APRIL 2020
ISSUE 109

One of those jobs is inputting information from the index cards in the Searchroom into our cataloguing system, CALM. These cards, painstakingly compiled by former staff and volunteers, are an incredibly name-rich source and can be a really important way into some collections. At the moment they can only be accessed in the Searchroom, but staff are now busy putting this data onto CALM so that it can be searched as part of the online catalogue. The cards include indexes of manors, 17th century tradesmen in Chichester, West Sussex County Council plans, and 17th century doctors and teachers. Already there have been some interesting things coming to light – for instance, in September 1608 Chichester City Court had to adjourn due to the plague, something which seems to have a particular resonance at the moment.



Other members of the Record Office team are helping to update our storage indexes and convert them into Excel spreadsheets. This is a really important job as it is the first step towards getting our locations onto the CALM database and having them all accessible in one place. We have also been hard at work editing volunteer spreadsheets and uploading them to CALM. Do take a look at Search Online for new Quarter Sessions rolls and Holmes Campbell (an Arundel based firm of solicitors) records.

Just before we closed our doors we received a piece of very good news. At the beginning of March we heard that we had been selected to receive one of the High Sheriff's Awards for services to the community. This was totally unexpected and a huge honour, reflecting the hard work and everything that the Record Office staff do for our users, our depositors and the local community in West Sussex. We were invited to receive our award at Chichester Cathedral on 17th March as part of Choral Evensong but sadly events intervened and it was cancelled. However, I have since received the certificate in the post and once we are back we will be able to display it and share it with you all.

While we are away do keep in touch with us and follow the Record Office news on our social media and blog posts. Tim Hudson has just written a fascinating blog for us on the historic records and architectural histories of Petworth. Following on from our blog on creating the new community archive, Jenny will be posting an article on the diaries that we already hold in the collections and SASE will be writing a blog for us on their film archives.

I hope it will not be too long before we are able to open our doors and see you all again. In the meantime take care and stay safe.

Wendy Walker

Forthcoming Events Organised by the Record Office

There has been some inevitable disruption to our programme due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The coffee time workshops in April and May have been cancelled and those who booked have been offered a full refund or places on repeat sessions later in the year. The Tuesday talks in March and April have been postponed, and everyone who booked has been offered a place for the new date (tbc) or a full refund. Future events may, of course, be affected if the crisis continues into the Summer. At the time of writing, the programme for Wednesday workshop is as follows.

Workshops for family and local history

If you're new to family and local 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 Wednesday of the month and cover a wide range of sources.

6 May 2020	Researching the history of your house *CANCELLED*
3 Jun 2020	Newspapers for family and local history
1 July 2020	Tracing your army ancestors
2 Sep 2020	Getting started with Ancestry.co.uk
7 Oct 2020	Researching the history of your house
4 Nov 2020	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.

28 Apr 2020	'SNAPS in Sussex': The photographs of John Smith (1852-1925) by Nichola Court *POSTPONED*
29 Sep 2020	Battle over West Sussex by Andy Saunders
27 Oct 2020	MacDonald Gill: Charting a Life by Caroline Walker, Andrew & Angela Johnson

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, but refunds will be offered if events are postponed or cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic). 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

Chairman's Report for the WSAS AGM in 2020

It was always going to be difficult to match the achievements of 2018 but I think in many ways we have done just that in 2019.

Our events have generally attracted large numbers – more than 40 at the Chichester Conference and over 60 at the RSR Symposium, for example, – and a growing trend has been the increasing number of non-members coming to our events. This is due not only to the quality of the events themselves but the publicity which Leigh Lawson gives them in the local press, on Facebook, in the West Sussex Libraries, with the WSAS posters she designs and in the Botolph Bell magazine for our Worthing-based events.

Non-members are also attracted to our events by the eye-catching WSAS website and by the highly informative Researcher which they pick up at the West Sussex Record Office. We must thank Sophie Wood for both the website and the Researcher for she has made both of them particularly distinctive.

Our membership numbers have grown during the year and with careful, accurate monitoring by Jane Mant, the WSAS Membership Secretary, in 2019 we reached 200 members for the first time for a number of years. Once again the quality of our events helps to explain this as does the Discounted Membership Scheme which we have run now for two years. At the Chichester Conference the WSAS desk was manned by Jeff Staniforth and he signed up 11 new members in one day – surely a new WSAS record.

At our conference in Fernhurst in 2014 we started the practice of inviting other societies to be with us on the day and we have continued this practice each year, with 9 societies attending this year's Chichester Conference.

At the Steyning Conference in 2018 we started the idea of having a mini book sale at our conferences and we included this feature at the Chichester Conference, thanks to Susan Millard who collected the books and had some good sales on the day.

I keep mentioning the Chichester Conference, the reason being that it had some highly distinctive features, such as those mentioned already, and it also had an A5 booklet for the conference programme and 6 guest speakers. We must thank Helen Whittle, the conference organiser, for this very successful conference.

We must also thank Helen for producing the Journal of West Sussex History each year. The Journal is always well-received and the feed-back on the latest edition was especially glowing. One regular reader said that it was the best ever and the BALH (The British Association for Local History) has specially mentioned it in their latest publication. In fact one of the contributors to the Journal, Dr Caroline Adams, has just been given an award by the BALH for her article on 'The Influence of the Early Modern Gentleman on the Changing Landscape of West Sussex'. We must always thank those who write these very good articles for the Journal for without their contributions the Journal would not be published.

So what explains these innovations and new levels of achievement at WSAS each year? Well it is the work of our marvellous committee. You will have read now how members of the committee make their own individual and very valuable contribution to WSAS.

One other member of the committee who is not often in the limelight but whose skilful, meticulous work underpins all we do is our Treasurer, Susan Nicel. Susan keeps our finances

in very good order as you will have seen from the accounts for 2019 which she has prepared. We are most grateful for all the work she does which is largely behind the scenes.

But here is another ingredient that explains the success of WSAS and that is the support we receive from our members. Without your support for our events, for the Journal, for the Researcher and for our various initiatives, WSAS would fail. So please continue to give that support which we need and which we welcome so much.

And even so there is yet one other ingredient which explains the continuing success of WSAS and that is the support we receive from the County Archivist, Wendy Walker, and her staff at the Record Office. Photocopying, address labels, the use of the Record Office for an occasional event, the loan of equipment and the printing of the Researcher, it's all there – and we are very grateful for it.

Perhaps, as this is my last report as Chairman, I may be allowed to end on a personal note. I will of course remain a member of WSAS and I shall look forward to meeting the many friends I have made at WSAS in the months and years ahead. I have now been a member of the committee for 12 years and for the last 6 I have been Chairman, a position which I have enjoyed enormously.

So what am I going to miss in particular? I am going to miss working with the WSAS committee who are a joy to work with for their energy, expertise and willingness seem unbounded. I am going to miss my very interesting, regular meetings with Wendy Walker when we swap information on the two organisations we represent: WSRO and WSAS. And I am going to miss working with the best Vice Chairman anyone could ever wish for, Leigh Lawson.

Richard Mant

The Minutes for the WSAS AGM held in 2019

We all received the minutes for our AGM in 2019 when we were sent the details for this year's AGM.

If you are aware of any errors in these minutes for the 2019 AGM please would you let the WSAS Committee know either by email to contact@wsas.co.uk or in writing to WSAS, c/o West Sussex Record Office, County Hall, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 1RN and by Friday, 24th April 2020 at the latest.

Emails/letters in support of the 2019 minutes are not required.

The WSAS Accounts for 2020

I am very pleased to announce that the WSAS accounts for the financial year 2019 have been accepted by the WSAS members.

The WSAS AGM in 2021

At the January 2020 WSAS committee meeting, it was decided, after careful consideration, that the date for next year's WSAS AGM would be Saturday 27th March 2021. By holding our AGM in March we avoid the increase in hall charges that often go up on 1st April each year and we avoid the month of April when so many other events take place.

The Results of the 2020 WSAS Elections

It now gives me great pleasure to announce the results of the recent elections to the WSAS Committee held by postal vote.

I am very pleased to declare the following elected or re-elected as from Saturday, March 28th 2020:

- Professor Philip Robinson has been elected as Chairman.
- Leigh Lawson has been re-elected as Vice Chairman.
- Richard Howell has been elected as Secretary.
- Sue Millard has been re-elected as a member of the committee.
- Jeff Staniforth has been re-elected as a member of the committee.

Richard Mant

Farewell to our Chairman

We are very sad to say farewell to our chairman, Richard Mant who has so expertly steered WSAS through the last six years. Richard's eye for detail, as well as his genuine interest in each occasion ensured every event and meeting went like clockwork. He has always been available to offer advice and guidance to the committee members who were organizing each event, for which we are very grateful.

As well as our usual meetings, talks and walks Richard has personally organised and introduced a number of 'extras'. Thanks to his efforts we have run three highly successful fund raising second hand history book sales and a map sale. The last book sale, in combination with the Friends of Chichester Cathedral, was held in the Vicars' Hall. It took a huge amount of effort and organisation on Richard's part and was a major success. Richard also introduced the idea of offering discounted membership on the days of the book sale and at the last two conferences. That, too, has been an incredibly successful venture.

Because the AGM had to be cancelled for obvious reasons, we are very disappointed that we have been unable to say 'goodbye and thank you' to Richard publicly so, unfortunately, this is the only platform available to us. We do hope that this will suffice. We all extend our heartfelt thanks to Richard. We wish him well and we know we will be seeing him again at future WSAS events!!

WSAS Committee



WSAS Committee

Philip Robinson - Chairman

Leigh Lawson - Vice Chairman

Susan Nicel - Treasurer

Richard Howell - Secretary

Sophie Wood - Newsletter & Website

Jane Mant - Membership Secretary

Helen Whittle - Journal Editor

Susan Millard - Information Manager

Jeff Staniforth - Committee Member

Wendy Walker - County Archivist

All contactable using: contact@wsas.co.uk

Further Society information is available at the website: www.wsas.co.uk

WSAS Talk: French Prisoners of War in Hampshire - Escape and Evasion

On a fairly unpleasant February afternoon, Paul Chamberlain talked to WSAS Members and friends in St Botolph's Church Rooms, Worthing, about what it meant to be a Prisoner of War in Napoleonic times.

The prison system of the time consisted of hulks, land depots (prisons as we know them) and Parole Departments. Prison ships were policed by Royal Marines, Land prisons by Naval Militia and the Parole Department was looked after by local yeomanry, with prisoners billeted on local inhabitants. Between 1803 and 1814 about 122,000 prisoners of war arrived in England. Of these many died and many were exchanged, sick or on parole. These were prisoners for all European countries, men, women and children. Paul distinguished between the Wars at Sea, on Trade and on Land.

War at Sea: The Great Terror, 1803 – 1805, was the fear of Napoleon invading England. Thousands of soldiers and seamen arrived as Prisoners of War, many from invasion vessels continually attacked and captured by the English Navy. By 1805 there were so many prisoners that a new war prison was needed – Dartmoor Prison was built as it was not felt safe to have prisoners near to a possible Napoleonic landing. After the Treaty of Amiens in 1802, Britons flocked to France, only to be kept there when war broke out in May 1803.

War on Trade: All major European countries had Colonies which they needed to protect, for their produce, mainly in the Caribbean. 4,500 prisoners were sent to Porchester Castle – many of them black men.

War on land: There were Colonial landings and the British were also involved in Iberia. By 1809, once the threat of invasion had receded, Porchester Castle was reopened for European prisoners.

On the Portsmouth hulks in 1798 were 750 prisoners listed as 'Negro' on a single ship, *Fortitude*, as well as boys as young as 9. There were 11 prison ships between 1796 and 1802. With the threat of invasion this went down to 1 in 1803, and 7 in 1806, but once the danger was over, by 1813 there were 16, containing 9200 prisoners. These were very convenient, but there were concerns about security.

Portchester Castle had as many as 7000 prisoners, and Forton Prison 3000. This was part of a national system. For instance Edinburgh Castle had 1000 prisoners, Dartmoor 7000. Prisons could be smelled a mile away. Prison clothing was a sulphur yellow outfit, with T.O. (Transport Office) stamped on it – it would be obvious if a prisoner escaped. There was a gambling problem in prisons, plus buying and selling – markets were held next to prisons with very lively buying and selling – prisoners could sell their wares. These would have been model ships, automatons, straw marquetry figures etc. Markets could be a source of escape.

Prisoners were fed well – often their diet was better and more reliable than that of the local community. (As there was no refrigeration, some of it was inedible). Cabbage was among their food allowance as scurvy was prevalent. Supplying these foodstuffs was a boost for the local community. Prisons also had hospitals, so prisoners had access to regular healthcare. Medical care was as good for foreign prisoners as for the British and some Surgeons went on to have lucrative practices after the war.

Parole depots gave a regular income to the area – prisoners had to give their word of honour not to escape – they were mainly Officers. They were restricted to within one mile of the Parole Depots. They were given a daily allowance to pay for food, clothing and lodging. Prisoner exchange systems worked well with Spain, Denmark and other European countries, but not with France. In 1810 there were 44,000 French prisoners in Britain and 12,500 British in France.



There were many reasons why prisoners tried to escape. If they were sent back to France, for example, they would have been recruited straight back into the French Army or Navy. Some escaped to avoid prison and military service, so they disappeared into the community. Their homes had been on the ship they were captured from – where would they go if they escaped? More Officers escaped if they could see their career passing them by. Some soldiers escaped during their march from capture to depot, and were not recaptured. Local militia might be paid by prisoners to allow them to escape.

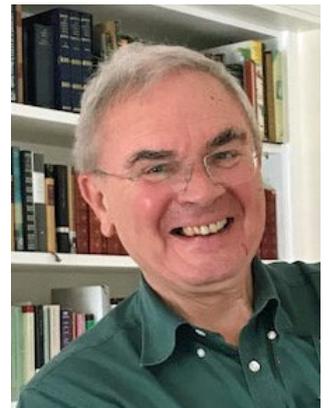
There were some places with especial risks such as Porchester Castle which had a church in its grounds, making it possible to leave with the parishioners. Smugglers often helped French gentlemen to escape – for the reward.

This can only be a brief summary – for more information, try Paul's book *Hell Upon Water: Prisoners of War in Britain 1793-1815*.

Liz Lane

Welcome to new chairman Professor Philip Robinson

The WSAS Committee wishes to welcome Professor Philip Robinson as our new chairman. We invited Philip to contribute an article about a subject of his choosing to this issue of *The Researcher*. Below is his very pertinent essay about a time that Chichester faced a local epidemic.



Chichester faces an epidemic:

As recorded in WG5/1a/1 Minutes of the Court of the Poor Law

In 1759 there was some concern in Chichester about a potential epidemic. The new Board of Guardians for the poor had been established. It had first met on Monday 2nd July 1753 to agree its structure and allocate responsibilities. This followed an Act of Parliament that had incorporated the nine parishes of the city into a single Corporation to administer the relief to the poor. At that initial meeting of the Court of Assembly, 33 gentlemen attended, and Sir John Miller was unanimously elected its President for the coming year. Sir John's father, grandfather and great grandfather had served as Members of Parliament for the City, and his grandfather and great grandfather had served the City as Mayor.

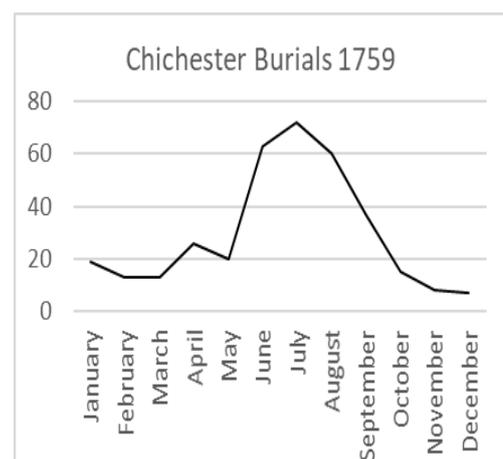
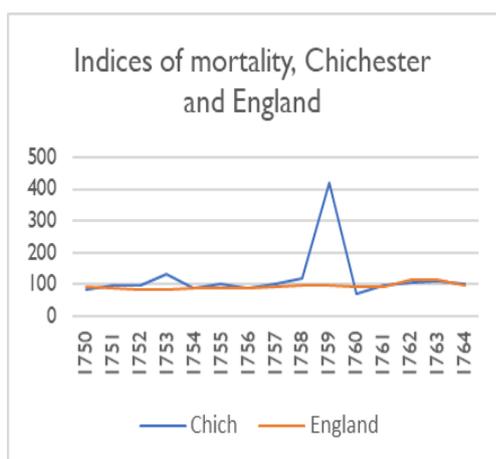
Within a year any initial enthusiasm seems to have declined; no doubt Sir John had more important matters to attend to and was frequently absent from meetings of the Court. Despite that, and though he appeared not to be present (his name is not included with the attendees) he was again unanimously elected in 1754 to serve another year as President, though the minutes record he rarely attended. In the following year Henry Peckham was elected President with twelve votes in his favour and eight against.

By early 1759 attendance at meetings has dropped to about a dozen, indeed in the 5th February only five members turned up and “business could not be transacted”. At the annual appointment of Officers of the Corporation in April Richard Buckner, a former Mayor of the city, was unanimously elected as President and at his first meeting, Friday 27th April, with 16 members present, notice was given that the 71 children in the workhouse should be inoculated against smallpox and that those surgeons and apothecaries willing to help the Guardians should deliver their proposals to a meeting of the Court on Monday.

At that meeting 25 members arrived and the question was put as to whether the children in the workhouse should be inoculated or not. A ballot was held with a red ball indicating support and a white ball opposition to the proposal. Eight voted in favour and seventeen against inoculation.

The minutes do not record the debate, nor the reasons why members took the decision they did. We can speculate whether the rejection was based on a fear of inoculation, or simply the cost to the Guardians of providing for 71 children. The following charts illustrate what happened next, and of course, then, as now, no one knew how events would unfold.

The chart on the left shows the annual mortality against the average for the 18th Century, the annual average number of deaths in Chichester was 89 but in 1759 reached 373. The chart also shows that it was a local epidemic, the deaths in England (*figures taken from Wrigley and Schofield “The Population History of England” pp 499/500*) remain close to the annual average of one hundred and seventy thousand. The chart on the right depicts the tsunamiic wave that was to hit the city in the summer of 1759. Edward Jenner, who did so much to advance our understanding of smallpox and the efficacy of vaccination, was only 10 years old. The minutes of the Guardians for the rest of 1759 remain silent on the impact of the epidemic on the City. Today we have far greater understanding, but even today people want to ignore the signs and treat the epidemic as false news. No one is immune from the tsunami but acting responsibly we will recover and return to a different, and possibly, more compassionate world.



The Archives Card: new reader's ticket coming soon!

The Archives and Records Association (ARA) has now ended the CARN reader's ticket scheme and launched the new Archives Card.

Many record offices across the country will be implementing the scheme over the coming months including WSRO. With many services closed for the foreseeable future by the Covid-19 pandemic, the rollout is inevitably facing delays. WSAS members can however help with the transition by signing up online before we reopen.



You can complete most of the registration process yourself on the Archives Card website (www.archivescard.com) using an e-mail address that is unique to you. You will then have 3 months to complete the registration (otherwise you will need to “pre-register” once again).

When you visit the Record Office (or any participating archive), we will ask to see two forms of ID – there is a list of acceptable ID, and the combination of documents required, on the Archives Card website. We will also take your photograph, if you haven't already uploaded one, and issue you with a card.

The Archives Card can be issued to anyone aged 14 and over, is free of charge, and lasts for 5 years.

Please note: Under the new scheme, visitors to WSRO will not be able to order original documents in the Searchroom until we have verified their identity and issued an Archives Card.

Wendy Walker

Events Programme

With the April and May events already cancelled, we have also decided not to run any events in June or July. The next planned event is the Annual Conference (see below). We will have more idea about whether or not this event can go ahead in the next issue of The Researcher (July).

Save the date:

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Council House/Assembly Room, North Street, Chichester
Saturday 26th September 2020 (10am - 4pm)

RECONSTRUCTING CHICHESTER: THE CATHEDRAL and CLOSE
1660 - c1700

The conference is organised by West Sussex Archives Society in association with 'Lincoln Unlocked', Lincoln College, Oxford and the Chichester branch of the Historical Association.
