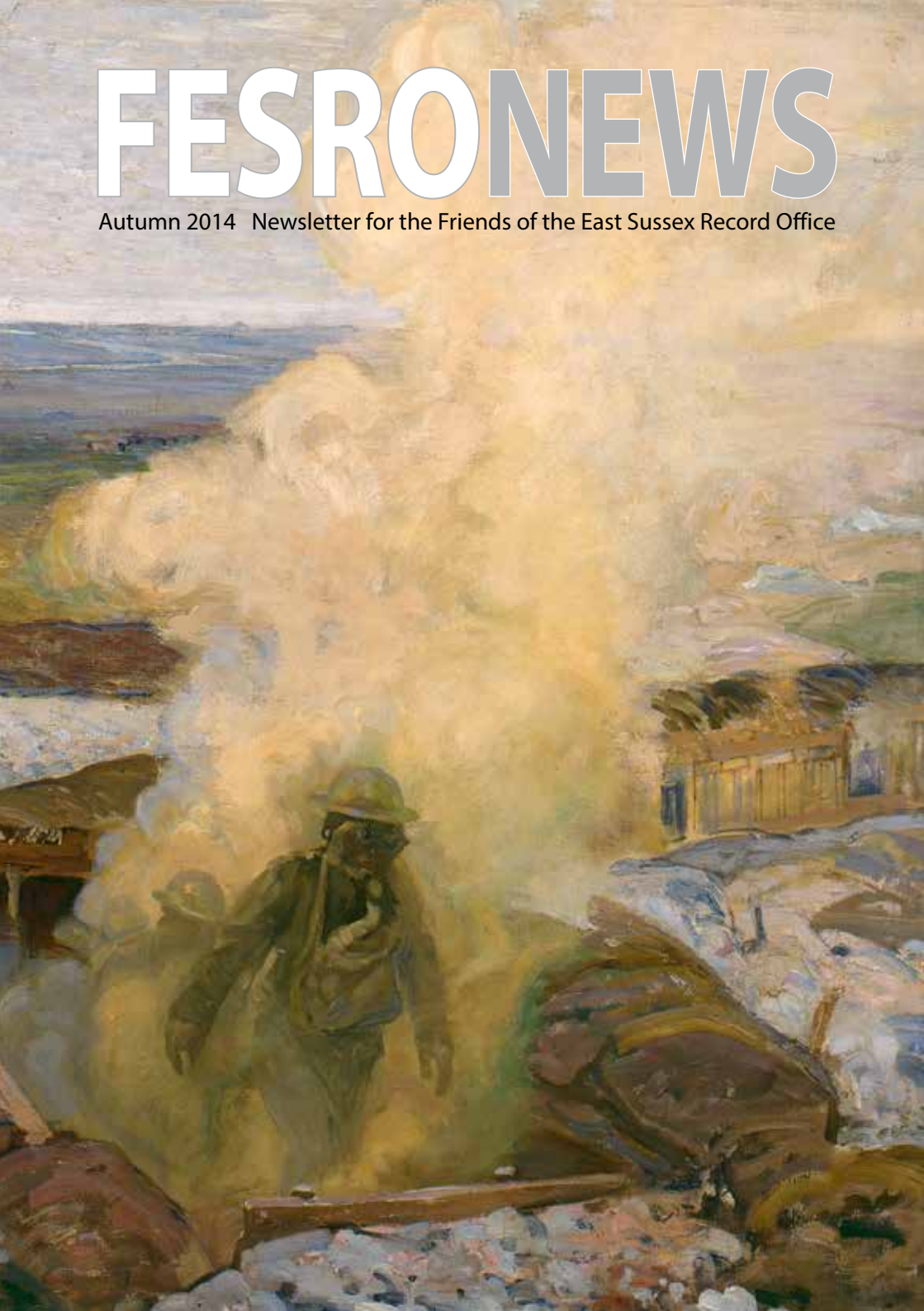


# FESRON NEWS

Autumn 2014 Newsletter for the Friends of the East Sussex Record Office



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#### Record Office website at:

[www.fesro.org](http://www.fesro.org)

Registered charity number 296062

## Contact The Keep

### The Keep opening hours

Tuesday - Friday: 9.30-17.00

Saturday: 9.30-16.00

The Keep is closed to the public on

Sunday and Monday

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Brighton, BN1 9BP

**Telephone:** 01273 482349

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**Twitter:** @thekeeparchives

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# Editor's introduction

This edition of the Newsletter features a number of articles which contribute to the commemoration of the Great War and its impact on Sussex. Anna Manthorpe of ESRO recounts how a lucky acquisition of an autograph book led to the uncovering of lives of both heroic and quiet devoted service, with a happy ending. Two articles publicise new interactive websites which aim to record the experiences of ordinary people and the memorials of their ultimate sacrifices. Look out for illustrations from the East Sussex website on the Brighton bus. On the cover of this newsletter we have reproduced from that site a startling painting of soldiers training for gas warfare on Seaford Head. Of many exhibitions across the county, do not miss at Brighton Museum and Art Gallery *War Stories: Voices from the First World War*, which runs until 1 March 2015 and includes material on loan from ESRO.

Christopher Whittick on behalf of ESRO has been active on the acquisitions front, with significant funding help from FESRO. A full list will appear in the forthcoming ESRO Annual Report. In the meantime, Christopher describes here an important addition to the collection, an inventory of a Sussex yeoman of the seventeenth century.

Work is continuing on the new constitution for FESRO, and we hope to have definitive news for the 2015 AGM. Please note the date for this – Wednesday 29 April 2015. In the hope that it will be more convenient for members, we have decided to hold the meeting at 5:30 for 6pm. The occasion will be special, as Christopher Whittick will mark the launch of the Manorial Documents Register with a speech in the presence of the Lords Lieutenant of both West and East Sussex.

**Diana Hansen**

# County Archivist's report

## News from The Keep

We are settling down at The Keep. The long-awaited vending machines are tempting plenty of customers to enjoy coffee and snacks. Our lunchtime *In Focus* talks on the first Tuesday of the month have attracted enthusiastic audiences (see Dates for your Diary). The group rooms are increasingly busy with external and internal bookings. Tours have been very popular and we have extended our fortnightly free Wednesday lunchtime tours to the end of the year.

## Tony Robinson at The Keep

The Keep had another high-profile visit on 26 August, when we welcomed actor and TV presenter Sir Tony Robinson. The Keep was chosen as one of four venues on a mini-tour of record offices organised by *Ancestry.com*. Tickets were allocated by *Ancestry* by ballot and despite there being only a week's notice the event was oversubscribed.

This was an excellent opportunity to show off the building and its archives to people who might not otherwise have visited. And we were not disappointed – although there were some familiar faces amongst the

audience, most people were new to The Keep. While generally they were familiar with the online resources, they were encouraged to take the plunge to look at original material.

Before the event, Sir Tony joined staff and volunteers for tea, cake and a chat, on subjects ranging from his child acting career to the difficulties involved in convincing TV companies to produce archive-based programmes.

The event proper began at 6.30 and Sir Tony spoke for an hour, cleverly weaving together stories of his own career and family history, and experiences of uncovering stories of the First World War in Australia and New Zealand, with thoughts on the growth in popularity of history-based TV programmes and the importance of archives as evidence.

He ended his talk with a local example, showing the audience and reading from the autograph book of Nurse Wallis who served at the Red Cross Hospital in Third Avenue, Hove, during the First World War, and which East Sussex Record Office purchased at auction thanks to support from FESRO ( see Anna Manthorpe's article on page 4). It was a moving end to a fascinating lecture.

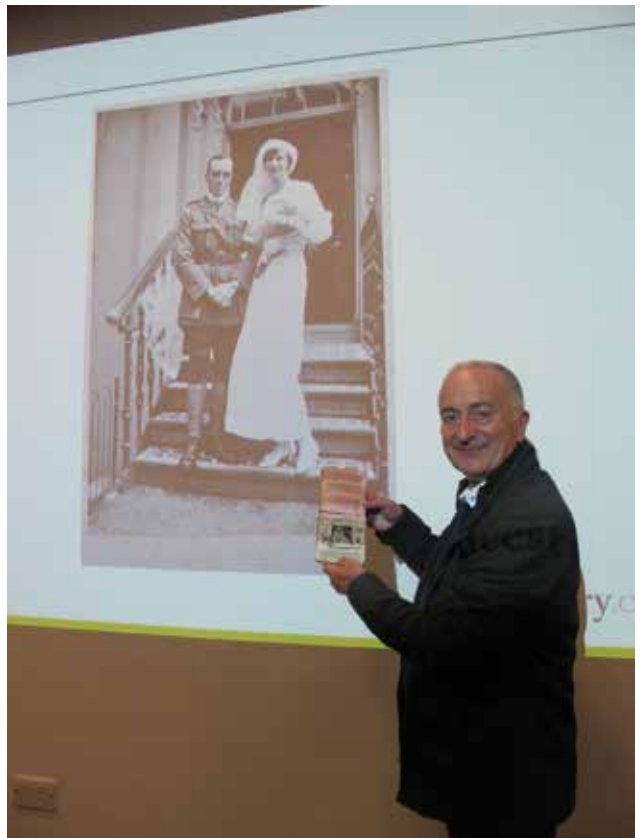
Sir Tony took questions afterwards, one of which tempted him – just briefly – into his Baldrick TV character, and then mingled with the audience, rounding off an excellent evening.

## Open Day at The Keep

Our next big event is our Open Day, which will be held on Saturday 22 November to celebrate our First Birthday. Reference and Reading Room services will be suspended on that day to allow our activities

to take over the ground floor. The programme includes exciting events for everyone. Adults can discover new and fascinating items on display, visit behind the scenes and see our conservator at work, with opportunities for hands-on experience. Families and children can enjoy stories inspired by the archives, dress up as a Mass Observer, and much more. And of course, FESRO will be there too.

**Elizabeth Hughes**



*Tony Robinson admires a photo of Nurse Wallis on her wedding day*

# First World War commemorations

## Finding Nurse Wallis – a First World War mystery solved

On 31 May 2013, the very day that The Maltings closed to the public, we purchased a First World War autograph book, sight unseen, at an auction at Aylsham in Norfolk for £160, thanks to FESRO. This was an achievement, given the pressures of the move.

The commemoration of the centenary of the First World War in 2014 meant that cataloguing the little book was a priority. *Nurse Wallis* was written inside the front cover, and we knew that she had nursed at the Red Cross Hospital, Third Avenue, Hove, which had forty beds for wounded soldiers. The book is full of delightful epithets and drawings by the soldiers, who seem to have maintained their sense of humour despite their awful experiences. There are also a couple of faded photographs of Nurse Wallis's charges. One gets the impression that she was very much liked by her patients.

In tracing her, we had a clue in an accompanying Post-it note suggesting that the album might have belonged to the Revd William Addison VC; we were soon able to identify him.

The Revd William Robert Fountaine Addison VC (1883-1962) was awarded the VC on 26 September 1916 following his actions on 9 April 1916 at Sanna-i-Yat, Mesopotamia. While serving as an army chaplain, he had dragged wounded men to safety under heavy enemy fire. After he left the army in 1938, Addison spent 20 years as rector of Coltishall with Great Hautbois in Norfolk, although he returned to serve as an army chaplain during the Second World War. Addison retired to Bexhill, where he was living at the time of his death in 1962.

We were then able to find the link with Nurse Wallis. A search of online sources showed that the Revd Addison married Marjorie Helen Katrine Wallis, which led us to the entry in the parish register of Christ Church Brighton on 19 July 1917 (PAR 260/1/3/2). Marjorie was a spinster, aged 29, and living at 16 Sillwood Place, Brighton, at the time of the wedding.

This was not, however, conclusive evidence – we still needed to prove that the autograph book had indeed belonged to the Revd Addison, and that his wife had been a nurse during the First World War. I wrote to the auctioneers enclosing a letter

for them to forward to the vendors, and was delighted to receive a reply. The vendor, who lives in Coltishall, confirmed that the autograph book had indeed belonged to the Addison family. Her uncle had been a great friend of the Revd Addison and his wife, who then used her third name, Katrine or Katrina. Addison left two boxes of books for the uncle to dispose of when he moved to Bexhill, and until recently they had remained in the uncle's attic. She said that the couple are still remembered with affection by the older residents of the parish.

In the meantime Christopher Whittick had made contact with the Addison family, some of whom are now in Canada, through *Ancestry.com*, and was able to establish from them that Marjorie Wallis had indeed been a wartime nurse. What is more, they allowed us to add scans of their family photographs to the archive.

Cataloguing a very small book purchased through the generosity of FESRO expanded into a most worthwhile experience. We have added to the family story of a wartime hero and his wife, and recorded a contribution to the war effort which would otherwise have been lost.

**Anna Manthorpe**



## East Sussex during the First World War.

A new website, launched by East Sussex County Council, has been created to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the start of the First World War.

The boundary between the home front and war front was blurred in East Sussex more than anywhere else in Britain. Gunfire from France could regularly be heard from the Sussex coast and soldiers from around the world were stationed in the county. The website includes moving stories, evocative photographs and wartime ephemera showing how the war touched the lives of people in East Sussex, as well as details of events being held to mark the centenary of the war.

Members of the public, schools and history groups are encouraged to submit their own stories, memories and research which will be featured on the website. You can post details of any events being held in East Sussex to be featured on the events page and interactive map. Stories currently appearing on the website include:

- The defences put in place to protect Sussex from invasion or Zeppelin attack
- How Eastbourne provided a safe haven for Belgians fleeing the fighting in their country
- How the hills near Seaford sheltered a gas chamber to train troops to survive this new, deadly weapon (see the cover of this newsletter)
- The women of Summerdown Camp pioneering massage as a means of treating wounded soldiers
- The German U-Boat which washed up on Hastings beach in April 1919
- Details of a Voluntary Aid Detachment Nurse working out of Filsham Park Hospital,

St. Leonards-on-Sea, including images from an autograph book

- Indian soldiers in East Sussex and how they contributed to the war efforts
- Chinese labourers in Newhaven alleviating manpower shortages.

The website also features a series of 'Did you know?' stories which are shorter tales containing interesting facts and snippets about the First World War. For example, the graves of the first and last British soldiers to be killed in the war are in the same cemetery and, coincidentally, face each other.

After the commemorations have ended, the website will be migrated into The Keep's website as a permanent legacy for future generations to remember the vital role played by East Sussex and the sacrifices which its people made for their country.

The website, which includes all the stories and details of World War One events across East Sussex, can be found at [www.eastsussexww1.org.uk](http://www.eastsussexww1.org.uk) You can also follow the project on Twitter: @EastSussexWW1

**Indea Cadman-Rivers**



## Recording Remembrance in East Sussex

Recording Remembrance will record war memorials across the county as part of a wider project to commemorate the First World War. This project, launched by East Sussex and West Sussex County Councils' Archaeology teams, will run until 2018.

Members of the public, schools and history groups are encouraged to research details about war memorials and submit their findings via the East Sussex First World War website: [www.eastsussexww1.org.uk/take-part](http://www.eastsussexww1.org.uk/take-part). The information gathered about the war memorials will be added to local and national records about these significant and historic monuments as a permanent record for future generations. It will also be possible to research an individual included on a war memorial and link this information to the specific memorial record.

In due course this will become part of the wider First World War website [www.eastsussexww1.org.uk](http://www.eastsussexww1.org.uk)

**Sophie Unger (ESCC Historic Environment Record Officer)**



*The war memorial at Firle*

# More Keep resources become accessible

## The Landscape of East Sussex in 1840

Legion are the local historians who have consulted the tithe maps and their accompanying schedules – an indispensable source for the history of the landscape around 1840 and earlier, though created for a quite different purpose. That was to require tithes in kind to be replaced by money payments, where this had not yet happened. The payments, known as ‘tithe rentcharges’, were to be index-linked to the price of corn. Under the Tithe Commutation Act 1836, the process for a parish began with a visit by an Assistant Tithe Commissioner. Through negotiations with the tithe-owner (typically, but not necessarily, the vicar or rector) and the landowners, he determined the baseline value of the tithe which should be a liability on the land. As the owner was not personally liable to pay, the tithe-owner who was not paid could distrain produce of the land.

The next task was to apportion part of the charge to each and every parcel of land, and that entailed first measuring each parcel and recording what it was used for. The owners and

the occupiers were also named. The result was the tithe maps and the tithe apportionments. Together they are the most detailed records of land use, ownership and occupancy for large areas of the county, prior to the records created under the Finance Act 1910.

Scanning of the tithe maps was completed in 2006. In the following year volunteers set about transcribing the apportionments into Excel spreadsheets and, with energetic support from Phil Bye, the task is complete (see *FESRO News* Autumn 2008). Now we have imported the data into the CALM database and thence into the public catalogue. Each plot of land has a separate record, giving parish, name or description (e.g., cottage, yard), (sometimes) name of the farm of which part, owner(s) and occupier(s), cultivation (arable, pasture, coppice, meadow, garden, etc.), area and date of apportionment.

These 94,000 records, covering 122 ancient parishes in the post-1974 county, have huge potential for further research. Landowners and occupiers can be traced across parishes, to establish size of holdings

and structure of farms. Land use can be analysed, fieldnames explored. Brian Short's mapping of land use and landownership in *An historical atlas of Sussex* (1999), for example, can readily be refined. But there are caveats. Although almost all the apportionments are dated between 1838 and 1844, that was long enough for changes of owner or occupier to occur; and names may be spelt differently between parishes. At Battle, where the Dean's right to urban tithes (unique in Sussex) was disputed by the town's largely nonconformist tradesmen, apportionment did not take place until 1858. So local knowledge and research comes in handy.

The owner or occupier could redeem the rentcharge for a lump sum (producing redemption certificates, often to be found in bundles of deeds), and when fields or estates were divided the rent charges had to be divided as well, producing altered apportionments. These latter documents, highly illuminating of the expansion of housing into erstwhile rural areas, have never been used, but now both they and the redemption certificates have been listed and are (effectively) available for the first time. Tithe rentcharges were extinguished by an Act of 1936.

**John Farrant**

## Parishes as places

One of the great benefits of the Keep website is that it enables us to create easy routes into a vast catalogue. Other archives, including The National Archives, often construct these routes using themed pages, which include links to documents in their online catalogue (see [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/)). Inspired by this approach, we decided to design our own 'place pages'.

Defining a "place" was our first challenge. After much discussion, we decided we should start with East Sussex parishes. Deciding on a structure was the next step. Thanks to the expert knowledge of Christopher Whittick we soon had an introductory page to East Sussex – [www.thekeep.info/places/eastsussex/](http://www.thekeep.info/places/eastsussex/) – and another page about parishes and settlements – [www.thekeep.info/places/eastsussex/parishesandsettlements/](http://www.thekeep.info/places/eastsussex/parishesandsettlements/)

We wanted the individual parish pages to be as helpful as possible, allowing users to discover documents they might miss through a catalogue search. This led us to design a standard format: an introduction; an image of the parish boundaries; a graph of population figures; links to ecclesiastical parish records; links to civil parish records; a list of manors; links to tithe documents; links to the 1910 Finance Act Survey, and a list of

other major archive groups. Links to ESRO's records and external websites are also embedded throughout the introductory text, making the pages more Google-friendly.

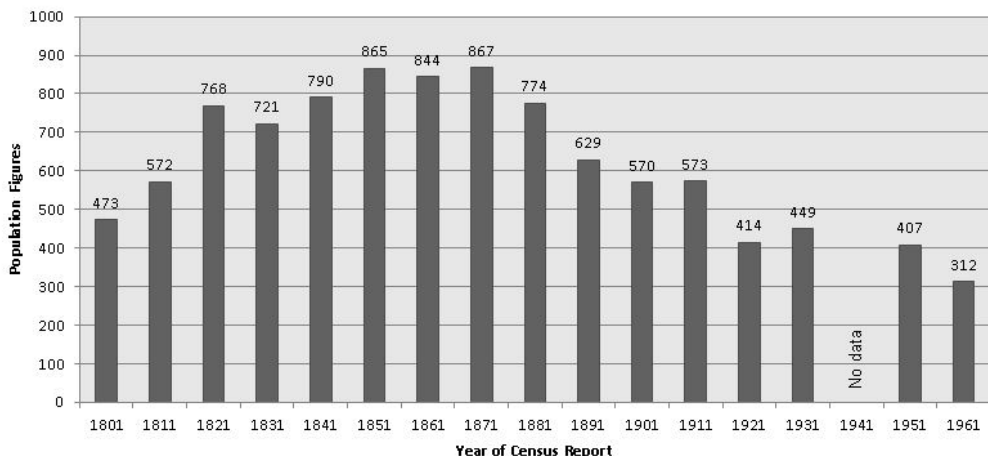
Once we had a number of places pages, it became apparent that an A-Z list was needed – [www.thekeep.info/places/a-z-places/](http://www.thekeep.info/places/a-z-places/). We also recruited a small team of volunteers to write introductions, prepare images and complete the painstaking task of making population figure graphs (see graph for Ashburnham below). The team have found researching parishes very enjoyable; as well as making a useful resource, the places project is creating a group of East Sussex enthusiasts!

One of the advantages of online resources is that they are not static; it is easy to adjust pages and add more details at a later date and the content can be changed in response to user feedback, or as we acquire new documents. It will be exciting to see how users engage with these resources over time, and how we can develop similar themed pages to support their research.

New parish pages are being added all the time, so remember to keep checking our A-Z listing.

**Abby Wharne**

**Population Figures for Ashburnham**



## A Piddinghoe treasure trove: the papers of Valerie Mellor (1933-2012)

FESRO member Val Mellor, who died in May 2012, was an acknowledged and enthusiastic expert on the history of Piddinghoe and its people. In 1985 she purchased and restored The Old Post Office, a 15th-century aisled hall. She lectured on local history, and wrote and directed pageants in which locals played the part of their village forebears. Her work 'Portrait of Piddinghoe, 1900-2000' was published in in 2000.

Val's research was recorded in a large series of binders, which contained her own notes, as well as copies of photographs. With great generosity, Val not only bequeathed her papers to ESRO, but added a substantial donation to FESRO to enable their listing. Val's untimely death came at a time when ESRO was preparing for its move, so we had time only to box the material up.

Processing and cataloguing Val's papers was a priority and we decided to tackle it early this year, but were confronted by an enormous task – the archive filled 55 boxes. The gigantic task would not have been possible without the help of volunteer Jan Boyes and other members of FESRO. To ensure long-term preservation we had to remove all the papers from

binders and repackage in a flat folder using non-acidic material. We sorted everything from the boxes into series, and were then able to impose a scheme for the catalogue.



*Jan Boyes delving into the archive*

compiled a large photographic archive, much of which was copies of material in private hands. All are indexed and numbered. During the cataloguing we were asked by a 90-year-old lady for a copy of her school photograph, and were delighted to be able to oblige.

We came across a good deal of interesting original material, including the photograph album of Mary Eleanor Poole (born c1883), the daughter of the Revd Frederic Poole, the rector of the combined parish of Telscombe and Piddinghoe. This was a particularly interesting find because we already hold an album of photographs presented to the Revd Poole by Ambrose Gorham of Telscombe (AMS 6595). There was material relating to the general

locality as well as Piddinghoe, including a fine photograph of Glynde Dairy workers complete with churn and buckets, taken c1900, and this photo of Piddinghoe schoolmistresses.

The archive is a perfect addition to the new 'Places' feature on the Keep website, which Abby Wharne describes on page 9. Piddinghoe is one of the first parishes to be included, with Val's archive (AMS 7040) listed as a useful source for researchers. We think that she would have been pleased.

### Anna Manthorpe



*Piddinghoe schoolmistresses 1910  
(AMS 7040/4/1/1/64)*

## Item things out of mind and forgotten...

### ...the probate inventory of Lawrence Avery of Westfield, yeoman, 1650

As soon as Ian Hilder spotted this document on eBay, we knew we would be in for a struggle. Billed as a parchment inventory, over two metres in length and with a very sharp photograph, the starting-price was set at £85.

FESRO kindly authorised a bid of £250, but that level had already been reached with less than seven hours to go. For reasons which will become clear we very much wanted this document, and I was delighted when my request for a four-figure depthcharge bid was responded to with enthusiasm by the FESRO committee.

Perhaps our rivals – there were four of them – were also mind-readers, because in the event the bidding stopped at £300 and the document was ours.

But why was it so important to acquire this particular document?

First of all, East Sussex is very badly off for inventories. In most diocesan archives, they survive from the second half of the 16th century, and indeed that is true for western Sussex. But for the Archdeaconry of Lewes, our rather miserable series begins only in 1706, perhaps as a result of an accident at the registry or a casual bout of records management by its clerks. To be sure, a handful of inventories survive in family archives – copies were given to the executors as well as being retained in the archive of the probate court – but they are few in number and tend to relate to gentry households.

Church courts were suspended during the Commonwealth and Lawrence Avery's will was proved not at Lewes but in London, at the Court for Probate established by Parliament to deal with wills and administrations for the whole of England and Wales. The Prerogative Court and local courts were re-established in 1660, but six years later the Fire of London consumed the bulk of its archive and there are no PCC inventories before that year.

But perhaps the most interesting (and indeed rare) aspect of the inventory is that we are pretty sure we know the house to which it relates – Platnix Farm in Westfield, where Sheila

Kaye-Smith spent happy childhood summers in the 1890s and which inspired her novels *The Children's Summer* and *Selina is Older*.

We also know quite a lot about Lawrence Avery. He was born in Westfield in about 1600, the eldest of the five children of Thomas Avery; his brother Thomas Avery was licensed by the bishop of Chichester to practise medicine. Lawrence was a substantial inhabitant of the parish – in 1648 he was the second highest contributor, after the vicar, to a collection for the relief of protestants in Ireland. His will, written on 3 March the same year, also reflected this generosity, leaving the large sum of 40 shillings to the poor people of Westfield. Two years later he was dead, with £1 6s 8d in his purse. His property was inherited by his daughter Sarah and her husband John Lunsford of Hollington.

But what of the inventory itself? As was traditional, it is written on long narrow strips of parchment, its length of 85 inches made up of five sheets stitched together. The appraisers – James Bachelor, Thomas Waller and John Weekes, gentleman – went round the six downstairs and four upstairs rooms, the attics, oasthouse and farmyard, valuing everything they saw. The whole came to a grand total of £466 9s 4d. But the value was spread very unevenly through the document. Almost half

the total, £230 7s 6d, consisted of debts, either with or without written evidence; the livestock came in at £122, growing crops (only ten acres) at £32, firewood, hop-poles and agricultural equipment at a further £12 and stored crops – as was usual, they were tucked away in the attics rather than in a barn – at £17. This left the house quite sparsely furnished, even by 17th-century standards, and one cannot help speculating that some of Lawrence’s belongings had already been removed by Sarah and John Lunsford. Indeed since his will had been written and witnessed by a Hastings schoolmaster, perhaps he was already partly living with his daughter and son-in-law at Hollington. Three objects stand out as personal reflections – a pike and musket in the hall, linen yarn in the bakehouse loft, and in the parlour a fine collection of silver – a standing salt, a trencher salt, a beer bowl, wine bowl and 12 spoons, all valued at £9 10s 0d.

Glimpses such as are offered by this document into the homes of 17th-century yeomen are rare, particularly in East Sussex. As ever, we are most grateful to FESRO for allowing us to benefit from them.

### **Christopher Whittick**



*Christopher Whittick displays the inventory*



## History on Your Doorstep

As we recorded in the last FESRO News the 'History on Your Doorstep' Project is based at The Keep. We aim to celebrate the heritage of the area, and to encourage local people to make use of the building and its collections.

In a busy year we have organised several successful talks and historical walks that sought to inspire local residents to explore their area's history, and we have been happy to work with various local groups and institutions. For example, we helped Moulsecomb primary school to create a three week art scheme and were present at their annual Heritage and Environment Festival. As part of the summer school for year 7 of Brighton Aldridge Community Academy, we hosted an activity day

about local identity at The Keep. A map was installed at Coldean Library where visitors can record what they particularly enjoy about their local area. Assisted visits, organised through the project, have introduced local people to The Keep and helped them to use its resources. Residents from New Larchwood Extra Care Housing facility in Coldean found their experience of visiting The Keep very enjoyable.

This autumn the project is focusing on collecting reminiscences and creating a topic box to use as a resource in the local community.

If you would like more information about the project or you would like to volunteer in events and sessions please contact Lynn Tye, Community Heritage Learning Officer.

Email: [Lynn.Tye@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:Lynn.Tye@eastsussex.gov.uk) or telephone Lynn on 01273 3365



*A hands-on experience for Moulsecomb Primary School pupils in The Keep conservation lab*

# Reports

## Visit to Friston Place: Sunday 29th June

On a sunny breezy afternoon 30 Friends joined 30 members of the Sussex Garden Trust at Friston Place which nestles in a fold of the South Downs below Friston church and pond, screened by copper beeches and other majestic trees from the serried conifer plantations marshalled to the west and north. The property was bought in 1956 by Sir Hartley Shawcross, the eminent barrister and Labour politician, and his descendants kindly orchestrated a most acceptable tea. Recently the family has embellished the extensive gardens, glades and wild-flower meadows with fountains, obelisks, topiary and festive chicken-coops, which the garden historian, Dr Barbara Simms, was on hand to interpret.

Addressing three successive groups in the great hall, Christopher Whittick unravelled the Place's complex tenurial history, reinforcing his auditors with a bristling brochure of photocopied maps, views, plans, surveys, pedigrees and portraits. In the 1190s Ralph, son of Ralph, held half a hide at Bechington, which William Potman held in c1430.



*East front of Friston Place, Sophia Burrell 1781  
(Eastbourne Reference Library)*

Before 1524 the estate passed to Thomas Selwyn of Sherrington in Selmeston who married Margery, a Potman granddaughter. Their son John (c1518-94), a lawyer and agrarian entrepreneur, prospered enough to be painted by Hans Eworth. The core of the estate was in 1599 'the capital mansion house in Bechington in Friston with 240 [arable] acres and all the Downs belonging', the traditional Southdown balance of wheat-barley laines and grass upland nourishing dung-dropping sheep, plus succulent cattle pastures on Pevensy Levels. The Selwyn line culminated with Edward (1638-1704), MP for Seaford, sheriff of Sussex, knighted 1683. But Edward's son William died childless in 1705, leaving four heiresses whose portions Thomas Medley of Buxted Park had patiently annexed by 1728.

His descendants used Friston Place till 1753 when George Medley moved permanently to Buxted. Friston was sold to the Devonshire estate in 1867, and thereafter to Major Francis Maitland, a gentleman-agriculturalist. Hence between 1754 and 1897 the estate was block-leased by wealthy sheep-corn farmers. Pre-eminent perhaps was George Alfrey (1771-94). A leading expert on breeding Southdown sheep, he doubled as a wine merchant with vaults in Seaford.

David Martin then addressed the equally complex history of the Place's structure. The gabled brick eastern 'show' front, later 17th century in date, conceals a Wealden-type early 16th century house with cross-wings and a great hall. The latter displays a fine central truss supported on angel corbels and an octagonal crown-post with moulded cap and base. A fine stretch of external wall – flint below, close studding above, also survives. In the late 16th century the solar end was replaced by the present commodious parlour and chamber above, while a new kitchen and service rooms were built round a courtyard. Fortunately a proposal in 1824 by the Medley steward to reduce the ancient structure, being by then merely a tenanted farmhouse, was blocked by the estate solicitor

John Hoper, a keen antiquarian. After 1897 Major Maitland commissioned a skilful restoration of many internal and external features, including a donkey-wheel in the well-house. He also turned the stables into cottages.

**Colin Brent**

## **Visit to the Weald and Downland Museum at Singleton: Saturday May 10th**

Sadly only one FESRO member joined the Friends of the West Sussex Record Office for this joint visit, perhaps deterred by high winds and threatening rain. Taking refuge in the upper room of Crawley Hall, a sixteenth century hall house, the group was introduced to Danae Tankard, a social historian, who is researching the history of shopping in the seventeenth century. Danae opened her talk with a splendid slide depicting the shops in East Street, Chichester during the early eighteenth century. Some were still a medieval style of night-shuttered, small shop with an outside counter in the sill, while others were larger shops with an outer glass window and an inner room displaying goods.

The account book of the Reverend Giles Moore [1617-1679] of Horsted Keynes reveals his shopping habits<sup>1</sup>. He would shop in East and West Sussex, and occasionally in the Royal Exchange or Cheapside in London. In addition to the source of his purchases, he detailed the price and name of the type of cloth or item. The mercers (the cloth sellers) sold various grades and types of wool, cotton and leather, and were associated with other workers, eg tailors, cutters, dyers, embroiderers and those who assembled the garments. To assemble a garment needed purchases from many sources including fastenings, buttons, hooks and eyes, and skins for lining breeches. Mercers also sold remade garments and second hand clothing, as well as adornments such as ribbons, feathers or furs.

The bulk of the population would use this method for clothing purchases. The upper classes might use imported silk and have their own tailors and dress-makers. The poor used itinerant pedlars who would obtain their supplies from mercers. These roving sellers were often found at fairs and markets, selling small household goods and small items to adorn dresses. The church was involved in purchasing clothing for the clergy as well as for the needy. Jails, homes



ANON (18th Century British, possibly Charles Collins) *East Street, Chichester, 1715*  
Oil on canvas. Pallant House Gallery, Chichester, UK (on Loan From a Private Collection, 1985)

and orphanages supplied suitable clothing for their inmates.

Probate inventories of the time revealed the value of clothing, which was often marked in case of theft.

Danae gave us a fascinating glimpse of an early retail shopping experience.

**Pamela Jeffery**

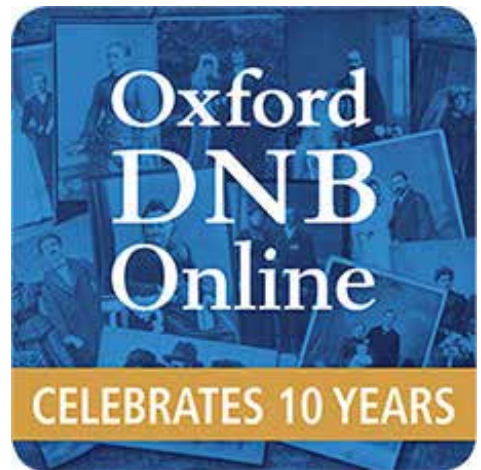
<sup>1</sup> Ruth Bird (ed) 1971, *The journal of Giles Moore*, Sussex Record Society 68

## Talk; County and Nation: East Sussex people in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

On 29 September at The Keep Mark Curthoys explored for an appreciative audience the immense potentialities of this online resource. He has kindly provided this summary of his talk for the Newsletter.

*The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* ([www.oxforddnb.com](http://www.oxforddnb.com)) marks its tenth anniversary this autumn, and now contains the lives of over 59,000 noteworthy historic figures from the British Isles and their overseas connections. During the past decade the online dictionary has been made accessible to all public library members, who can login either in a library or archive, or at home – or anywhere that has an internet link.

The talk looked mainly at the modern lives (active from 1750 to 2010) in the Dictionary to consider what this national resource can reveal about East Sussex, and to explore some of the connections which electronic publication now makes possible. The online Dictionary's search tools allow the scale of coverage to be



shown: the numbers of subjects in the Dictionary born, educated, resident, or who died in places in East Sussex, for example.

Similarly the Dictionary can be searched for subjects who have papers in particular repositories, such as ESRO. Institutional holdings also provide links with the Dictionary, and within it: thus, the papers of the Chailey Heritage Craft School are a source for the entry on its founder, Dame Grace Kimmins, while within the Dictionary a search on 'Chailey' leads to the singer Ian Dury, who was sent there as a child.

'Full text' searches (that is, any word or phrase) in the Dictionary can be a useful way of turning up information

about places. 'Battle of Lewes' leads to numerous entries on people who took part in it. 'Robertsbridge' leads not only to references to people who were born or lived there, but also to the abbey, the furnace, and the railway line. 'Ditchling' leads both to the artists who gravitated there and its earlier dissenting congregations.

Searches in the online Dictionary show the growing importance as East Sussex as an educational centre, with so many of the Dictionary's subjects being sent as boarders there. Preparatory schools in Eastbourne and Seaford are referred to in numerous entries. The entertainment industry - and especially film-making - accounts for another noticeable cluster of East Sussex lives, and additional examples are coming to light through recent ODNB updates on the theme of cinema.

The geology of the Weald was the concern of another group of ODNB subjects, while the High Weald

attracted some astronomers in the Dictionary, who sought clearer skies for their observatories. And there are many examples of civil servants and trade unionists settling in the county, while retaining their links with national centres of power.

The tenth anniversary update to ODNB, released on 25 September, added further East Sussex lives, including the journalist Godfrey Winn (a resident of Falmer), the children's authors Eve Garnett (of Lewes) and Malcolm Saville (of Winchelsea), the Rye minister and alchemist John Allin (whose correspondence is in ESRO), and Thomas Towers, who led the attempt to reoccupy Bayham Abbey after its suppression by Cardinal Wolsey in 1525.

In October 2015 ODNB welcomes a new editor, Professor Sir David Cannadine, whose own work has included a major study of the role of the dukes of Devonshire in the development of Eastbourne.

**If you need to contact FESRO urgently please telephone  
Membership Secretary Melissa Williams at The Keep on her  
direct line 01273 482358**

# Dates for your diary

All The Keep events are listed on its website [[www.thekeep.info/events](http://www.thekeep.info/events)]. You will find other useful information there. In particular, it is intended to introduce parking charges at The Keep in the near future – watch the website for details.

We intend to set up an email database of Friends, so that we can alert you to forthcoming Friends and Keep events. If you would like to be included on this, please let Melissa Williams have your email address ([melissa.williams@eastsussexcc.gov.uk](mailto:melissa.williams@eastsussexcc.gov.uk)).

## Events at The Keep

Entrance is free but places must be booked at reception  
(01273 482349)

29 Oct 1.00-1.30	Keep Tour	
4 Nov 1.00-2.00	In Focus; Lewes Bonfire Celebrations	Jim Etherington
12 Nov 1.00-1.30	Keep Tour	
22 Nov 11.00-3.00	The Keep Open Day	Come and enjoy the birthday celebrations
2 Dec 1.00-2.00	In Focus; To the Manor Born- manorial records	Christopher Whittick
10 Dec 1.00-1.30	Keep Tour	
<b>2015</b>		
29 April 5.30 for 6pm	FESRO AGM: Launch of the Manorial Documents Register	Christopher Whittick



*"Gas Chamber at Seaford"*  
Frederick Varley  
© Canadian War Museum