

# NEWSLETTER

## Summer 2005

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# FRIENDS OF THE EAST SUSSEX RECORD OFFICE

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Registered Charity No. 296062

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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](http://www.esrole.fsnet.co.uk)

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

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## 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](mailto: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.

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## News from the chairman

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As many of you will already know, our Patron, Admiral Sir Lindsay Bryson, died earlier this year. After a distinguished naval career, where he specialised in weaponry, he retired from the post of Controller of the Navy in 1984. As Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex he was invited to become President of the Friends and, when his duties permitted, he attended our AGMs. On his retirement from the Lieutenantancy in 2000 he kindly consented to become our Patron. He will be sadly missed by the groups with which he was associated.

It was exciting to see behind the scenes at a 'state of the art' archive centre when we visited Surrey History Centre where we were made very welcome by Maggie Vaughan – Lewis the county archivist and her staff members Sally Jenkinson and Janet Nixon (see Diana Crook's report on p. 5) The scale of the massive roller racking allowing all the documents to be sourced from within the one building was awesome, the suite of rooms provided for the cleaning, conservation and packing of the documents was an eye opener for those of us familiar only with the modest conservation facilities currently available at the Maltings, while the lavish entrance hall and meeting/lecture room allow for 'outreach' activities on a substantial scale.

The visit served to confirm for all the participating members our appreciation of the excellent service provided by the ESRO staff. That service is provided against the odds, and is achieved despite having to contend with distant storage facilities and difficult, under resourced and cramped working conditions; a dramatic contrast to those we saw at Woking. If any of us had any lingering doubts about the necessity of working towards to new Record Office for East Sussex it is safe to say that those doubts were utterly dispelled by our experience.

A survey of the manor of Bodiam in 1645, a recent acquisition, is featured in this newsletter. In addition we highlight the acquisition of the 1755 Marchant map of Hove Tenantry Laines, and the conservation of the 1800 Figg map of the Stanmer Estate which was funded by a generous donor. A digital scan was made of the Stanmer map following the restoration. The resulting image is now stored on CD ROM, perfect copies of the map can be printed or the image viewed on a computer screen so the original can be kept safe from further deterioration in the future. As a map addict and regular user of these important, but sadly fragile archival resources, it is encouraging to hear of this type of initiative.

Over the winter members have once again enjoyed a series of excellent seminar sessions on a variety of documentary sources, kindly organised for us by Sue Berry, and a great success. We would also like to thank Lorna Gartside, the membership secretary for the Sussex Archaeological Society, for her support. It became apparent that there was a further demand for Latin tuition and as a result we have arranged a series of five classes beginning in September. Places are limited to 10, in order that individual help can be given, so do book early (see p. 3).

Support for the New Year Social, which is complex and time consuming to organise, has not been good in recent years and the committee have decided to arrange another social occasion at a different time of year in 2006. If any members have ideas for a venue or the form the event should take we would be delighted to hear from them – indeed is there anyone out there who would be prepared to help with organising or coordinating the FESRO programme of events? We urgently need help. If you are prepared to lend a hand please do make yourself known to the committee.

*Pam Combes*

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# Record Office news

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## New record office

Most of the work so far this year has concentrated on disseminating the feasibility study as widely as possible for comment and further discussion with interested organisations. In the meantime, on the advice of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), we are putting together a bid for funding a joint audience development and access plan for both this project and for the digitisation of library, archive and museum materials (and especially glass plate negatives). The plan will look at who are users now, who we should be aiming at in future, and how we can reach them all! The plan will be an essential element of the full funding bid to be made to HLF in future. The FESRO visit to the Surrey History Centre, reported on page 5, showed staff and members alike what a purpose-built record office can achieve.

## Still lacking a lift

Regular visitors will have noticed that the hoped-for lift has not yet appeared at the Maltings. This is not for want of trying and a great deal of effort has been expended in trying to find an acceptable design. Unfortunately, fire service policies and health and safety considerations have meant that all the proposals so far have not been acceptable. However, neither we, nor the architects and health and safety experts have given up, and discussions continue!

## Designated status

For several years now there has been in place a designation scheme for museum collections. Those collections judged to be of outstanding national and international importance have been designated as such, and the custodians of those collections have since benefited from being able to apply to a Designation Challenge Fund to improve their collection care and access. In 2004 the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) extended the

designation scheme to archives and libraries and invited applications. The scheme does not fit local authorities well, but we are not to be deterred and, in common with several other county record offices, we have applied on behalf of all our holdings, since it is the bringing together of such a wide range of archives reflecting so many aspects of the county's history and people that makes them special. We are also proud of policies which have ensured the survival of some archives (such as those of the county council and of specialist hospitals) which in other areas have been destroyed. MLA is expecting to grant designated status to 40 collections; 77 applications have been made. The results will be announced in September.

Unlike the museum scheme, there is as yet no Challenge Fund to go with the status. However, MLA has asked applicants to provide them with some idea of our development priorities in the next few years and likely costs so that they can lobby to create such a fund. Even if no special fund is created, it is anticipated that funding bodies such as HLF will look favourably on applications made for grants to improve the care of designated records.

## Access to Archives

Keep checking the Access to Archives website (<http://www.a2a.org.uk/>) as parish records continue to be mounted. At the time of writing 135 lists were available on the site. We have been aware of the fact that people can access our lists via A2A at home or in libraries but could not access the site at the Maltings and have been trying to rectify this. After many teething problems, we have now installed two public access terminals, one in the searchroom, one in the hall, at which visitors can use the A2A site and a number of other selected websites (including the 1881 census and the National Archives website). It proved too difficult to give access to pay per view sites, however. The terminals are bookable and the service goes live on Tuesday 31 March.

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## Future events

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### Latin and palaeography for local history

In response to a demand, voiced by participants in the seminar session on manorial documents, Anne Drewery has kindly offered an initial five session Latin class to take place this autumn on alternate Thursday evenings between September and December.

The primary aim of the class is to offer basic training in reading and translating a series of commonplace Latin documents that are relevant to anyone with an interest in studying local history. Wherever possible Sussex documentary sources will be used but since the Latin content of the course is paramount, examples of Latin texts originating from elsewhere may be included.

Anne's teaching commitments for September have not yet been finalised so final dates for all the sessions cannot be advertised now. A preliminary meeting will be held at the Maltings on Thursday 8 September at 6.30 to fix the dates for subsequent sessions, discuss details of the classes, and distribute the first set of papers.

For this series of five classes the following topics will be included: manorial court rolls, freehold conveyancing, i.e., deeds, fines, quitclaims and wills and probate. The aim will be to study both medieval and post-medieval texts.

The relevant texts will be circulated in advance of each class. Papers for the first class will be distributed at the initial meeting. Equal weight will be given to language and palaeography, with an element of administrative history to set the documents in context.

The cost of the five session class will be £50. The number of participants will be limited to 10, so places will be at a premium – do book now (using the flyer enclosed).

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### Addendum to VISIT TO CHARLESTON MANOR, WEST DEAN Saturday 16 July 2005 at 2.15 pm

On arriving at the manor please go through the main gates into the drive and follow car parking signs. Those with walking difficulties may park beside the manor house kitchen windows. On arrival at the Great Barn, Friends will be asked to sign a safety form detailing any hazards that may be encountered on the visit. Teas are included in the price of your ticket and will be served in the barn. We look forward to seeing you!

*Diana Crook*

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(continued from page 2)

### Navigating History

You may remember our arts project, Navigating History, which ran events in October and November last year. It's still not yet complete, however. Neville Gabie, whose project is based on events on 10 September 2001, has still to produce the final installation

(a term preferred to "artwork"). However, his plans are now coming together and he intends to display some of the items he has gathered (with the permission of those concerned) on the two billboards opposite Lewes station for the four weeks beginning 29 August and to have a centre-page spread in the Sussex Express on 2 September. It should have quite an impact.

*Elizabeth Hughes*

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# Future events

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## Preston: from village to suburb, 11 September 2005

A walk around Preston park and village – Sunday 11 September 2005 – with Sue Berry

Preston village is between Brighton town centre and the by-pass at Patcham. Once a downland parish where a key east-west route crossed the north-south route out of Brighton to the mid Weald, by the 1750s the village was one of the places visited by people on holiday in Brighton and by the early 1760s there was a tea garden. Thomas Western refaced the house in an early Georgian style and then the Benett-Stanfords altered it in the later 19th century as it became a town villa.

By the early 1850s the village was being hemmed in by suburban development to its northern side. The Benett-Stanford family decided to develop the estate from the early 1870s and the Harringtons from a slightly later date. The park was neatly sold to Brighton Corporation who spent a bequest on its purchase and the taxpayer of the time paid for the landscaping. The benefit of the park for the estate development will become apparent as we walk. We will view the impact of the interwar pro-motorist 'drive by and view' landscaping policy adopted by the Corporation on the Victorian landscaping - for example the park railings, so crucial to good park management, were removed.

The 'Stanford Estate' as it is called is an excellent example of the many well-run private-sector developments of the 18th and 19th centuries that gave us an urban heritage to be proud of, amongst the best in the world. We will briefly explore how and why the development became a success. The park suffered from the neglect that most urban parks have since the 1970s but it is now being overhauled thanks to a Heritage Lottery Fund grant. The archival history of the area is interesting and some of it will be mentioned in your advance reading and on the walk.

### **The house**

This is an old manor house with the atmosphere of an Edwardian gentry house. Dating from c.1600, rebuilt in 1738 and substantially added to in 1905, the house and its contents give insight into life during the early years of the 20th century. More than twenty rooms are open to the public over four floors, from the servants' quarters, kitchens and butler's pantry in the basement to the attic bedrooms and nursery on the top floor. The Manor also has walled gardens and a pets' cemetery.

A tour round the house has not been organised – but the house is open from 2 to 5pm on Sundays, entry £3.95 (£3.20 concessions) for those who have not previously visited the house.

To book a place send a cheque for £5 payable to FESRO and an envelope to FESRO c/o East Sussex Record Office, The Maltings, Castle Precincts, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1YT.

Twenty places are available on this tour. Please meet in front of the main entrance to Preston Manor at 3pm – the tour will start promptly. You will receive a map and some advance reading when you book. Parking is available in the local streets such as Preston Drove and those off the Drove. There are toilets and a couple of small cafes in the park.

*Sue Berry*

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## Review of recent programme

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### FESRO visit to the Surrey History Centre, Woking, 9 May 2005

This centre is an amalgamation of archival records and a local studies library collection from Kingston and Guildford, and was opened in March 1999 by the Prince of Wales. The approach through an industrial estate is not prepossessing, but has the advantage of being both central and close to public transport. Inside is a purpose-built centre that cost £9 million which does not seem outrageous considering the facilities provided. The windows and interior lighting have been cleverly designed to suit each aspect and prevent damage from sunlight without compromising the feeling of light and space. Off the impressively large foyer is a meetings and lecture room – how we could do with this at the Maltings! A refreshment area for visitors and a comfortable staff room are other enviable facilities.

Our tour started in the reception room where documents come straight in from the car park. Items can then be cleaned and dried and put into a blast freezer to exterminate insects. A ‘disaster’ cabinet for sudden emergencies endearingly revealed rather less sophisticated equipment such as wellies, torches and safety pins. Packaging of documents is carried out meticulously with beautifully made and tied folders.

The conservation room was for me the highlight of the tour. A back-lit map repair board took up a large section of one wall. We were shown bookbinding equipment, a fume cupboard, dry and wet methods of repair, a de-acidifier, a leaf caster pinched from the Russians which cleverly infills documents, and the latest acquisition, a vacuum table which relaxes stiff documents or controls fugitive ink. Taking advantage of all this are one part-time and two full-time members of staff. The Senior Conservator said that when the building was erected he had been given exactly what he asked for – lucky man.

We proceeded into one of the two strong rooms with controlled temperature and humidity. Suspended above the ceilings, 20-foot high, are tanks of argon gas, which can flood the room and put out a fire without damaging the precious contents. The huge record and map stands are easily moved by the turn of a handle, and access to the search room next door ensures that large maps can be transported without bending.

The search room was another large area housing a host of microfiche readers, and the local studies library volumes displayed behind glass doors. Facilities for digitalisation and access to the internet were also available. We viewed interesting documents which related to the county of Sussex. The website, which gives details of the services offered and documents catalogued, is [www.surreycc.gov.uk/surreyhistoryservice](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/surreyhistoryservice).

In the foyer we were told about the specially commissioned tapestry depicting the county’s history through the ages. Designed by Philip Sanderson and woven at West Dean, the tapestry has five panels, each woven by a different weaver. In front of the windows stand two fine etched-glass panels designed by Martin Donlin which give a visual account of the county with ‘lenses’ set in to represent a ‘seeing’ of history.

However superb the facilities, a record office is only as good as the people who work there, and I came away filled with admiration for our ESRO staff who achieve such a standard of excellence in impossibly restricted conditions. Our thanks are due to our hosts at the Surrey Historical Centre and to Pam Combes for organising a trip which has given us much to consider when planning our future premises.

If any of the above information is inaccurate, please forgive me. I was somewhat distracted by discovering that a member of the tour party was my former husband, last seen 35 years ago. All in all, a very interesting day.

*Diana Crook*

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## Looking back at Bodiam in 1645

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**Christopher Whittick** describes an exciting new acquisition by ESRO.

We have the Bodiam Committee of the National Trust to thank for a document which, even in an outstanding year, is remarkable for the light it sheds on the history of the county.

Towards the end of the 19th century, an as yet unidentified collector from Tunbridge Wells was busy acquiring historical documents. He was perhaps a solicitor, and as such had unique access to old title deeds. But he also bought from catalogues, and dutifully annotated his purchases with details of their date of acquisition and price.

Last year, as the result of a house-clearance, part of this collection – enough to fill a large deed-box – had found its way to Bexhill. The owner helpfully contacted Bodiam Castle since one of the documents seemed to relate to the parish.

The Record Office has held the Trust's deeds and documents for over 20 years, and within four days of the original contact, I was sitting in a comfortable conservatory in Bexhill surrounded by mountains of paper and parchment.

The document turned out to be a survey of the manor of Bodiam, compiled by the steward Richard Kilburne of Hawkhurst (1605-1678), a well known lawyer and topographer, in 1645. As if that was not enough, its creator had spent hours poring over the records of the manor, and transcribed entries stretching back over many years from court rolls which – alas – no longer survive.

The information is not limited to the parish of Bodiam alone. Like many manors, Bodiam's tenements reflected the landholdings of its early lords – there is information about properties in Ewhurst, Icklesham, Penshurst, Playden, Salehurst and Wartling, as well as the manor's home parish.

Until the survey appeared, it was virtually impossible to discover details of any of the manor's tenements before the first decade of

the 17th century – the first court roll, now in the British Library, dates from 1607. Now, thanks to the National Trust and especially to the diligent lawyer of 1645, we can now trace the descent of many of the manor's holdings from the beginning of the 16th century, some even from the reign of Henry V – the 1410s.

The survey augments a large body of information, gathered from disparate sources, relating to the manor of Bodiam. Chief among them is a survey of 1673, undertaken on behalf of the lord by the bailiff Thomas Russell. In the almost 30 years which had elapsed since 1645 new ideas of survey had developed, and it is surely significant that the 1673 exercise produced a cartographic picture of the manor as well as a verbal description.

We still live in hope that the rolls which Kilburne had on his desk in 1645 might still survive. His survey was an entirely unexpected discovery and there is no reason why another chest of documents, perhaps in a different part of the country, should not contain them.

The Record Office was happy to pay the £150 asked for the survey, and was delighted to accept seven other documents, ranging in date from 1551 to 1879 and covering the parishes of Rotherfield, Salehurst and Rye, in exchange for identifying the remainder of the collection. The sum has been provided in its entirety by FESRO, to which we are most grateful; the frequent need to repeat that formula does nothing to diminish its sincerity.

But the real price of history is eternal vigilance and as usual, we have many people to thank for this exciting new find. All have been inspired, whether to communicate or to be generous, by the same feelings which motivate ESRO's staff – a passionate desire to preserve the records of our county's past, and to make them available for the benefit of the present and the future.

**Christopher Whittick** is senior archivist, document services, at East Sussex Record Office.



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## The fields beneath the city streets

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Marchant's 18th-century map of Hove reveals the origin of its American-style road layout, as **Andrew Bennett** explains.

In October 2003 ESRO purchased a 1755 Thomas Marchant map of Hove Tenantry Laines (AMS 6277). It shows an area at the western end of the parish of Hove bounded by the parish boundary with Aldrington and the present Old Shoreham Road, Sackville Road, Blatchington Road, Albany Villas and Hova Villas. However, this recital of road-names would be of little help in locating this map, the value of which is its depiction of a wholly agricultural landscape in an area which is now entirely urban.

Like most areas of Sussex below the South Downs, Hove's economy was based on a system of open fields, similar to that of the East Midland villages which once served as a shaky paradigm for the whole of England. The Sussex vernacular term for these open fields is *Laines*, each of which was divided into furlongs, which in turn consisted of several strips (see AMS 4107 for a similar map of Brighton drawn up in 1792). When such an open-field system is subsequently developed for housing, the resulting road-pattern conveys the mistaken impression of early town planning; but the governing factor in determining the layout of streets is not a bureaucratic process, but the underlying alignment of the separate strips, each potentially owned by a different person or estate. It is for that reason, rather than the intervention of planners, kings or Romans, that the streets of both Brighton and Hove resemble the gridiron of a city in the United States.

This map, which is drawn to a scale of scale of 1" to four Gunter's chains (25 inches to a mile), incorporates a table containing the names and acreages of each furlong, and distinguishes the ownership of William Michell (lower-case letters), Mr [Richard] Tidy (upper-case letters) or Mrs [Ann] Scutt (numbers), who by 1755 between them owned

all the land in the open fields. It shows a scatter of landless cottages on either side of a north-south street, and the church of Hove St Andrew, partly in ruins, a little to the east.

Each owner would have had his or her own copy of the map, identical in all respects but the title and the armorial bearings; this one bears the arms of William Michell (1708-1771), a Lewes lawyer retained by the all-powerful Duke of Newcastle and for the Duke of Dorset, a major landowner in neighbouring Brighton. Michell was active in the Broyle Inclosure of 1767-1771, and John Kay's article 'The Broyle Inclosure, 1767-1771' [SAC 138 (2000) 165-90] gives an excellent picture of him at work.

Michell, whose landholdings were extensive, had acquired an interest in Hove on the death of his maternal grandfather William Hamshire in 1739. When his own death was presented in 1772, he held 18 tenements of the manor of Hova Villa and Hova Ecclesia, paying a total quitrent of £12 7s 2d; his heir was his youngest brother James Michell of Lewes (ESRO ACC 2409/1).

This is one of the earliest known maps by the Lewes-based surveyor Thomas Marchant, whose working life spanned the years 1750 to 1790. He too worked for the Duke of Newcastle and his Pelham cousins and for the Duke of Dorset, but was also employed by John Smeaton on navigation schemes. He employed the Lewes artist James Lambert the younger as a draughtsman, and probably trained Thomas Budgen, last in the line of a family of cartographers. As well as his fine line and elegant baroque cartouches, Marchant's work is distinguished by his unvarying use of Roman numerals for the date.

The map is held at the Maltings so can be ordered on the day of your visit, but it is advisable to book the map table in advance.

**Andrew Bennett** is Brighton and Hove Archivist. He would like to thank Christopher Whittick for his help with this article.

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## Digital map copies – a boon to researchers

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A digital scan of Figg's 1800 map of the Stanmer estate has proved enormously useful, says **Sue Berry**.

We all know how important maps are for the study of localities and appreciate the need for great care when handling them. Most of us have wanted to use maps and found that the map table isn't free or that the map is so huge that it's cumbersome and easily damaged and details are hard to see. What might be a better way of ensuring that a map is accessible and yet cared for? An answer seems to be digital copies.

In 2004, the wonderful map of the Stanmer estate surveyed and drawn by William Figg in 1799 and 1800 (ESRO ACC 3714/4) was so in need of repair that Chris Whittick thought that it may have to be withdrawn from use before it degenerated any more. The Friends paid more than £200 for the conservation work to be done. While it was in the conservator's studio, an estimate for a scan of the map was asked for because the conservator had the facilities to scan such a large map. Donations towards the cost of the conservation and the scanning of the map were given to FESRO using Gift Aid. The value of donations is increased this way because the tax can be claimed back. Michael Verrall, our Treasurer, is the Friends' expert on this and can explain how he does it.

A copy of the CD can be purchased for private use from ESRO (which holds the master copy of the CD) and taken away for use on a computer with a CD. The detail can be seen far more clearly and easily than hanging over the edge of a map table. It can also be printed off at home for research use.

Clearly neither FESRO nor the Record Office can scan all of the maps, that would cost far too much. But if there is a map that a group of people know and use then why not think about contributing towards the costs of a scan, and a copy each of the map, with a

master for the Record Office? Organised via FESRO, it may be possible to use Gift Aid to boost the value of donations. A scan can't happen immediately because the archivists have to organise it and the map may have to go away for this, but it can be done, and would be a nice way of giving these documents that we all enjoy so much a breather from the amount of handling they often get. You get something you can see more clearly and can take home and if you choose to publish something, a good and identical copy of the map to use. Before you seek to reproduce a map in a publication of any type, including on a web site, you must have the permission of the record office. If you intend to publish, check beforehand that ESRO is able to give that permission before sinking funds into a copy.

A copy of the Figg map on a CD was used by me for my forthcoming article about Stanmer House and Park in the *Sussex Archaeological Collections*. I think that a professional photograph would have cost at least the price of a scan and lacked the flexibility that the scan offers, for once it was loaded onto my computer I could cut and paste sections as I wished. It has made the research and writing up so much easier.



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## From freakish storms to poor relief: the Sussex Parish Chest

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A new detailed catalogue of Sussex parish records, now available via the internet, is a rich resource for local historians. Type in 'pew', for instance, and you might discover who was sitting next to whom in 1750, says *Rachel Freeman*.

By visiting the *Access to Archives* (A2A) website (<http://www.2a.org.uk>), the vast majority of ESRO's catalogues can be searched from the comfort of your own home. Nevertheless, until this year, a significant archive group had not yet made it to the site – that of the Anglican parishes of Sussex. This year, however, that is set to change. *The Sussex Parish Chest* is a project supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, and is being undertaken at both East and West Sussex Offices; it encompasses both the cataloguing of the backlog of unlisted parish records and increasing the detail of the existing lists.

So what do these archives include? The most commonly requested items from the archives are the parish registers, which from 1538 it was compulsory to maintain. Clearly the registers are crucial to anybody tracing their family, but the earlier registers contain much more than lists of baptisms, marriages and burials. The more unusual examples of these events are given in detail, including death by inhalation of sulphurous vapour in a well in Tunbridge Wells (Frant, 1796) and marriage through impersonation at Hamsey in 1748. The registers became the most obvious place to record anything out of the ordinary, or of particular importance. Meteorological events are noted, such as a storm so violent it instantly blew barns down in Jevington in January 1735 and the description of a solar halo or parhelion (East Hoathly, 1636). For some incumbents it became a place to voice their grievances, such as at Udimore where the vicar grumbled that despite Udimore being too much work for one clergyman, it produced too little to support even one vicar. The early registers often list money collected for Briefs, a slightly dubious

form of charitable contracting; the intended recipients could be as far away as Copenhagen, which suffered from a fire in 1728, or be Christian captives in Turkey.

Records relating to the fabric of the church make up a significant proportion of many parishes' archives. Interiors, long since disappeared, can be re-created from architectural plans, such as that of the elaborate regency Chapel Royal at Brighton. The transformation from the box-pewed, galleried structures of the Georgian era to the familiar neo-gothic designs of the nineteenth century, can be traced through faculties, sketches and correspondence. The records do not stop at the arrangement of the furnishings, but cast light on that of the congregation as well. The survival of pew rentals reveals the very public, and often disputed, practice of reserving seats – and in the process sheds light on the pecking order of eighteenth-century society.

In many parishes, records concerning the pastoral care of the parishioners are less numerous than those produced as a consequence of the church's secular responsibilities. The relief of the poor was one such task, which, as a result of the 1662 settlement act, left a vast amount of paperwork. From 1662, a pauper could not expect relief from whichever parish they were residing in but only from the place in which they were legally settled. Paupers were therefore 'removed' back to their parish of settlement under a removal order, which allows us to trace the individuals' movements from place to place in a way few other historical sources do. Even more informative is the settlement examination, produced by magistrates in order to determine to which parish the pauper ought to be sent. Luckily for historians, many factors influenced one's place of settlement: where one was born, had worked, the residence in which one had lived, to name but a few. As a result all these factors had to be examined by the magistrate and recorded. Consequently, the parish archives contain detailed accounts of the lives of the very poorest members of

## DATES FOR YOUR 2005 DIARY

- 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 1st - Newsletter deadline. Copy to ESRO Reception
- Sept 8th - Thursday 6.30pm - preliminary meeting for **Latin & palaeography for local history** seminars
- Sept 10th - Saturday opening (please phone to book)
- Sept 11th - Sunday - **Preston:from village to suburb - a walk with Sue Berry**
- Oct 5th - FESRO Committee Meeting
- Oct 8th - Saturday opening (please phone to book)
- Nov 11th - **FESRO AGM**
- Nov 12th - Saturday opening (please phone to book)
- Dec 7th - FESRO Committee Meeting
- Dec 10th - Saturday opening (please phone to book)

To book an event please use the enclosed booking form. Payment within 7 days (cheques to FESRO) must be made to secure bookings of events, *please include a SAE with all correspondence.*

(continued from page 9)

society. The judgement on a pauper's settlement was often disputed, calling for solicitors to advise or bringing in surveyors to verify the value of a dwelling; all adding their papers to the parish chest.

Several parishes saw emigration as the answer to the pressure on the rates. Salehurst borrowed £1200 over the course of 15 years to raise the funds to send their paupers abroad. An insight into the conditions of the emigrants on board is provided by the letters to the overseers of Framfield, in which complaint is made of the lack of meat available. The overseers of Udimore were more enterprising than most and arranged for one of their paupers to tend the livestock on board in return for free passage. Furthermore, by using the back of a plan of first-class accommodation as writing paper, a glimpse at life at the other end of émigré society is presented.

For many topics of research, parish archives are clearly a rich resource which we hope will reach a much wider audience with the catalogues available on A2A. The greatest benefit of the site is that the searcher no longer needs to know in which archive the information that they are looking for is to be found. The site simply matches the term that is entered, for example, 'pew' or 'tithe', with descriptions in the catalogues of all participating repositories. So far 208 East Sussex parishes have been submitted and 132 are already on the site. With more lists being added each month, it is worth revisiting the site frequently.

Leaflets giving advice on using A2A are available at the Record Office.

*Rachel Freeman is Project Assistant for the Sussex Parish Chest.*