

The Researcher



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

County Archivist's report

It was very good to be with you all again at the 51st AGM of the West Sussex Archives Society and to be able to look back over the year and share some of the activities and highlights.

The last twelve months have seen significant changes with a number of retirements of longstanding members of staff. Ian Pennicott left us in April last year, Diane Ladlow in July, with Clare Snoad and Sarah Head following in August and Derrick Swindon in September. We have been very fortunate in having staff who have stayed with us for many years developing their knowledge and expertise and bringing all this experience to the service that we provide. We are extremely grateful to them all and wish them well in their retirement.

They leave behind a considerable legacy and filling these gaps is never easy. We have been very lucky in being able to welcome Mia Curtis-Mays and Lois Bodie to the Search Room Team, and Rhian Silvester and Katherine Birch as Records Management Assistants. Jo McConville, our Digital Preservation Archivist, has stepped up to manage the Digitisation Studio and Nicki Clarke has taken over the role of Technical Assistant. Alice Millard, formerly the project archivist for the New Jerusalem: New Towns Project, has now taken up a permanent role with us as an Archivist. Alice joined the Record Office in 2018 as a Search Room and Research Assistant. During this time she embarked on her postgraduate diploma in archives and records management at Dundee University.

This year has seen the culmination of several grant-funded projects, all of which have enabled us to open up access to major collections, including the Freddie Laker Archive Project and the Worthing Marine and General Mutual Life Assurance Society Archive. We have also finished work on our Ordinary Voices Revealed Project funded by the National Manuscripts

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

See pages 14 and 15

26 April

**Sussex inn signs
and their history**

BOOK NOW

22 May

**Commonwealth
War Graves
Commission**

BOOK NOW

12 June

**Weald & Downland
museum**

BOOK NOW

10 July

Coultershaw

**April 2025
ISSUE 129**

Conservation Trust. This has enabled us to conserve a significant tranche of papers of the Consistory Court of the Archdeaconry of Chichester, which were too fragile to be used by researchers. With the completion of this work (conserving some 69 out of a total of 112 boxes) these archives can be indexed and used alongside the court deposition books that have been produced as edited texts for the Sussex Record Society (Chichester Archdeaconry Depositions (sussexrecordsociety.org)). Our HIV and AIDS Archives in the UK Project is also drawing to a close with the survey work completed and the report being finalised.

In 2024 we received 175 accessions, in both paper and digital formats, with archives dating from the 16th century to the present day, including deeds and manorial records, maps and plans, diaries, letters, photographs, the records of parishes, parish councils, churches, schools, WIs, organisations and societies, businesses and charities. Amongst these were the diary and photograph of Lieutenant V E Rogers, serving in the Royal Sussex Regiment 1915-1918; additional records of Chichester High School for Boys, 1931-2004; the records of the Church Schoolmasters and Schoolmistresses' Benevolent Institution, 1891-2007, and the archives of the Petworth United Reform Church, c1768-2016.

We also received the Sussex Yeomanry Archive dating from c1906-2019 and the Shoreham Airport movement logs 1954-57. Amongst the public records that we took in were the Ford Prison Chaplaincy journals, 1960-2014. In 2024 staff had a stand at Chichester Pride inviting people to record their thoughts on what should be collected about LGBTQ+ life in West Sussex today: These response sheets have also been added to the archive.

I always enjoy looking through the annual list of accessions that we submit to The National Archives every year. It can be and usually is such an eclectic mix reflecting life in the county past and present. Where else would you find the birding notebooks kept by wildlife author David Lang (1935-2020), the minutes of the Henfield Duplicate Bridge Society, 1980-2022 and the records of the Martlet Sword and Morris Men from the 1940s-2020s?

The drawings by Ron Martin of industrial archaeology, buildings and structures in West Sussex 1980s-2020s sit alongside the Chichester Harbour Conservancy sealed byelaws c1973-1992 and a photograph of the band of 2nd Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment, in Karachi in 1935-36. And my own particular favourite, a copy of the 1803 Act for paving, lighting, cleaning, watching, and improving the Streets, Passages and Places, within the Town of Worthing...and for establishing an effective Police in the said Town.

Thanks to the West Sussex Archives Society's generosity over the last 12 months we have been able to buy the accounts and correspondence relating to works at Avisford Park, owned by Sir Thomas Reynell 1834-43, additional records of Shippam's, 1913-1980s, a photograph album showing the Horsham Automatic Telephone Exchange in 1955, and the sale particulars of property in Caledonian Road and Lyndhurst Road, Chichester, in 1906.

Recently we were successful in bidding for a warrant for livery relating to lands in Heyshott and West Dean, dating from 1596. This agreement was made between William Cecil (Lord Burghley) and Richard Kingesmill, Surveyor of the Liveries, and John Aylwyn, and includes a valor in Latin specifying the property. William Cecil was Elizabeth I's chief minister for most of her reign. WSAS very kindly offered to help with match funding, though in the event the Friends of the National Libraries gave us a grant for the full amount.

The West Sussex Record Office has just been awarded Archive Service Accreditation for a further six years (with an interim review due in three years). Archive Accreditation is the UK standard for archive services and is administered by The National Archives. Retention of our status as a Place of Deposit for public records is dependent upon retaining accreditation. The Accreditation Panel was very complimentary about the service, praising *'this strongly led archive service with a considered approach to service development and delivery'* and recognising *'the impressive work around developing digital preservation and intersectionality'*.

I would like to pay tribute to Sue Hepburn, whose death was announced last week. I first met Sue when she was at the University of Sussex and I was working on The Keep. However it was after joining WSRO that I had the privilege of getting to know her better as she pursued her work as an historian with a particular interest in the Great War. She edited and provided the contextual commentary for *The Great War Memoir of Ralph Ellis, Sussex Artist and Soldier*, published by the Sussex Record Society in conjunction with West Sussex Record Office in 2020. She served on the SRS Council and supported the work of Arundel Museum. She leaves behind a very special legacy for all those who knew her and for the history of the county.

Finally I would just like to offer my thanks to you all for your support, to our staff and to our volunteers, who do so much work in listing and indexing and opening up access to the collections. My final thanks go to all our depositors who enable us to preserve their archives for future generations. Without all of these people there would be no stories to tell, no history to explore and the world would be a much poorer place.

Wendy Walker, County Archivist

New staff member for WSRO - Katherine Birch

Hello, my name is Katherine Birch and I joined the Records Management team as a Modern Records Assistant at the beginning of December. I am based at the Record Office in Chichester together with Matt Dell and Rhian Silvester, where we manage the Modern Records of WSCC departments across the county.

Katherine on Pico Ruivo,
Madeira



Originally from Manchester I have recently moved to the Chichester area, having previously lived in Winchester and Weymouth. My background is in administration and finance and I have previously worked in primary schools and more recently in a large secondary school. Although my background isn't in Records Management I am very much enjoying the opportunity to utilise my existing skills and learn new ones.

I have been made to feel very welcome in my new role and, as I have been researching my own family history over the last few years, it's a bonus to be able to take this further surrounded by colleagues who have such a vast array of knowledge, expertise and helpfulness.

New staff member for WSRO - Rhian Silvester

Rhian in Stockholm



My name is Rhian Silvester, I joined the Records Management team as a Modern Records Assistant at the end of November. I work with Matt Dell and Katherine Birch, managing a variety of modern records for West Sussex County Council.

I live in West Sussex but moved to Bath for three years to complete my undergraduate degree in Heritage and Public History at Bath Spa University and graduated in 2024. During my degree I gained an interest in studying LGBTQ+ and Women's History having completed extensive research into the history of gossip. In my spare time I continue this theme having volunteered for the National Trust for two and a half years at Bath Assembly Room as a Remote Researcher and worked as a volunteer at Horsham Museum.

This is my first job since graduating and the first step in what I hope is a long career ahead of me working with archives and historical records. I am grateful for this opportunity and am thoroughly enjoying working alongside supportive team members and the wider Record Office staff.

Chairman's report

This year has perhaps been more a year of looking forward and reviewing how the Society operates. Following the members' survey carried out some two years ago, we have made it easier for people to book events by being able to do so on-line. We have also increased our presence on social media through Facebook and Instagram. We have also started to promote our events more widely in those areas where they are being held, which has brought about a notable increase in the numbers of those attending, more of which later.

Looking back at the events the Society has organised this past year I am amazed at the variety of places we have visited and the topics we have covered. In April we were treated to a fascinating talk on the Shelley family at the Horsham Museum. This also provided the opportunity for those attending to visit the museum itself, which is well worth a visit in its own right. In May we visited the beautiful Highdown Gardens near Worthing, and heard how their owners, Colonel Stern and his wife, had transformed an area of downland into gardens famed around the world. In June we enjoyed a private visit to the historic and atmospheric St. Mary's House in Bramber. That same month our secretary, Leigh Lawson and her husband Richard, opened their historic bakehouse in Broadwater as part of Worthing Heritage Week, and kindly donated the proceeds of £255 to WSAS. In July we had a walking tour round the historic town of Arundel led by local resident, John Barkshire, who pointed out many things that would have otherwise gone unnoticed.

In September we ran a very successful conference in Midhurst on the theme 'Aspects of War' looking at life in West Sussex from both a military and civilian point of view during World War II, when six different speakers gave fascinating insights into life during those troubled times. In October former army officer Jeremy Prescott gave at the Lavant Memorial Hall a very moving talk on the history of the poppy as a symbol of remembrance. In November we gathered at the Sullington Village Hall to hear about the tithe system and how it worked as explained by Christopher Whittick. In December we had our traditional Get-Together at the Record Office where we were able to view the documents that WSAS had helped the Record Office to purchase over the past year and were treated to three five-minute talks from John Godfrey, Annette Lloyd Thomas and, stepping in at the last minute, Mike Kipling, about aspects of their own researches. Last month we held what was probably our best ever attended event organised by WSAS when John Mills presented his fascinating talk 'Old Atherington and the Washed Away Villages of West Sussex', held at the Clymping Village Hall, not far from where Old Atherington once stood before it was lost to the waves. Over 70 people attended, many being local people. There is clearly a lesson to be learned here, in that generally local people are interested in local topics, and we will be building on this experience for future events.

We are in the process of funding five new laptops for the use of the volunteers who help the Record Office out in so many ways. This is something of a new departure for WSAS and provides an excellent example of how we can help.

Membership has remained at about the same level as a year ago. Last year we announced the introduction of the 'Bring Along A Friend' scheme whereby members could invite someone along to

an event for the same price as members, and the friend would receive the next two copies of *Researcher*. Little use has been made of this offer, but it is still on the table, so do try to bring others along to some of our events to experience something of what WSAS has to offer.

Over the coming year we will be planning more events for people to experience and enjoy and helping the Record Office out whenever we can. But this is very much a two way process, and I would like to thank Wendy and her team for all their support for WSAS such as printing the paper copies of *The Researcher* and being there to provide help and advice.

Finally my thanks to you, the members for continuing to support WSAS. We have another programme of interesting and exciting events coming up over this coming year and soon we will be sitting down and planning ahead for 2026. I shall look forward to seeing you at some of these events in the near future.

Richard Howell

Old Atherington and the washed away medieval villages of West Sussex

On 22 February to a packed Clymping village hall John Mills opened this year's programme of events with a fascinating tour of lost coastal settlements. His skill in bringing together rare old maps, historical documentation, ancient artefacts, past and contemporary photographs, and his professional archaeological expertise to tell those villages' stories was enormously valued by the audience.

Ranging along the coast from the west of Chichester Harbour to Kingston Buci, east of Shoreham, John began by looking at known past settlements that have either been taken completely by the sea, or that have been partly washed away and abandoned.

Among the first, Rumbridge, a hamlet thought to have lain out to sea to the south-east of West Wittering, and last mentioned in contemporary documents in 1398, has survived in the Sussex personal surname Rumbridger. Charlton, a township and tithing of Pagham parish in the 13th and 14th centuries, had its site to the south of Pagham Point.

Cudlow, a haven or landing-place west of the River Arun and south-west of Littlehampton, had a manor house in 1380, but dwellings there were being abandoned in the 1300s and 1400s. The remains of its chapel, on the edge of the beach, were still visible in 1698. Three complete 14th-15th century large pottery vessels, possibly sitting in the bottom of a former well, were found at very low tide in the Cudlow area in the early 2000s. Pende, lying south of Penhill in South Lancing, was the home base of merchant ships and a port from 1250 to 1420 with its own port officials, but it suffered from the ravages of the sea and of French and Spanish pirates, and is no longer heard of after about 1450.

Other settlements now lost can be traced through historical mapping and through the churches and chapels that they once possessed, such as Old Bracklesham Chapel (last known 1518), St. Bartholomew's Chapel in Bognor (1465), probably lying some way to the south of Gloucester Road, and Kingston Chapel near East Preston, whose churchwardens in 1626 and 1641 bewailed its ruination by encroachments of the sea.

As recently as the late 1840s the standing remains of old St. Nicholas' parish church in Middleton-on-Sea fell into the sea, but the gradual erosion of its churchyard had been noticed decades earlier, the poet Charlotte Smith writing in 1789 of the bones of the dead torn from their graves and washed by the waves.

New Shoreham, a medieval "new town" and in the 14th century the busiest port along the Sussex coast, was said in 1404 to have been "destroyed by the sea", but later research suggests that only the south-east corner of its grid of streets had been permanently lost to storms and coastal erosion.

Within Pagham Harbour the former port of Wythering, claimed by the Citizens of Chichester to have been their port in Henry I's time, was later claimed by the Archbishop of Canterbury and suffered from encroachments from the sea. On the other side of the harbour the Bishop of Chichester founded in 1262-1267 the rival "new haven" and port of Wardour in Sidlesham parish (see the map on page 16), which eclipsed Wythering, its ships trading mostly along the coast and especially to New Shoreham. Wardour became more generally known as "Sidlesham", although the names "Warder Green" and "New Haven" were still known and marked on a plan of 1775, north and east of Sidlesham Quay. But rather than being washed away, Wardour/Sidlesham declined largely owing to the inexorable silting-up of the harbour.

Some of the washed-away parts of settlements have been re-exposed from time to time in the form of the very bottoms of the wells that served the now vanished houses of the settlements, either lined with chalk blocks (seen at Middleton in 1923 and 1961, and at Kingston in 1980-1), or with timber.

Chalk-lined well at Climping beach, Atherington

March 2023



And coming to the present day chalk- and timber-lined wells, regularly being exposed by storms, may often be seen on Climping beach. From a map of 1606 which shows the street, cottages and gardens of Atherington hamlet, these wells must have lain within the medieval house plots, most of which were swallowed by the sea between then and 1772.

Con Corditer

The Rising Down - Lives in a Sussex Landscape

At the AGM on 22 March at Barnham we were delighted to welcome Professor Alexandra Harris as the guest speaker. Since its publication in early 2024 her book has received much critical and popular acclaim . Over 60 people were present to listen to her presentation.

Alex explained that the book's premise was to look at a relatively small area of countryside and peel away its layers of history. Her inspiration came from nature studies whilst at school and using a quadrant of one square yard to examine the number of different species of plants that could be found within it. She chose to write about the area that encompasses the Arun Valley, and along to the coast to West Tarring in the east and Chichester to the west. This is where she grew up and through the many different topics in her book she weaves her own life story.

She told us how four books in particular – *The History of Myddle* by Richard Gough, *Ulverstone* by Adam Thorpe, *In These Times* by Jenny Uglow and *Jacob's Room* by Virginia Woolf – had helped her formulate her own book, whilst the Sussex Archaeological Collections, the Sussex Record Society publications *Sussex Depicted - Views & Descriptions 1600-1800* and *Sussex Clergy Inventories*, together with *English Immigrant Voices* and *Assisting Emigration to Upper Canada* had helped in providing the factual basis for some of the chapters.

Alex chose to look at two stories in particular. In the archives of Arundel Castle she had come across the 17th century notes of the water bailiff whose role was '*to take care and over sight of the fishermen (to whose charge as it were the high streame is committed immediately) that they performe their services and attendance in the preservation of swans, fowle and fish, that they lay and keep open, during the fence month ... all their weares, weare-gates, weels, shutting nets...*'.

The River Arun was then a busy waterway and played an important part in the general economy of the area, though today it is hardly used apart from the occasional pleasure vessel setting out from Arundel. The role of water bailiff was clearly an important one and Alex talked at some length on the Bartelott family of Stopham, who carried out that function in the 17th century.

She then discussed the inheritance of 18th century literary Sussex, highlighting three writers from this period, William Collins (1721-1759) Anne Gittins (1738-1800) who wrote under the name Anne Francis, and Charlotte Smith (1749-1806). None of these would be considered to be 'household' names, but they were all influential in their day and all had strong Sussex connections. Each seems to have led rather tragic lives, but they all appear to have found hope and inspiration in the Sussex landscape. She concluded by reading from one of Charlotte Smith's poems, *The Emigrants*, which contains the moving lines:

When, on the banks of Arun, which I see
Make its irriguous course thro' yonder meads,
I play'd; unconscious then of future ill!

Alex's engaging style of delivery contained, just like her book, many profundities. Afterwards she took a number of questions from the floor and no doubt most people, if they had not already done so, would have left with a determination to obtain a copy, or read it again. There is so much to discover.

Richard Howell

Volunteering at West Sussex Record Office: A Collections Update for 2024-2025

The West Sussex Record Office (WSRO) volunteer programme is part of the public voluntary engagement services provided by West Sussex County Council (WSCC). It continues to offer the wider community a chance to engage with WSRO's services from behind the scenes, providing experience of working with archives and learning new skills.

25 volunteers commit their time to WSRO, a mixture of new recruits and others who have been with us for many years. Most attend on a weekly basis. They come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, bringing with them a wide range of skills and experience developed during working careers or within education, together with an interest in history. Volunteering gives them the opportunity to learn more about the archives and catalogue our collections so that they can be used by researchers.

Throughout 2024-2025 they have continued working on numerous, diverse historic collections. A selection of these that have been made publicly available include:

- The papers, photographs and publicity associated with the portrait painter Juliet Pannett of Angmering (AM 1860). Her sitters included leading figures in British society from the mid to late twentieth century such as Queen Elizabeth II, other members of the Royal Family, several Prime Ministers and military officers, musicians and athletes. She was the sister of Phoebe Somers, a well known Sussex professional lecturer and illustrator, whose collection of artwork for local papers is available as AM 677.
- The sales particulars (SP collection) of Churchman & Duke of Crawley. Numerous sale brochures detailing properties for sale in a rapidly developing New Town development of the 1960s and 1970s.
- The business papers of Duke and Ockenden (DANDO) of Littlehampton, a company whose technical knowledge and expertise helped Britain to fight during two world wars, and in later years become a leader in international drilling equipment design.
- Aviation business records of F G Miles Aircraft Limited of Shoreham (AM 1749), innovative aircraft designers and manufacturers, whose work influenced technological developments for decades.
- Correspondence, minutes and plans of many organisations involved in the supply of water to the residents and businesses of the county in the West Sussex Water Archive (WSW).
- Presenting the best of 1960s craft and technological advances displayed at the Festival of Industry in Chichester Cathedral (AM 1568) in June 1968. A collection of publicity leaflets, organisational papers and photographs.
- Programmes, flyers and photographs of performances by the Worthing Operatic Society, 1970-2004 (AM 1765).
- A hospitality and building history of The Swan Hotel in Arundel (AM 1788).
- Finally, a glimpse into the scientific and personal journey of the naturalist and geologist Edmond Martin Venables (1901-1990). From his notebooks of observations and publications to his correspondence and photographs all testifying to a life well lived.

In addition the WSRO volunteers also regularly update our local government, parish, non-conformist, maps, photographs and plans catalogues.

In 2024 the volunteers processed 141 accessions, created thousands of records and committed 3352 hours of their time. Their invaluable contribution means that even more West Sussex history is being catalogued and opened to researchers, whose interest spans many topics. It is this work that supports the Record Office in its efforts to provide a varied, vibrant public service to all our visitors and those accessing our services remotely.

Nick Corbo-Stewart, Archivist and Volunteer Co-ordinator, WSRO

Current journals on the history of West Sussex

Many magazines and newsletters are published in West Sussex by local history and family history societies and by groups who include local history amongst their other interests. Series of some are deposited routinely or intermittently with WSRO, though others are accessible only from their publisher.

Below is a provisional list of the currently published serials covering West Sussex that may be described as journals containing researched articles, each issue typically of 40 or more pages.

Paper copies of all five are deposited at WSRO. However the holdings there are not always complete, so its on-line catalogue should be checked before visiting; if the required issue is not on the catalogue, it might be worth contacting WSRO in case any recently acquired issues are yet to be catalogued.

Only one of these journals is available on-line for non members, namely *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, which is accessible via the ADS website for the period from its establishment in 1847 up to 2020.

publisher	title	frequency	scope	indexed?	annual membership
Sussex Archaeological Society	<i>Sussex Archaeological Collections</i>	annual	scholarly articles on history and archaeology of West and East Sussex	yes, for 1847-2020 via ADS website	£47
Chichester Local History Society	<i>Chichester History</i>	annual	Chichester and district history	yes, for 1985-2024 at the Society's website	£20
Midhurst Society	<i>Midhurst Magazine</i>	annual	history of Midhurst and its area	no	£25
Sussex Family History Group	<i>The Sussex Family Historian</i>	quarterly	Sussex family history	yes, for members	£15
West Sussex Archives Society	<i>West Sussex History</i>	annual	original articles based on material held at WSRO	yes, but for 1974-1996 only	£22

This table might be incomplete. If you know of other such local journals that may be of value to WSAS members, please let the newsletter editor know at: contact@wsas.co.uk

Notices 1

Events

May 2025 event

You will have noticed that a proposed talk about HG Wells in May has disappeared from our publicity. This is because we discovered that the Midhurst Society and others were planning a VE Day celebration in Midhurst on the same day, and we felt that our talk did not fit with this theme. For more details of that event contact: chair@midhurstsociety.org.uk

The replacement WSAS event in Midhurst will now be on Thursday 22 May, entitled 'Sacrifice and remembrance - the story of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission', a talk by Jeremy Prescott. See page 14 for more details, and page 15 for the booking form.

Nor have we lost HG Wells; in true Time Machine style we hope he can be projected forward to our 2026 programme, with a talk on his association with the Midhurst area. Look out for details in due course.

WSAS conference, Saturday 27 September 2025

This year's conference, entitled "Chichester in the late seventeenth century", will be held in the Jubilee Hall at New Park Centre, New Park Road, Chichester. Registration will begin at 11.15am, and the conference will finish by 4.30pm.

The presentations will be:

Post Civil War recovery of Chichester cathedral and city by Dr Andrew Foster

Protestant nonconformity in Restoration Chichester by Dr Danae Tankard

Continuity and change as revealed in Chichester wills by Dr James McInnes

Some demographic puzzles by Professor Philip Robinson

These will be followed by a panel reporting on current research and work on:

Chichester consistory court depositions

inns and taverns

quarter sessions projects

cathedral library projects.

Refreshments will be provided, but not lunch.

There are car parks close to the venue, including at New Park Road itself and off Market Avenue.

Booking forms for the conference will be published in the July issue of "The Researcher".

Notices 2

A quicker way to book WSAS events

As an alternative to posting a cheque and the booking forms printed in The Researcher (see p15), 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 those attending.

Data protection

At its March meeting the committee agreed a revised Privacy Policy, covering members' personal data that the society collects, what it does with the data, and its storage and retention rules. Members can request to see the data about themselves by contacting WSAS.

Member publication

WSAS member John F Wells has recently published "Military defence of Chichester, World War Two", describing the anti invasion defences in the Chichester area from 1940 to 1945. Generously illustrated and based on years of research, Mr Wells reports having found much that has not previously been published.

Copies may be obtained from JFW Publications, 25 High Street, Selsey, Chichester PO20 0RB.

WSRO events: discount code for WSAS members

For WSAS members a discount of £1 on WSRO events is available. The discount code has been sent to our members who use e-mail, and should be quoted when booking WSRO events on-line via the new WSRO website. Note that the code is changed from time to time. WSRO events can still be booked in person at the reception or over the telephone.

WSAS committee

Carol Brinson
Kim Fleming
Dr John Godfrey
Richard Howell, chairman
Mike Kipling
Leigh Lawson, secretary

Annette Lloyd Thomas
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 and on the WSAS Facebook and Instagram sites.

Registered Charity no 266997.

Forthcoming Record Office events

Evening talks

WSAS members are invited to the Record Office's series of evening talks, starting at 7pm.

29 April 2025: Freeland's Fair Ground – The Curious History of Oaklands Park by Alan Green

Oaklands Park is Chichester's largest open space, famous for housing the annual Sloe Fair, the Festival Theatre, rugby and a large mansion hidden in the trees, now used by the University. However it did not become a public park until 1938 when it was acquired by Chichester Corporation from the Henty family, prior to which its history is curious, complex and hitherto unexplored. Oaklands Park as we know it was the 19th century creation of one man, James Bennett Freeland, a wealthy lawyer who started acquiring the necessary closes of land in 1819 to create his own private park and finally completed it in 1850. This talk tells for the first time how Freeland went about his creation and what happened to it after his death in 1852 as it morphed into what it is today.

16 June 2025 (Sussex Day): West Sussex on the Home Front 1939-1945 - the latest webinar presented by WSRO and Screen Archive South East as part of West Sussex Unwrapped.

To mark the 80th anniversary of VE and VJ days, this episode features archives and film footage exploring the experiences of ordinary West Sussex residents on the Home Front in the Second World War. Further details and tickets are available on the Events page on the WSRO website.

Behind the Scenes at West Sussex Record Office

Join archivists at West Sussex Record Office on **Saturday 21 June 2025** from 10am to 12pm for a rare opportunity to view behind the scenes and see some of the unique documents from the collections. This two hour session will include a short introductory talk about the work of the Record Office, a tour of the building, and a chance to look at a selection of items from the archives.

Advance booking essential.

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 and cover a wide range of sources. The remaining programme for 2025 is as follows.

7 May 2025	Reading old handwriting *SOLD OUT*
2 June 2025	Manors and their records
3 September 2025	Getting started with Ancestry.co.uk
1 October 2025	Researching the history of your house *SOLD OUT*

***** Please book and pay on wsro.org.uk/events *****

**** Discount for WSAS members; quote the discount code supplied to all members ****

WSAS Events

The following four events are now ready for booking.

Sussex inn signs and their history, a talk by Dr Janet Pennington

Saturday 26 April 2025 at 2pm in the Billingshurst Centre, Roman Way, Billingshurst RH14 9EW; TQ089262

The research for Janet Pennington's doctoral thesis on the inns and taverns of western Sussex took her to pubs all over the county and beyond. If you think you know your White Horse from your Red Lion, or your King's Head from your Royal Oak, come and learn something new. Their signs and brackets reveal patronage, land ownership, social status, local personalities and events, opening a window to the past.

WSAS members £8; non-members £10.

Sacrifice and remembrance, the story of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, a talk by Jeremy Prescott

Thursday 22 May 2025 at 2.30pm in the Methodist Church Hall, North Street, Midhurst GU29 9DU, SU887219 (refreshments from 2pm)

This talk will cover the scale of the sacrifice in the world wars, how the Commonwealth War Graves Commission commemorates the fallen in both wars, their founding principles and the initial adverse public reaction to their plans, the layout of the cemeteries, stories behind some of the headstones, the new cemetery at Fromelles Pheasant Wood, and how we commemorate the fallen in recent conflicts.

WSAS members £6; non members £8.

Behind the scenes at the Weald & Downland Museum

Thursday 12 June 2025 at 2pm at the Weald & Downland Museum, Singleton PO18 0EU, SU875128

Led by WSAS committee member Carol Brinson, who is a volunteer librarian at the museum, Julian Bell, museum curator, and other museum volunteers, the archive room, artefacts store and reference library will be visited. There is some uphill and downhill walking. This special event is open to WSAS members and their guests only; those who book will be sent more details.

WSAS members and their guests £10 per person.

Coultershaw Heritage Site and Beam Pump

Thursday 10 July 2025 at 1.30pm for 2pm at the Coultershaw site (between Duncton and Petworth) GU28 0JE, SU972194

As well as a tour of the industrial archaeology at Coultershaw, we will be given a talk about the River Rother that crosses the site. Refreshments will be served afterwards. Maximum of 20 people.

WSAS members £10; non members £12.

Booking for WSAS events

Please book and pay either by e-mail and BACS (see page 12) 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

Sussex inn signs and their history, 26 April 2025, Billingshurst

WSAS 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 _____

Commonwealth War Graves Commission, 22 May 2025, Midhurst

WSAS members £6; non members £8

Names of members attending _____

Tel no or e-mail address _____

Names of non members attending _____

Tel no or e-mail address _____

Weald and Downland Museum visit, 12 June 2025, Singleton

WSAS members £10

Names of members attending _____

Tel no or e-mail address _____

Coultershaw Heritage Site, 10 July 2025, near Petworth

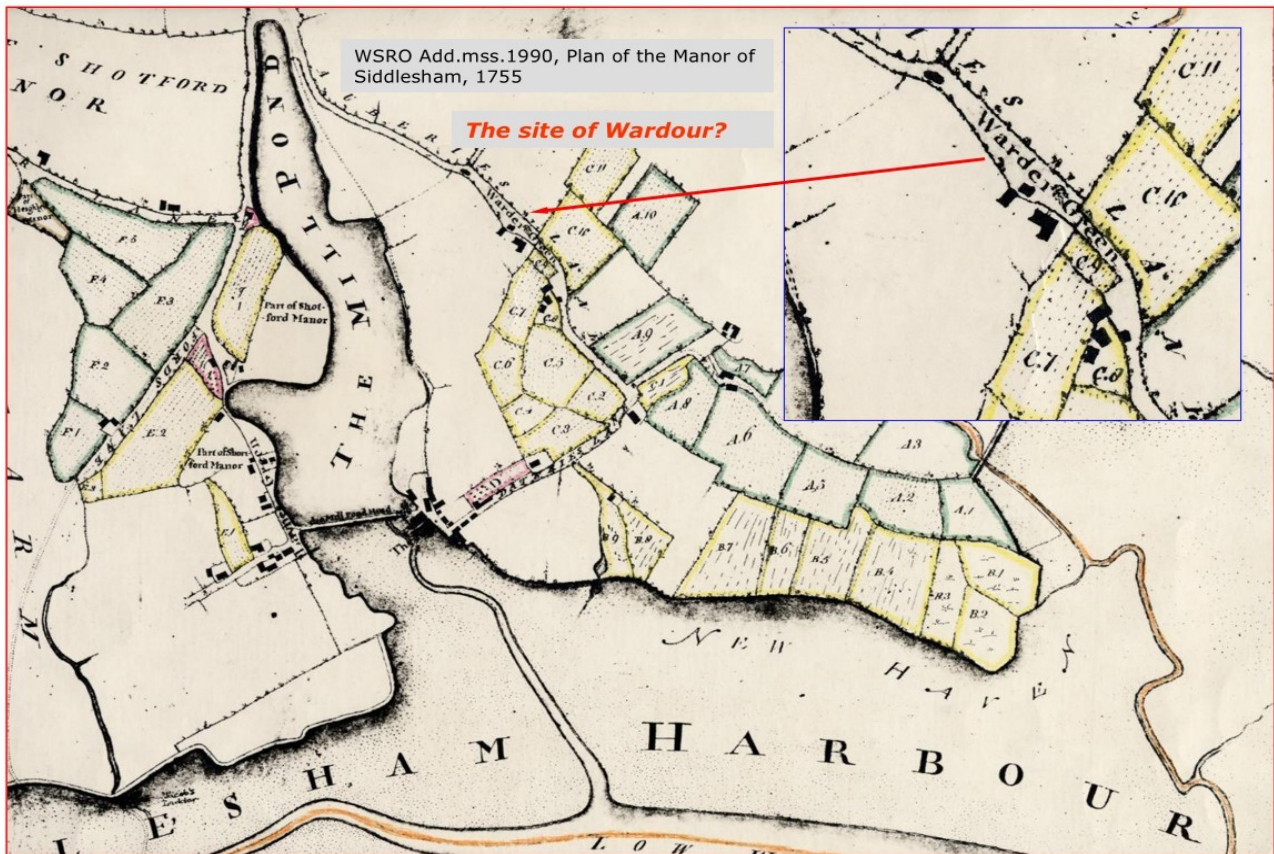
WSAS members £10; non members £12

Names of members attending _____

Tel no or e-mail address _____

Names of non members attending _____

Tel no or e-mail address _____



Plan of the Manor of Sidlesham, 1755, showing the site of Bishop Stephen de Berghstede's planned new town of Wardour (1262-1267) in Pagham Harbour.

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