

# NEWSLETTER

## Summer 2006

### CONTENTS

- ▼ **News from the chairman**  
*Pam Combes* *pages 1-2*
- ▼ **Future events**  
*Christ Church Oxford with Mike Hughes* *page 2*
- ▼ **Record Office news**  
*Elizabeth Hughes* *pages 3-4*
- ▼ **Recent events**  
*A walk round Firle with Andrew Lusted* *page 4*
- ▼ **New courses and day schools**  
*Family history with Andrew Lusted* *page 5*  
*Conservation with Melissa Williams* *page 6*
- ▼ **Fundraising for the Record Office**  
*Wendy Walker* *page 7*
- ▼ **Member's research**  
*Contagious enthusiasms* *Diana Crook* *page 8*
- ▼ **Dates for your diary** *back cover*

# FRIENDS OF THE EAST SUSSEX RECORD OFFICE

**Chairman**  
**Vice-Chairman**  
**Hon. Secretary**  
**Hon. Treasurer**  
**Newsletter Editor**  
**Newsletter Production**  
**County Archivist**

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**Lady Teviot**  
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**Dr Gail Vines**  
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**Mrs Elizabeth Hughes**

## Committee Members:

Ms Barbara Abbs                      Mr Ian Hilder  
Mrs Judy Brent                        Lord Teviot  
Mrs Diana Crook

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

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Please direct any correspondence or membership  
enquiries to the appropriate officer c/o the Record Office

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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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*New FESRO website*

<http://www.fesro.org>

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## News from the chairman

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It gives me great pleasure to record that, thanks to the contributions of many generous donors, we have raised the money required to purchase the Lambert portfolio of paintings of Herstmonceux Castle. The volume is now safely in the hands of the Record Office at the Maltings, where it has the reference ACC 9374.

In future this fine volume will be readily available to any researcher. The paintings will interest a large group of people: not only those with an interest in understanding Herstmonceux Castle and the architecture of later medieval domestic buildings in general, but also those documenting the interests and recording-methods of 18th-century antiquarians and indeed anyone with a general interest in the history of our county.

Donors included not only our own members but also the Friends of Herstmonceux and several generous individuals. It has been gratifying to realise that not only members of FESRO but also the wider community in Sussex are prepared to step forward and contribute so generously towards saving a precious archival resource.

Our President Mrs Phyllida Stewart-Roberts assisted and encouraged us by raising public awareness of the appeal and we are grateful to her for giving us her continuing interest and support despite the many demands upon her time.

Finally, we would like to thank Christopher Whittick for his untiring work on this project. He first spotted the sale of the Herstmonceux portfolio and, realising its importance, drew it to the attention of the FESRO committee. When our initial bid was unsuccessful, he gave us an enormous amount of support in masterminding our appeal. He worked untiringly to interest a wide range of individuals in the purchase, and successfully persuaded the original purchaser to reduce his asking price in order to assist us. Christopher has an unparalleled knowledge of the landed families who have been associated with Sussex and of the archives remaining in private hands throughout the county. He continually checks catalogues to identify Sussex material coming up for sale in auction houses and also uses his considerable powers of persuasion to encourage local landowners and business to deposit their archives at ESRO – long may such work continue.



Elizabeth Hughes and Wendy Walker report elsewhere in this newsletter on the progress being made on the various initiatives designed to improve the care of the archives and the future provision of a new record office. The Friends enthusiastically support these moves but members must be aware that they also make demands on our resources. The tangible evidence of our support is once again financial; nearly all these initiatives require some matching funding to be provided and that is where our role lies. It is becoming clear that to function effectively in the future the Friends should not only be assisting the Record Office by increasing public awareness of the service but also by raising more substantial funds than we have in the past.

As some of you are already aware the gradual but insidious reduction in staff time available to the Record Office has caused some administrative problems for FESRO. In future we must be prepared to take more responsibility for our own administration. If we are to continue to provide an interesting programme of events and a regular newsletter, we need more dedicated volunteers who are prepared not only to come into the Record Office to assist with small tasks on occasions, which is one important role of our volunteers, but also to take some administrative responsibility within the group. If you feel you can help please make yourself known to us, but I must emphasise that computer literacy is an essential asset for any volunteer in this latter category.

A particularly welcome development this year has been the offer from two of the Record Office staff to run specialist training courses on behalf of FESRO this autumn/winter. Andrew Lusted plans a series of classes in genealogical research methods (see p 5) and Melissa Williams is offering members a unique opportunity to train in the care and conservation of archives (see p 6) Please tell anyone you think may be interested in the courses to apply; they are open to all.

*Pam Combes*

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## Future events

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### **FESRO VISIT TO OXFORD, 27 SEPTEMBER 2006**

*Book now: places still available. Final date for booking: 15 August*

A visit by coach has been arranged to see the archives of Christ Church College, in the morning, and in the afternoon to tour Magdalen College, followed by a look at some of the college archives. The colleges are two of the oldest in Oxford, and both have documents and maps pertaining to Sussex as well as some of national importance. Lunch will be taken in the city where there are plenty of cafes, pubs and restaurants nearby.

The coach will depart from Lewes Railway station at 8.00am and return to Lewes by 6.00pm. The cost per person will be £32, which includes cost of coach, driver's tip and cost of the tour of Magdalen College.

Please complete the application form and send it with a cheque made out to FESRO and send to Michael Hughes c/o FESRO, East Sussex County Record Office, The Maltings, Lewes, East Sussex.

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# News from the Record Office

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## **New record office**

I am pleased to say that I have plenty to report on the new record office. Firstly, our bid for funding a joint audience development and access plan for both The Keep and for the digitisation of library, archive and museum maps and illustrative material (known as *East Sussex Depicted*) was successful, and we have been awarded up to £24,700. We will be starting the process of appointing consultants in June and July and FESRO will be among those consulted. In the meantime, the impetus within the County Council has increased. Councillors and officers have agreed that a Record Office Project Board be set up – chaired by Councillor Tidy, the lead cabinet member for Community Services – and that resources be set aside to appoint a full-time project manager to take forward a stage 1 capital bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. The first meeting of the Project Board will meet at the end of June.

## **National Archives inspection**

The above developments were timely as the need for a new Record Office was given a renewed sense of urgency by the results of our inspection by the National Archives. The hard work of the staff was recognised, and the service was complimented for its work on the information audit in connection with Freedom of Information and on furthering electronic records management within the County Council. However, the verdict on the buildings was that neither The Maltings nor the outstore at Southover School were suitable to hold public records, although the newly converted store at Unit Y, Newhaven, offered better conditions and was a vast improvement on Pelham House, which Unit Y replaced.

As a result, the National Archives is

withdrawing the licence to hold public records from The Maltings (the Southover store was never licensed) but is prepared to licence Unit Y, which already holds large amounts of public records (e.g. records of hospitals and magistrates' courts). However, they have asked that all public records be transferred from The Maltings to Unit Y and we are currently considering how to respond to this request since public access to records held at Newhaven currently requires a week's notice and some public records are heavily used (e.g. probate records). The transfer will also be a major logistical operation as records will need to be moved out of Unit Y in order to make space for the records to be transferred.

## **Battle Abbey Estate archives**

The National Archives inspection was also undertaken in order to advise on the allocation of archives accepted by the nation in lieu of inheritance tax. The Battle Abbey archives have recently been accepted in this way and ESRO applied for permanent allocation, hence the timing of the inspection. We have now received the decision of the Secretary of State, which is that the Battle Abbey archives be allocated to ESRO for a period of five years on the condition that they are moved from The Maltings to Unit Y, and that we will work towards the provision within five years of storage and access facilities in line with British standard BS5454 and the National Archives' Standards for Record Repositories.

## **Other activities**

Recent visitors to the search room will know that we have recently installed a microfilm reader-printer for public use. We were able to buy this with central departmental funding, since the Record Office's budget cannot cover

major outlays of this sort. The reader-printer operates with a coin box and copies cost 40 pence a sheet, half the cost of copies done by staff. The service is proving very popular.

We held a family history day at The Record Office in partnership with the BBC on 11 February. With help from the Sussex Family History Group and the Family Roots Family History Society, and from FESRO Chair Pam Combes, we helped in the region of 400 visitors, who filled The Maltings to bursting point. Tours behind the scenes and

conservation demonstrations were also very popular.

Digitisation of the tithe maps has now been completed and over the next few months we will be looking at the most effective way of making them available for use in the search room. Making them available digitally will help to conserve the heavily-used originals, many of which are suffering badly, and enable us to provide copies quickly and easily. In the long term we plan also to make them available remotely, via the worldwide web.

*Elizabeth Hughes*

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## Recent events

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### A walk round blustery but beautiful Firle

Andrew Lusted gave a group of FESRO members a fascinating insight into the development of this architecturally various village on Saturday, 20 May. Mathematical tiles, ancient timber cottages, 19th-century random flintwork and grandiose vicarages jostle together in a strangely pleasing hotch potch which developed as the Gage estate gradually acquired numerous tenements, both large and small, throughout the late 18th and early 19th century. Equally varied characters also emerged from Andrew's talk, with some of his own family history

intertwined in the story – a fine demonstration of how genealogy can enhance the history of a community. As a final bonus one of our eagle-eyed members spotted some small coins dropped in the street. Never one to refuse money, your chairman immediately accepted it for FESRO funds - an additional benefit from an most enjoyable, if blustery, visit.



Taking shelter while viewing the gamekeeper's grave

*Pam Combes*

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## New evening classes

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### Search out your Sussex ancestors

Andrew Lusted, who carries out the paid research service at East Sussex Record Office, is running an evening class at the Record Office for beginners searching their family history in East Sussex and Brighton. The course, entitled 'Tracing your family tree in East Sussex', will take place in the searchroom at the Maltings and has been set for six weeks on Tuesday evenings – 26 September, and 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31 October.

Each evening will last two hours, with a short break in the middle, and the time is likely to be either between 6.00 and 8.00 or 7.00 and 9.00 pm. To decide what time will best suit participants, Andrew is proposing to hold a pre-course meeting at The Maltings on 19 September at 6.00 pm to discuss what time would suit the majority, and answer any questions about the course. This initial meeting should last less than an hour.

At the moment Andrew is hoping to accommodate up to 12 people on the course, which is designed for people to trace families who lived in East Sussex. It will be helpful if people know at least part of their family history and knowing the name of at least one of their grandparents would be very useful, especially if they were born before 1901.

It is intended that on each evening a different topic on researching a family tree will be covered, and in the second part of the evening those on the course will undertake some practical research of their own using sources available in the searchroom. Topics covered will include the history of parish registers, civil registration (which can not be done from the Record Office), searching the internet, census returns, street directories, wills, and indexes to baptisms, marriages and burials that are available at ESRO and elsewhere.

The course will also cover sources that are often overlooked by family historians such as early parish overseers' records, workhouses, local taxation records, newspapers, quarter sessions records and estate and private archives which can sometimes produce interesting and surprising details about people's lives.

A small amount of time will also be spent on understanding handwriting on seventeenth and eighteenth century documents. Finally, the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts and their impact on access to original documents will also be discussed.

All these sources should allow course members not just to compile a list of names of parents, grand-parents, great grandparents and backwards in time but, hopefully, to find out where they lived, what they did for a living, how large their families were and whether they stayed in one place or moved from parish to parish within the county. It is hoped that participants will be encouraged enough to use the Record Office during normal opening hours and that everybody on the course will be able to establish part of their family history and to get at least one person to trace their family back to 1700 by the end of the six weeks.

The cost of the course will be £60 per person for 6 sessions. Please fill in the enclosed application form.

*Andrew Lusted*

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# New day schools

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## Have you a talent for conservation? It is never too late to learn a new skill

Have you ever wondered how the precious artefacts held at ESRO are cared for and conserved? This winter, come and join the series of day schools to be led by Melissa Williams, the conservator at ESRO, and discover all about it. You will learn everything you need to know about the care of documents of all kinds – indeed you are invited to along your own books or documents so that you can establish how to conserve and care for them. Part of every session will be ‘hands on’ – come prepared for DIY! If you find ‘you have a talent to conserve’ Melissa is looking for willing volunteers to help with the enormous task of caring for the ESRO collection; you might be just the person we need...

The initial three sessions will be as follows:

### Handling objects

We all assume incorrectly that we handle documents appropriately but as I walk around the office I often observe bad practice. Searchers and staff alike can handle things thoughtlessly. In this first session I offer instruction and advice on all types of objects which need preserving.

#### Half day

### Mechanical/dry cleaning

Dry cleaning can be applied to all flat paper/parchment objects before wet treatment can begin. This session deals with various procedures for surface cleaning documents. The techniques will be demonstrated and then students will be expected to participate. **Full day**

### Encapsulation

This final session will highlight the need for correct storage. Methods of encapsulation using manila card and polyester pockets will be discussed. **Half day**

Please note that a lot of standing is necessary for this course. Manual dexterity and a steady hand are essential.

Equipment need: Apron/dust jacket; large soft-haired brushes, (available at Brighton University Shop, Grand Parade, Brighton); nutmeg grater, (Robert Dyas, Waitrose); bone folder (Artworker, Grand Parade, Brighton). Alternatively, equipment can be provided.

### Cost of course £90. The cost includes materials.

A further series of classes will take place early in 2007.

#### Dates and times of classes

16 September	handling objects 10am – 1pm
7 October	mechanical/dry cleaning 10am – 5pm
4 November	encapsulation 10am – 1pm

**Because of the need for individual tuition places are strictly limited – only ten are available. Sign up immediately if you wish to participate.**

Please fill in the enclosed application form.

# Fundraising for the Record Office

Senior archivist *Wendy Walker* describes the trials of her first week at an intensive training course for would-be fundraisers

In January of this year I was awarded a bursary from MLA South East (formerly SEMLAC: South East Museums Libraries and Archives Council) for a programme of training and development on the 'essentials of fundraising'. This scheme has been set up to train staff working in Museums, Libraries and Archives across the region as fundraisers for their own organisations and to act as trailblazers and advisers for the sector as a whole. Six bursaries in all have been awarded in this pilot project the other five places being taken by staff at Slough Museum, Brading Roman Villa on the Isle of Wight, the Hampshire Museums Trust, the Lightbox, formerly Woking Galleries, and the Royal Pavilion, Libraries and Museums in Brighton. ESRO is therefore the only Record Office to receive one of these bursaries.

The scheme runs for the whole of this year and at the end of March I attended the National Arts Fundraising School in West Kilbride for an intensive week of training in all aspects of fundraising including fundraising strategies, trusts and foundations, tax effective giving, sponsorship, individual giving, legacy fundraising, major campaigns, international fundraising, development boards, the role of Friends organisations, internet fundraising, research resources for fundraising and legal issues. All this to an idyllic back drop of the Isle of Arran, albeit shrouded in rain clouds for much of the time and only viewed from the confines of the classroom. A particularly harrowing part of the course was an exercise in presentation skills, for which everyone prepared well into the early hours prior to individual presentations the next day which were filmed and then dissected by the tutors and fellow participants. Definitely not for the faint hearted.

The training is continuing with a series of monthly workshops for the bursary holders running in Winchester and London until December, each devoted to a particular aspect of fundraising. Over the next few months I will also be writing a fundraising strategy for The Keep with the help and advice of Carole Strachan, the course leader, and putting together a case study on fund raising in archives. I will also have the opportunity to spend time in a major organisation to shadow and learn from their fundraising activities.

As The Keep develops momentum this bursary couldn't have come at a better time and will give us the tools to work with the Friends in raising vital funds for the future of the Record Office.



*awaiting caption*

# Member's research

## Contagious enthusiasms

Researching smallpox in Sussex, *Diana Crook* happened upon forgotten documents that chart the origins of a unique museum dedicated to the vaccination pioneer Edward Jenner

After a recent Friends' committee meeting, Pam Combes happened to mention to me that the archivist to the Jenner Trust, Professor R A Shooter, was looking for references to smallpox in Sussex. As I was writing a book on the subject, I got in touch and before I knew it had sent him my typescript. Had I known then how eminent he was I doubt that I would have dared. Aged over 90 and rather formidable he could not have been more tactful in putting me right on medical matters, especially the nature of viruses. A pleasant correspondence ensued with an exchange of references useful to us both.

I decided to visit the Jenner museum, in Berkeley, Gloucestershire, and wrote to my cousins living nearby asking if I could stay with them. My cousin wrote back in some excitement that her father, my uncle, was one of the local doctors who in the early 1980s decided that Jenner was not properly appreciated and set up the museum in the house where he lived and worked all his life. She had various records in her attic that might be of interest. And so a delighted Professor Shooter received minute books, photographs and other early fund-raising material to add to his archive. He told me he had written over 6,000 letters by hand all over the country asking for information.

The museum is in The Chantry, Jenner's beautiful Georgian house in the centre of this Cotswold village. It is only open to the public between April and October and life proceeds there at a gentle pace. The curator is the only full-time member of staff and I was asked to arrive at 11.30 am as she did not get in until 11. The modest but charming exhibits include the horns of the cow, Blossom, who provided the cow pox for Jenner's first momentous experiment. In the garden is his Temple of Vaccinia, a small, round, thatched building where he vaccinated the local people for free. The museum does not only look back at Jenner's achievements but now specialises in developing an understanding of the science of immunology. Should you be in the area, I recommend a visit, perhaps combined with Berkeley Castle down the road.

My book *Defying the Demon – Smallpox in Sussex* comes out in July. It is an extraordinary and dramatic story which despite the disease's eradication by 1980 may not be over. The virus has not been securely contained and is now believed to be in the hands of Al Qa'eda. America and the West have made preparations against a bio-terrorist attack using the variola virus. If you read my book, you will appreciate what this could mean to the millions of us no longer immune to this most fearsome of diseases.

Friends of the East Sussex Record Office

## 26th Annual General Meeting

Friday 10 November 2006, at 7.30pm  
in the Council Chamber, Lewes Town Hall

*After the AGM, Geoffrey Mead of the University of Sussex  
will give a talk entitled*

*'Scattered Squalour: aspects of  
Patcham's interwar housing'*

**Please note the change of venue.** For the first time  
we have arranged for the meeting to be held outside  
the Record Office.

This has been a momentous year for both ESRO and  
FESRO. With progress being made towards the provision  
of a new record office, we felt a larger than usual number  
of members might wish to attend.

## DATES FOR YOUR 2006 DIARY

- July 8 - Saturday opening (please phone to book)
- Aug 12 - Saturday opening (please phone to book)
- Sept 9 - Saturday opening (please phone to book)
- Sept 15 - Newsletter deadline. Copy to ESRO Reception
- Sept 16 - FESRO Committee meeting
- Sept 19 - Conservation course with Melissa Williams
- Sept 20 - 6pm. Pre-course meeting with Andrew Lusted
- Sept 26 - Family history - course with Andrew Lusted
- Sept 27 - Wednesday - **Visit to Christ Church and Magdalene Colleges, Oxford with Michael Hughes)**
- Oct 3 - Family history - course with Andrew Lusted
- Oct 7 - Conservation course with Melissa Williams
- Oct 10 - Family history - course with Andrew Lusted
- Oct 14 - Saturday opening (please phone to book)
- Oct 17 - Family history - course with Andrew Lusted
- Oct 24 - Family history - course with Andrew Lusted
- Oct 31 - Family history - course with Andrew Lusted
- Nov 4 - Conservation course with Melissa Williams
- Nov 10 - **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**, Lewes Town Hall

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 an sae with all correspondence.*

For booking Saturday openings please phone the Search Room on:  
01273 482359