

The Researcher



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

County Archivist's report

We very much enjoyed seeing and being able to talk to so many of you at the Christmas Get Together last month, and to show you some of the documents that you have helped us to buy over the last year. These included an early minute book for the Court of Sewers for the Rape of Arundel (1655-1663), two police ledgers for Arundel and the surrounding area (1869-1932), and a set of rules and reports for Littlehampton and District Cottage Hospital (1906-1948). Most recently, thanks to your generosity, we have also been able to acquire a set of deeds for West Field, Worthing (19th-20th centuries), deeds of Littlehampton and the surrounding area, and deeds of the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway, including Littlehampton District Line.

Immediately prior to our Christmas event the Record Office Search Room was closed for Collections Care Fortnight, an annual December event. This is a time when we all come together to work on large group projects to preserve and open up access to more of the archives. This year we focussed on four different collections starting with the Uppark Archives, which needed further cataloguing work in order to make them accessible. A hierarchy was put in place together with a new numbering system, which will make it possible to add items to the catalogue if necessary. Previously unlisted boxes of material, including several boxes of deeds, were also catalogued and the whole collection (1283 records) is now available to search and order.

Next staff turned their attention to the archives of Rapers (now SMR Solicitors), the oldest firm of solicitors in Chichester. Over the years they have deposited large quantities of material with us, much of which is uncatalogued. Over the two weeks we were able to catalogue 30 boxes of deeds dating from 1588 to 1918 relating to Chichester, including Pallant House and property in Spitalfields.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

See pages 14 and 15

11 February

Hurrah for Shippam's

BOOK NOW

21 March

AGM and talk

BOOK NOW

18 April

Chichester Harbour

BOOK NOW

**January 2026
ISSUE 132**

A few years ago Worthing Borough Council transferred a series of fiches of their building control plans. Unfortunately these were not in a proper order, making it very difficult to find relevant plans when people enquired about them. Immie has so far sorted over half of the 18 boxes into numerical order and put together a locations index which will make it much easier to find the correct fiche and help people with their enquiries.

During the two weeks Jo, Nicki and Mia were able to digitise photographs from the Loader photographic archive and the Wardell postcard collection, some 2300 images in all. Jo is now in the process of importing these records into our online catalogue so they should be available for everyone to see and use very soon.

Meanwhile Nick and Nichola spent time consolidating, reboxing and reorganising the shelves in one of our strong rooms, creating approximately three full bays of space for incoming archives. Nick also continued to work on the European Architectural Year photographic collection with approximately 1500 further new records ready to go into our catalogue.

With the start of a new year we are planning our new season of talks and workshops. For our talks we are trialling a new time of Monday afternoons. On 23 March Alan Green will be giving us a fascinating account of 300 years of travel in the Lavant Valley from the stagecoaches and a short-lived railway to the more recent Stagecoach buses. On 27 April we will have Sue Berry with us to explore the history of the Wealden gardens and the plantsmen who created them.

Meanwhile our popular Coffee Time Workshops continue on Wednesdays with sessions already booking up on house history, family history and reading old handwriting.

Our most recent blogs feature articles on workhouse records by Jenny Bettger, a fascinating insight into the Society of Sussex Wealdmen and their photographic archive, which we have just finished digitising, and an exploration of Christmas at Graylingwell Hospital, both by Vicky Evans.

Nichola's new book on *Madge Turner: The Chichester Suffragist*, has just been published by the Chichester Women's History Group. With a foreword by Kate Mosse, it tells the story of a woman who spent her life campaigning for the rights of women and children both nationally and internationally ([Madge Turner: The Chichester Suffragist - West Sussex Record Office](#)). To whet your appetite you can also find out more about Madge in Nichola's blog ([Achieving equity: celebrating the life and work of Madge Turner, suffragist and campaigner – West Sussex Record Office](#)).

Last but by no means least we will be celebrating our 80th birthday in 2026 so do watch out for further news and events on our website and in the next "Researcher".

Wendy Walker, County Archivist

Chairman's report

Another year rolls round. In October we had a most interesting visit to the Gatwick Airport Museum. Unfortunately our visit to Steyning Grammar School to see the archives there had to be cancelled at very short notice as the new owners of the building had requested that the archives be removed as soon as possible. We await discovering their ultimate destination.

We ended the year in our customary way with an annual get-together at the Record Office, where we enjoyed coffee, wine, mince pies and a good chat before going into the Search Room and viewing the many documents that the Society had helped the Record Office to purchase over these past twelve months. This was followed by three most interesting Five Minute Talks from David Muggleton on the Dolphin & Anchor Hotel, Alan Green on Mr. Cawley's Almshouse and John Wells on his recent book about Chichester's defences in World War II. Our thanks to them for their time and strictly keeping to the five-minute rule! Thanks also go to Wendy Walker and Nichola Court for giving up their Saturday to make this event possible.

In February committee member Annette Lloyd Thomas is arranging what should be a most interesting afternoon looking behind the scenes at the Shippam's exhibition at The Novium. Once well known for their pots of fish and meat paste, the company was an important employer in Chichester. Then in March we will be holding our AGM at the Storrington and Sullington Parish Hall. Our guest speaker this year will be Mike Pitts, President of the Sussex Archaeological Society. Mike will be talking about his highly acclaimed latest book, 'Island at the Edge of the World – The Forgotten History of Easter Island' about a couple with Sussex connections who visited Easter Island in the early 20th Century and which combines archaeology with archival research. Full details of these events will be found in this edition of The Researcher.

The AGM of course is the time that members may wish to join the Committee. If you feel you can spare a few hours over the course of the year to help move the Society forward, then do please give it some thought. Nomination forms will be found in this edition.

We were saddened to learn recently of the passing of Brian Norton, who did so much work on the WSAS Inventory Project over many years, and we send our condolences to his widow, Daphne.

Hopefully I shall see some of you at our events in 2026. May I wish all our members a happy and prosperous new year.

Richard Howell

WSAS committee

Carol Brinson

Kim Fleming

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.

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Gatwick Aviation Museum

English Electric Lightning, Avro Shackleton, Laker Airways. Three names intimately associated with British aviation of the Cold War era – and just three of the many fascinating exhibits WSAS members and guests saw during their visit to the Gatwick Aviation Museum in October. 23 of us arrived at the museum on a fine Tuesday afternoon, to be greeted by three of the museum's dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers, including a still-serving RAF squadron leader and a retired Gatwick based commercial pilot. We were divided into three smaller groups; each being sent to a different part of the museum to start their tour.

My group was first seated in the museum's small film theatre, where, after a brief introduction from Squadron Leader Chris, we watched a film about the museum's most renowned exhibit, the only Avro Shackleton in the world currently with working engines. We learned that the Shackleton was a derivative of the wartime Lancaster bomber, used mainly for anti-submarine warfare, and later in an airborne early warning role, in service for forty years until 1991. The film included interviews with four elderly former crew members: a ground engineer, a flight technician, a navigator and a pilot. One recounted viewing one of the Christmas Island hydrogen bomb tests from the air at fifty miles distance, only being told by his captain afterwards that their mission had been to fly to Hawaii if the test had gone disastrously wrong and annihilated everyone on the island. This element of the tour concluded with a chance to walk up to the Shackleton and stand under its open bomb bay, for a final word from Chris, who had actually flown in a Shackleton on a couple of occasions.

Next we visited the main hanger which housed most of the other aircraft. Apart from the Lightning, the jet engine of which was also occasionally run, we saw and were told about seven more preserved air force or navy planes: Sea Hawk, Venom, Meteor, Sea Vixen, Hunter, Harrier and Jaguar, the last being the museum's most recent acquisition. We also learned about the dangers of ejector seats, the tight crew space in a Canberra cockpit, and how the first aircraft training simulator was built by an organ manufacturer.

Finally we went to the Gatwick room, which contained exhibits relating to the history of the airport, from its early days as a horse racing course (the Grand National was held there on three occasions during the first world war!) and grass-field home to the Surrey Flying Club to its re-establishment in 1958 as London's second major airport. We saw a scale model of the original 1930s airport with its Art Deco rotunda terminal (which survives in the middle of a nearby industrial estate), heard of its transformation into RAF Gatwick during the second world war, and saw exhibits of Laker, Monarch, Dan Air, and other now defunct airlines which used to be based there.

And perhaps most memorably we learned that its name originated in the Middle Ages, 'gat' meaning goat, and 'wic' a farm. So, enjoy your next holiday flight from Goat Farm Airport!

Mike Kipling

Lord Egremont

Whilst most people will be aware of Lord Egremont as the owner of the Leconfield Estates, WSAS members will also know him as our President, many of us having met him at our celebrations in November 2023 when he cut our 50th anniversary cake.

Quite how this busy public figure and manager of extensive estates finds time for writing was the first question. Ruthlessly setting aside four hours every morning to research and write is the key, providing a solid block of time in which to concentrate undisturbed. His publications are evidence that that discipline has worked.

Studying modern history at Oxford University Max Egremont (his authorial name) always knew that he wanted to write, and worked first in publishing. But when his father died unexpectedly, he found himself at 24 years of age in charge of the Leconfield Estates in West Sussex and Cumbria, and had quickly to learn, mainly from the estate staff, about agriculture and land management.

The first book, *The Cousins: The Friendship, Opinions and Activities of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt and George Wyndham*, was close to home, the extraordinary Blunt having been born in Petworth House and his cousin being of the family. Despite their strongly opposing views on Irish independence, the two remained great friends.

After the biography of Lord Balfour ("charming, but there was something cold and cerebral about him") Egremont published four novels, but a publisher's commission to treat the life of the likeable Major-General Sir Edward Spears provided the opportunity to return to historical research.

Justly highly praised, Egremont's now definitive biography of Siegfried Sassoon was another commission, this time enriched by access given by Sassoon's son to previously inaccessible papers.

Further work on the poets of World War I, and then on the war itself, followed, before the eastern part of Europe started to intrigue him. Although there was a substantial corpus of academic work in German about East Prussia, little was available in English about the area (nowadays covering much of north Poland, south Lithuania and the Russian exclave of the Kaliningrad oblast). In 2011 *Forgotten Land: Journeys Among the Ghosts of East Prussia* was published. For this subject Egremont chose a style that combined his own explorations of the area with its documented history, coloured with interviews with a range of experts and ordinary people, so as to describe the atmosphere of the area past and present.

The same approach he used for the more recent *The Glass Wall: Lives on the Baltic Frontier* about Estonia and Latvia, areas successively occupied by foreigners, some less malevolent than others. This would be an ideal pre-read for any visit to those fascinating countries.

Is there a logical progression in his choice of subjects, from home and family to poetry to World War I to eastern Europe? Possibly, he thinks, but the more important point is that history writers should not stray outside the area which they know, which in his case is the 1860s to the present, with special interests in this country's relationships with Europe, Ireland and the first world war.

What is there to be learned from studying these periods and figures from the past? Egremont stresses that there has always to be sympathy with people, there has to be courage, and imagination to maintain relationships in adverse conditions.

Lord Egremont
at Petworth House
December 2025



Now he is considering a new work about his own life and work with land and property, unsure yet whether that will mature into another book.

Though characteristically modest about them, Lord Egremont's leading roles in heritage have been considerable. For many years he chaired the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust, the charity dedicated to creating and giving grants for manuscript conservation, and the Friends of the Nations' Libraries. Asked to say what makes him proud of their achievements, he gives the best of chairman's answers, that he ensured that excellent individuals succeeded him in both roles. It was both for his publications and his leadership of the Friends of the National Libraries (as it was then called) that he was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 2001.

Now the President of the Sussex Heritage Trust, Lord Egremont enjoys and promotes high quality new architecture. Overall he is optimistic about the heritage, evidencing how people appreciate it more than in the 1960s and 1970s when disastrous town and country planning destroyed so much.

He pays warm tribute to the archivists who have managed the Petworth House Archive over the years, especially Alison McCann who did so much both at Petworth and at the smaller archive at Cockermouth, and now her successor Nichola Court. Whilst researching the history of the gardens at Petworth House, his wife, the garden designer Caroline Egremont, is a frequent user of the archive. Easy access to this huge and important private archive is granted via WSRO.

WSAS is indeed fortunate in having Lord Egremont as our President.

Kim Fleming

Underused records at WSRO

WSRO's eight miles of shelving house collections which cover nearly every aspect of life in the county from 780AD to the present day. These archives are a rich resource for research into a range of different topics, but only a fraction of the material held by WSRO is regularly accessed. This article explores a selection of underused collections or series of material, hopefully inspiring researchers to delve even more deeply into the archives.

The Richard Cobden Archive

One of the most significant personal collections held at WSRO is that of Richard Cobden, the liberal politician and campaigner for free trade. An important resource for 19th century political history, the Cobden archive comprises an extensive series of Cobden's correspondence with colleagues and friends, including fellow anti-Corn Law campaigner John Bright. Other correspondence in the collections deals with international affairs, including the American Civil War, Cobden's moral opposition to slavery, and his support for the Union. The archive also provides an important insight into Cobden's personal life and that of his children, including suffragist campaigner and early proponent of women's rights, Jane Cobden.

Financial records

Financial records may not have the immediate appeal of other documents but they can offer an important insight into many aspects of people's lives and material culture in the county and beyond. Accounts, bills and receipts kept for some of the great estates and the very wealthy may record information about important changes to properties and the construction of new buildings or lavish spending in other areas. A series of bills and receipts in the Uppark Archive, for instance, documents the purchase of jewellery and Sèvres china along with items which are no longer in use today, such as a pastille burner used to fragrance rooms (Uppark 13).

For less well off people housekeeping books help to tell the stories of ordinary lives and also reflect wider social and cultural change. An account book from 1953-1956 records the purchase of paraffin, and services such as coalmen and chimney sweeps – largely rendered obsolete with the arrival of electricity and mains gas (AM 975/1).

Records of house valuations can be a fascinating source for social history as they provide an incredibly detailed list of everything in a property, from individual items of jewellery and clothing, bed linen, garden furniture and ornaments (including flower pots), to the number of cushions on a sofa and even the carpets and linoleum on the floors. Valuation books can reveal much about how our ancestors lived a hundred or so years ago. One of our favourites is that of Reverend Philip John Thomas Blakeway, the parish priest at Walberton, dated 25th July 1915 (AM 692/112). It records that, in addition to a huge range of wines, he had in his cellar: 3 bottles of whisky, 57 bottles of sherry, 87 bottles of claret, 124 bottles of port and 129 bottles of Champagne.

Valuation book of Rev
Blakeway's house,
Walberton, 1915

WSRO, AM 692/112

Second Cottages at Walberton		57
Case No 1	20 bot Sherry	8 Ly-
	5 bot White wine	0 T-
W 2.	7 bot Stock.	1R-
	11 bot Claret	2 E-
	8 bot Port.	2 R-
W 3.	19 bot Sherry	2 0. T
	6 bot Port	1B-
W 4.	11 bot Champagne	2 JW-
	3 bot Whiskey.	1y. T
	9 bot Brandy	1 T. T
	2 bot ?	R-
W 5.	23 pr bot Claret	2 a-
	7 bot Burgundy	1R-
	3 bot Brandy	3B-
W 6.	12 bot Burgundy	1 N-
	12 bot Claret	1E-
W 7.	36 bot Port 1891.	0 B-
W 8.	12 bot of Bottles.	2 R-
W 9.	12 bot Port	1 LT-
	22 bot Tonic Wine	1 Id-
	2 bot Chablis.	R-
W 10.	12 bot P.G.W	1 LT.-
		aa E

17th March, 1916.—At a MEETING of the COMMITTEE held at the Town Hall, HORSHAM.

PRESENT.—Mr. F. H. Padwick (Chairman), Mr. G. C. Barker, Mr. P. Chase more, Mrs. A. M. Drabble, Mr. C. Gorring, Mr. H. Gorring, Rev. E. D. L. Harvey, Mr. W. A. Mackenzie, Mr. R. Morris, Mr. W. J. Passmore, Mr. J. Rapley, Mr. H. A. Rigg, K.C., Mr. M. Taylor, Mr. H. R. P. Wyatt, and Mr. O. N. Wyatt. Sir Sydney Olivier, K.C.M.G., permanent Secretary of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, and Mr. A. K. Kemble, from the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, were also present.

MINUTES.

1. The Minutes of the last Meeting were taken as read and were signed by the Chairman.

CO-OPTION OF ANOTHER MEMBER ON THIS COMMITTEE.

2. RESOLVED—That the Rev. E. D. L. Harvey be co-opted on this Committee.

3. REPORTS FROM DISTRICT SUB-COMMITTEES.

Westbourne, 16th February, 1916.—Miss Hall Hall reported progress as to canvas of the women for Agricultural Work and as to Farmers who would be willing to employ Women Labour.

No replies had been received to the Clerk's letters asking for the name of Agricultural Machine men who had gone to Munition factories or who had joined up.

The Committee had before them circulars from the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries as to the employment of Soldiers and Convalescent Soldiers and as to the Loan of Army Horses.

Attention was drawn to the proposed courses at Wye College in Poultry keeping and practical Farm Work.

Horsesham Rural, 10th March, 1916.—It was reported that 2 lectures had been given at Lower Beeding and Crawley on potato cultivation. The Committee had before them the various circulars received from the War Agricultural Committee. They resolved that the Parish Council of each Parish be asked to act as a Parochial Committee to carry out the suggested canvas of Farmers and others to work in conjunction with the Committee appointed by the Countess of March, and to report the result of their canvas to this Committee.

CANVASS OF WOMEN.

4. The Clerk reported that he had, acting on the instructions of the Chairman of the Committee, written to the Clerks to the District Sub-Committees pointing out that Lady March would organise the Meetings for women, with the official backing of the Board of Trade, and this was being done by her in the district.

The ladies appointed were as follows :—

WESTBOURNE ... Miss Hall Hall, Ivy Cottage, West Marden.
WESTHAMPNETT ... Countess of March's Secretary—Mrs. Wells—Boxgrove Vicarage, Chichester.
MIDHURST ... Mrs. Lacaita, Selham House, Petworth.
PETWORTH ... Hon. Mrs. Maxse, Little Bognor, Littleworth.
HORSHAM ... Mrs. Drabble, Lydford, Cowfold.
STEYNING ... Mrs. Miller, Blackstone Grange, Henfield.
and the Clerks of the District Sub-Committees had been asked to co-opt them on their District Sub-Committees. There is no representative co-opted for Thakeham and East Preston.

The Clerk reported he had sent posters of the Appeal to Women to the Clerks of the above District Committees for posting in their Parishes.

The Clerk stated that he had, acting on the instructions of the Chairman, written to the Clerk of each Sub-Committee asking them to at once take steps to see that a Parochial Committee is appointed in each Parish in their District to canvas Farmers and others to ascertain what shortage of labour there is, or is likely to be, in the future, and whether they would be willing to avail themselves of women labour, and also asking for names and addresses of Parochial Committees formed.

The Clerk had received a list of the Parochial Committees formed for the Parishes and places in the Westbourne Rural District. In the Westbourne Rural District they had appointed Registrars who will keep a list of women requiring work on farms and employers wanting to make use of such labour, applications to be made locally to the Registrar for all details of the labour available in their neighbourhood. Similar methods had been adopted in the Petworth Rural District.

The Clerk had also received a list of ladies appointed on the Parochial Committees for the Petworth Rural District. The Clerk had received a list of ladies willing to act as representatives in the Steyning West Rural District, which he had forwarded to the Countess of March.

The Clerk stated that he had received the names and addresses of persons nominated on the Parochial Committees from the Clerk of the East Preston Sub-Committee.

The Chairman explained the present position as to Lady March's Committee, and the canvas of women, and Sir Sydney Olivier and members of the Committee spoke as to the best means of canvassing women for work on the land, and farmers to employ women.

5. It was RESOLVED—That the resolution passed at the last Meeting of the Committee, instructing the Clerk to write to each district Sub-Committee, urging the appointment by them of Parochial Committees to canvass women, be rescinded.

6. It was also RESOLVED—That the canvass of women be left to Lady March's Committee, which had the official backing of the Board of Trade.

7. It was also RESOLVED—That Lady March be co-opted on this Committee.

SHEEP GRAZING ON GOLF LINKS.

8. Acting on the instructions of the Committee given at the last Meeting, the Clerk stated that he had written to the Secretary of each Golf Club and from the replies received it appeared that the majority of Golf Clubs were utilising their links for grazing sheep.

CULTIVATING BUILDING AND OTHER PLOTS.

9. The Clerk stated that acting on instructions received at the last Meeting, he had written to the Clerk of each Urban District Council asking each Council to do its utmost so that spare building and other vacant plots should be utilised for the purpose of growing vegetables and other similar crops.

WSCC,

Minutes of War
Agricultural
Committee,

17 March 1916.

WSRO,

WOC/CM80/1/1.

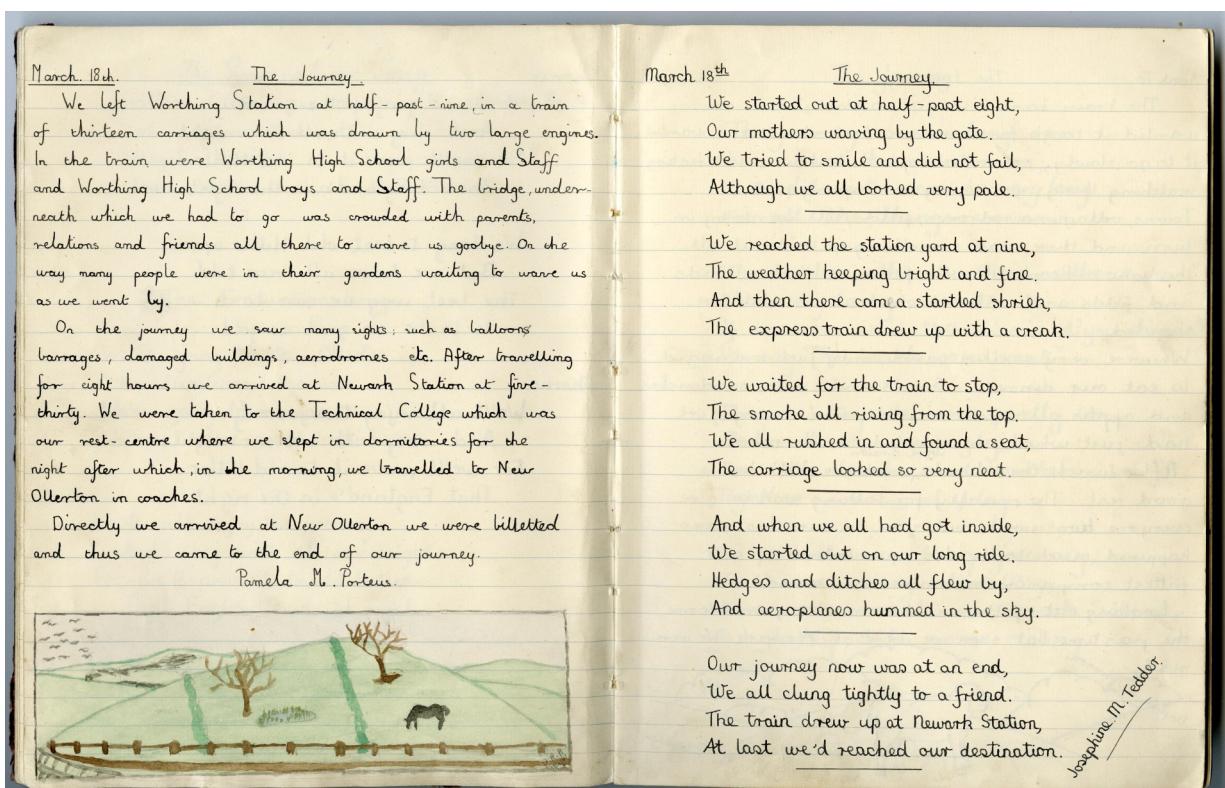
West Sussex County Council

Like financial documents the records of local government may have a somewhat unglamorous reputation. However organisations like the County Council and borough and district councils have played a key role in shaping the county we live in today. We hold an extensive series of minute books and other records which document the work of the County Council, and other tiers of local government, which cover matters such as public health and education. The County Council in particular had an important role in wartime, and the records cover matters such as women working on farms in the First World War and evacuation in the Second World War.

School magazines

Many genealogists may have used school records such as admission registers and log books to trace their ancestors, but school magazines can also be an invaluable resource, both for family history (including for tracing staff members who might be difficult to locate in other sources) but also for understanding what life may have been like at local schools in the past. We have extensive series of school magazines for some schools in the county. They record events including sports days and prizegivings, and also wider, and sometimes unexpected, events in the life of the school such as a trip to Germany by pupils from Worthing High School for Boys in 1936 at the height of the Nazi regime. One unusual example is a school magazine produced by pupils from Worthing High School for Girls which records their evacuation to New Ollerton in Nottinghamshire. The magazine includes poems, sketches and an account of a night spent in an air raid shelter; unusually in the archives at WSRO it allows us to hear more directly from children themselves about their experiences.

Jenny Mason



Worthing High School for Girls school magazine, March-July 1941

WSRO, E 218/19/64

Christmas get-together, 13 December 2025

After coffee, mince pies and conversation, we were ushered into the search room to view this year's display of documents which WSAS funds have helped to acquire. Catching several early modernists' eyes was a bound manuscript volume from the 1650s. The page at which it was open was, after some collaborative deciphering, determined to be a register of the activities of the commissioners for sewers responsible for the Arun and its floodplain (a 'sewer' at that time was any sort of artificial drainage channel). Other items on show included 19th century Arundel police records ('Monday - took a prisoner to Petworth', 'Tuesday - Cardinal Manning in Arundel'), early 20th century printed annual reports of the Littlehampton and District Cottage Hospital, and a map of the revised junction layout to allow Arun valley trains to route directly to Littlehampton.

We then sat down to listen to the three five-minute talks. First was David Muggleton, who told of his investigations into the merger of two adjacent Chichester inns, the Dolphin and the Anchor. The Dolphin and Anchor in West Street is noted in histories of the city to have become a single entity in 1910, but photographs from the King's visit in 1913 and Kelly's directories from 1918 confirm they remained separate for longer. Trust House hotels, owner of the Anchor, bought the Dolphin in 1919 and knocked through the wall between them. However they maintained separate liquor licences for the two premises until February 1922, when the first application in the joint name was made. Since then part of the premises has been sacrificed to Waterstones, and the remaining part is owned by Wetherspoons, who have yet to change this part of history of the inn on their website despite the overwhelming historical evidence.

Next came Alan Green's talk on Mr Cawley's Almshouse, which was founded 400 years ago by William Cawley. The money to build it came from the estate of his father John Cawley, a wealthy brewer and three-time mayor of Chichester. William Cawley was later one of the signatories of Charles I's death warrant and fled into exile at the Restoration, when the almshouse then came to the city corporation and served as Chichester's workhouse in subsequent centuries. Housing now occupies much of the site, but the chapel has been preserved (although is rarely open to the public). All the workhouse records were lost during a Second World War campaign to recycle waste paper, but excavations revealed three bodies beneath the chapel floor, one of which is thought by some to be that of the regicide, brought back in secret from Switzerland where he had died (and has a marked tomb).

The final talk was by John Wells, author of '*Military Defence of Chichester: World War Two*' (reviewed in *West Sussex History* 93). John emphasised that, whilst he had carried out extensive research nationally, he had restricted this book to the Chichester area. He has also written up his findings on Bognor and Arundel, and Littlehampton is his next challenge. Some might consider the mid twentieth century as too recent for archaeology, but he disagreed. As well as structural remains, his research has embraced official army war diaries, RAF aerial photographs (oblique shots reveal more than those taken directly overhead), and oral history (such as recollections of canoeing in ten foot deep anti-tank ditches).

Our thanks go to Wendy for allowing WSAS to use the Record Office, and to Leigh in particular for organising the refreshments so ably. Mike Kipling

West Sussex Archives Society

52nd Annual General Meeting

At 12 noon on Saturday 21 March 2026

Parish Hall, Thakeham Road, Storrington RH20 3PP

Agenda

- 1 To receive apologies for absence.
- 2 To agree the minutes of the 51st AGM held on 22 March 2025.
- 3 To discuss any matter arising.
- 4 To receive the society's final accounts for 2025.
- 5 To receive the chairman's report.
- 6 To receive the County Archivist's report.
- 7 To elect officers and committee members.
- 8 To discuss any other urgent business.
- 9 To propose the date of the 53rd AGM.

Refreshments will be served from 11.30am. Members' lunch at 1pm must be booked by 14 March: vegetarian quiche, new potatoes and salad, followed by cheesecake and fruit.

Mike Pitts' talk will begin at 2.30pm.

Joining the committee

The committee comprises twelve members. It meets six times a year at the Record Office, each meeting lasting about two hours. Members serve for up to three years before seeking re-election. The following have agreed to stand for re-election:

Richard Howell - Chairman

Carol Brinson

Susan Millard

Leigh Lawson - Secretary

Mike Kipling

We still have a few vacancies, so if you would like to nominate yourself or someone else (having checked that they are willing to stand), please complete this form and send it to the chairman, Richard Howell, to be received % the West Sussex Record Office by 21 February 2026.

Name of candidate _____

Tel no/e-mail _____

Name of proposer _____

Tel no/e-mail _____

Name of seconder _____

Tel no/e-mail _____

Notices

WSAS events in 2026

Our programme of events for this new year was published on page 9 of the last issue. The dates and venues for those in September and October are now confirmed.

Saturday 5 September 2pm	Archaeology of the South Downs, including latest discoveries on Highdown Talk by James Sainsbury	Clapham and Patching Village Hall, 201 Long Furlong, Clapham and Patching, Worthing BN13 3UT
Saturday 24 October am and pm	Annual Conference Sussex Writers	Barnham Community Hall, Yapton Road, Barnham PO22 0AY

A quicker way to book WSAS events

As an alternative to posting a cheque and using 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.

West Sussex History

The editor of our journal *West Sussex History* is always very happy to receive contributions, especially from new authors. Ideally pieces should be between 3,000 and 5,000 words, but shorter pieces are also welcome. Longer pieces may need to be split between consecutive issues. Articles should be submitted as a Word document to the editor via the WSAS contact address, or on a USB stick which may be deposited at WSRO for collection. Submissions should contain the author's name and contact details. Notes for contributors may be found on the inside cover of past issues of *WSH*.

The deadline for submissions for the 2026 issue is 31 July 2026; if depositing the material at WSRO please allow a further two weeks prior to the deadline. Publication will be mid October 2026. Non members of WSAS will be sent one free copy of the journal. Please address all enquiries to the editor via the WSAS contact email address.

West Sussex History indexing

The indexing of *WSH* is being brought up to date. News of the project will be published in the next issue of this newsletter.

Explore Your History: Events at the Record Office

Talks

WSAS members are invited to the Record Office's series of talks. The following are planned as pilots for a new slot on Mondays at 3pm.

Monday 23 March 2026: **From Stagecoach to Stagecoach - 300 Years of Travel in the Lavant Valley** by Alan Green

Monday 27 April 2026: **Transforming the Wealden garden - the development of 'plantsmen gardens' by incoming country house families c.1840-1920s** by Sue Berry

We hope you'll join us, either in person (advance booking essential) or online.

Workshops for family and local historians

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 programme for 2026 is as follows.

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

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

The following three events are now ready for booking.

Hurrah for Shippam's

Wednesday 11 February 2026 at 2pm

At The Novium, Tower Street, Chichester PO19 1QH; SU859049

This event will consist of a visit to the exhibition, a talk, and a visit behind the scenes, all about the history of the famous Shippam's brand and the production of its foods in Chichester - and also a guided walk to see sites in Chichester formerly occupied by the company. Refreshments will be provided. WSAS members and their guests only.

WSAS members and their guests: £6

Annual General Meeting, and talk by Mike Pitts

Saturday 21 March 2026: AGM starting promptly at 12 noon; talk at 2.30pm

At the Parish Hall, Thakeham Road, Storrington RH20 3PP; TQ094148

The agenda for the AGM is on page 11. Tea and coffee will be available from 11.30am. Lunch must be booked by 14 March. The talk by Mike Pitts, President of the Sussex Archaeological Society, entitled "Archaeology and archives", will begin at 2.30pm after tea and coffee.

Members attending the AGM, lunch and talk: £15.

Members and non members attending the talk only: £10.

Hormouth to Seal island: a short maritime history of harbour and coast

Saturday 18 April 2026 at 2.30pm

At the Chichester Harbour Conservancy Education Centre, Dell Quay Road, Apuldram PO20 7EB; SU835028

Preceded by tea and coffee from 2pm, this talk on the history of Chichester harbour and the nearby coast will be given by Dr Ian Friel, historian, writer and consultant with an international reputation in maritime history.

Park on the side of the road adjacent to the pub (not in the pub's carpark), or along the road.

WSAS members: £7

Non members: £9

Booking for WSAS events

Please book and pay either by e-mail and bank transfer (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
Event details are also at www.wsas.co.uk and on the WSAS Facebook page.

**Hurrah for Shippam's, 11 February 2026 at 2pm, The Novium, Chichester; £6
WSAS members and their guests only**

Names of members attending _____

Tel no or e-mail address _____

Names of members' guests attending _____

Tel no or e-mail address _____

Annual General Meeting, and talk, 21 March 2026: AGM starting at 12 noon

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

At the Parish Hall, Thakeham Road, Storrington

Names of members attending the AGM _____

Number wanting lunch (book by 14 March) _____

Tel no or e-mail address _____

Names of non members attending the talk only _____

Tel no or e-mail address of non members _____

A short maritime history of harbour and coast, 18 April 2026 at 2.30pm

Members: £7; Non members: £9

At the Chichester Harbour Conservancy Education Centre, Apuldrum

Names of members attending _____

Tel no or e-mail address _____

Names of non members attending _____

Tel no or e-mail address _____



Collections Care Fortnight, December 2025, WSRO



Selection of publications by Littlehampton and District Hospital.
Acquisitions shown at the Christmas get together, December 2025,
WSRO