

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2005

CONTENTS

- | | | |
|--|---|-------------|
| ✓ Friends News | <i>Pam Combes</i> | page 1 |
| ✓ Record Office News | <i>Elizabeth Hughes</i> | page 2 |
| ✓ Derek Rawlings: an appreciation | <i>Roger Davey</i> | page 3 |
| ✓ 'The sheer drudgery of local history' | <i>Colin Brent</i> | page 3 |
| ✓ Developments at Stanmer House | <i>Sue Berry</i> | page 4 |
| ✓ Stories from the archives | <i>Margaret Thorburn</i> | page 5 |
| ✓ Future events | <i>Pam Combes, Sue Berry, Diana Crook</i> | pages 6 - 7 |
| ✓ New acquisitions: The Courthope Papers | <i>Jeremy Hodgkinson</i> | page 8 |
| ✓ SAS FIGG - where has it gone? | <i>Pam Combes</i> | page 8 |
| ✓ With a little help from your Friends | <i>Michael Verrall</i> | page 9 |
| ✓ Some dates for your diary | | back cover |

FRIENDS OF THE EAST SUSSEX RECORD OFFICE

Chairman	Mrs Pam Combes
Vice-Chairman	Lady Teviot
Hon. Treasurer	Mr Michael Verrall
Hon. Secretary	Dr Sally Dench
Hon. Assist. Secretary - I.T.	Mr Ken Foord
Newsletter Editor	Dr Gail Vines
Newsletter Production	Ms Sue Rowland
County Archivist	Mrs Elizabeth Hughes

Committee Members:

Mrs Judith Akhurst	Mr Roger Davey
Mr Brian Brooks	Mr Ian Hilder
Mrs Diana Crook	Lord Teviot

Patron: Admiral Sir Lyndsay Bryson KCB

President: Phyllida K. Stewart-Roberts OBE, Lord-Lieutenant, East Sussex
Registered Charity No. 296062

Please direct any correspondence or membership enquiries to the appropriate officer c/o the Record Office
Visit the FESRO web site at: www.esrole.fsnet.co.uk

EAST SUSSEX COUNTY RECORD OFFICE
The Maltings, Castle Precincts, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1YT
Telephone: 01273 482349
e-mail: archives@eastsussexcc.gov.uk

Opening Times

Mon, Tue, 8.45-4.45, Wed 9.30-4.45, Thur 8.45-4.45, Fri 8.45-4.15
& the second Saturday in each month 9.00-1.00 & 2.00-4.45

*To book please phone the Search Room on:
01273 482359 (Booking is essential on Saturdays)*

FESRO e-mail Forum

If you are connected to the internet you can join the Friends 'e-mail list'. This system is like an open forum, through which any member can send an open e-mail to the rest of the group. There is no fee, just send a blank e-mail to:

fesroeg-subscribe@onelist.com

If you are seeking information on a particular subject relating to the history of the county, simply e-mail the group.

News from the Chairman

Taking over from Derek Rawlings as the new chairman of FESRO is daunting, to say the least. His dedicated work over many years makes him a formidable act to follow. Fortunately for us in this time of change, the present committee can continue to build on sound foundations.

I first joined the committee last year, having been only intermittently a member of the group in earlier years. My deeper interest was aroused when plans were revealed to replace the Maltings – along with its archive storage facilities in Lewes and Newhaven - with a new state-of-the-art archive or history study centre. The facilities at the Maltings are becoming increasingly inadequate for modern archive management while the facilities for users, which are of particular interest to the Friends, are inevitably limited in such a confined space.

But the provision of specialised archive storage and user facilities is costly. It is clear that if the ambitious plans are ever to be realised, the project must seek financial support from sources such as the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Friends have an essential

role to play in supporting the project. If, through our organisation, we can demonstrate a wide and varied interest in the work of East Sussex Record Office and the facilities it provides, our support could be crucial to the successful realisation of the plans.

I have been fortunate to have been able to attend some of the meetings where the plans have been discussed, both as a representative of the Friends and of Sussex Archaeological Society, which may wish to become a partner in the scheme. As a result, I have some insight into what has been proposed, but I am acutely aware that other members are not so privileged. WS Atkins Consultants Ltd has been advising ESCC on their future plans; the same company designed and realised the Surrey History Centre. In order for our members to get an impression of what a state-of-the-art archive office can provide, the committee has arranged a group visit to Surrey on 9th May (see page 6). Do come along if you can and gain a glimpse of what excitement the future might hold for us. For more information, search Surrey History Centre on the internet.

Pam Combes

Newsletter update

Faithful readers of the FESRO newsletter will have noticed modest changes in house style over recent months. In future issues we intend to introduce further innovations, with the aim of broadening the newsletter's appeal. In this issue, we've squeezed in a couple of illustrations, and Margaret Thorburn has launched what we hope will become a regular feature – offering lively, informal accounts of research projects undertaken by Friends.

Additional ideas so far include brief biographies of committee members, as well as contributions from ESRO staff about their

work. But do get in touch with your own suggestions – please tell us what you'd like to read about in the newsletter. The committee also welcomes any ideas for courses, lectures and visits for the coming year.

We would very much like to thank Sue Berry for editing the newsletter in 2004. The new editor is Gail Vines, a freelance writer and editor who was formerly features editor at *New Scientist* magazine. Gail moved to Lewes six years ago and is particularly interested in the landscape history of the Malling-Caburn Downs.

Record Office news

New Record Office

Progress continued to be made towards achieving a new Record Office. The final version of the feasibility study report by Faithful & Gould was received in October and we are now looking at getting County Council endorsement of its recommendations and a steer on the way forward. We are also circulating the report to potential partners and will use it as a basis for further discussions. The recommendations came up with six options, costing between £12.7m and £8.25m:

- New Historical Resource Centre (The Keep)
- New Historical Resource Centre excluding Records Management
- New Record Office including Records Management
- New Record Office excluding records management
- Do Nothing
- Do Minimum (repair and refurbish)

We are also intending to put together a summary of the report to circulate more widely, to people like the Friends, and we are putting in a lottery bid for money to produce an audience development plan, which is an essential part of any large lottery bid. This will involve user consultation with people like yourselves.

In the meantime, back at the Maltings, there are plans to provide a disabled lift coming up from the back of the hall opposite the toilets and into the space occupied by conservation, where we'll inevitably lose some space. The intention is also to re-configure the toilets to provide disabled access. But nothing is definitely decided yet and every meeting with the architects brings new problems.

Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act came fully into force on 1 January 2005. East Sussex County Council was well prepared, thanks to work by Jane Bartlett, who drew up guidelines for staff, ran training sessions for key staff, produced an on-line training package for all staff and a leaflet and website information for the public. Thanks are also due to Wendy Walker and former staff-member Colin Hinton, who carried out the audit of records across the whole council (a huge job, not quite complete). As I write this, we have 7 Freedom of Information enquiries in as many days, some relatively easy to answer, others more complicated and time-consuming. For archive visits and enquiries, it is hoped that things will be largely "business as usual".

Access to archives

The work to digitise lists of ecclesiastical parish records and mount them on www.a2a.org.uk continues apace, thanks to Rachel Freeman. About a dozen lists have already appeared.

Elizabeth Hughes

FESRO AGM

Derek Rawlings: an appreciation

Derek took his final bow as Chairman of the Friends at the 2004 AGM in November, having served as an officer since the society's inception in 1980. He was the founder Treasurer from 1980 to 1988, then Secretary for a couple of years before taking on the Chairmanship upon the retirement of Austin Williamson in 1990. In all this time he - with the help of Hylda, also for some time a committee member - gave his services unstintingly not only to ourselves but also to the Danehill Parish Historical Society and the Sussex Record Society.

Derek and Hylda's involvement with local history (and much else besides) began in earnest when he retired from the Bank of England and they came to live in Danehill. Derek's financial expertise has considerably benefited us over the years, not least in our dealings with the Charity Commissioners since registration in 1987. In his time as an officer (aided notably by Colin Hobbs, Wyn Ford and others) some £35,000 was given by, or channelled through, the Friends to help the work of the Record Office. He also initiated the bookstall in 1984, has run it ever since, and hopes to continue to do so.

But Derek and Hylda are far more than just committee people. They have faithfully participated in, and evidently thoroughly enjoyed, the activities of the Friends over the years, attending most of the outings and social events - always with exactly the right word of thanks to the organisers. They were assiduous participants in the winter evening workshop sessions from 1982 which undertook so much valuable listing and indexing work for the Record Office. And for many years they have joined other volunteers in manning the reception desk in the hall of the Maltings when help was needed.

Perhaps it is their friendliness and enthusiasm which has marked out Derek and Hylda's 'Friends' years, and which has made them such an asset to us and to others. We very much hope to see them among us for some time to come. Indeed, may they also long continue to unearth and document the history of the Danehill area, enjoying such leisure time as their energy and their house, garden, donkey and other interests will allow them.

Roger Davey

'The sheer drudgery of local history'

At the AGM last November, the Friends were delighted to hear **Dr Colin Brent** speak about his latest book, *Pre-Georgian Lewes*, now on sale at FESRO bookstall. With characteristic wit and style, Colin surveyed the hazards: "the scarcity of archives, medieval and early-modern; the patchiness of archaeological excavation, and the often inconclusive results; the difficulty even of using the name 'Lewes' with confidence. Beyond that loomed the tiresome duty of the antiquarian to relate any hard-won data to the onward sweep of English history. Three themes did however emerge from the formless matter. They were the abiding wealth of provincial England, the decentralized nature of the English state, and the impact of Conscience - Catholic and Puritan: freedoms which heralded English democracy."

Developments at Stanmer House

Many members will have seen the sadly neglected house and stables at the mainly late 18th century park at Stanmer. At last, there is hope. After years of neglect during its ownership by Brighton Council, a developer called Cherrywood is going to try to rescue this Grade 1 listed building, and has set up a website about the house and park: www.stanmerhouse.co.uk. The change in the prospects for the house means that many people who are used to wandering close to it through its neglected grounds will have to forego that. One hopes that a smart-looking house - into which entry to the lovely rooms on the east side will be possible – will be a

small price to pay for the major environmental improvements that the development should give to the house and the stables. The immediate grounds will be restored and managed by Cherrywood. If this development does not work, then the buildings are likely to be doomed and with it one wonders about the prospect for the park, as Brighton and Hove Council seem to be unable to afford the enormous management needs it now has.

My article about the house and grounds in the 1700s is now due out in 2005, a year earlier than expected.

Sue Berry



These still-surviving lodges on the Lewes Road side of Stanmer Park, as depicted in Baxter's *Stranger in Brighton and Directory* (1824), were built in 1778 to replace the first set of 1769, the site of which is marked on the map by Figg (ESRO ACC 3714/4) of the Stanmer Estate in 1800 as 'Old Lodge Clump'. For more information about the house and grounds in the 1700s, see Sue Berry's forthcoming paper in SAC (2005).

Stories from the archives

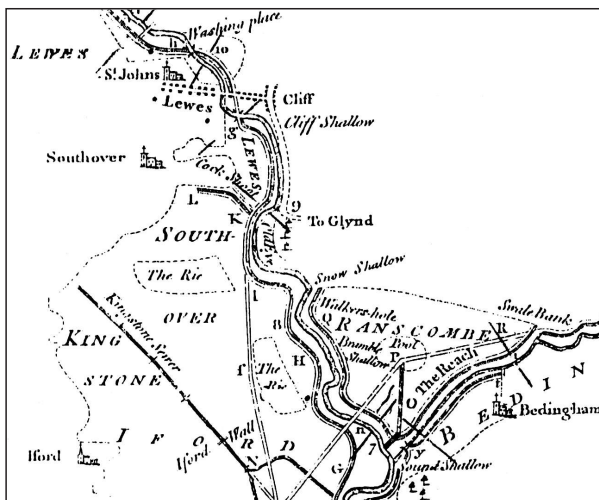
Launching a new occasional series, **Margaret Thorburn** describes a decidedly draining research project.

Trawling through the record books of the Commission of Sewers, 1626-1950 (ESRO SRA6/2/1-12) for Lewes and Laughton Levels proved to be an all-absorbing exercise. Coming away bleary-eyed with pages of notes, one returns again and again, eager to continue. All those familiar local names of the high-status landowners and ambitious gentry spring from the pages. How busy and committed they all were to adapt and control the waters of the Ouse and Glynde in order to trade, to raise stock and to produce great quantities of hay on well-drained pastures. The Agricultural Revolution was on its way. Barges went up and down the Ouse, and further north a higher navigation with locks was developed, though the scheme was never an economic success. Despite storms and floods during the 18th century, the Commission carried out surveys and consulted engineers with even more determination to control the flow of the Ouse and to keep summer pastures dry for stock grazing. How else would it be possible to raise the yields of barley and wheat without the abundant manure and well-fed stock?

Eventually, the Commission was succeeded by the Southern River Authority. Minutes of meetings continued to be recorded in the big brown books. A climax to the long story of drainage over the centuries occurred just before WW2 when with great courage it was decided to buy a mechanical excavator for the Ouse - a Priestman Drag-Line

Cub. Thereafter the minutes are brief, chiefly recording the siting of the excavator, working somewhere in the Levels.

So what did I do with my notes? I had particularly selected references to the sewers that passed north to south through Cliffe (it was 2001) and subsequently wrote *Cliffe: a trading settlement on the low ground*, with copies placed in the two Lewes libraries. Christopher Whittick found selected references useful in discussion meetings with the Environment Agency (it had all happened before). My written piece has been drawn to the attention of the Historic Landscape Characterisation Project for Sussex. I also use material from my notes for a local historical walk, based around the Cockshut and brooklands. Recently I was a contributor for a discussion on the past history of floods which in due course will be a Radio 4 programme. So, you never know what might emerge from delving into big old books.



Part of John Smeaton's map of proposed improvements to the Upper and Lower Ouse Navigation in 1768. (ESRO Acc 2759)

Future events

Regency Brighton and Hove Study Day, 12th April 2005

The Georgian Group is running a Study Day in Brighton and Hove on 12th April 2005. The three experts are Sue Berry, Andrew Barlow (Keeper of the Royal Pavilion) and Nick Tyson (Director, Regency Town House). In the morning, Sue will examine our current knowledge of the evolution of the Steine as a promenade and social centre and its influence on the choice of location for the Prince of Wales' seaside home. At the Royal Pavilion, Andrew Barlow will explain how recent research has developed the interpretation of how the Pavilion evolved from a villa into a seaside palace. The afternoon will be spent in Brunswick Town where Nick Tyson will interpret recent work on the Regency Town House and the basement annexe and a colleague will take the group around the key parts of Brunswick Town and explain how this very successful planned Regency suburb of the 1820s worked.

The day starts at 10.30 and ends at 4.30. It will cost £25. To book write to The Georgian Group, 6 Fitzroy Square, London W1T 5DX and enclose an SAE. Cheque payable to The Georgian Group. To check whether places are still available ring 020 7529 8920 or e-mail info@georgiangroup.org.uk

Sue Berry

Visit to Surrey History Centre, Monday 9th May 2005

This trip is a unique opportunity to see the range of facilities that can be provided at a modern archive centre. The centre is closed to the public on Monday so we will have good access to both the 'front of house' facilities and 'behind the scenes'. Sussex material in the Surrey collections will also be put on display.

In addition, Elizabeth Hughes has kindly agreed to show participants some of the 'behind the scenes' facilities at ESRO on Wednesday May 4th at 4.45pm, so you get two visits for the price of one!

The cost of the visit is £15, which includes coffee on arrival, a tour of the History Centre and the preliminary visit to The Maltings. Take picnic lunches to eat at the centre or there is a pub close by.

The coach will pick up at Hove Town Hall at 9.30 and the Travel Lodge/Little Chef near Hickstead at 9.45. The Travel Lodge is just off the A23, accessible from both carriageways. Restricting the pick-up points reduces the hire cost substantially. To minimise use of the parking at the Travel Lodge, please try to car share if you plan to join the coach there. A map showing access details will be sent with confirmation of booking.

Pam Combes

Future events

The Villas and Squares of west Brighton, 5th June 2005

A walk on Sunday 5th June 2005 2.30-4.30 with Dr. Sue Berry.

Meet in Russell Square at 2.30 prompt. Bookings in advance only – 15 people maximum. You will be walking into Brunswick Town and up towards Wick. Please come in suitable footwear and clothing. Charge for members £4, this covers photocopying etc.

The area from Churchill Square westwards to 'Brunswick Town' contains quite a few surprises and deserves to be both better known and managed. Within this area there are early squares from c1799 whose facades have been 'lifted' out of the design books of the period jostling with redevelopment of later dates such as Embassy Court (now being refurbished) and the Grand Hotel. The result is a medley of squares with a variety of facades of which the earliest is farthest from the town centre, an issue we will explore as we walk. Once we get to the boundary with Hove, the contrast of the planning of Brunswick Town with the Georgian scramble through which we will have just walked will become evident. At this point the change in visitors' tastes and their greater wealth co-incided with the desire of a group of developers to keep a firm hold on a project until it was completed. We will amble through part of the development and look at what was intended and compare that with what we see. This was one of the most successful projects of its time and still has the period feel that 'west Brighton' could also project.

I am at present writing up the early history of the western side of Brighton for publication and from my work, maps and notes will be provided.

Sue Berry

Visit to Charleston Manor, West Dean, Saturday 16th July 2005

Charleston Manor is mentioned in the Domesday Book, and its dovecote and the earliest part of the house are recorded as being owned by William the Conqueror's cupbearer. A 12th century window can be seen at the house, which is set in a fine formal English garden. In the 1930s the dilapidated estate was purchased by Sir Oswald Birley, the portrait painter, and his wife Rhoda, who engaged the architect Walter Godfrey to carry out restoration of the house and gardens. Comprehensive information on the estate and its music festival can be found on charleston-manor.org.uk/content/house/history.htm.

Mr and Mrs Kandiah have generously given us permission to visit their home and to have access to the house. As the rooms are not large, visitors are asked to take care in looking around. At 2.15 pm Friends will assemble in the magnificent 16th century tithe barn where Chris Whittick and David Martin will point out features of interest, and archival documents will be displayed. Those interested may look through the door of the ancient dovecote, but not enter so as not to disturb the birds.

Friends may like to extend their visit to nearby West Dean Church which has an Epstein bust of Viscount Waverley and a fine 17th century tomb of William Thomas and his wife. We hope for good weather so that the gardens and lake at Charleston Manor can be enjoyed at their best, but rain or shine, this promises to be a special visit.

Diana Crook

New acquisitions

THE COURTHOPE PAPERS: Scythes, guns and cricket...

A recent acquisition of the Record Office, to which both the Friends and the Wealden Iron Research Group have contributed, is a body of manuscripts which have already existed in the collection at the Maltings in the form of photocopies for the past 20 years. In 1956, a substantial deposit of papers of the Courthope family of Whiligh, Ticehurst, was made to the Sussex Archaeological Society, and subsequently transferred to ESRO in 1982. Missing from that collection, and separately sold, were an important group of documents concerning the iron industry in the Weald. When these were privately acquired in the early 1980s, copies were made available.

In the main, the papers cover two distinct periods: the first is a group of documents (1530-1600) relating to the business and private affairs of the Horsmonden family, of Goudhurst, Kent, scythemakers. These include a rare 16th-century business correspondence concerning the sale of scythes to Barnstaple, Devon. The second group of documents, dating from c.1660-1680, relate to ordnance production during and following the Second

and Third Dutch Wars, and include letters, contracts and accounts derived from the partnership of Alexander Courthope with George Browne. Among them is an interesting collection of letters from Humphrey Tuckey, gunfounder's agent, in which are many passing references to events in London during the critical years of the plague, the Great Fire and the Dutch threats to the coast.

The 17th-century gunfounding material is part of a larger group relating to the activities of the Brownes, which also includes papers of the Foley family in Herefordshire Record Office, and papers in the hands of the Sanders family (descendants of George Browne), copies of which are in the Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone.

Finally, the newly deposited papers include a copy of the previously published 17th-century journal of Nathaniel Courthope, a copy of the memoirs of Sir George Courthope, also 17th century, and some correspondence of a local nature dating from the early 18th century, amongst which are several references to cricket.

Jeremy Hodgkinson

SAS FIGG – where has it gone?

Fellow cartographic addicts and technophobes may have found of late that the index of SAS FIGG maps has mysteriously disappeared from the shelves in the search room. In the interests of tidying up the system, these plans have been united with the other Figg material held by ESRO as part of the archive of the surveyors and architects Fuller and Askew (FAA) – so it is to the FAA binder that reference should now be made. The SAS maps

and plans are listed in that binder as ACC3412/3 and the original index numbers for the individual maps have been retained as the suffix.

When these changes were made, the catalogue entries were fully revised and improved and so, once the list has been located, the descriptions are much more informative – for example:

Reference: ACC3412/3/276

'A Survey and Plan of the Estate of Mr Thomas Rickman lying in the Parish of Barcombe'
by Thomas Marchant

Creation date: 1784

For those of us who still use the search room lists, it would be helpful if one of the SAS binders had SAS FIGG noted on the spine and a page inserted with directions to the new place that has been assigned to these useful maps. For those of us who have access to the internet, all the material can be found by

searching A2A using the name William Figg as the first point of reference. When the Fuller and Askew list appears, click on 'catalogue in full' to see the descriptions of the individual maps and plans and use control 'f' to locate place-names or personal names.

Pam Combes

With a little help from your Friends

Even small gifts can help the Record Office to acquire unique documents or make the archives more widely accessible. Here is an update on our latest financial support, compiled by treasurer Michael Verrell:

£1000 for the A2A Project: Sussex Parish Chest

£282 for two documents, one about possible Jacobitism in East Sussex

£90 for volumes 29, 35 and 56 of The Canterbury & York Society

£75 for the diary of Henry Davidson of Brighton, 1872-1874

£20 for the hire of two tables at the Hastings Family History Fair

If you would like to make a donation, please don't hesitate to contact Michael by leaving a note or phone message at ESRO reception. See the Summer 2004 FESRO newsletter for a list of earlier contributions from FESRO totally £4776.

More largesse from the Chancellor! A new scheme for giving to charity through the tax return

From April 2004, people who complete a self-assessment tax form will be able to nominate a charity to receive all or part of any repayment due to them. The Inland Revenue repaid about £3000 million to near 3 million self-assessment taxpayers last year.

The new scheme has the following advantages:

- the donation will be paid direct to the charity's bank account
- the form will incorporate a Gift Aid declaration
- Gift Aid tax will be paid without the charity having to make a claim
- for the first time charities will benefit from Gift Aid on anonymous donations

The Inland Revenue will publish a list of participating charities from which donors can choose on its website. Donors need to enter the code for their chosen charity on their tax returns. You will only be able to donate to charities which have registered to join the scheme. FESRO has registered. Our unique code is BAJ84KG.

Michael Verrall

Dates for your 2005 diary

- Feb 12th - Saturday opening (please phone to book)
- Feb 19th - Saturday 2.30pm Annabelle Hughes *House History and archives*
- Mar 9th - FESRO Committee Meeting
- Mar 12th - Saturday opening (please phone to book)
- Mar 19th - Saturday 2.30pm Roger Davey *The Enclosure Process*
- Apr 9th - Saturday opening (please phone to book)
- Apr 12th - **Regency Brighton and Hove Study Day** (see p.6 for details)
- Apr 23rd - Saturday 2.30pm Sue Berry *Georgian Brighton's archives for local and family historians*
- May 8th - Newsletter deadline. Copy to ESRO Reception
- May 9th - Monday - **Visit to Surrey History Centre**
- May 14th - Saturday opening (please phone to book)
- May 21st - Saturday 2.30pm Catherine Ferguson *Tudor and Stuart Palaeography: an introduction*
- June 5th - Sunday 2.30-4.30pm - **The Villas and Squares of west Brighton- a walk with Sue Berry**
- June 8th - FESRO Committee Meeting
- June 11th - Saturday opening (please phone to book)
- July 9th - Saturday opening (please phone to book)
- July 16th - Saturday - **Visit to Charleston Manor, West Dean**
- Aug 13th - Saturday opening (please phone to book)
- Sept 10th - Saturday opening (please phone to book)

Venue for the seminars: the Education Room belonging to the Sussex Archaeological Society under the Barbican between The Maltings (The Record Office) and Barbican House. The seminars are run in partnership with the Society and we hope to organise more in the future.

If you want to find out if places are left after the first flurry, please ring ESRO reception on: 01273 482349 (including Saturday openings) but payment within 7 days (cheques to FESRO) must be made to secure bookings of events.

Please include a SAE with all correspondence.