

The Researcher



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

Note:

As from January 2023 we will distribute The Researcher by email.

Postal copies will only be sent to:

those of you without email;

libraries and other affiliated organisations, such as The British Association for Local History.

COUNTY ARCHIVIST'S UPDATE

HONRESFIELD LIBRARY SAVED FOR THE NATION

In 2021 a major fundraising campaign was launched by the Friends of the National Libraries (FNL) to acquire the Honresfield Library for the nation. This extensive library, which was set up in the late 19th century by William Law, a Rochdale mill owner, contained over 1400 books including manuscripts by the Brontës, Jane Austen, Robert Burns and Sir Walter Scott. It had been largely inaccessible for the eighty years before it was put up for sale at Sotheby's in July last year. The sale was postponed and in the space of five months over £15 million was raised from numerous donors including a £4 million grant from the National Heritage Memorial Fund. The principal benefactor was the American-British investor and philanthropist Leonard Blavatnik, who donated half the purchase price by match funding the £7.5m sum raised by the consortium. The collection has been renamed the Blavatnik Honresfield Library in recognition of his donation.

Following the successful campaign and acquisition the FNL has been transferring the contents of the library to 68 public institutions across the UK to ensure that the collections remain in the public domain. As part of this redistribution West Sussex Record Office has just received a collection of correspondence belonging to William Cowper

FORTHCOMING EVENTS:

SATURDAY
29TH OCTOBER:
WSAS TALK
1.30 for 2.pm

Grahame Joseph
'AMBERLEY ARTISTS'
Church Hall,
Church Street,
Amberley, BN18 9ND

SATURDAY
19TH NOVEMBER 2.pm
WSAS TALK
Chris Hare
'HILAIRE BELLOC, THE
MAN, HIS WRITINGS
AND HIS LEGACY'
Coronation Hall,
Reynolds Lane, **Slindon**
BN18 0QZ

SATURDAY
10TH DECEMBER
WSAS CHRISTMAS
GET TOGETHER
10:30 – 12:30
WSRO

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including a letter to William Hayley in November 1792. The Record Office already holds a collection of William Hayley's correspondence and manuscript poems, 1784-1811 (WSRO Add Mss 18577-18585) including a letter from Cowper to Hayley in March 1792 and a copy of Hayley's sonnet on Cowper (WSRO Add Mss 13363/37A&B). We are therefore delighted to receive this donation from such a prestigious collection and hugely grateful to the FNL, Leonard Blavatnik and all of the donors for making this possible.

With the successful conclusion of our Transatlantic Ties Project we are now looking forward to the start of our new projects. Jo McConville, our Transatlantic Ties Archivist, is now embarking on her work as Digital Preservation Archivist and Alice Millard, whom many of you will know from her role in the Search Room and her work as our Research Assistant, has just been appointed as our New Jerusalem's Project Archivist. Alice has been studying for her postgraduate diploma in archives and records management at the University of Dundee, which she passed this year with distinction. We are therefore delighted that she will be staying on with us to work on the Freddie Laker Archive and the archives of Crawley New Town Development Corporation over the next two years.

Our Tuesday Talks are continuing with Andy Saunders sharing his extensive knowledge of the Battle of Britain and its impact over West Sussex on 25 October and Bill Gage returning on 29 November to tell us about the Rails to Midhurst. For Explore Your Archive Week on Monday 28 November we will be opening our doors to anyone who would like an introduction to the Searchroom or for those who feel they would like a refresher after all the disruptions of the past two years. In the New Year we will be restarting our popular Coffee Time Workshops with a programme of Wednesday sessions on a wide range of sources.

We will also be resuming our WSAS Christmas Get Together at the Record Office on 10 December, an event that sadly had to be cancelled during the pandemic. I am really looking forward to seeing you all again and having the opportunity to show you some of the archives that we have taken in over the last two years including those that WSAS has helped to purchase and of course our donation from the Blavatnik Honresfield Library.

Wendy Walker

WSAS Committee

| | | | |
|------------------------|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|
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| <i>Wendy Walker</i> | <i>County Archivist</i> | | |

All contactable using: contact@wsas.co.uk

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

Facebook: [West Sussex Archives Society](https://www.facebook.com/WestSussexArchivesSociety) | Instagram: [@westsussexarchivessociety](https://www.instagram.com/westsussexarchivessociety)



William Cowper

Born 15th November 1731 Berkhamsted Died 25th April 1800 East Dereham

Image donated to WSRO from the Blavatnik Honresfield Library
by the Friends of the National Libraries, 2022

Aspects of the Wealden Landscape and Community

In September WSAS members were given a reminder of the importance of landscape in revealing the stories of communities, by a professional archivist, Heather Warne. Her text was Wivelsfield, two and a half miles south of Haywards Heath, sitting at the watershed of the river Adur flowing west to Shoreham, and the Ouse, reaching the coast at Newhaven; a watershed acknowledged in the name of the extant farm, Clewewaters.

Heather provided an example of the complexity of landholding and drew out some of the consequences of this in ways that may surprise. Wivelsfield is not listed in the Domesday survey of Sussex in 1086. It is known to have been a settlement before then as in 765/77, a Saxon king, Aldwulf/Ealdwulf, had been petitioned to grant land on which to build a monastery. The charter defines boundaries, remnants of which may still be seen, *'These are the woodlands of Wivelsfield, firstly at Hampel's pool and at Friday's east, so to the long stream, between the two Wivelsfields, west thence to the Henfield stream.'* The two Wivelsfields are the settlement close to the church and that to the east, Wivelsfield Green.

Wivelsfield is framed by a long ridge to the north where people occupied natural clearings and established their homesteads. Over time owners might have extended their rights through exchanges, negotiations or expropriation, backed, if necessary, by force. This early occupation pre-dated the manorial overlordship and resulted in a patchwork of holdings that became customary. Ultimately all was owned by the King and much of Wivelsfield lay in the rape of Lewes, given by William I to William de Warenne, who was also given land in Yorkshire. Manors were distributed to lesser lords and ecclesiastical authorities, such as Lewes Priory. Over time there developed a kaleidoscopic pattern of ownership as different interests, ambitions, and needs sought ownership of resources; meadow land for arable and grazing, woodland, and commons, each carrying different obligations and conferring different rights.

Wivelsfield was part of the Royal manor of Ditchling, which with Arlington and Washington were some of the largest settlements in the rape, not to be replaced by Lewes until late Saxon periods. The church in Wivelsfield began as a daughter church of that in Ditchling until it became a parish in its own right, in the thirteenth century.

The changing patterns of ownership, the rise and fall of manors and absence of dominant lordships were beneficial to the spread of religious non-conformity. It was interesting to note that Selina, Countess of Huntingdon (1707 -91) leased Otehall in the west of the parish. The countess was the daughter of Washington Shirley, a relative of William Shirley who had inherited Otehall through his mother. The countess founded Ote Chapel in 1778 and erected the building, that still stands, in 1780.

Heather provided a richly woven tapestry of the interlinks between settlements and development as the community benefited from and initiated agriculture improvements and diversified into crafts associated with brick production and with tanning. A tapestry woven from a close scrutiny of the landscape and enriched through standard archival sources such as building plans, inventories and wills. WSAS members received a comprehensive understanding of a fascinating settlement in the Sussex weald.

Our thanks to Heather for her encyclopedic knowledge of Wivelsfield and the weald and our thanks to Wivelsfield Historical Society for the delicious home-baked cakes and welcome cup of tea.

Philip Robinson

See; Barker, Eric, (1947) *Sussex Anglo-Saxon Charters*, Sussex Archaeological Collections, Vol. 86, p. 87

Local History News from across West Sussex

Storrington & District Museum November 4th 2022 at 2.30 p.m.

Venue: Old School, School Lane, Storrington RH20 4LL.

Members £6. Non Members £8. All welcome

Gardens of South East England Talk by Frances Farrer-Brown

Two thousand years of gardening! Delightful illustrations of some of the country's most beautiful gardens plus stories about where some of our most popular plants came from and who collected them. Find out about the greatest garden designers and what inspired them. A talk with slides.

Frances Farrer-Brown was born and brought up on a mixed farm. Rural affairs, the countryside, gardens, history and literature have always been an abiding interest.

Frances is a qualified nurse, and has been married to David, a retired GP, for over thirty years. They met while both were training at St Thomas' Hospital in London, and have two grown up children. Frances and David run a very successful part-time bed and breakfast business from the family home in West Sussex.

In addition to and complementing her skills as a public speaker, in 1999 Frances became a qualified and registered Blue Badge Guide. As a Blue Badge Guide Frances covers the South East, namely Kent, Surrey & Sussex as well as the East End of London for the 2012 Olympics. Her job entails walking tours, coach tours, guided walks around towns & villages, museums etc & lecturing.

From 76 years ago

One of our members, John Wells, came across an item in The Chichester and Southdown Observer, March 2nd 1946 (see: britishnewspaperarchives.co.uk)

It is a report of a talk entitled 'The Protection of English Archives' given by Hilary Jenkinson, secretary to the British Records Society. Sir Hilary Jenkinson was one of the founding fathers of archival theory and practice in this country. His seminal *A Manual of Archive Administration* was first published in 1922 (second edition 1937, reissued 1965) and obligatory reading for all would be archivists. He worked at the Public Record Office, becoming Deputy Keeper in 1947-1954. He was awarded a CBE in 1943 and was knighted in 1949.

Interestingly he reported, "England lacked at present the means of preservation of archives as adopted in other countries, for example in France, where not only were there national archives, but an inspectorate of local and private archives".

The piece ends with Mr. H. L. Baxendale stating that, "special provisions for the housing of archives were now being made in Chichester, and it was hoped to appoint a paid archivist".

Snippets

A question from one of our members. Is any member currently working on aspects of the history of Summersdale in Chichester, or know of anyone who is. Reply please to contact@wsas.co.uk

The 1921 Census: disappointment continued

I ended my news item on the 1921 census in *The Researcher* 116 with the 'tongue in cheek' speculation that Findmypast might '*reimburse me for pointing out an error*'. I did not anticipate the extent of errors I would find, running from five to at least ten percent of transcripts. They range from the minor, the egregious to the fanciful. To transcribe Tayler instead of Tyler might be considered an excusable error, unless of course you are interested in the Tyler family (*now corrected by Findmypast, having paid to 'Report an Error*). In 1921 the Chichester workhouse was in Broyle Road, where it had been since 1626, but 21 records were listed as Brayle Road, an egregious error, (*now corrected, after payment*). As to the fanciful; search for Sydney Randle Mons Diplock, a name not without significance for someone born in 1914, son of Alfred Sydney and Maude Diplock but not found in the transcription. There is Sydney Randle Mons Tuppen, born 1914, but no such named person exists on the census record. Neither does Daisy Whilen, nor Herbert Burrell whose ten-year old brother, James Frederick, appears not to have been transcribed at all. To correct errors costs the user £6.00 (£5.40 for those holding a '*professional*' subscription at an annual cost £177.99).

The disappointment continues with incomplete transcriptions, particular in respect of birth places. As an example, almost random in that I have a full transcript of Little London, a Chichester street that I transcribed in the National Archives, 'for free.' I could have used other streets for which I have complete transcriptions. Putting 'Little London' into the Findmypast 'advanced search' for Chichester results in 188 people. The first record returned names '*an unnamed person*.' On viewing the record, as against its transcript, it is clear that Thomas Beacham, who completed the census return, made an error. Against Alfred Cosbelt, he entered '*single*' in the '*Relationship to Head of Household*' column, crossed it out and underneath wrote '*Boarder*.' This is interpreted as an '*unnamed person*.' Alfred does appear in the transcript but as '*Alfred Cosbelt Beacham*' born in Sussex, England. That name is not in the census record and his place of birth, '*Hove Sussex*' is not transcribed. The birthplace of Thomas and Mary Beacham, '*Crick Rugby*,' is clear in the record but is not transcribed. On the first page of the transcriptions made by Findmypast for Little London, there are eight that are incorrect or incomplete out of the twenty listed.

Findmypast is tarnished with omissions and unacceptable errors; a jewel locked within a cage inimical to scholarship frustrating enquiry and discovery. Frustration as in, for example, Ronald Binstead, birth year 1914, birthplace, blank. The record gives the birthplace as 'Earlsfield S.W.' and two other children are listed in the record as 'visitors', Ivy aged 12 years 10 months, with both parents alive, and Mavis, 5 years 9 month, whose father is dead. Searching the census for their parents in East Meon and Chichester, where Ivy and Mavis were born, could be expensive. A Muriel E. W. Hilton's birth was registered in Chichester in the September Quarter 1915, the mother's surname before marriage was Binstead. Could this be Mavis? Where was her mother on 19th June 1921, why is Mavis listed as a visitor and not granddaughter, if that is who she is; an expensive journey through the paywall beckons.

The frustration continues. Ronald Binstead is staying with his grandparents, Frederick and Fanny Binstead. Frederick is a Foreman working for Sadler & Co at East Row, Little London, and Findmypast provides an opportunity to search for others working for the same employer. There are 36 returns for 'Sadler', however, these include 25 who work for Frederick Sadler in East Street, East Row or Little London, 8 people who work for Henry Sadler, Miller at Westhampnett,

Victor Coombes who works for Percy Seaward, a saddler in The Hornet, Chichester, John Sivyer, an agricultural labourer working on Henry Sadler's farm in Westhampnett and John Mathieson an unemployed disabled soldier who once worked for Sadler possibly as a 'stationary engine and crane driver'. The complexity of the 36 was revealed in the National Archives at Kew, 'for free', though that of course does not include the cost of getting to Kew, one of my favourite places to be.

It may be some time before the paywall comes down, when the cage is unlocked, and work can begin to interrogate the treasures captured by the 1921 census. The family, local and social historian, amongst others, will just have to be patient before this precious original source, this jewel can be polished to enhance our understanding of that turbulent second decade of the twentieth century. Such a disappointment unless you happen to be within walking distance of Kew or have a London travel pass.

Philip Robinson

STOP PRESS:

As from 12 October subscribers to Findmypast Premium will have unlimited access to the 1921 Census—good news indeed.

Forthcoming events at the Record Office

Tuesday talks

WSAS members are invited to our ongoing series of Tuesday talks, starting at 7pm. The next talk is: 29 November 2022: **Rails to Midhurst** by Bill Gage

In the 1860s Midhurst had a population of just 1,500 and yet had two railway stations and was a junction for three railway lines linking the town with Chichester, Pulborough and Petersfield. Come and hear the tales of the rails to Midhurst at an illustrated talk, together with film footage, a photographic display and original documents.

****You can book to attend either in person or online****

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. The programme for **2023** is as follows.

| | |
|------------|--|
| 11 January | How to start your family tree |
| 1 February | Researching the history of your house |
| 1 March | Getting started with Ancestry.co.uk |
| 5 April | Reading old handwriting |
| 3 May | Old photographs: how to identify, date and care for them |
| 7 June | Tracing your army ancestors |
| 5 July | Newspapers for family and local history |

Forthcoming events at the Record Office continued

| | |
|-------------|---|
| 6 September | Getting started with Ancestry.co.uk |
| 4 October | Discovering wills and other probate records |
| 1 November | Researching the history of your house |

Book now!

If you'd like to attend the Tuesday talk **in person**, or one of the workshops, please ring 01243 753602 to book and pay.

To attend the Tuesday talk **online**, for which you don't need any special software, please book on [Eventbrite](#).

Visit www.westsussex.gov.uk/ro and view the 'What's on at the Record Office' page for more details and for helpful links to our talks on [Eventbrite](#).

Monday 28 November - Explore Your Archive Week 2022: introduction to the Searchroom and its resources

For anyone interested in an introduction to our Searchroom and online resources, or for those wanting a refresher.

These free sessions will include:

- a short tour of our Searchroom facilities
- an introduction to our resources on Ancestry.com
- the opportunity to look at some of our favourite records
- the chance to sign up for an Archives Card for future visits

Throughout the day there will be several opportunities to join in this **free** 45-minute introduction to the Record Office.

Booking for slots is essential either by phone on **01243 753602** or by email at **rec-ord.office@westsussex.gov.uk**

2023

Your committee members are working on our Events Programme for next year. Please suggest to us Events or visits that you would find of interest.

At contact@wsas.co.uk

WSAS Events

Amberley Artists: Talk by Grahame Joseph

Saturday 29th October, refreshments available from 1.30, talk starts at 2.00.

Venue: Church Hall, Church Street, Amberley, BN18 9ND

At the turn of the twentieth century, the West Sussex village of Amberley was home to one of the most thriving artist colonies in the country. Local resident, Graeme Joseph, will give a talk on some of the artists who came to live and work in this corner of Sussex. After the talk, Graeme will lead a walk around the village, pointing out some of the houses where these artists lived.

Hilaire Belloc, The Man, His Writings and His Legacy.

Talk by Chris Hare

Saturday 19th November, 2. pm followed by refreshments

Venue: Coronation Hall, Reynolds Lane, Slindon, BN18 0QZ

Hilaire Belloc spent his boyhood in Slindon and the last 48 years of his life in Shipley. His Sussex connections are very strong as was his enduring love for the county.

This talk will delve into the deep sense of place and history that made Belloc the man he was, and the curious combination of religious orthodoxy and pagan sensibility that grounded him during a turbulent life.

He may appear a paradox, yet once understood, his beliefs not only make sense, they also stand the test of time.

Chris will be reading some of Belloc's poems and singing at least a couple of his songs during the talk.

The WSAS Christmas Get Together for members and their guests

Saturday 10th December from 10.30 to 12.30 pm

Venue: WSRO, 3 Orchard Street, Chichester PO19 1DD

Mince pies, coffee, wine, a look at recently acquired documents, short talks on West Sussex history and a chance to ask those questions you have been itching to ask the County Archivist. The event is free, but we need to know the numbers so please complete a booking form.

Talks: During the morning we are going to include three short talks. This worked well before Covid and gave the meeting added interest. We would like to hear from you if you would like to tell us about some aspect of West Sussex history that is a special interest of yours. You do not have to be an expert in this field! Please let us know on the Booking Slip if you would like to offer a short talk and speak to us for **no more than five minutes – less if you like**. The talks are completely informal and there is no need to stand when you speak. The first three offers of talks will be accepted. All those who offered a talk will be informed as to whether their offer was successful or not. If you would rather not offer a short talk, please come anyhow, relax and enjoy the occasion. The more the merrier!
