

The Researcher



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

County Archivist's report

We celebrated the end of another busy year in style with the Record Office Open Day for the 50th anniversary of the West Sussex Archive Society on 25 November. It was lovely to see so many people and to share the day with members who do so much for us in promoting the history of West Sussex and supporting the work that we do.

We were joined by Lord Egremont, the President of WSAS, who cut the birthday cake, and by the High Sheriff, Andy Bliss, both of whom spent time with us in the afternoon talking to staff and members and exploring the displays. A highlight of the day was the opportunity to display some of the many archives that WSAS has helped us to buy over the last 50 years. There were too many to get out in their entirety, but they included an impressive range of documents, maps and photographs dating back over 600 years. We were also joined by the Sussex Family History Group (SFHG) providing advice and guidance to visitors, by Screen Archive South East with an archival film show put together for the occasion, and by the Royal Sussex Regimental Association with a display of their museum collections. We also had displays on our latest projects including Transatlantic Ties. Alice was on hand to talk about the New Jerusalems Project and the archives of Crawley New Town, whilst Chris answered questions about his work surveying HIV/AIDS Archives in repositories and private hands across England and Wales.

At the WSAS Christmas Get Together we were able to show members our very latest acquisition purchased with the aid of grants from WSAS, SFHG, the Friends of the National Libraries and the V&A Purchase Grant Fund. The wartime diary of Hugh de Sélincourt came up for sale through a rare books dealer in Yorkshire. De Sélincourt was an author and journalist, whose archive was gifted to the Record Office in 2010. The archive comprises diaries, manuscripts, typescripts, copies of his published works and reviews. Dating from 1884 to 1951 it covers the majority of de Sélincourt's life, with one later edition of *The Cricket*

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

3 February

**History of Film in
West Sussex**

(at Slindon)

BOOK NOW

9 March

AGM

(at Boxgrove)

BOOK NOW

13 April

The Shelley Family

(at Horsham)

BOOK NOW

**January 2024
ISSUE 124**

Match published in 1980. However the diaries covering 1918, 1924, 1938, March-September 1940, September 1940-October 1942 and October 1942-April 1948 are incomplete (Selincourt 1/1-6).

The diary which we have purchased covers the period September 1939-March 1940 and is dedicated to his lover, the German translator and writer Eva Schumann. The final diary that we already hold is inscribed at the front 'War diary volume IV', suggesting the presence of three previous volumes. It is therefore possible that the diary for Eva is the first one in this series.

Written with fluency and skill, the diary conveys the day-to-day uncertainties and privations of the Phoney War, set against a complicated personal and domestic backdrop. It touches on a number of key themes – the war, which casts a shadow over the diary, his relationship with the absent Eva Schumann, cricket, and de Sélincourt's domestic life. It also contains de Sélincourt's reflections on his friendship with Havelock Ellis and affair with Margaret Sanger, the American birth control activist and educator.

His descriptions of the early stages of the Phoney War include accounts of gas proofing the house and the blackout in London. The reality of war, including seeing German planes on the south coast of England, contrasts with his domestic life, with trips to Worthing, work in the garden, and interactions with his family and pets. The birth of his first grandchild, Phillip, acts as a counterpoint to the destruction and horrors of the war. The diary also offers an insight into the challenges of communicating with loved ones in Germany - de Sélincourt relied on an intermediary in Holland ('Ada') to get letters to and from Eva. Eva herself is an interesting character who translated the work of the Guild of Socialism in Germany before the war ([Translating Guild Socialism: The Case of Eva Schumann \(1889–1967\) – German Historical Institute London Blog \(hypotheses.org\)](https://www.hypotheses.org/10000)).

The range of people and places and the stories that the archives tell us never cease to amaze me. I am looking forward to whatever is found and uncovered in the year ahead and to sharing this with you all. In the meantime do check out our new programme of Tuesday Talks and Coffee Time Workshops. With topics ranging from Ford Madox Ford in West Sussex to Elizabethan Chichester, amateur theatricals and returning to the moon, the West Sussex archives continue to delight and intrigue.

Wendy Walker

WSAS Committee

Carol Brinson

Kim Fleming

Dr John Godfrey

Richard Howell, chairman

Mike Kipling

Leigh Lawson, secretary

Jane Mant, treasurer, membership secretary

Susan Millard

Wendy Walker, county archivist

Helen Whittle, journal editor

All are contactable at: contact@wsas.co.uk

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

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Chairman's Report

Question – What do Lord Godwin, Oaklands Park and the development of the coastal railway in West Sussex all have in common? **A**nswer – they were all subjects for our customary five-minute talks at our Christmas Get-Together held at the Record Office on 9 December, given by Philip Robinson, Alan Green and Tony Wakeford respectively. In many ways they epitomised the breadth of information that can be obtained by researching the archives, the wide areas of interest of our members, and their willingness to share this with others. Our thanks to these stalwarts for their excellent presentations.

The day had started with an amiable gathering of members chatting over coffee and mince pies, before we moved into the Search Room where our County Archivist, Wendy Walker, had laid out some of the documents from the substantial West Hoathly archive and the recently acquired diary of the author, Hugh de Sélincourt, who lived in Storrington, and whose most famous book 'The Cricket Match' encapsulates the joys of pre-war village cricket. These documents had been purchased in 2023 with the assistance of a financial contribution from WSAS, highlighting the important role that WSAS plays in helping to make these documents accessible to all.

The Christmas Get-Together followed hard on the heels of what was undoubtedly one of the highlights of the year when over 160 people visited the Record Office to help celebrate WSAS's 50th birthday. It was a great pleasure to have our President, Lord Egremont, on hand to cut the cake to mark this very special occasion.

On behalf of the Society, I would like to thank Wendy Walker and her team at the Record Office for all their work in helping to make the day such a success. Thanks are also due to all those members who helped by serving teas and coffees or manning the WSAS stand. It was a wonderful team effort, and a day that was clearly enjoyed by all those who attended.

As the year draws to a close I look back on what has been undoubtedly a good year for the Society. We have enjoyed an active programme of events which have been enjoyed by many of our members, we have been kept informed of what has been happening through our newsletter, *The Researcher*, and we have been treated to another excellent edition of our annual journal, *West Sussex History*. Perhaps most importantly, we have assisted the Record Office in purchasing valuable documents for historians of the future. To all those who have helped to bring this about a huge 'Thank you'.

Looking ahead, in the new year we have a number of exciting events to look forward to. On 3 February we have what promises to be a fascinating talk on the history of film in West Sussex by Ellen Cheshire at Slindon. On Saturday 9 March we will be holding our AGM at Boxgrove Village Hall when our guest speaker will be best-selling author, Kate Mosse, whose talk 'Fact or Fiction' will be on how she uses the archives to provide inspiration and historical background for her stories. Kate is an excellent speaker and non members are most welcome to come along in the afternoon to just hear the talk, so do tell your friends. All details are available in this edition of *The Researcher*.

Finally, none of this would be possible without the help and support of the members of the Committee. If you feel you have some time to spare to help the Society by joining the Committee, please give it some thought. Nomination forms can be found on page 4.

This just leaves me to wish all our members a happy and prosperous New Year and hopefully I shall see you at some of our events that we have planned for the year ahead.

Richard Howell

West Sussex Archives Society
50th Annual General Meeting 2024
NOMINATION FORM
COMMITTEE MEMBERS

All positions on the WSAS committee (other than the *ex officio* member) come up for re-election after three years. At the 2024 AGM two of the current members will have completed their three year term. Up to two additional committee places can be considered, and so nominations are now invited for:

Up to four Committee Members.

Committee members are also trustees of WSAS. This year the committee is particularly keen to see nominations from members who have skills in two specific areas:

information technology; and
publicity and marketing.

If you would like to nominate yourself or someone else (having checked that they are willing to stand) as a member of the committee, please complete the form below and send it to the Chairman, Richard Howell, to be received at the West Sussex Record Office by **Saturday 10 February 2024 at the very latest.**

West Sussex Archives Society: AGM 2024

Nomination for Committee Member

Name of Candidate:

Tel. no/e-mail:

Name of Proposer:

Tel. no/e-mail:

Name of Seconder:

Tel. no/e-mail:

Members' survey

As reported in the last edition a survey of members was undertaken in the autumn. Commissioned by the committee the objective was to understand better the preferences, needs and views of members. None of the current committee could recall such a survey ever having been attempted, and all were concerned that the views of those who seldom attended events were little known.

So as to enable those who do not use e-mail to respond and to save anyone having to pay for postage, stamped addressed envelopes were provided. A sample of 1 in 4, selected in sequence from the individual membership spreadsheet, was taken, and all those were sent the survey. Whilst very clear that this was not a statistically valid sample, the committee felt that it would be informative to hear from every one of those who wished to respond. Just over half the sample replied, meaning that overall we heard from about 1 in 8 members.

The tenor of all the responses was supportive of the Society and WSRO, in some cases very warmly so. This was the principal motivation for members having joined, and then staying as members. Both the journal and the newsletter were much appreciated, neither receiving any critical comment. The cost of membership and events was not a problem for any responder; indeed those who commented on value for money all felt satisfied.

The Society's events were much appreciated by those who had attended them recently or longer ago. No member reported that events were unfriendly, though one said they felt "neither welcome nor unwelcome".

Some commented positively on the idea of on-line events, whereas others said that they would not take part in them. Access to events was, or had become, limited for some, either because of poorer health or because lack of access to a car meant that only events close to public transport could be considered.

Specific comments were made on the following additional subjects:

- a/ the range of event types and subjects;
- b/ the process of booking events;
- c/ social media development;
- d/ exchange of research activity news between members;
- e/ members helping at WSRO; and
- f/ more active recruitment of members.

The committee has had a first discussion about the results, and is now developing a response to the views expressed and each of the issues raised by responders. An action plan will be developed and agreed, notified to all members, and monitored by the committee until its completion.

Kim Fleming

Report on Christmas get-together

After wine, coffee and mince pies in the festively decorated Record Office foyer, twenty-six members and guests adjourned to examine some of the material that WSAS donations have helped to buy. County Archivist Wendy Walker introduced the selections she had made. There were six items from the extensive West Hoathly archive, the acquisition and contents of which were described in the July 2023 edition of *The Researcher*. The oldest was a 1560 grant of the rectory, glebe lands and tithes, which mentions Anne of Cleves who owned the property at the time. Two more documents from around the turn of the eighteenth century related to Anna Tidcombe, who married the Attorney-General of Barbados, the West Hoathly estate forming part of her marriage settlement. In her will she granted freedom to three enslaved people. Also on display was a poor rate assessment of 1743, a survey of the parish from 1839, and a manor court book spanning 1700-1923.

Wendy's second choice was a selection of the diaries of Storrington author Hugh de Sélincourt. His entry for Easter Monday 1938 read simply 'Very Cold and cloudy. Went on Downs by Chalk Pit and picked Cowslips'. Eighteen months later he wrote 'No wish to kill Germans, senseless to be slaughtering each other. But there can be no peace with Hitler, Goebbels Goering Himmler Hess and the Gestapo. The sooner these false leaders are disposed of, the sooner will peace come.'

We then heard three five-minute presentations on a most diverse set of local history topics. Past Chairman Philip Robinson took us back to the eleventh century as he told us the tale of Godwin, Earl of Wessex, who according to *Domesday Book* had owned three-quarters of Sussex. Godwin was born in the reign of Aethelred the Unready (better translated as 'the ill-advised'), rose to prominence during the reign of the Viking Cnut from 1015, with whom he allied and thus avoided the fate of other leading Anglo-Saxons, and was influential in the succession crises after Cnut's death, retaining his lands under Edward the Confessor, who married his daughter. His son, Harold II Godwinson, was briefly king in 1066 until an unfortunate encounter with an arrow. Philip is working on a presentation showing the lands Earl Godwin owned in Sussex and to whom the ownership passed after the Conquest.

Next up was Tony Wakeford, whose talk was on the development of the railway across the coastal plain of western Sussex. The first line was laid between Shoreham and Brighton in 1840, with the main purpose of carrying material from Shoreham harbour to Brighton for the construction of the southern end of the London to Brighton line, which itself opened the following year. The coastal line had been extended to Chichester by 1846 and, with branches north to the Downs, south to the coast and west to the Hampshire border, grew to 49 miles in all. It cut a 22 yard wide swathe across the plain, dividing parishes and adding risk due to the many ungated crossings of minor roads and footpaths. Around 300 houses had to be demolished and 800 plots of land subdivided. There had been opposition from both the Duke of Norfolk and the Admiralty. But once completed, parishes competed with each other to have a station. One long-closed station building, at Singleton, was being restored by the West Dean estate. Those wanting to know more can read Tony's paper in the 2023 edition of *West Sussex History*.

Finally, Alan Green has been researching Oaklands Park in Chichester. Up to 1800 this area to the north of the city was open fields. Thereafter James Bennet Freeman, a wealthy lawyer, began

to buy up freeholds, walled the park, and built a house there. Interestingly the tithe map shows a house layout unlike the house today, which is part of the university. Further research revealed that it had been rebuilt in 1860 by James Freeman's son, Humphrey. The census returns show that the house was let out for the rest of the century. In 1912 it was bought by a Colonel Henty, a banker from Worthing. He let out the park for grazing. In 1938 his widow sold the park to the Corporation, which planned to build a sports arena. The war put paid to this, although the idea was only finally dropped in 1957. In 1961 part was leased to Leslie Evershed Martin on which to build the Festival Theatre. At the south-east corner of the park was a gravel pit known as Dell Hole. It was filled in, eliminating drainage and contributing to the floods often seen at the end of College Lane today. Alan intends to publish his findings as a New Chichester Paper.

Mike Kipling

Keeping you informed over the years

Some form of newsletter has been produced for members, and to entice new ones, since WSAS was founded 50 years ago. The first newsletter was issued in March 1974 and was called "The Quarterly Bulletin". It was soon joined by the prestigious "West Sussex History" Journal, at first in a combined publication, then separately. Copies of all are available at the Record Office, and most are also in the Weald & Downland Museum Library*.

Newsletters have always embraced social events, workshops, fundraising, pieces written by members, Record Office activities and acquisitions and more. Here are some highlights, mainly about how WSAS has helped with purchases.

1974

In view of the continuing crisis in the power industry and the need to restrict the use of electricity, the Committee has reluctantly decided to postpone the Inaugural Dinner from Saturday 23 March.

The Society is launching an appeal for the purchase for West Sussex of the Dallaway Papers

Membership has increased rapidly since the beginning of the year and is now approaching 200. Among these are 2 junior members who could do with some more young company!

1976

A valuable historical map showing boundaries of estates in the Singleton area was presented by the Society to Mr Buckle, Vice Chairman of the West Sussex County Council, for the County Archives Office.

1977

West Sussex Archives Society have been formally challenged by Bishop Carleton's XI (male members of the staff of the West Sussex Record Office and friends) to a cricket match.

1990

the hard work that members have put into fund-raising projects paid dividends in recent purchases for the Record Office, including our earliest playbill, our earliest piece of Sussex ephemeral printing.

Does anyone know where the Play-House was in Midhurst in 1770?

For the Benefit
OF
Mrs. and Miss FAIRBAIRN.
By the Canterbury Company of Comedians.

AT THE
PLAY-HOUSE in Midhurst,
On Thursday the 22 d. Instant 1770, will be presented a
Comedy call'd

**The INCONSTANT;
OR THE WAY TO WIN HIM.**

<p>OLD MIRABEL, Young MIRABEL, DURETETE, DUGARD, PETIT, BRAVO, ORIANA, BISARRE, LAMORCE, LADY,</p>	<p>Mr. BROGAS. Mr. SMITH. Mr. TASKER. Miss LATHROPE. Mr. GAMMERFORD. Mr. FOOTE. Mrs. FOOTE. Mrs. SMITH. Miss FAIRBAIRN. Mrs. FAIRBAIRN.</p>
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To which will be added
The Devil to Pay.
With DANCING.
††† The Doors to be open'd at 6 and to begin exactly at 7 o'Clock.
PIT, is 6d. GALL. 1s.
TICKETS to be had at the Principal Inns and at their Lodgings.

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1991 Fundraising to purchase a microfilm version of the 1891 census for West Sussex (below left).

WEST SUSSEX ARCHIVES SOCIETY
WINTER NEWSLETTER, 1991

NEW YEAR GREETINGS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I am looking forward to seeing many of you at future meetings. In the meantime a Happy New year to all WSAS members and to all the staff at WSRO.
Janet Pennington

PEOPLE COUNT - WEST SUSSEX 1600-1900

Our annual day conference at Fittleworth Old Rectory will be about people, appropriate in this year of the release of the 1891 census on microfilm, and we have collected some excellent speakers. Kim Leslie (Education Officer at WSRO) will begin the day with a talk 'The Victorian Census: Opportunities for Historians' and Phil Lucas, Brian Taylor, Karen Lamberry and Mick Henry (members of the Sussex Family History Group) will follow with 'The Census and the Family Historian.'

After lunch Joyce Sleight, MA, Dip.Loc.Hist. will give a short talk entitled 'Out of the Parish Chest.' Dr Annabel Palmer (formerly Hughes, Wealden Buildings Study group) will explain 'How to place seventeenth century people in houses' and finally Alan Readman (Assistant Archivist, WSRO) will show the film 'For the Strength of the Hills' and describe the work of the Genealogical Society at Salt Lake City. Book quickly as numbers are limited.

FISHBOURNE MONEY LAUNCHES 1891 CENSUS FUND

WSAS fundraising this year will be for the microfilm of the 1891 Census Returns for WSRO, and the Fishbourne Local History Society, now sadly disbanded, has already given £81 towards our £500 target. A raffle at meetings throughout the year will begin in February, and our main fundraising event will be a lunchtime barbeque at Fittleworth on Sat 31 August, with cake and bottle stalls.

WEST SUSSEX ARCHIVES SOCIETY
Newsletter
No. 14 April 1998

Editorial

You will, I hope, notice that the Newsletter is in a very different format this month. This is part of some changes that your committee is making, in order to make the Newsletter both more attractive and more useful to you. I hope you like the changes, and find that this format is more attractive and approachable.

The change in format also sees a change in editor for the Newsletter. Peter Donohue has worked on both the journal West Sussex History and the Newsletter for many years, and I am sure members will wish me to express our appreciation here for all his hard work. It's not easy! Peter will remain Editor of West Sussex History, but I am taking over the editorship of the Newsletter. At this point I should like to say that if you think you can do better, I would be delighted to hear from you, and would welcome you with open arms.

My name is Caroline Adams, and I am Senior Archivist (Outreach) at the Record Office, and I am involved in the activities and "news" at the Record Office. If you think the Newsletter is too much Record Office, and not enough WSAS, this is a consequence of having a number of staff at the Record Office take over one of the primary jobs on the committee. The Newsletter is supposed to be by our members for our members, but Peter has told me how little copy comes in to him. There are 380 of you out there! Even if each of you only writes 100 words - for example, just one of the meetings - or on some research you or a friend is doing - or write in with an enquiry another member might be able to answer that would still fill 9 years' of Newsletters, without a mention from the Record Office! Please write and don't leave it all to an over-worked member of staff, and WSAS committee. All copy should be accompanied by a bar of chocolate.

Caroline Adams
West Sussex Record Office, County Hall,
Chichester West Sussex PO19 1RN; tel:
(01243 53391)

Society News

The post of Chairman

I've mentioned how there was much discussion that the use of these cards would lead to a decline in standards. Women were voiced that there would be a lowering of moral standards as there would be no privacy of communication; that they would ruin letter-writing skills and the receiver could be insulted that they were not worthy of a "paper" letter. It was not until William Gadsdon, admitted using them that they gained respectability.

Steve explained how the first picture postcard was produced in 1872 but had to be sent in an envelope until 1904.

The Box 'We increased sales and the size was increased to the standard modern size of 5 1/2 x 3 1/2."

He related how at the Paris exhibition there were many new postcards for sale and they could be specially postmarked from the top of the Eiffel Tower. At the same exhibition Police raided the postcard sellers and seized 80 thousand 'obscene' cards of French actresses photographed in their underwear. The result was an increase in visitors and postcard sales!

We were told about the development of the oval and format of picture postcards. Originally any message you written around the white border of the picture, and it was only later in 1902 that the sender allowed to use half of the back of the card for a message alongside the address. We were given examples of the wide range of cards that were available, and told about the influence of the First and Second World Wars, and even like the Olympic games.

Steve also showed slides of some of the messages written on the backs of cards he has collected, and finished with some examples of delayed deliveries of 'lost' postcards.

Steve Harris was a very entertaining speaker, giving a humorous and instructive lecture, which led to a lively session of questions before the proceedings were brought to a close.

* Photo: Garland Collection

1998 The newsletter appeared in a very different format, with a Garland photo (above right).

2001 The Society contributed a total of £1004.50 towards an Oral History Project for the Millennium. A grant of £100 was also made to the Record Office for the purchase of books.

2010 The newsletter was "re-vitalised" and given the title 'The Researcher' used to this day. All subsequent copies are on the wsas.co.uk website.

Carol Brinson

*If you have spare copies of some of the newsletters (not "West Sussex History") from 1992-2009 please let me know as we would love to complete the set at the Museum. I have a vested interest because I am a volunteer in the Library. Email library1@wealddown.co.uk.

**Please also let me know if you can help with the Midhurst play-house.

A Nature Notebook of the Sussex Downs

A recent addition to the archive at WSRO is a nature notebook, written in the early 1900s, which offers a fascinating glimpse of the natural world on the Sussex downland before changes in biodiversity began to affect the landscape. This small hardback notebook, filled with diary entries and drawings, was kept by Cornelia Cracknell, the co-principal of a gardening school for women at the Old Rectory in Clapham on the Downs near Worthing.

In the late 1800s a number of private gardening schools sprang up across the country, providing opportunities for young women to gain qualifications and enter a profession that had primarily been the domain of men. The Glynde School for Lady Gardeners in Sussex was operated by Frances Wolseley, and through Wolseley's influence achieved considerable renown. The history of the Clapham School of Gardening and Nature Study is less well-known, but it operated from 1912 until 1937, a considerable length of time for a private gardening school. Cornelia Cracknell had been a teacher at a school in Norwich before she moved to Sussex; with another teacher, Florence Collins, she set up the school at the Old Rectory in the centre of Clapham village. Cornelia, who also went by the name of Nancy, taught gardening and Florence was the teacher of nature study.

Cornelia Cracknell in the garden of The Old Rectory, c1912



Cornelia grew up surrounded by fields and farmland which might have been why she chose the Sussex downland for her gardening school. The youngest of seven children, she was born in 1880 at Valley Farm in Wickham Market, Suffolk. Her father, John, farmed 380 acres of land and lived into his seventies, but her mother, Emma, died at the age of 47 when Cornelia was just four years old. Her brother and her five sisters stayed close to the area around Wickham Market, marrying, bringing up their families and working on local farms. While census returns and registers of births and deaths reveal something of this history, we can only speculate as to why Cornelia imagined a very different life for herself at the turn of a new century, becoming a teacher and then taking the ambitious step of opening a school for gardening, first in Dorset before moving to Sussex. This was a clever, intelligent woman, having studied at Swanley



Fox Moth caterpillar, third moult by Cornelia Anne Cracknell (1879-1969)



Goldcrest by Cornelia Cracknell

Horticultural College in Kent (which began admitting women students in 1891), where she passed the rigorous Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) examination in general horticulture.

The Clapham school offered courses in nature study, including bird watching and exploring wildlife on the Downs, as well as training in all aspects of gardening and preparation for RHS examinations. Students in 1912 would pay seventy pounds a year for a two-year course, so these would have been young middle-class women with independent means, or whose families could afford the cost of having their daughter training for this new profession of horticulture. There were students from the village, which at the time was a rural farming community, with the main source of employment for men the Clapham Brick and Tile Company, but their fees might have been reduced, perhaps in return for more general work in the house or garden.

The nature notebook, inscribed 'Miss Nancy Cracknell, School of Gardening, Clapham', begins a year after Cornelia moved into the Old Rectory. It contains her handwritten notes and delicate watercolours of plants and wildlife observed in the rectory garden, both on the South Downs and when visiting Suffolk and neighbouring counties. From the spring of 1913 until July 1918 she documents the natural world around her: all the wildflowers gathered on a cycle outing, the plants that will grow on chalk, a list of birds seen in early spring and the names of birds that sing as they fly. She keeps an account of the weather for the month of November 1913, records all the wildflowers seen throughout 1915 (384) and notes the days when she heard the first cuckoo calling at Clapham, or saw the earliest swallows, 'the Nightingale on the Common, the Chiff-Chaff and the Willow Wren'. In between the lined and plain pages she pastes newspaper cuttings, copies of extracts from nature books and makes a note of lectures, one by Mr Oliver Pike, a pioneer of nature photography in the 1900s. Her writing is underpinned by a keen knowledge of botany and of local traditions, such as the practice of shepherds catching wheatears in traps for selling to dealers in Brighton and Eastbourne. In the nineteenth century these birds were considered delicacies and shepherds in Sussex supplemented their income by capturing as many as a hundred in a day.

The diary continues throughout the First World War, but the focus of Cornelia's notebook is contained within the world close by: writing several pages about leaf-cutting bees at work in the garden (see page 16), observing how the goldcrests, numerous among the pine trees and cypresses, sing as they fly, and illustrating the different leaf shapes of the oak trees. The greatest hardship that she records during the war years is the weather of 1916-17, known as the severe winter of the Great War, when she writes in February that a sharp spell of frost has killed hundreds of birds unable to find food in the frozen ground.

The nature notebook reveals Cornelia Cracknell's sphere of interests, her awareness of the countryside conveyed sometimes in minutely detailed descriptions, or in a page of pencilled lists, or by her watercolour illustrations. These day-to-day observations are made more remarkable when viewed against the wealth of current writing about the natural world. Given the loss of wildlife in the last fifty years this notebook is a valuable record to have in the archives, and rather poignant, written when nature was in abundance.

Sally Ingram

Illustrations by permission of WSRO.

The notebook is catalogued at WSRO as AM 1712/1.

Forthcoming events at the Record Office

Tuesday talks

WSAS members are invited to our series of Tuesday talks, starting at 7pm. The current programme is as follows.

30 January 2024: **Ford Madox Ford in West Sussex: Finding a 'rhomboid of green'** by Professor Alexandra Harris

27 February 2024: **Recovering Britain's Amateur Theatrical Past 1789-1914: A West Sussex Perspective** by Dr David Coates

26 March 2024: **The material culture of life in Elizabethan Chichester** by Dr Caroline Adams

30 April 2024: **What did the Victorians do for Chichester?** By Alan Green

28 May 2024: **Returning to the Moon – Sir Patrick Moore's Legacy** by Dr John Mason

24 September 2024: **Tales of a Sussex Family Farm** by Angela Lerwill

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 2024 is as follows.

7 February 2024	Researching the history of your house
6 March 2024	How to start your family tree
3 April 2024	Getting started with Ancestry.co.uk
5 June 2024	Reading old handwriting
4 September 2024	Getting started with Ancestry.co.uk
2 October 2024	Researching the history of your house

Book now!

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

To attend a 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.

WSAS events 2024 – updates and confirmations

A quicker way to book events

As an alternative to posting a cheque and the booking forms printed in The Researcher, it can be more convenient to book and pay by bank transfer to:

West Sussex Archives Society, account no. 10942073, sort code 20-20-62

When using this method it is essential to email contact@wsas.co.uk to let us know that you have made the transfer, specifying the event/s being booked and naming the attender/s.

AGM, 9 March at Boxgrove

Members who wish to have lunch at the AGM need to book by 24 February. The menu will be vegetarian quiche with potatoes and salad, then fresh fruit and cheesecake.

The Shelley family, 13 April at Horsham

Members may find it helpful to know that the Horsham Park & Ride service runs buses numbers 23 and 98 into the centre of the town from the car park (at TQ161287) off the B2237 immediately north of its junction with the A24 . Those with an English national concessionary bus pass travel free on the buses. More details are at:

<https://www.metrobus.co.uk/horsham-park-ride>

St Mary's, Bramber - date confirmed

The date for the visit to St Mary's House and garden at St Mary's in Bramber is now confirmed as Saturday 8 June.

WSAS Conference 2024 - venue confirmed

Our annual conference, "Sussex in World War II", on Saturday 28 September will be held at The Grange Community and Leisure Centre in Midhurst. Further details about the event will be published in due course.

The miracle flower, from Flanders to the Tower - date and venue confirmed

This talk will take place on the afternoon of Tuesday 15 October at Lavant Memorial Hall, Pook Lane, Lavant.

WSAS Events

The following three events are now ready for booking. Please book and pay either by e-mail and BACS (see page 13) or by returning the booking forms use the booking forms for them on page 15.

History of Film in West Sussex

A talk with film excerpts by Ellen Cheshire

Saturday 3 February 2024 starting promptly at 2pm

At Slindon Coronation Hall, Slindon BN18 0QT; SU965078

Related to Margaret Lockwood, the film expert and author Ellen Cheshire will be giving a talk about the development and history of film making in our county. There will be generous film excerpts to illustrate the talk, for which we have arranged a large screen.

Members: £8; non members: £10

Refreshments will be provided after the talk.

Annual General Meeting, and Talk by author and broadcaster Kate Mosse

Saturday 9 March 2024 starting promptly at 12 noon

At Boxgrove Village Hall, Boxgrove PO18 0EE; SU906076

This will be the Society's 50th AGM. The formal business will include the election of officers and committee members.

Tea and coffee will be available from 11.30am. After the AGM there will be lunch (see page 13). The talk by Kate Mosse CBE, entitled "Fact or Fiction - using the archives to bring the past to life", will begin at 2.30pm after tea and coffee.

Members attending the AGM, lunch and talk: £15

Members attending the talk only: £10

Non members attending the talk: £10

The Shelley Family: Politics and Poetry

Saturday 13 April 2024, talk starting at 2.30pm

At Horsham Museum, 9 Causeway, Horsham RH12 1HE; TQ172304

A talk by Nikki Caxton of the Museum on the Shelley family of Sussex, and how their lives shaped the path of the poet PB Shelley. The family is known to have lived in Sussex since at least the 14th century. The speaker will focus on how the poet's grandfather amassed his fortune, the construction of Castle Goring, and Shelley's father's political career.

Members £8; non members £10

Refreshments will be served from 2pm.

Booking for WSAS events

Please book and pay either by e-mail and BACS (see page 13) or by returning the booking forms with your cheque to: WSAS, % West Sussex Record Office, County Hall, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 1RN.

We do not issue tickets or receipts for bookings. For queries please contact: contact@wsas.co.uk
Event details are also at www.wsas.co.uk

History of Film in West Sussex

Saturday 3 February 2024, starting promptly at 2pm

At Slindon Coronation Hall, Slindon

Members £8; non members £10

Names of members attending _____

Tel no or e-mail address _____

Names of non members attending _____

Tel no or e-mail address _____

Annual General Meeting, and Talk by Kate Mosse

Saturday 9 March 2024: AGM starting promptly at 12 noon; talk at 2.30pm

At Boxgrove Village Hall, Boxgrove

Members: AGM, lunch and talk £15; non members: talk only £10

Names of members attending the AGM _____

Will you have lunch? YES/NO

Tel no or e-mail address _____

Names and tel numbers/e-mails of non members attending the talk (from 2pm)

The Shelley Family: Politics and Poetry

Saturday 13 April 2024, refreshments from 2pm, talk at 2.30 pm

Horsham Museum

Members £8; non members £10

Names of members attending _____

Tel no or e-mail address _____

Names and tel numbers/e-mails of non members attending

Hymenoptera.



Nest of leaf-cutting
Bee - found in
sand on golf-links.
Littlehampton - Aug. 1913.



Work of
leaf-cutting Bee.



B. pupae of Ichneumon-fly.
July 6th 1915.

A. Cabbage Butterfly
ichneumonid.



larva of
Ichneumon Fly.
July 5th 1915.



Imago emerged
July 25. 1915.

Hymenoptera by Cornelia Cracknell

August 1913 and July 1915

Illustration by permission of WSRO (AM 1712/1)