

The Researcher



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

100 Days of Archives in Lockdown

By the time this newsletter reaches you we will have been running an archive service in lockdown for four months, having passed our first 100 days in June. At the outset it seemed impossible to operate without access to the collections but we have found that there is much that we can do whilst working from home and there have been some interesting and unexpected developments along the way.

Throughout the lockdown period we have had a member of staff on site every day to check on the archives and keep the building open for essential work including that of the Coroner, the Registrars and the Records Management Team, who have been providing regular access to urgently needed modern records for WSCC staff. Our Reception Team have also been operating throughout this period and have been doing a wonderful job in very difficult circumstances.

In April I mentioned the work that we have been doing in adding to our catalogues and improving our storage indexes. Nick Corbo-Stewart has been busy processing the impressive work of our dedicated team of volunteers and he provides a detailed insight into this in this newsletter. Alongside this Jenny Mason, our Collections Manager, provides an update on the progress of our Covid-19 Community Archive, which we have been developing with our partners, Screen Archive South East and The Novium Museum in Chichester.

The lockdown period has also given us the opportunity to develop a brand-new multi-media project with Screen Archive South East, using our combined resources to highlight different aspects of the county's history and traditions. Our relationship with Screen Archive South East, which is part of the University of Brighton, began in 1992 and their Conservation Centre and large collection of original films, tapes and files are based at the Record Office. There are many synergies between our collections and the last few months have given us the opportunity to explore these together in more detail and create West Sussex Unwrapped, which was launched on Sussex Day 16 June.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS:

CANCELLED:

26th September 2020
ALL-DAY CONFERENCE
The Assembly Room,
Chichester

31st October 2020*
THE WOMEN'S LAND
ARMY

St Botolph's Church,
Worthing

*Subject to Covid-19 rules
then applicable.



**JULY 2020
ISSUE 110**

This ten-week series focusses on a different theme each week with an intriguing mix of old film footage, photographs, blogs and documents, which together offer a rather different approach to experiencing archival material at home. We started with the theme of summer, followed by nursing, the WI, lifeboats and jubilees. The last two weeks in July will focus on country life and traditions with three more different episodes to follow in August. Each new episode is available every Tuesday at 12 noon with the final one on 18 August. You can catch up with the earlier films and blogs as well as following the new ones by visiting [Vimeo](#) or the [Record Office's 'West Sussex Unwrapped' blog post](#). The feedback so far has been very positive and at the end of the series we will be looking to see how we can build on this and offer more online content together in the future.



West Sussex Unwrapped:
WSRO PH4089: Donkey rides at Bognor 1920s

For those of you who have been turning to online resources over the last few months you might also like to explore the website of the Sussex Record Society. In January I wrote about the Sussex Record Society's new Digital Editions series, which provides digital editions of the Society's older print publications together with an online platform for records and other content which are complementary or additional to the printed volumes. Since then three more new volumes have been published online including two further *Witness Depositions of the Chichester Archdeaconry*, by Kim Fleming (1597-1599) and Linda Robertson (1607-1611). John Farrant's *Sussex Depicted – Views and descriptions 1600-1800*, originally published by the Society as volume 85 in 2001 to celebrate its centenary, has just been made available as a digital edition together with a separate online gallery of all the Views (<https://www.sussexrecordsociety.org/srs-digital-editions/>).



West Sussex Unwrapped:
WSRO 3963: Bathing machines at Bognor c1910

The Sussex Record Office is now joining forces with West Sussex Record Office to publish volume 100, *The Great War Memoir of Ralph Ellis, Sussex Artist and Soldier*, edited by Sue Hepburn. Some of you will already be familiar with the diaries of Ralph Ellis, who served with the 7th Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment on the Western Front and returned home to make a life in Arundel as an artist and inn sign painter. The sketches and watercolours that accompany the narrative of his war diaries together with the personal account of his experiences makes this a very compelling memoir –

and one that is very different from the usual battalion war diaries. Such is the quality of the material that we have opted to produce this as a full colour facsimile. You will be hearing more about this in the next WSAS newsletter.

I know that you will all be wondering when the Record Office will re-open and we are currently working on our recovery plans. We are following all of the guidance and have carried out detailed risk assessments, which help us in our planning to deliver a safe service when we re-open. At the time of writing WSCC Libraries are starting a phased reintroduction of services with a Select and Collect service from the front doors of the library buildings but browsing in the library is not yet available. Like the libraries we will be phasing in our reopening plans and there will be more on this on our website and social media in due course. We will be looking forward to the time when we can welcome you back into the Record Office once more but in the meantime take care and stay safe.



West Sussex Unwrapped:
WSRO 239/3/1: Easebourne WI scrapbook showing activities during the Second World War

Wendy Walker

Record Office Volunteers: Work on the Collections

Over the closure period, I have been processing collections which have been listed, arranged and packaged by our dedicated team of volunteers. This work has involved many hours of input on their behalf. These collections vary greatly in material content and cover a wide range of events, people and organisations across West Sussex.

Amongst the larger collections the volunteers have worked on is the archive of Petworth based artist Claude Muncaster (1903-1974), whose paintings of marine scenes and landscapes were exhibited at the Royal Academy. This remarkably complete collection includes sketchbooks, c1916-1967; loose sketches; diaries, 1948-1973; extensive professional and personal correspondence; photographs of Muncaster's works and his travels around the world. There are also files relating to his writing projects, notebooks, and exhibition catalogues of his work. The collection includes a small amount of material relating to Muncaster's father, the celebrated artist Oliver Hall.

Claude Muncaster was born Grahame Hall in 1903, changing his name in 1923, shortly after he started exhibiting his work. From 1940-1944 he served in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, advising on camouflage, and in 1946 he was commissioned to produce a series of watercolours of royal residences. He became an Associate Member of the Royal Watercolour Society in 1931, a member of the Royal Society for British Artists in 1944 and of the Royal Institute of Oil Painters in 1948

Another collection, donated by Mr David Elleray, reflects interest in the architecture of Sussex. He travelled across the county taking photographs of churches, prominent homes and street scenes from the 1970s to the late 1990s, a number of which have since been altered or demolished. His collection also includes postcards depicting Sussex scenes, notes on local history and weather diaries for Worthing. Another volunteer has catalogued a collection of photographic slides of Amberley, which provide a fascinating snapshot of transport, people, and places in the village, between the mid to late 20th century.

A more personal collection catalogued recently are the diaries of the late Lady Dorothy Longley, giving a glimpse into her well-travelled life and participation in the social circles of mid Sussex. She was married to Sir Norman Longley C.B.E., who was the chairman of the construction company, James Longley & Co Ltd of Crawley, and a former county councillor for West Sussex. At one time, Dorothy's diaries were recognised by the Guinness Book of Records as Britain's longest continuously kept diary. We also have the papers of Dr David Harris, Labour Party member in mid Sussex and academic. This collection gives researchers some idea of the work of political activists within the frenetic world of local politics. Finally, West Sussex is the home to many community-based organisations involved in collating information on historic changes and influencing the lives of residents. On this theme, one such collection I have just processed are the papers documenting the activities of the Angmering Society from 1973 to 2014.

Then we come to the smaller collections prepared by our volunteers, which provide interesting snapshots of Sussex history including the deeds of the Richmond Inn in West Ashling, 1834-1873, and additional papers for the Rideout family, who were long established in Sussex and had prominent roles within the local community. For those who like gardening: Chichester Organic Gardening Society and the West Sussex Growers Group, with their constitutions, minutes and newsletters.

Together these collections reflect the hard work and time given by our dedicated team of volunteers, without which so much of this fascinating history would remain closed to the public.



Volunteers at work in the Record Office (pre-lockdown)

Nick Corbo-Stewart

West Sussex Covid-19 Community Archive

On 31st March West Sussex Record Office asked the people of West Sussex to share their experiences of the pandemic with a view to establishing a Covid-19 Community Archive which would help to document these unprecedented times and their impact on the county's residents.

One of the suggestions was that people could keep diaries, and we drew on some historic examples from the archive to show how diaries had been kept at other times of crisis. We also asked people to take photographs, videos (to be preserved by our partners Screen Archive South East) and to collect leaflets, flyers, posters, and other information about the pandemic.

We didn't quite know what to expect when we launched this appeal or what the scale of the response would be but we have had a really positive reaction to our call out. Over 50 people have been in touch to say that they have been keeping a diary and offering photographs, poems, emails and films which document the experience of lockdown.

Photographs in particular have dramatically brought home just how much our world has changed over the last few months. From deserted streets in Chichester to empty buses and socially distanced VE Day celebrations they are a visual record of a very different way of life to that of the pre-Covid era. Photographs also capture our gratitude towards NHS and keyworkers, with rainbows and bunting thanking those who have worked to keep us safe throughout this crisis.

We have also received emails and leaflets from the County Council, District Councils and shops, which record the 'official' response to the pandemic and some of the measures which have been put in place to protect people and help the most vulnerable. We are working with the County Council's Communications Team to ensure that we are able to preserve all of the Covid-19 messages the Council has sent out to schools, care providers, and residents across West Sussex.

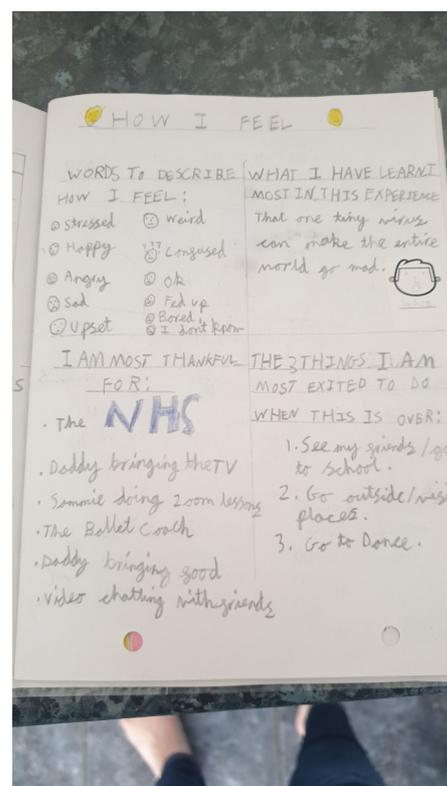
Whilst the focus of our appeal was diaries, so far we have only received three (I hope because people are still keeping them!) but these have already provided a fascinating range of experiences and perspectives. From a 10-year-old keeping a 'time capsule' which captures her emotional response to lockdown to an 81-year-old retiree sharing her thoughts about the government's handling of the crisis and the experience of supermarket shopping with Covid-19 precautions in place, they are exactly the kind of record we hoped would come out of this call-out.

Our partners Screen Archive South East have been actively collecting films throughout and amongst the items they have received is a recording of Dr Tim Fooks' declaration of office as the new High Sheriff (his formal appointment). This was performed over the video conferencing software Zoom and was a first for both SASE and the High Sheriff!

In an exciting development, at the beginning of June the Novium joined forces with West Sussex Record Office and Screen Archive South East to help bring this archive together. They will be collecting artwork and objects, including 3D items from across the Chichester District. If you have a particular item that has kept you going through lockdown please do contact the Novium (thenovium@chichester.gov.uk).

It has been an interesting journey so far and all of the contributions we've received are helping to develop a really significant archive documenting the pandemic and providing a wide range of perspectives – from the official to the very personal.

We're looking forward to receiving even more material once we reopen and are able to take in further deposits. If you've been keeping a diary or have other material you would like to donate to WSRO, please do get in touch. Once we reopen, we'll be able to take in deposits by appointment so keep an eye on our website and social media for updates.



Time capsule by a 10 year old - a contribution for our archives

Jennifer Mason

WSAS Chairman's Report - July 2020

It is with regret that your Committee had taken the decision to cancel our September Conference of 26th September; the virus has not gone away, many of the potential attendees are in a vulnerable category and social distance rules inhibit the benefits that derive from such events.

At present we intend to run the talk on "*The Women's Land Army*", by Ian Everest at St. Boltoph's Church, Worthing on 31st October subject to the rules that will then apply.

One of my regrets since becoming your Chairman is that I have not been able to meet more of you and discover your interests and projects. The purpose of this "lockdown" edition of our quarterly newsletter is to show that WSAS Members have not been idle and, despite the inevitable closure of the Record Office have managed to keep alive their passions. The great benefit of local history (indeed all hobbies) is to keep the enthusiast engaged and, as I'll illustrate later, the great privilege that the contemporary local historian enjoys is the richness of resource that can be accessed through the internet. I am grateful to our contributors even if now, a little frustrated at not being able to follow up some of the many ideas that are suggested.

It is a pleasure to record, on your behalf, congratulations to Caroline Adams as the winner of the short articles award 2020 by the British Association for Local History [BALH], for her article "*The Influence of the early modern gentleman on the changing landscape of West Sussex*" In making the award the judges commented that the article "*is a readable and welcome introduction to a topic which could be researched in other counties.*". The article appeared in our own journal, *West Sussex History* No. 87, Autumn 2019, so we may also extend the congratulations to the editor, Helen Whittle. A worthy award that resonates with the Object of our society, "to advance the education of the public in the history of West Sussex."

It is worthwhile looking at the BALH website balh.org.uk for a national context and stimulation, see for, example, Dr. Andrew Jackson's presentation on 'The "Spanish" Influenza Epidemic 1918-19'.

Amongst the other resources I have found of value during "lockdown" is the celebration of the Record Office collections from 780AD to the present day, if you haven't done so it is well worthwhile to make a coffee and enjoy browsing through westsussexrecordofficeblog.com/westsussexunwrapped. Maybe finish your coffee before reading Mr Tom Cochrane's account of the treatment of burns at Queen Victoria Hospital in East Grinstead.

Remember the [A-Z of electronic resources](#) on the West Sussex Library website. Through the latter, and your library card, you have access to the Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford English Dictionary, the Times Digital Archive, Who's Who and Who was Who, and much more. I should warn you, browsing through "Past Pictures" of West Sussex will devour your time as will The Illustrated London News or The London Gazette.

Darryl Lundy is a self-confessed "somewhat eccentric" and has developed over 17 years an extensive database of surnames that is much wider than his original intent to "capture in one place all of the members of the inter-connected families of the British peerage". It's free and can be accessed at thepeerage.com

Histpop histpop.org provides online access to the complete British population reports for Britain and Ireland from 1801 to 1937, invaluable should you wish to know the size of a community in which you are interested.

Most of you will share my alarm that The Sussex Archaeological Society is somewhat precarious and its properties, including Fishbourne Roman Palace, Michelham Priory House, Lewes Castle and Marlipins Museum, are at risk of permanent closure. Next year we should be celebrating 175th anniversary of its foundation on Thursday 18 June 1846. The SAS has set itself an ambitious, but necessary target of £1m, with historian Tom Holland as its patron – if you are able, you might consider donating, go to sussexpast.co.uk.

Also remember that the Lewes History Group is making available the Sussex Archaeological Collections [SAC] online at leweshistory.org.uk/research-resources/lewes-history-group/sussex-archaeological-collections-digitised-volumes. Vol. 1 (1848) to Vol. 87 (1948) and Vol. 137 (1999) to Vol. 153 (2014) are available, together with the index for volumes 1 – 25 (published in 1874) and volumes 26 – 50 (published in 1914)

Sussex Family History Group, sfhg.org.uk has an extensive range of publications. I make daily use of the ‘hatch, match and despatch’ records for Chichester, settlement certificates for Sussex and have recently bought from SFHG a facsimile reproduction of Mark Anthony Lower’s History of Sussex (1870). This also contains the Index of the first 25 volumes of SAC and an 1864 map of the County. Mr Lower was present at the first meeting of the SAS at Pevensey Castle.

In pursuit of our Object as a Society we pledge to assist the work of the Record Office and “arouse and stimulate interest in historical records and increase awareness of the need for their preservation”. I hope you feel that this edition of our newsletter is in keeping with that intent. Our next newsletter, *Researcher111* will be produced in October. I fear that we still have little opportunity to meet, talk, share and show our current interests. I would like to invite you to make a contribution to our next newsletter, about 1,000 words, not in the style of an article that might be presented to *West Sussex History*, but more in the style of a conversation you might have were we to meet physically. What are you doing, what tracks are you following, where are you stuck, what thoughts are developing? For example, one of our members has transcribed the Will of John Cawley, gentleman of Chichester, who was buried at St. Andrew, Chichester on Thursday 3rd May 1621. John was father to eight daughters with his first wife, his only son, William, was the child of his third wife. Within the Will a family problem is revealed, one of John’s daughters, Elizabeth, had made an unfortunate marriage where she is “*unprovided of any maintenance whereby she is forced (to my greate greefe) to rely, onely uppon me for her dyett and all other mayntenance*”. More of this story might be revealed in October, there is a richness of resource available to us. Even in “lockdown”, our Society must continue to give support to the advance of the history of Sussex, you are part of the means and I encourage you to let us know what you are doing by emailing us at: contact@wsas.co.uk.

Philip Robinson

Record of historical research on The Dean (formerly the Selsey Arms), West Dean

Before Christmas 2019 the new landlady of The Dean pub at West Dean asked me if I would research some of the history of the pub. I first checked Search On-line (the Record Office on-line catalogue, available from the website) and, secondly, I asked a former colleague, archivist Nichola Court, who had local knowledge of the area, if she had any ideas. I followed this up by spending a happy day in the Record Office looking at maps, photographs, directories, quarter sessions records, licensing registers and valuations.

The pub is a Georgian style building with outbuildings and has an interesting extension on the side that at one time constituted the village hall. I started my research with the maps, which is always a good place to begin as maps can often tell you so much and point the way forward. The maps were very interesting and it was possible to see changes to the shape of the building on the different Ordnance Survey maps, looking backwards from 1965 to 1875. The tithe map of 1847 also shows the building and the apportionment that goes with the map lists the building as a public house, giving the names of the owner and occupier at that time.

There were a few photographs taken around the end of the 19th or beginning of the 20th century. One shows a carriage and a cart waiting outside on the front forecourt. It also shows the village hall extension to the side of the pub.

I then turned my attention to licensing registers and Post Office and Kelly's Directories. The Record Office holds licensing registers from 1872-1938 and I was able to trace all the landlords and landladies who were registered throughout the entire period. The directories confirmed the details from the registers and also that the name of the landlord in the 1845 directory was George Humphrey, who was also recorded on the tithe map of 1847.

The Quarter Sessions records are only partially indexed but I found a reference to The Selsey Arms in 1842. In the 1841 Census the "publican" was Elizabeth Wright, age 70.

Finally, I was fascinated by the valuations that I found in the WSRO Additional Manuscript collection. Dated 1874 and 1891 they show the size of the establishment at these dates as they list all the contents of every building in the pub complex. For example, the 1874 valuation of the yard includes '3 fat pigs and an iron trough' and the 1891 valuation of the bar includes '3 iron spittoons'.

The landlady was delighted with this information but wanted to know more about the pub name, 'The Selsey Arms', so I promised to look into this. Then came Christmas, then my month long trip to Australia and then lockdown... However, after discussion with our Chairman, Philip Robinson, I am happy to be able to add the following additional information. The Selsey Arms are those of John Peachey, Groom to the Bedchamber of the Prince of Wales, later George III, who was promoted in 1791 to Master of the Robes and elevated to the Peerage as 1st Baron Selsey in August 1794. His father, Sir John Peachey had acquired West Dean House in 1738 and Lord Selsey employed James Wyatt to extend and enhance the property.

Susan Millard

Networks of influence - power in the parishes

When a cleric takes up a new responsibility for a parish, oaths of obedience to the bishop are taken: in that respect, nothing has changed in the church in nearly 500 years. The cleric is presented by the patron of what is known as the living, and the bishop was and is the line manager. A simple structure possibly, but back in the eighteenth century, following the restoration of the monarchy, things were very different. My doctoral research is concerned with networks of power, as it was exercised in the parishes of western Sussex.

At the start of the period, there was great uncertainty: how should a cleric conduct himself (no female clergy then, of course), what were his responsibilities towards both the church and the house he occupied, and importantly, how should worship be conducted according to the canons and the Book of Common Prayer? Many in the community believed they had an interest, and concerns were often brought before the ecclesiastical courts. The case often started simply, with a charge that the vicarage was "ruinous and decayed" but over time (sometimes years), this would escalate, the conduct of worship challenged, and the cleric's morals called into question. Many people, from bishops and archdeacons, patrons and churchwardens on the one hand, and fellow clerics and other witnesses would contribute to networks of influence in a case, as each endeavoured to exert their own power.

Establishing networks of influence requires working through a vast range of documents available in the Record Office: obvious starting points are Court Act Books, which record cases as they come before the Consistory Court. Some cases are brought by patrons, but more commonly the churchwardens present their concerns initially. Some take their responsibilities very seriously, to the extent that they attend church with copies of the canons and the Book of Common Prayer tucked in their pockets so that they can check if the vicar is obeying the rules to the letter. (The canons, revised from time to time and which the clergyman has promised to obey, control the detail of public worship.)

Act Books are supported by deposition and detection records, including a range of witness statements, giving local parishioners a voice. The trail leads to other records such as Quarter Sessions and Estate archives such as Cowdray, Petworth and Goodwood, all contributing to a different network, this time of evidence

Later in the period, the emphasis shifts to concerns about property and reserved pews, absentee clerics, and parishes held in plurality. However, the clergyman often fought back - he had his own networks of influence ranging from his patron, through fellow clergy to sympathetic parishioners. Although official papers record the case for the prosecution, several clerics managed to record their situation for posterity, not just through diaries and correspondence, but by annotations within the baptism, marriage and burial records of their church, knowing that these registers would survive, and their thoughts influence future generations.

Rev. Linda Robertson

Just a Minute...

For anyone researching the history of Chichester from the late 17th century to 1974, the first port of call has to be the Corporation minute books held in the Chichester City archive at WSRO. They provide a broad picture of the city of the time, including who was running it, current affairs, public works, town planning and finances. From the mid-19th century the minutes are more detailed and there are separate books for the various committees, but earlier ones are written into single volumes and often tantalisingly brief, leaving you thirsting for more information. For this you have look for other sources and one such, for the period 1787 to 1828, is the Journals of John Marsh¹.

John Marsh moved to Chichester in 1787 as a wealthy non-practising barrister whose private means enabled him to live the life of a dilettante and take an active role in the cultural life of the city. He refused to become a councillor, but sometimes attended council meetings as an observer and wrote up the proceedings in great detail in his journal. Marsh had a much better eye for detail than the Town Clerk!

My favourite demonstration of this concerns the scrap over the provision of improved lighting in the Assembly Room in 1799. Marsh noted that the room had '*hitherto been very badly lighted*' and having subscribed to new chandeliers he attended a special council meeting on 17 September at which the estimates therefor were reviewed. In his lengthy account of the meeting he recorded the heated debate over whether there should be two large lustres down the centre of the room, or four smaller ones, placed two and two either side so as to leave a clear view to the organ beyond. Marsh favoured the latter option but found strong opposition to it. The Mayor, tactfully thinking that the Duke of Richmond as High Steward of the Corporation should be consulted, had sent the options to Goodwood, but His Grace opposed the idea of any sort of suspended lights, preferring instead ones attached to the wall. He stated that he would subscribe 10 guineas - but only on the condition that wall lights were provided.

The Duke did not attend the meeting, and in his absence it was decided to opt for two chandeliers and this decision, plus the list of subscribers, was conveyed to him. He obviously took umbrage for, as Marsh records: '*...someone, as the list lay at the bank afterw'ds, struck out his Grace's name who thus saved his 10.gu's.*'

If you turn to the relevant Corporation Minute book² you find – nothing! Not only is the meeting of 17 September not recorded therein, there is no reference to its outcome being reported at any subsequent meeting either. Seemingly, to avoid alienating the Duke, the Mayor decided to draw a discreet veil over the whole issue; an early example of 'airbrushing' perhaps. Had it not been for John Marsh this episode would have been lost to future historians.

Alan H J Green

¹ *History of my Private Life*, the complete journals of John Marsh, 1752-1828. The original is the Huntington Library in the USA but fortunately they can be consulted on microfilm at WSRO (MF 1165-70 and 1384-5)

² WSRO C/3, Chichester Common Council Minute Book, 1783-1826

Composite Parish Registers

Being in lockdown and missing the record office very much, I was musing on which records I enjoy the most. Coming out somewhere near the top are the composite parish registers. 'Composite' in this case means that the baptisms, marriages and burials are all in together, often on the same page. Unfortunately these registers have been replaced for search room use by microfilm or fiche because of the sheer numbers of people who would be handling them otherwise, but there is a project underway to digitise them, and then people will have access to what the volume looked like - often they have lovely parchment covers.

These registers for the most part were probably fair copies, and one imagines the parish clerk having to find all his notes, memoranda and bits of paper as he wrote it up once a month or less frequently. A change of clerk might mean that the entries suddenly turn neat and easy to read, or conversely that the pages become a spider's web of untidy scrawl, jumping from date to date wildly. Sometimes pages have huge blank spaces, where entries were evidently going to be copied in but it just didn't happen. Sitting down with a register and really spending some time on it brings the parish congregation to life.

As the days, months, years and centuries passed, the people of these parishes, living their lives in West Sussex have much in common with their 21st century descendants – yes, even during a pandemic. Just taking one parish register for an example, that of St Peter the Great in Chichester (par 44/1/1/1) gives us an insight to daily lives for our ancestors.

Sometimes pages will be taken up with burials; for example the parish register for 1650 has a devastating page where child after child has been buried over the space of 18 months. Was this a plague year? Or normal for a city of the size of Chichester when most people lost half the children they gave birth to? Did the clerk write child burials on a separate page? Either way the starkness of the entries speaks of dreadful suffering (and don't fall for the myth that people of the past didn't care as much as we do now).

The same parish register has four entries for the burials of four soldiers, who died one by one from 30 November to 2 December 1654. What was going on? Were they billeted in the town and ate their landlady's fish dish one evening?

Happier times come through as well: Marie and Mildred Light, 'being Twynnes' were baptised in August 1630. William Juxon, who became Bishop of London and then Archbishop of Canterbury, was baptised as an infant on 16 October 1624. Ink sits on top of parchment, rather than sinking in as it does for paper, so many hands turning the pages over the centuries have rubbed away the second half of the word October.

Amongst the baptisms for 1670 there is a big entry for the baptism of the clerk's own daughter Jane – which names his wife, also Jane, as well, unlike any other entry then. John [-] was so excited he put his own family in large letters and everyone else in smaller text.

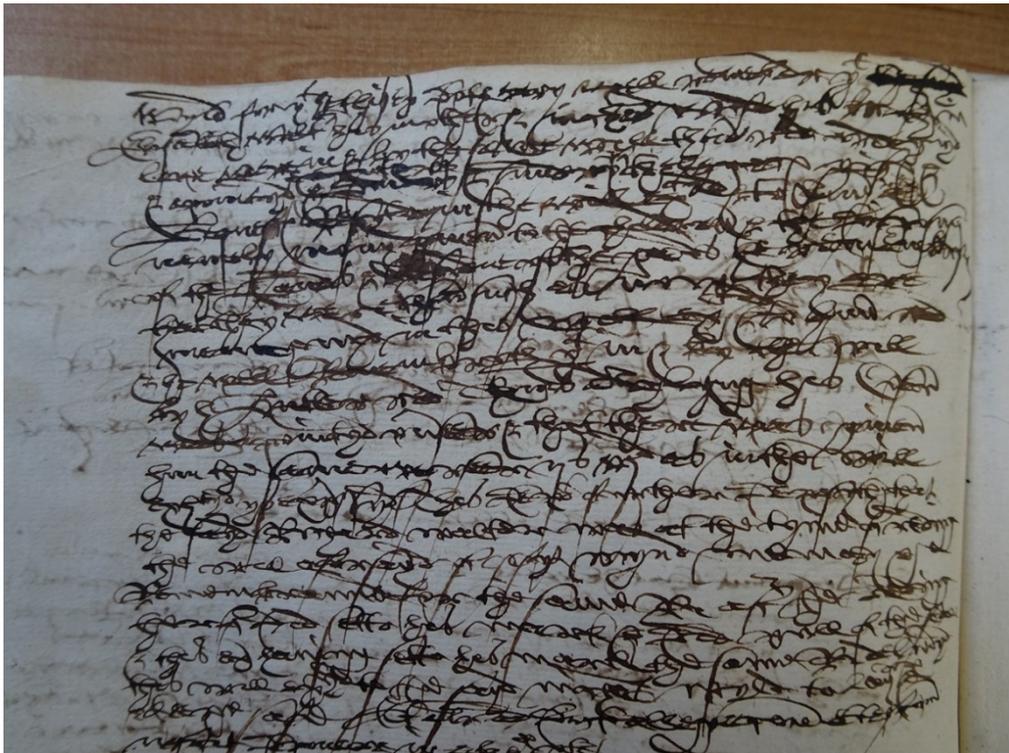
There are lots of other things in the volumes as well which my word count won't let me write about: accounts, doodles, scribbling – they are real treasures for our delight.

Dr. Caroline J. Adams

Chichester Consistory Court Depositions

On behalf of the diocese the West Sussex Record Office holds a substantial archive relating to Chichester Cathedral's consistory court. The holding includes a long run, from 1556 to 1694, of depositions by witnesses submitted to the Chichester archdeaconry court, whose jurisdiction at that period covered disputes about tithes, wills, matrimonial matters, defamation, and a few about other church matters.

The depositions were written by hand on paper, bound into parchment covered volumes of several years' cases. In some periods one scribe wrote practically all the material, whilst at others several scribes contributed. The quality of their handwriting varies from easily legible to difficult. About 20% of a typical passage is in Latin, the rest in English.



In 2017 the Sussex Record Society (SRS) published Peter Wilkinson's book about the court, which contained the depositions for cases from 1603 to 1608. Since then two other transcribers have been producing verbatim versions of the manuscripts, one working backwards from 1603, the other forwards, whilst as part of the same project the University of Mid Sweden has transcribed the earliest volume. So far the SRS has published two more of these volumes on its website, meaning that all 588 depositions from 1599 to 1611 are now on-line; more will follow later this year. All these publications are indexed, and searchable.

The texts follow a standard structure, beginning with a definition of the dispute, and then a series of statements by the witnesses, each preceded by a short biography in Latin. The depositions comprise answers to questions put by the defendant or the plaintiff.

In the 1599 to 1611 period only 12% of the witnesses, but over a third of the plaintiffs, were women. In the Mantle case from 1600 husband and wife were the plaintiff and defendant respectively, Oliver Mantle wanting satisfaction after his wife was found by him and his neighbour in bed with her lover whilst believing her husband to have been away on

business.

A tithe dispute between the parishes of neighbouring Eartham and Upwaltham kept returning to the court, the fundamental cause being differing interpretations of the parish boundary. During at least six cases the vicars or their nominees brought forward so many present and former parishioners that there can have been few left in those villages who had not testified.

The corpus of published depositions is building into an important source of local history and church history. The manuscripts have even produced some previously unrecorded Early Modern English words. There are large numbers of place names, including those of fields, farms and mills, as well as some valuable accounts of Tudor iron works and parish perambulation routes. At least 1645 separate people are mentioned in the three volumes published by the SRS to date. The identities of the witnesses are enriched by the short biographies, and family relationships are often either explicit or can be inferred with care.

Kim Fleming

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WSRO and the Military Historian

Because it contains the archive of the Royal Sussex Regiment, the West Sussex Record Office (WSRO) is a treasure house for any researcher interested in how one English county, and its county regiment, have contributed over the years to the defence of these islands and the prosecution of British interests around the world. The value of the archive will be further enhanced if the forthcoming NLHF bid for the Sussex Military Heritage Project is successful, as it deserves to be.

Two essential publications with which the researcher needs to be armed are G.D. Martineau, [A History of the Royal Sussex Regiment](#) (Chichester, 1953) and A.E. Readman, [Records of The Royal Sussex Regiment: A Catalogue](#) (Chichester, 1985). Between them, these two books provide a gateway to one of the most comprehensive and well-organised county regimental archives in the country.

The material catalogued in Alan Readman's book were originally deposited in WSRO in 1979-80 by the Royal Sussex Regiment Museum Trust. The collection comprises documents, photographs, audio-visual records and printed works. The documents derive from two sources: official documents and battalion war diaries; and personal records, such as diaries, letters and service papers. Some 6,800 photographs, mainly the personal collections of former soldiers, are included, together with film and recordings. The printed works include regimental journals, military histories and biographies, and reference books.

The Regiment was originally raised, as the 35th Regiment of Foot, in Belfast in 1701. It was disbanded in 1966, when it was amalgamated with four other South East county regiments to form The Queen's Regiment. However, it retains an active Regimental Association, which has

played a key role in ensuring the safeguarding the archival and material heritage of the Royal Sussex Regiment.

In its 265-year history, the Regiment served in the War of the Spanish Succession, 1702-1710; the Seven Years War, 1756-1763; the American War of Independence, 1776-1781; the Napoleonic Wars, 1793-1815; the Indian Mutiny, 1857; the South African War, 1899-1902; the First World War, 1914-1918; the Second World War, 1939-1945; and in other conflicts during the 20th Century.

The collection includes papers relating to the Regiment's involvement in the North American campaign in the Seven Years War and in particular to the capture of Quebec by General Wolfe in September 1759. In this engagement, the Regiment overthrew the French Roussillon Regiment, from which they acquired the white Roussillon plume, which was to be incorporated in their own badge. Roussillon was also taken as the name of the barracks in Chichester.

The Napoleonic Wars are illustrated by, among many other documents, the diary of Captain Thomas King, who served in the Mediterranean, as did Lieutenant John Biggs Hildebrand, whose papers are in the archive. Having trained at the barracks in Chichester, he served in the Mediterranean and, following Napoleon's escape from Elba, he served as Acting Adjutant in the Waterloo campaign. The Regiment was awarded the Waterloo Medal for its part in the subsequent Battle.

The material in the archive relating to the 19th and 20th Centuries is, if anything, even richer than the earlier material illustrated here. Of particular interest to the military historian are papers relating to the service of CSM Nelson Victor Carter VC, one of the few Sussex men to win the Victoria Cross in the First World War, and the papers of General Lashmer Gordon Whistler relating to his command of the 133rd and 131st Infantry Brigades in North Africa and Italy, and the 3rd Infantry Division in France and Germany during the Second World War.

Whatever the interests of the military historian, the relevant archives held in WSRO are a source of wonder and delight, and the staff who look after them so carefully are always ready and able to help researchers find their way around.

Dr. John Godfrey

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