

FESRONNEWS

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



FESRO Officers

President

Peter Field, Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex

Elected committee/trustees

Chairman: Lady Teviot

Vice-chairman: Bill Shelford

Treasurer/Secretary: John Barkshire

Visits Secretary: Sheena Parker

Annette Shelford

Colin Excell

Co-opted members

Newsletter Editor: Pamela Combes

Meetings Administrative Secretary:

Stanley Bernard

Minutes Secretary and Newsletter

Assistant Editor: Diana Hansen

Visit the Friends of East Sussex Record Office website at:

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

Post: The Keep, Woollards Way,
Brighton, BN1 9BP

Telephone: 01273 482349

Email: thekeep@eastsussex.gov.uk

Website: www.thekeep.info

Twitter: @thekeeparchives

Contents

Page

Chairman's report – Mary Teviot 1

County Archivist's report –
Elizabeth Hughes 3

AGM report – Pamela Combes 5

Welcome to our partners at The Keep

Brighton History Centre Collections
at The Keep – Kate Elms 6

The everyday archives of extraordinary
lives: The University of Sussex Special
Collections – Fiona Courage 8

Sussex Family History Group at
The Keep – Colin Excell 10

New appointment

Administrative change: introducing
our new Membership Secretary
– Sue Tompsett 11

Our latest acquisition

Plan of Newhaven Harbour by
William Figg of Lewes, 1824
– Christopher Whittick 12

Reports of events

Horsted Place – Sheila Love 15

The Keep – Pamela Combes 17

Forthcoming events for members

Visit to Friston Place 19

Talk: 'County and Nation:
East Sussex people in the *Oxford
Dictionary of National Biography*' 19

New initiatives at The Keep

History on Your Doorstep Project
– Lynn Tye 20

Don't miss out! – the editor 20

The Keep in Focus – lunchtime talks 21

Contact number for members
at The Keep 21

Chairman's Report 2013-2014

By far the most significant event of the year was the opening of The Keep in October by Her Majesty the Queen. This marked the culmination of many years of hopes, dreams and plans, brought to fruition by persistence, determination and sheer hard work. Elizabeth Hughes, Wendy Walker (now in charge at West Sussex Record Office) and all the team deserve praise from all of us who use the archives of East Sussex, and on behalf of FESRO I pay tribute to everyone involved. As Chairman of FESRO it was an honour to be presented to Her Majesty at the opening.

Members will know that this offers the opportunity for FESRO to review the way in which we can continue to support the archives at The Keep. A working group, chaired by our vice-chairman Bill Shelford, has charted a way forward. I am delighted to say that cooperation between ESRO, the University of Sussex and Brighton and Hove Museums has enabled us to propose a future which promises benefit to all the partners at The Keep. FESRO will, as members were informed in the newsletter of last autumn, modernise its constitution to reflect our role in support of all the archives at the Keep and incorporate as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, under the supervision

of the Charity Commission. We expect, as part of these changes, to adopt a new name – probably we will become Friends of The Keep Archives. For all this to happen, we shall need the approval of members at an Extraordinary General Meeting. While this is taking a significant amount of time and effort, it will be worth it to secure the future of FESRO and its important support to East Sussex archives.

Our prime purpose is, of course, to enable the purchase and preservation of documents which would otherwise be lost to the county and even to the nation. Our Annual Report records another active year: funds contributed from FESRO enabled the acquisition of 65 groups of documents at a cost of £6,129. We contributed £900 to the most expensive acquisition, the apprenticeship indenture of Joseph Cribb to Eric Gill, with associated correspondence. Other items included letters from the physician and geologist Gideon Mantell, a letter from the Arctic explorer Clements Markham and, on a similar theme, the address book and photograph album of G Murray Levick, medical superintendent of Chailey Heritage and a survivor of Scott's Antarctic expedition of 1910. We acquired early photographs of

Brighton, including one of the comet of 1858 and another of the band playing on the newly-built West Pier, and a letter-book of Shoreham Customs Collection with references to smuggling. As ever enormous credit is due to Christopher Whittick for his guidance in our acquisition policy, particularly through his encyclopaedic knowledge of the field and ability to ferret out documents of value, as well as to Ian Hilder for his monitoring of eBay for items of lesser monetary value but of real interest.



Brighton West Pier with a band playing on a temporary bandstand in the foreground, c1866 (ESRO AMS 7023/4/1)

As Chairman I am delighted to pay tribute to my Committee. Without their hard work and readiness to contribute FESRO would not be able to provide our service to East Sussex archives, nor to our members. Of Committee members who are not standing for re-election, I must give

my particular thanks to Sue Tompsett for her many years of devoted service as assistant treasurer and membership secretary. I know that John Barkshire would second this. Sue's work behind the scenes has ensured that our finances have remained healthy and orderly, membership records have been kept up to date and members have received timely information about the organisation. Her successor is Melissa Williams, who is introduced by Sue on page 11 of this issue. I welcome her to FESRO.

Like many members, I look forward in particular to our exciting programme of visits. Last year saw three nicely contrasted excursions, to Bishopstone and Little Halland House, to Pashley in Ticehurst and to Mayfield. All were well-attended, and all were blessed by the weather in a lovely summer. In addition in early 2014 our members had the privilege of three 'behind the scenes' tours round The Keep, and a visit to Horsted Place. Sheena Parker, our busy new Visits Secretary, has planned an equally interesting programme for this summer. These occasions involve a lot of work, and I am grateful to her and to the others involved, including Elizabeth Hughes and her staff for The Keep tours.

I look forward with confidence to another exciting year.

Mary Teviot

County Archivist's report



The Keep is open!

After all the excitement of The Queen's visit, The Keep opened its doors to the public on Tuesday 19 November 2013. Our opening hours are slightly changed from when we were based at The Maltings: Tuesday to Friday 9.30-5.00 and Saturday 9.30-4.00. We close a bit earlier on Saturdays to ensure that users and staff have time to get away before the football crowds leave the nearby Amex Stadium on match days.

Some of you will have visited The Keep already, either on a tour or as a user, and I hope that you are enjoying it as much as we are. We just have the vending machines left to install and we'll have all the facilities in place.

Having all the archives in one building is fantastic so, although it can take about half an hour to produce documents from the strong rooms (which are large and on three floors), you know that you do not have to wait days for them to be produced from the outlying strong rooms as in the past. And now you can register for a reader's card and order documents in advance online from the comfort of your own home. If you're not so keen on computers, you can do everything at The Keep and staff will be able to help you through the process.

The catalogues of all three partners – ESRO, the Brighton History Centre and the University of Sussex Special Collections – are now available to

search on The Keep website – www.thekeep.info. We are working constantly to improve it so if you find a problem, do let us know.

The amount of interest in the building and its services has been tremendous. We were getting requests for tours well before we even moved in. Mondays, when we are closed to the public, has been set aside for group visits. These are now booked up well into July. Fortnightly tours for individuals on Wednesdays have also been popular, and our open day on 1 February attracted 300 people. In addition, we have monthly Tuesday lunchtime In Focus talks on highlights of the collections within The Keep (see page 21 of the newsletter).

Between opening and the end of March The Keep had 3,445 visits to the search rooms and 1,726 people using the group rooms, at events or on tours. The group rooms are a real bonus and are already well-used for school parties, student teaching sessions, seminars and talks. We are also hiring them out to other organisations, who appreciate the facilities that The Keep can offer. Perhaps unsurprisingly, we have had several bookings for seminars looking at building new archive centres.

The fourth partner in The Keep is the Sussex Family History Group, whose headquarters are next to the Reference Room. Their volunteers are



there most days to offer additional help to our visitors which is much appreciated (see Colin Excell's article on page 10).

There have been so many people involved in getting us to The Keep but I would like especially to pay tribute to all the staff and volunteers, past and present, who helped plan the building, package and move the archives, develop the website and now run the service. Thanks to them all.

Elizabeth Hughes

AGM report 11 April 2014

Members gathered for our first AGM at The Keep for a sociable drink and, for those who had not yet visited the building, an opportunity to see ESRO's new home.

Our Chairman Lady Teviot welcomed the members, guests and contributors and then introduced our President, the Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex Peter Field, and invited him to take the chair. Lady Teviot and Elizabeth Hughes presented their annual reports, concerned principally with the completion of the move from The Maltings and its several outstores to The Keep and plans for changes to the FESRO constitution and administration. Once again FESRO's significant contribution towards the purchase of documents was noted with appreciation.

The Treasurer reported that we have received no substantial legacies or donation in the course of the last year and as a result our income has declined somewhat. However, our overall financial position remains strong and we look forward to supporting The Keep archives in the future.

Nominations were received for the Officers: Chairman Lady Teviot, Vice-Chairman Bill Shelford, Honorary Secretary and Treasurer John Barkshire. All were elected unopposed. No other nominations had been received for the committee.

The President closed the meeting at 19.50.

Following the business meeting Nick Tyson of the Regency Town House in Hove gave a talk entitled 'Local records for local people'. He highlighted the visionary possibilities of linking the work of volunteers gleaned from all walks of life with a sophisticated website that would make the information they have gathered, as well as images of the original documents they have used, readily available to everyone.

We were particularly grateful to Nick Tyson for having fulfilled his engagement with us despite having heard of the death of a close relative only that morning.

Pamela Combes

Welcome to our partners

Brighton History Centre collections at The Keep

Old Treasures in a New Home

Moving our collections from the Brighton History Centre to The Keep was a daunting task, but it provided a great opportunity for us to rediscover some of the resources in our care.

Our material is as diverse and interesting as the city it represents, and a large proportion – including books, pamphlets, street directories and periodicals – is now easily accessible in The Keep's Reference Room.

The newspaper archive remains one of our most popular resources, for family historians, for stories about Brighton and Sussex in the past, and for accounts of nationally and internationally significant events, such as the outbreak of war, the coming of the railways and the rise of the Suffragette movement. In January 1910, for example, it was reported that two women had been found hiding in the organ at The Dome. Their aim? To disrupt a talk that evening by Prime Minister Herbert Asquith, a known opponent of women's suffrage. Sadly, the plan was thwarted by the dusty interior of the organ, which made one of the

women sneeze and reveal herself to the authorities.

Local papers are also a wonderful source of irreverent, idiosyncratic and totally unexpected news: where else might you find anecdotal evidence of an unsinkable swimming costume (The Brighton & Hove Herald, May 1928), a robot opening fire on its inventor (The Argus, autumn 1932) or a waterproof wig (The Herald, May 1961) in your home town?

Our collection of rare books includes scrapbooks and albums that offer a more nuanced glimpse into the past. One of the most interesting examples is a series of volumes known as Smith's Cuttings. William Joshua Smith was a 19th-century bookseller with premises in North Street, Brighton; he also appears to have had a passion for local history and a keen eye for material that could bring it to life. His majestic volumes are archived in the repository at The Keep, and they can also be viewed on microfilm in the Reference Room. Covering themes that range from Public Characters to Great Storms, Beach and Baths to Elections (including Brighton's first after the Reform Act of 1832), they bring together news reports, book extracts, letters, sketches and other fascinating ephemera.



*Kate Elms and Shona Milton with one of the volumes of Smith's Cuttings now at The Keep.
Photograph: Abby Wharne*

More specific, but a personal favourite of mine nonetheless, is the album recalling Billy Boardman's time as manager at the Brighton Hippodrome. Boardman was a prominent figure in the town who seems to have used his position to raise money for all sorts of causes. In World War I, for example, he sent the first concert party to France to entertain the troops while, at home, he arranged entertainment for the wounded men being cared for at The Royal Pavilion. It seems all the more tragic to find, in amongst the charitable receipts and letters of thanks, official notification that his only son had been killed in action in May 1918.

Much has been written about Brighton's development as a fashionable resort, but our collections

also document the lives of ordinary people residing there. One of our customers once observed that it is by looking at health reports that you really find out about a town, and Edward Cresy's 1849 report on Brighton for the Board of Health certainly makes for compelling reading. Having inspected the 'worst-conditioned houses', Cresy described the sort of conditions that were generally associated with industrial cities rather than coastal towns: shared privies, open cesspools that were rarely emptied, slaughterhouses discharging into the streets, and the presence of scarlet fever and smallpox in many of the overcrowded households.

On a more upbeat note, Brighton has for a long time been recognised as a place of entertainment, and this sense of fun is also reflected in our holdings. The town's first carnival curiously, or possibly provocatively, described by its founder as 'the best antidote to socialism', was held in June 1922. It featured parades of decorated vehicles, beauty pageants and, to finish, a masked ball held at The Dome. The glorious poster, programmes and scrapbook of cuttings capture, in our view, not just the atmosphere of the 1920s, but also the spirit of Brighton itself.

**Kate Elms, Brighton History Centre
Officer at The Keep**

Welcome to our partners

University of Sussex Special Collections and Mass Observation Archive

The everyday archives of extraordinary lives

The beauty of an archive is how it can reveal how ordinary the lives of extraordinary people are. And how extraordinary the lives of ordinary people can be. Browsing through the photo albums of the Kipling family, we find Rudyard Kipling taking a break from his writing to mess about in boats on the lake at Batemans. Looking through Virginia Woolf's rather tattered pocket engagement diary for 1930 we can see that she had a visit to the dentist on the same day that she went to have tea with Tom (otherwise known to us as T.S. Eliot). Whilst the archives of Woolf, Kipling and other writers such as Charles Madge and May Sinclair highlight the significant literary strengths of the University's Special Collections, other collections concentrate on subjects as diverse as journalism, politics and anthropology. The papers of the short-lived yet politically significant Common Wealth Party (1942-1945) sit by those of the archive of the New Statesman,

spanning its literary and political editorial history from 1944 to 1988.

From the extensive correspondence files with literary and political greats in the *New Statesman*, to the most intimate feelings of a Jewish artist portraying his experiences in a German slave labour camp in Ukraine during World War Two (Arnold Daghani Collection), the common element within all of these archives is the light shed on the individual personalities that lie within them. This is particularly evident in the largest collection that we hold, the Mass Observation Archive, which has been recording everyday life in Britain since 1937.

In its early days, Mass Observation employed a team of investigators to use ethnographic field-working techniques to observe and report on the daily life around them in Britain. This work included traditional survey techniques alongside less orthodox methods such as standing on street corners and noting down what passers-by were wearing; noting down verbatim conversations overheard on buses; observing the behaviour of crowds at football matches and asking people their opinions on air raid shelters. Over 80 thematic collections ranging from

Dogs in Wartime to General Elections and comprising reports, survey material, notes on observations, overheard conversations and a huge range of ephemera were assembled by these paid investigators.

Alongside this work, Mass Observation recruited a national panel of volunteer writers to record what they did from waking to sleeping on the 12th of each month. These surveys soon developed into open ended, themed questionnaires and many panel members also kept detailed diaries, providing a valuable insight into both the opinions and feelings of the 3000 or so volunteers who wrote in this period between 1937 and the 1960s. Mass Observation reinstated the national panel of volunteers in 1981, and for over 30 years has continued to collect responses to questions on topics as diverse as General Elections to attitudes towards tattooing. These volunteers came from all walks of life in Britain and their diaries provide us with an unparalleled snapshot of life throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries, varying from the most basic accounts of daily activity to the most beautifully written and heart-rending accounts of the joys and tragedies of everyday life.

In the same way as the Kipling family photo album or Woolf's diary entry, they provide such intimate glimpses into ordinary everyday life, spanning



The Special Collections Team
L-R back: Anthony McCoubry, Fiona Courage, Rose Lock, Karen Watson, Jessica Scantlebury, Adam Harwood. L-R front: Lis Towner, Jo Baines, Nick Corbo Stewart, Suzanne Rose

seven decades, that on reading through the contributions one can forget they are not novels, or their authors are not professional writers. In her diary for Sunday 8 October 1939, Mass Observation's most famous diarist Nella Last wrote 'Next to being a mother I'd have loved to write books ...'. Last's diaries now sit on a shelf in the stores at The Keep alongside the writings of Virginia Woolf and Rudyard Kipling: surely a testament to the fact that great literature can be produced by the most ordinary of lives.

Fiona Courage, Special Collections Manager and Curator of the Mass Observation Archive, University of Sussex

Welcome to our partners

Sussex Family History Group at The Keep

Searching your family origins ...

Sussex Family History Group was delighted to be invited to be involved from the beginning in establishing the new resource centre which is The Keep. Since our group covers the whole of Sussex, both East and West, the near-central position of The Keep makes our headquarters as well placed as it is possible to be in such an extensive county.

SFHG members and the general public often meet 'brick walls' when they are researching their family history. Our dedicated room at The Keep enables our experienced volunteers to help them make further progress with their research. We can advise beginners to ensure that they avoid the pitfalls so many of us have encountered when we first started researching. Having a permanent centre at The Keep also allows us to have readily available a number of helpful guide-sheets for users to take away.

The group has been involved for many years with the Record Office, helping with transcription work, indexing and open days. As well as our library of books on Sussex



Judy Excell, Vice President and Library helper, ready and willing to help researchers.

and personal family histories, there are our indexes to other sources, for example the Sussex Marriage Index 1538-1837. Continuing work includes the Baptisms Index (about one and a half million entries), the Burials and Tombstones Index and the Sussex People Index, which now contains references to about 242,000 people. Our charitable status also enables us to give grants for specific projects. We make regular donations to both East and West Sussex Record Offices and have recently contributed alongside FESRO to a project to digitise local parish records. A link to our website is one of the icons on The Keep home page; this gives

information about us and also lists of other useful Sussex, national and international sites.

Sussex Family History Group is a charity with educational status and all our work is done by volunteers. We are currently able to open the centre from 10am to 4pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays with the occasional Friday or Saturday. Anyone wishing particularly to visit us at The Keep should check beforehand that it will be manned (website www.sfhg.org.uk). It is a pleasant and friendly environment in which to work on digitising, indexing and research. Our volunteers will always be pleased to see you. There has been very positive feedback from visitors about The Keep, its resources and the help given and we look forward to helping many more researchers in the coming years.

Colin Excell, chairman SFHG



Working in the centre

Administrative change: introducing our new Membership Secretary

It was with some regret that I decided a couple of years ago to retire from the committee of FESRO as your Membership Secretary and Assistant Treasurer. I knew that it is not easy to replace someone with a job like mine, so I gave plenty of warning!

I was very pleased when Melissa Williams stepped forward and volunteered to take my place. Many of you will already know Melissa as the conservator at The Maltings who is now working at The Keep. The committee felt that while we all adapt to changing circumstances, it would be especially helpful for one of the principal administrators to be based at The Keep, so they too welcomed the offer. In order for her to become familiar with our work and aware of our plans for the future, Melissa will be in attendance as a non-voting member of the committee. The handover is going very well and, assisted by her volunteers, she is already in charge as Membership Secretary. By the time you read this, we'll have made a proper start on the important work of the Assistant Treasurer. I expect that this handover will continue to go smoothly without any interruption of our service to members.

Sue Tompsett

Our latest acquisition

Plan of Newhaven Harbour by William Figg of Lewes, 1824

When we have to buy documents, it's always better to do so by private treaty rather than in the auction-room – the asking price is fixed or even on occasions negotiable; the element of surprise and consequent anxiety which an auction always provokes is lacking; and grant-giving bodies can be approached for a definite sum and without any pressure of time.

So we were delighted when, at the end of February, Gorrings of Lewes asked us if we would like to acquire a splendid map of the environs of Newhaven, drawn by William Figg in 1824. Negotiations proceeded rapidly and amicably, matching grants were obtained from FESRO and the Friends of the National Libraries, and on Saturday 29 March the map – measuring over 6 by 8 feet – arrived at The Keep.

William Figg the elder (1770-1833) practised as a land surveyor at 52 High Street, Lewes and may have been trained by his neighbour, the noted cartographer Thomas Budgen (1765-1832). His fourth son William Figg the younger (1799-1866) had joined him by 1823 and continued

the business after his father retired in 1825, so it is possible that our map is one of the earliest collaborations between the two men.

The Figgs were the foremost Lewes surveyors, and the office holds many of their maps and drawings, both worked-up products from the archives of their clients, and the substantive business archive of the firm itself – over 7000 draft maps, books of measurements, auction particulars and notebooks. The practice was inherited by Fuller and Askew, an architectural practice, who retained many of the best maps when the archive was passed to the Sussex Archaeological Society (whence to ESRO) in 1956. These we bought at a memorable auction at Sotheby's Billingshurst in 1988, at which over 40 lots were knocked down to ESRO in succession.

Maps by the Figgs are appreciated for their clarity, artistic expertise and workmanlike use of colour; an enlarged detail of the map of Rodmell, a few miles up the Ouse valley (AMS 6786, itself bought for us by FESRO in 2007), decorates the wall of our new Reading Room at The Keep.

The new map is a detailed survey of an extensive area from the outlet of the river Ouse upstream to the town of Newhaven, prepared at a time when the harbour was an important focus for river transport of goods to Lewes; it subsequently expanded with the advent of the railway from Lewes to Newhaven in 1847. An inferior copy, now in poor condition, was submitted to the Tidal Harbours Commission in 1845, and is among the Board of Trade plans deposited here by The National Archives (BOT 1/725/1). The map also provides a link backwards from the tithe map of 1838, which shows changes over the intervening fourteen years.



Newhaven was strategically important for the defence of the south coast, and the map depicts the fort and battery. The remains of the old pier marking the former course of the river are present, Newhaven is shown in detail, and other interesting features include brickworks and the names of landowners.

Also depicted in great detail is the complicated medley of buildings Tidemills, which has been the subject of a lengthy archaeological survey over the past few years. The site is depicted in its heyday after expansion by William Catt, in partnership with Edmund Cooper, in response to the increased demand in grain during the Napoleonic wars.

Cartographic material is one of the greatest strengths of the East Sussex Record Office, and one upon which we have consciously built by an active policy of acquisition during the last 30 years. Maps capture the appearance of a locality at a moment in time and convey information of value to the local historian, biographer, historic buildings specialist and student of place-names.

The great reveal - Philip Taylor of Gorrings and ESRO archivist Anna Manthorpe unroll the Newhaven map at The Keep (ESRO ACC 11826)

It would have been unthinkable for ESRO not to attempt to purchase the original version of this extensive, highly informative and beautiful work.

We are most grateful to FESRO and the Friends of the National Libraries for their support, and especially to Gorrings for their handsome offer of a private-treaty sale.

Christopher Whittick



Detail showing the town of Newhaven (ESRO ACC 11826)

Reports



Photograph of Horsted Place in the 1860s (Private collection – digital image at ESRO)

Visit to Horsted Place Hotel, Little Horsted: Monday 24th February

By kind permission of the hotel administrator, Liz Brown, 28 members gathered in the spacious sunlit drawing room for tea, coffee and delicious biscuits and an introductory talk about the property by Colin Brent.

He touched on some early owners of the Horsted Manor Estate – Sackville Pope who commissioned a map of his land from John de Ward in 1621 (ESRO AMS 5969), and Richard Hay whose estate was mapped by Thomas Smith in 1717 (ESRO AMS 743). In 1849 the Revd Ewan Law sold the estate to Francis Barchard

(1786-1856). Barchard had inherited a fortune from the family dyeing business in 1845, and began the expansion of the estate, which was to cover 1,450 acres by 1873.

In 1850 he contracted for an expensive mansion on an eminence north-west of the ancient manor house with splendid views to the south. The architect was Samuel Daukes, chiefly remembered for his classical Witley Court in Worcestershire. But here at Horsted Place AWN Pugin was allegedly influential in the design. Certainly the Gothic furniture and fittings were supplied by John Webb from the Grace Workshop which was closely associated with Pugin. Moreover the builder George Myers, whose firm

Reports

was responsible for the stone carving and woodwork, had worked closely with Pugin and the Crace Workshop on the Palace of Westminster. Within the house, Barchard created a special room with a fireplace decorated with the scales of justice in which to make judgements on miscreants in his role as a Justice of the Peace. The magnificent staircase, commissioned by Barchard and encompassing Francis and his wife Margaret's initials and crest, formed the centrepiece of Pugin's Gothic Court at the 1851 Great Exhibition in Hyde Park.

Puginesque too is the commanding location, the use of local Wealden brick and the 'fitness for purpose' of the internal layout, with its spacious central corridor and servants' courtyard.

Barchard's son and grandson (both Francis) were educated at Winchester and Oxford, and were barristers and vigorous public servants.

The fourth Francis was a career naval officer whose battleship HMS Barham was sunk by German torpedoes in the Mediterranean in 1941 with the loss of over 800 lives. He left two young daughters. After his mother died in 1964 the house contents were dispersed and the estate was



*Horsted Place and garden, the day of our visit.
Photo Stanley Barnard*

sold to Lord Rupert Nevill, a close friend of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh. He and his wife Camilla scrupulously restored the mansion and commissioned Sir Jeffrey Jellicoe to redesign the surrounding landscape. After Lord Rupert's death in 1982, the property was acquired to create The East Sussex National Golf Club.

Members were free to examine the Library with its Gothic bookcases and Lord Snowdon's secret door, the heraldry on the Pugin staircase, the entrance hall's Minton tiles, the Justice Room and some of the bedroom suites.

Sheila Love

Reports

Visits to The Keep 10 and 24 March

In the event, the number of visits originally planned to see behind the scenes at The Keep proved to be totally inadequate. Initially the number of people in each group was increased from 15 to 20 but that still did not fulfil the demand. Such was the enthusiastic response to the opportunity that the number of visits had to be doubled from two to four. Our heartfelt thanks are extended to Elizabeth Hughes, our leader for the visits, for so readily agreeing to double her workload on our behalf. Happily, as she explained to us, interest in this wonderful new resource is not confined to our members. Such has been the curiosity shown by the general public that FESRO's final overflow visit could not be accommodated until early July!

In order to ensure that none of us was trapped in securely locked strong rooms or even in unfamiliar corridors, our members were herded by carefully chosen 'sheepdogs' as they followed Elizabeth through the wonderful repository that is The Keep. First on the itinerary were the public areas on the ground floor which includes the Reference Room containing the reference collections

of all the partners, catalogues of ESRO's documents and parish register transcripts. The 'do it yourself' photocopying facilities available there are especially welcome to former users of the Maltings where such resources 'were but a dream'.

The newly available digitised documentary sources can now be read on clear computer screens; a far cry from the dim and antiquated microfilm readers with which so many of us were all too familiar.



Using digitised documentary sources in the Reference Room

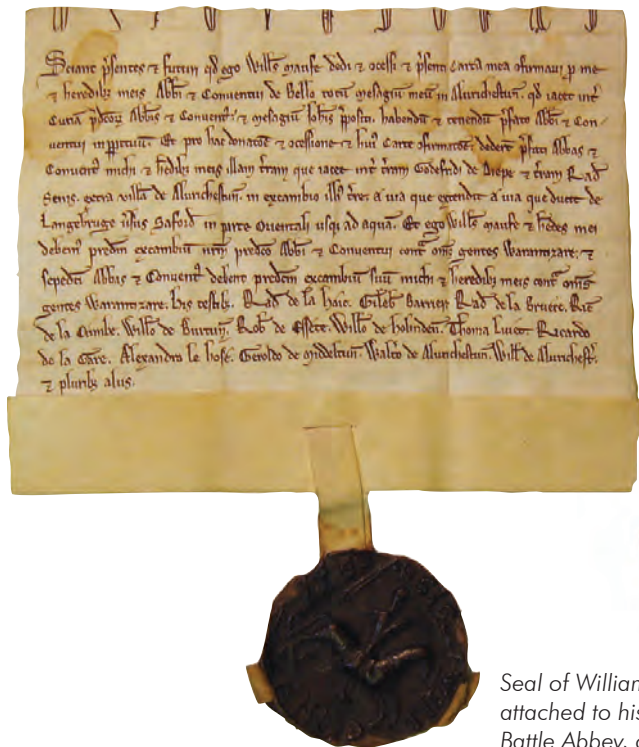
Could it get even better? It certainly can. No more waiting for document production. Order in advance from your home computer and when you use your new Reader's Ticket to gain access to the Reading Room your pre-ordered documents will be ready and waiting for you to begin work.

For the documents life is even better. Here they are not only cared for but cosseted in state-of-the-art climate-controlled conditions. Magnificent freeze-dryers welcome the arrival of damp, mouldy and insect ridden accessions before they can infect any of their healthy future companions. Boxed, paper-wrapped, or bagged in WI-manufactured linen containers, miles of newly barcoded and tagged documentary sources await the call of the searcher – over 1 million entries appear in the new online database.

A call into Conservation allowed us to see some of the treasures of the

archive – a wonderful collection of medieval seals, many still attached to ancient documents, on which the conservation team are currently working. Melissa had undoubtedly recruited some would-be bookbinders for training sessions in the future before our reluctant group were herded away. Our allotted time had run out and, in our case, a delicious lunch (courtesy of The Bridge) awaited us.

Our sincere thanks to Elizabeth Hughes and the staff of The Keep for making us all so welcome.



Detail of seal

Seal of William de Maufe (pronounced Mau-fay), attached to his grant of a messuage at Alfriston to Battle Abbey, c1220. SAS/G 47/9

Forthcoming events

Friston Place: 29 June at 2.30pm

A visit to Friston Place house and gardens is being arranged jointly with Sussex Gardens Trust. Christopher Whittick and David Martin will be our guides. The house, which is not normally open to the public, is a Grade 1 listed timber-framed manor house, the oldest portion of which was built in the early 15th century. There are surviving elements of garden and landscape features from the 16th century onwards.



Mark Curthoys – ‘County and Nation: East Sussex people in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography’

**Monday 29 September 4pm
at The Keep**

The Oxford DNB, which marks its 10th anniversary this September, records the lives of noteworthy individuals from the British past. This talk will explore some of the historical figures in the Dictionary connected with East Sussex with an emphasis on the lesser-known names and on those active after 1800. What can these lives tell us about the county and its towns and villages?



Mark Curthoys is the Research Editor (Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries) on the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.

The online dictionary (www.oxforddnb.com) is freely accessible to public library members, either in libraries or at home using a library ticket number as a login.

Booking essential for both events – see enclosed booking form

New initiatives at The Keep

History on Your Doorstep Project



Lynn Tye a new ESRO staff member at The Keep introduces herself

Hello, I would like to introduce myself as a new member of staff to The Keep, as Community Heritage Learning Officer. My job is to manage a new initiative called History on Your Doorstep, which is an 18 month long project designed to celebrate the rich history of the local area surrounding The Keep.

Free activities will be provided covering many themes, including archaeology, oral history, map reading and photography. If you would like to participate or volunteer to help run events or activities I would be very happy to hear from you.

We are holding open days and children's activities over May and June and the first session on using collections at The Keep to explore the local area is on Thursday 26 June at Moulsecomb Primary School at 6pm.

In the meantime, please visit www.historyonyourdoorstep.wordpress.com email me lynn.tye@eastsussex.gov.uk or call 01273336506 for more information.

Don't miss out!

All The Keep events are advertised on the website [\[www.the keep.info\]](http://www.thekeep.info)

Additional lunchtime talks are being planned. Volunteers are often required to assist with many and varied tasks. Make sure that The Keep website is listed as a favourite on your computer so that you can benefit from this plethora of activity.

The Keep in Focus Lunchtime Talks

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

1 Apr 1.00-2.00 The Keep	Treasures of East Sussex Record Office	Christopher Whittick
6 May 1.00-2.00 The Keep	Treasures of the University of Sussex Special Collections at The Keep	Fiona Courage
4 Jun 1.00-2.00 The Keep	'Scattered squalour' – 'Downland Homes'; Brighton's inter-war housing	Geoff Mead
8 Jul 1.00-2.00 The Keep	The French Connection	Elizabeth Hughes
2 Sep 1.00-2.00 The Keep	Crime and Punishment	Christopher Whittick
7 Oct 1.00-2.00 The Keep	The Old Poor Law	Elizabeth Hughes
4 Nov 1.00-2.00 The Keep	The evolution of the Lewes Bonfire Night Celebrations	Jim Etherington
2 Dec 1.00-2.00 The Keep	To the manor born – manorial records	Christopher Whittick

Should you need to contact The Keep urgently about FESRO events or visits our new membership secretary Melissa Williams has kindly agreed for us to publish her direct line telephone number.

Please keep your calls to a minimum.

Melissa Williams 01273 482358



Detail from a map of Newhaven Harbour
in 1824 by William Figg the elder (1770-1833);
ESRO ACC 11826
Purchased with the aid of grants from FESRO
and the Friends of the National Libraries, March 2014