



Friends of [the keep] Archives

Newsletter Autumn 2017

Friends of The Keep Archives

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Peter Field,
Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex

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Chairman: Lady Teviot
Vice-chairman: Bill Shelford
Treasurer: Colin French
Secretary and Newsletter Editor:
Diana Hansen
Membership Secretary: Jan Boyes
John Barkshire
Sheena Parker
Ann Norman
Steve Selby
Annette Shelford
Philip Pople

Visit the Friends of The Keep Archives website at

www.fotka.org.uk

Contact the Membership Secretary at
membersfotka@gmail.com

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Contact The Keep

The Keep Opening Hours

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 9.30-17.00
Wednesday 10.00-17.00
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

Front cover:

Cathedral church of San Giusto, Trieste

Back cover:

Funerary slab of Don Juan

Editorial

The second FoTKA AGM on 18 October was the occasion for a party to celebrate Christopher Whittick's 40 years with the East Sussex Record Office. Affectionate and respectful tributes were paid to him by Becky Shaw for ESCC and Mary Teviot for FoTKA. Without Christopher's charm, immense knowledge and undiminished energy, FoTKA and its predecessor would never have been so successful in preserving the rich archives of East Sussex. Christopher has recently been appointed County Archivist, and has now had the honour of joining the ranks of Deputy Lords Lieutenant of East Sussex. An enthusiastic gathering listened to Christopher's Pam Combes Memorial Lecture, an account drawn from the papers in the Ashburnham archive of a surprisingly exotic resident of Hove.

The AGM was chaired by Lady Teviot, whose annual report is reproduced below. Bill Shelford was elected as Vice President, and Colin French is our new Treasurer. The composition of the committee is shown on the inside cover. We welcome new members, so if you have some time to spare and would like to be involved, do get in touch with any committee member.

Friends of Archives



Accessions Report 2016-2017

The Accessions Report 2016-2017 illustrates the wide range of beautiful, intriguing and historically valuable items to which FoTKA has contributed for the enjoyment and illumination of scholars and dabblers. Our visit programme this year included a very special visit to Firle Place; all the responses were favourable and FoTKA member Michael Kennedy contributes an exuberant account of a memorable day.

Diana Hansen

Chairman's report

The year began with congratulations to the Keep on the 22nd of February with the award from the National Archives of Accredited Status.

Our year has again been successful with the assistance we have been able to give to The Keep for the accessions of a variety of archival material, and for the outings which have provided us with the opportunity to access houses and buildings not usually open to the public.

The most important purchase to which we contributed was one of the two Prolog machines which enable not just visually impaired searchers to read documents. One is for the reading room and the other is for the research room. The best outcome is that everyone can benefit from the enhancement which enables an accurate transcript to be made. The idea for this equipment came directly from requests by members of Blind Veterans UK in conjunction with a new Mass Observation Archive project, Beyond Boxes. One of our grants enabled the purchase of 106 glass plate negatives taken by Brighton Corporation's Surveyor in the 1930s which show buildings before their planned demolition.

The outings began in February with a visit to Lewes Town Hall when our members were greeted by the Mayor of Lewes Dr Graham Mayhew, who at one time was at the Record Office at the Maltings. The Town Hall had some surprises, one of which was the

undercroft part of a large freehold originally owned by Lewes Priory. This had housed the Star Inn and by 1554 sheltered pilgrims on their way to Canterbury. In May the all day event, including lunch, at Firle Place and the church was unique as we were able to see parts of the house not open to the public. Deborah Gage, whose family has owned Firle Place for generations, and Christopher Whittick were our guides. In September the visit to Powder Mills Hotel was most interesting. Built in 1784 as a Gunpowder Owner's residence it has been restored as a hotel in 1980. The gunpowder mill worked for about a hundred years until 1876.



Mrs Coupland ,the owner of Powdermills, with Christopher Whittick

The last outing in September was to Lamb House in Lewes by invitation of Professor Paul Benjamin and his wife Mary. We saw the rare Chinese Screen and 18th and 19th century watercolours followed by a cream tea. We hope next year to have the same varied programme and an all day event which will help us fund raise, as was the intention with Firle Place, so we can continue with our support for the Record Office.

My thanks, heartfelt, go to John Barkshire, who is stepping down as Treasurer, and to Sheena Parker, who is relinquishing her role as our events organiser. Luckily for us, both have agreed to stay on as members of the committee. John joined the committee in 2008 and has always been a very sound adviser on all matters financial, which can become restrictive and complicated. We are fortunate that Colin French has agreed to take on the onerous position. Our thanks also go to Sheena. We are grateful for her enthusiasm and hard work in finding places to visit. This is not always easy with being confined to East Sussex and all the hazards involved with Health and Safety issues. Any suggestions would be very welcome. Sheena I am sure would add her thanks to Philip Pople and Annette Shelford who have worked so successfully as a team.

Our thanks also go to Casper Johnson who followed Elizabeth Hughes last November and to Christopher Whittick now the County Archivist. They both have worked closely with the Friends and with Ian Hilder who is always on the lookout for documents which are

at risk of being sold or of not being deposited at the Keep.

The Friends were represented at the recent Open Day at the Keep on the 9th of September when we were able to explain who we were and how we have been able to support the Record Office with our donations and hopefully to enrol new members. Thanks again to Judith Kinnison-Bourke who came to help out.

The challenge looking forward is to expand our membership so we will be able to keep our role in a time when the role of archives may not be so fully understood; it seems as if they are not on the internet records do not exist – but they do.

Finally I would like to thank all the members of the committee during the last year for their support and to add that the Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex Peter Field was sorry not to have taken the AGM this year, as he has done for the last nine years, but he is determined to take the tenth one next year.

Lady Teviot

Pam Combes Memorial lecture

From Hove to San Giusto, Trieste – the last journey of a reluctant Carlist

This is a very brief summary of the talk Christopher Whittick gave following the AGM. Christopher recalled Pam Combes with great affection as a longstanding friend, colleague and mainstay of FESRO

In 1834 the pretender Don Carlos, who had been evacuated by the Royal Navy the previous year, returned to Spain to take part in the first Carlist War; his wife Maria installed herself at Alverstoke Old Rectory, Hampshire, where she died shortly afterwards and was interred in a Gosport church. Their third son, the Infante Juan de Borbón y Braganza (1822–1887) had travelled with his parents to England. He married the daughter of the Duke of Modena; in 1848 he settled permanently in London, but his wife returned to Modena with their two sons.

In January 1861, suddenly and unexpectedly, Juan's two elder brothers died, probably from typhus, at Trieste, leaving Juan as the Carlist claimant to the throne of Spain. This left the movement in something of a quandary. As well as being a scientist, astronomer and an active photographer and a founder-member of the London Photographic Society, Don Juan, despite the conservatism and religious piety of

his own family and particularly that of his wife, was a liberal. Perhaps more to the point, since at least 1858 he had lived with Ellen Sarah Carter, fifth of the 12 children of William Carter, a market gardener; in 1861 they were enumerated in Kensington as Mr and Mrs Charles M Fort, with their two children. A decade later they were at 33 Marine Parade Worthing, their assumed name refined to Monfort, under which many of their several hundred descendants live to this day.

At some stage in the 1880s the Monforts moved to 25 Seafield Road in Hove, where Juan died of angina on Friday 18 November 1887. The following day the fifth Earl of Ashburnham, the leading UK adherent of the Carlist cause, engaged Henry Kent of the Brighton undertakers' firm of Attree and Kent. It was presumably in the week of the funeral that the family decided to have not only Juan's body, but that of his mother, removed to the Carlist mausoleum in the cathedral of San Giusto at Trieste. Largely to avoid French customs, the party sailed from London to Hamburg, and then by train via Bodenbach and Vienna to Trieste. The journey took 58 hours, arriving at 8.30am at Trieste, where the coffins were committed



Funeral procession of Don Carlos, father of Don Juan

to the mausoleum in the chapel of St Philip Borromeo within two hours.

As Don Juan's son reported to Ashburnham, 'the bodies were placed on a magnificent catafalque covered with lights, wreaths of flowers and of the arms of Spain; the cathedral was draped in black and 20 shields with the arms of Spain; the governor of the province Baron de Pretis, the commandant of the garrison, the admiral commanding Trieste and the mayor all present; the music (violins etc) and the choirs were superb; we were very pleased with Mr Kent'.

On 31 January, Kent submitted his account, amounting to £253 14s 10d, which was settled by Alfonso's secretary at Graz on 10 February.

Christopher Whittick,
County Archivist

Excavating the Eastbourne Library muniment room

We were asked this summer to select and remove archival and scarce printed material from the muniment room and basement of Eastbourne Library. Imminent work on the installation of new windows would affect these areas, and it seemed a good idea to remove as much as possible out of harm's way.

We started work in May, going once a week initially, then twice as the deadline for the building work approached. At the start of such a job it is always exciting to wonder what discoveries might be in store, and it has been a very enjoyable and rewarding experience. Eastbourne Library provided a spreadsheet containing brief descriptions of the material arranged under the shelf numbers, which was a good starting point.

The first major discovery was a massive accumulation of glass negatives and lantern slides. These were the work of several photographers, but the majority were by the Revd Walter Budgen (1862-1952), who bequeathed his vast photographic collections to Eastbourne Library. Budgen was curate of St Mary's Church, Eastbourne, 1900-1910, then vicar of Bodle Street, 1910-1912. But he became an expert on local history and archaeology, and these interests took over his life. He published *Old Eastbourne* in 1912, and from 1910 was Curator of Deeds at the Sussex

Archaeological Society. He is thought to have continued listing documents right up to the time of his death, aged 90, in 1952.

It was decided that the glass negatives were a priority, and conservator Melissa Williams and her team carefully removed them. All the negatives and lantern slides are now being cleaned and packaged by conservation volunteers, and we are organising a project to scan and catalogue every item. Given that the numbers run into thousands, it will be a while before the task is complete.





*Eastbourne Beach looking towards the Wish Tower c1800
(R-L 42-1-15-3)*

The conservation team also assessed the muniment room for mould, and unsurprisingly for a basement area, a fairly large proportion of material has needed treatment. As part of the project, we decided to take nearly 400 volumes of Eastbourne newspapers. Most were in very good condition, but to avoid the possibility of introducing mould to the repository areas, it was necessary to inspect and clean every one.

*Opposite: The construction of
Beachy Head Lighthouse 1901
(ACC 12583/7/9)*

The rest of the material selected was catalogued on a spreadsheet for import into our cataloguing software at The Keep. The important photographic collections included a large number of albums illustrating Eastbourne's history and development, and there are also many paintings and prints. The archive of Eastbourne Natural History, Photographic and Literary Society contains a series of mounted photographs mostly dating from the 1930s. There is a fine collection of prints depicting Eastbourne during the Second World War which were made by the *Eastbourne Herald* photographer Harry Deal.



*The Lamb Hotel Eastbourne undergoing restoration 1912
(R-L 40-02-090)*

Sadly the large number of private schools which flourished locally are poorly represented in our holdings, so we were pleased to obtain photographs and magazines from St Cyprian's, the *alma mater* of Eric Blair (the writer George Orwell), 1911-1916, who is pictured in the Cadet Corps band. There is a multitude of antiquarian guide books, and records of a number of local associations, from Eastbourne Literary Luncheons to minutes of the Dominie Club of Schoolmasters. There are scrapbooks of seaweeds made by Mary van Somner on the shore at Eastbourne before it was disturbed,

1870-1873, and a number of country diaries by Gertrude Leese (1870-1963), who lived at Twytton House, Alfriston. The range of material is too large to describe in detail here, but will soon be available to browse on our online catalogue, mostly under the reference ACC 12853.

Work is ongoing, both with cataloguing and scanning. We plan to return to the library shortly in order to check the rest of the basement area for other possible transfers to The Keep.

Anna Manthorpe

Belgian Refugees in Brighton in WW1

Brighton's role as a place of healing and convalescence for wounded soldiers during WW1 is well-known. Prominent buildings, including the Royal Pavilion and Brighton Grammar School, were requisitioned as military hospitals, and our archives include some wonderful material that brings this period to life. Less widely reported is the sanctuary offered locally to Belgian refugees displaced by war. 250,000 Belgian refugees came to the UK after the German invasion of 1914, prompting a huge relief operation. Although the plight of the Belgians was used to

build support for the war, refugee relief was also seen as a moral duty at that time; more than 2,000 official relief committees were established around the country, one of which was in Brighton and Hove.

The Catholic community was first to respond to the crisis, with local priest Father Kerwin offering temporary shelter (and the support of the Catholic Women's League) at the newly built St Mary's School in Portslade. Before long, however, a committee was set up to raise funds and care for the new arrivals. Accommodation was offered



Belgian refugees at Chesham Place (Brighton and Hove Museums)

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in private houses and residential or convalescent homes that had been made available, and an impressive range of services was established, including free medical treatment, a clothing depot and a school for Belgian children as well as English classes for the adults.

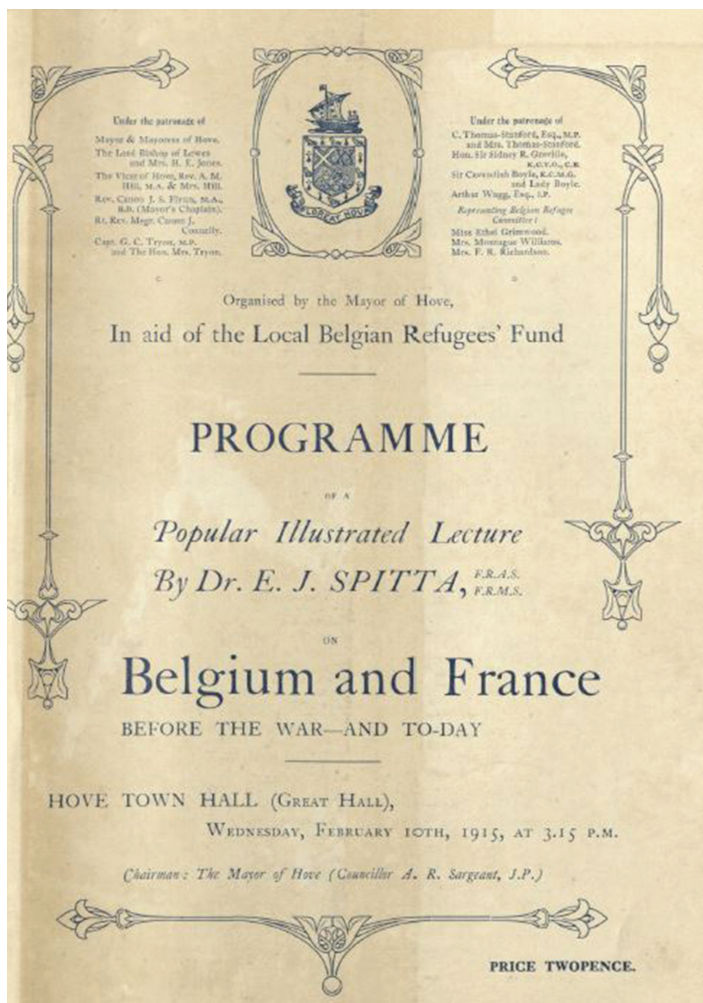
Our collection of rare material includes a scrapbook documenting the work of the local committee. Through news cuttings, photographs, handwritten letters and ephemera, it illustrates the huge effort made by local people to welcome and provide for the Belgians living among them. Newspaper articles describing atrocities witnessed by surviving refugees sit alongside detailed annual reports of the committee's work and accounts of concerts, lectures and other forms of entertainment. Fundraising events, including a Flag Day held on 2 October 1915, are also covered, while photographs of families, individuals and groups of people, all sadly unnamed, give a moving impression of community, however hastily formed.

A collection of letters has been pasted into the pages at the back of the scrapbook, some written in English, some in French. Most are addressed to Mrs Richardson, honorary treasurer of the local committee, thanking her profusely for Christmas gifts and other acts of kindness and generosity. I became intrigued by Mrs Richardson and tried to find out more about her. Using the family history resources available at The Keep, I discovered that her name was Bertha, that she was born in 1861, (one of 11 children)

and had married widower Frederick Richardson in 1912. Bertha, a spinster, was 50 at the time of her marriage, Frederick was 68, and it was Frederick's home, 4 Adelaide Crescent in Hove, which was transformed two years later into the clothing depot for the Belgian refugees that Bertha did so much to help.

Sadly, their marriage was short-lived; Frederick died of heart disease in February 1917 and, according to an obituary published in the *Brighton Herald*, one of the many floral tributes at his funeral came from the Belgian refugees in Brighton and Hove, 'in whose welfare the deceased had always taken the most sympathetic interest'. Another great supporter of the Committee's work, Reverend Paul-Marie Renkin from Brussels, died in the same year, knocked off his bike and run over by a motor bus while on his way to visit a refugee family in Preston. Bertha, meanwhile, was awarded the *Medaille de la Reine Elisabeth*, a Belgian decoration created in October 1916 to recognise exceptional service to Belgium and its victims of war. She died in Eastbourne in 1933.

And what of the refugees? By February 1918, the committee's annual report describes 'a diminishing output in almost every direction', with the closure of the clothing depot and one of the residential homes, and a falling-off of local subscriptions. This is interpreted in a positive light, however, 'a sign that the need for much of what had to be done at first has come to an end, and that the Refugees are now much more capable of managing for themselves.'



Programme for lecture in support of the Local Belgian Refugees' Fund (Brighton and Hove Museums)

And although they had been welcomed with open arms at the beginning of the war, refugees were encouraged by both the British and Belgian governments to return home as soon as it ended.

The scrapbook has been digitised and can be downloaded free of charge from the Royal Pavilion & Museums Digital

Media Bank using the following link <http://bit.ly/2xy0ned>. The original (reference BH600786) is held at The Keep and can be ordered by registered members to view in our Reading Room.

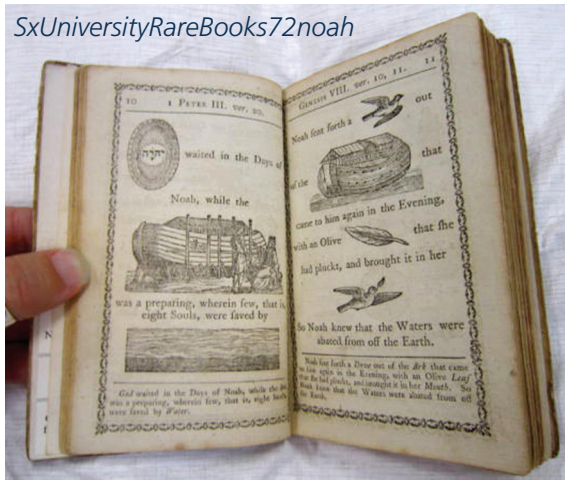
Kate Elms
(Brighton and Hove Museums)

Rare books in the University of Sussex Special collections

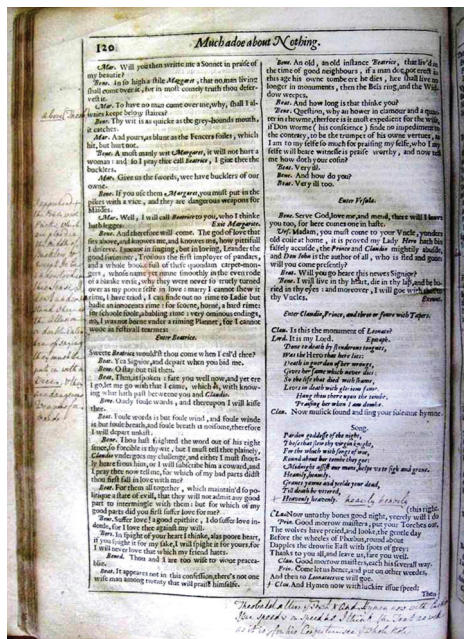
We are lucky at the University of Sussex Special Collections to have some fabulous and varied rare book collections, which are now part of the wonderful collections held at The Keep. Individual researchers can study these books in our reading room, and academics from Sussex and other universities use the books to teach their courses, running seminars in our education rooms where the students get first-hand experience of handling rare volumes.

Our largest collection is the University of Sussex Rare Books, formed in 2003 from our library's stock and including donations from Harold Foster Hallett, Sir Henry D'Avigdor-Goldsmid and Bishop George Bell. The range of dates and subjects in the collection is wide, and with nearly 2000 volumes it is our largest collection of published material. A highlight of this collection is *The works of that famous chirurgion Ambrose Parey* (SxUniversityRareBooks/784) from 1678; at its time this was a revolutionary book of surgery, not just for the skills and techniques developed by the man considered the father of modern surgery, but also because he did not publish in Latin.

SxUniversityRareBooks72noah



The Travers Collection was donated to the University by Joy Travers and represents a selection of the collection of Michael Travers, a book collector with wide ranging tastes. It showcases a range of different printing and binding techniques from the 15th to 19th centuries. The themes of the development of modern culture and of the impact of the printing press run through this collection. It includes the first book printed in England in the English language, *The Polychronicon* (SxTravers/7) printed in 1482 by Caxton, and first editions of *The workes of Benjamin Jonson*, (SxTravers/226) 1616 and *Hobbes Leviathan*, (SxTravers/250) 1651. Demonstrating its variety, the collection also includes the largest book in our collections, a reprint of the second volume of Audubon's



SxBaker/146

Birds of America, (SxTravers/335).

Printed in Double Elephant, with pages 23x28 inches, it is known as 'the most expensive book in the world'. Our 1970's reprint allows researchers to see the rich, full size illustrations close up.

The books in the Baker Collection may at first seem rather disparate, but they are linked by the collector, art gallery proprietor Samuel Henry Baker's eye for beauty. Full of fine bindings, colour illustrations and unusual details, these volumes are a rich source for studying the development of dress and decorative arts. It is this collection that includes our Second Folio of *Mr. William Shakespeares comedies, histories, and tragedies* (SxBaker/146) and *Culpeper's English physician; and complete herbal*, (SxBaker/161) which has never been out of print since it was first published in 1652.

University of Sussex looks after the Gilbert Foyle Charles Dickens Collection (SxGilbertFoyle) for Eastbourne Borough Council. The original monthly serialisations are regularly used for those studying not just Dickens, but also the history of the book and material culture itself. With several richly bound first editions and a volume of *Household Words*, this gem of a collection may be small but its importance for research and teaching has been proven time and again.

I present to you here a selection of my own personal favourite volumes and hope you will come to The Keep to explore and find your own.

Rose Lock, senior archive assistant



SxBaker/161c

News from The Keep

Our talks and events programme has gone from strength to strength in 2017. We started the year with a hugely popular presentation on life in the Brighton Workhouses with James Gardner, and have followed it up with talks on subjects as diverse as the role of women in WW1, the coaching era, and the history of Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club. A series of summer talks on Sussex artists was a particular highlight. We've opened up our conservation studio for a series of well-attended workshops led by conservator Melissa Williams. The Open Day on the 9th September attracted over 200 visitors who were able to see archives related to the themes of science and architecture and discuss their own research interests with staff. We have an exciting programme planned for 2018, so keep an eye on our website or sign up for our monthly newsletter to receive advance notice of what's on, by emailing thekeep@eastsussex.gov.uk.

As ever, we need to focus our income on maintaining and developing our core public services. To this end we will be introducing car parking charges this winter with a token system. Tokens will be purchased from the vending machine inside the Keep and used to release the barrier on leaving the car park. The normal charge for visitors will be £2.50 per token/day, but FoTKA and SFHG will benefit from a reduced rate of £1.00 per token/ day.

I am pleased to say that in 2018 The Keep will become the regional hub for *Save our Sounds*, a nationwide project led by the British Library and funded by the HLF to digitise audio archives on old formats so that they can be preserved and made accessible. We will set up a digitisation lab at the Keep with professional staff and volunteers with skills in project management, sound engineering, cataloguing and copyright issues.

Finally I would like to thank FoTKA for their funding of one of two Prodigy machines that can be found in the Research and Reading Rooms. The machines which look like computer screens allow the magnification and scanning of text which is then also converted into sound, which can be listened to through headphones as well as read on the monitor in a wide variety of type sizes and colour combinations. Taken in conjunction with the new Supernova text to speech software installed on all the public network computers at the Keep (and also in East Sussex libraries), we can now offer a much more comprehensive service to those with visual impairments or general reading difficulties. We are very grateful to FoTKA and the Heritage Lottery Fund for their support. Don't hesitate to ask a member of the Public Service team at The Keep if you have any questions about these new additions.

Casper Johnson

Visit to Firle Place on 5 June 2017

Joyful sunlight greeted our approach across Firle Park. Even the normally indifferent grazing sheep occasionally varied their superior gaze – as of a bored Retainer – seeming to acknowledge the pleasures prepared for us. The Georgian front looked its elegant best, concealing at first sight the Tudor core within. Passing beneath the 18th-century archway, its Venetian window

above, we were met in the Great Hall, with its hidden hammerbeam roof above, by Deborah Gage, who was to be our most knowledgeable guide, Christopher Whittick, who provided us each with an admirably informative, illustrated portfolio for our enjoyment and guidance and Lord Gage, a benign companion on the Tour.

An introductory word; then outside, where Deborah and Christopher helped our understanding of the Georgian encirclement of the Tudor original, confirming the happy choice of both Tudor and Georgian builders, which positioned their works so as to be sheltered beneath the skirt of the Downs, yet far enough forward of the rising ground to give a good view over the Park, and also to allow much light



The author and Friends

into the interior, particularly of the East and North Georgian wings.

It seems the Church came first – though last for our itinerary. Probably of origins before Domesday, on the site of older sacred buildings, what we see now is of the 12th century, then Tower and Chancel (13/14c), the north chapel added by Sir John Gage, the builder of the Tudor House, to be a Mortuary (with vault below) for his family.

The House itself capped a good century of marriages, inheritances and judicious land purchases, with business successes also, that matched a steady rise in wealth and High Office. Gages, as Sheriffs and Commissioners under Henry VIII and Cromwell, assisted the 'voluntary' surrender of Lewes Priory,

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pursued (and burnt) some of those who resisted first the Protestant, then the Catholic preferences of successive monarchs, before assisting Elizabeth to deal with petitions for the return of the property seized from her half-sister's unfortunate victims. In the early decades of the 17th century, the bachelor 7th Baronet Sir William Gage (1695–1744), now characterised more for his knowledge of good living, racing and other 'ventures' was the patron of the Georgian architect and craftsmen who produced the present Firle Place, a building which Pevsner, in his fruitless Sussex search for 'early pure Palladianism' puts amongst 'some fine ensembles of c1730-50, but too exuberant to go as Palladian ... especially the staircase'.

For me, the Staircase, in a Hall very well restored, redecorated and illuminated, and for Pevsner 'the only really splendid room in the house' was a bright introduction to the Upper Floor. Before that, though, we had seen pictures and furniture in the North Range which alone would justify the visit. Deborah Gage, clearly steeped in familiar knowledge, was invaluable, but time constrained her. In the Staircase Hall stands a stone doorway, said to have come from Lewes Priory, despite the battered but indistinguishable Gage ram in one of the spandrels, and a clearly carved but indecipherable object in the other. This carving provoked much learned debate between our guides, still unresolved as we left Firle Place for the church.



Debo Gage with the Sevres cabinet

Upstairs, an example of the kind of gallery allegedly first designed – in England, at least – by Wolsey (at Hampton Court) for the display of art; furniture, painting and otherwise. And wealth, of course. Portraits, landscapes, were all lit through tall windows – that even risked distracting one, with extensive parkland views – and distraction enough, one may find, from so many unanswerable questions, even given time. What did this sitter think of that artist – does it show? What dominant characteristic did the latter see in the former, and decide to display – or conceal? Were all the rich fabrics, laces and jewellery, the trees and water and the hands, the work of the fashionable master – or discreetly provided by Pupils, or the ‘Studio’? Fortunately perhaps, having viewed the Gainsborough, the Lawrence, the Reynolds and the Copley – and the famous Firle Sèvres –we were then diverted downstairs, to a very well selected, prepared and served lunch, giving us a chance to rest a moment and make new acquaintance.

The short walk past stately trees, with views of the park, the family’s horses and the gardens, left a little time to view some churchyard monuments to Firle families. Three of the Charleston ‘Family’ also are buried here, their more visible epitaphs left in Berwick Church. A fair exchange, some would suggest. The Gage Monuments, impressive in alabaster and carefully detailed in brass, were well illustrated and described both in our Portfolios and by the original 1590s designs by their maker Garat Johnson. At first a little confused between Pevsner and other sources as

to which ‘parents’ or ‘grand-parents’ were being identified by John Gage to be commemorated, it seemed to me more touching to read the detail in which he specified the dress and even the coiffure of his wives. And it was in the Gage chapel that the mystery of the stone doorway in the house was resolved. Between the effigies of Sir John Gage and his wife Philippa stands an object closely resembling that in the spandrel of the doorway. Matching the Gage ram on which Sir John rests his feet, it is a flaming tree or firebrand – the crest of Philippa’s Guldeford ancestors. This discovery, and the similarity between the door at Firle Place and that into the chapel, provided virtually positive proof that both were the work of Sir John Gage, whose earliest letters from Firle date from 1531.



A Friend with her new best friend

There was – and is – so much more to see, in Church and House; but they are close enough for most of us to visit again. This visit, however, was made special for us by the hard work of Dr Sheena Parker, our Visits Coordinator, to whose industry we owe so much.

Our guides both know their metier and how to share it. Thank you both. Lord Gage should, I hope accept that we enjoyed ourselves and thank him – and others not met – for the care expended on both house and collection, not least in this generation.

Michael Kennedy

Visit to Lamb House, 3 Chapel Hill Lewes, on Tuesday 19th September, 2017

We were indeed privileged, on this lovely September day, to be visiting the home of Emeritus Professor Paul Benjamin and Mrs Mary Benjamin. Professor Benjamin had shown the spectacular Chinese screens on Heritage Open day and was kind enough to offer an opportunity to FoTKA members to see them shortly afterwards.

The house from the front looks like a typical Georgian building, but that hides a late medieval timber framed hall house. Paul showed us the plaque to the right of the door with the letters JSB, for John and Sarah Baldy, 1716.

In their splendid drawing room, Paul and Mary gave us a brief history of the building. We then split into two groups to view the unique C17th Chinese lacquer screens, which form the walls of the hall and study. Mary explained the hall side, which is the lotus pond, with birds, animals and flowers, while Paul

explained the study side, which depicts a lion hunt with birds and flowers, all in such vivid colours.

There is no documentary evidence telling us by whom, and when, the Chinese screens were brought to Lamb House. However, there is a strong case for believing that it was Thomas Baldy of The Cliffe Lewes, who is more famous for creating Baldy's garden in the mid C17th, Lewes' first major tourist attraction. Baldy was known as a 'chinaman'; in other words, he sold Chinese porcelain, probably from his shop 'garden, adjacent to Lamb House at the rear' in what is now 3 Malling Street. Thomas Baldy owned Lamb House – as did his mother and father, Sarah and John Baldy, who purchased the house in 1716 – but he did not live there.

Having inspected the Chinese panels, we all walked into the garden for a

superb cream tea. Some of us – two, in fact – climbed the steep steps at the end of the garden, to the terrace under the cliff. There, we had a magnificent view of the superb garden, and the interesting old roofs of Malling Street along Cliffe High Street and up to the Castle.

Everyone thanked our hosts for what had been a unique, instructive and very enjoyable afternoon.

Philip Pople

Visit to Powdermills on 6 September 2017

FoTKA members visited Powder Mills Hotel, near Battle, on a lovely late summer's day. The owner, Mrs Julie Cowpland, was able to accompany us throughout the visit. County Archivist, Christopher Whittick presented a historical narrative mainly focusing upon the families associated with the house and its place in the manufacture of gunpowder. This explosive story included personal vendettas, money laundering and catastrophic accidents. The gunpowder mill operated from the late C17th until 1876, having been rebuilt after a disastrous explosion in 1798 when three men died, one 'rent to atoms' and one expiring after consuming a cordial 'with great avidity'. As well as the proprietor's residence, Powder Mills housed various process buildings, which probably included the single-storey ranges at the rear. The apparent concentration of processes in one large structure was unique in the gunpowder industry, where buildings were usually highly dispersed in single-process buildings. The gunpowder was reputed to be the finest in Europe.



Friends at Powdermills

Christopher's warmly appreciated account, with its carefully researched detail – including detail from the Battle Abbey Archive – gripped the audience to the end, stimulating many

Friends of The Keep Archives

questions historical and quasi-technical, providing a fitting end to an immensely interesting visit.

Sincere thanks were offered to both Christopher Whittick and Mrs Cowpland.

Sheena Parker

Friends' events

Thursday 15th February 2018; a talk **Shoreham Fort: Past Present & Future**, by Gary Baines, chairman and founder of the Friends of Shoreham Fort. Members are invited to this talk organised by our friends at West Sussex, to be held at 2.30pm in St Botolph's Church, Lansdowne Road, Worthing, BN11 4LY. £6 members: £8 non-members, tea/coffee and biscuits included.

Tuesday 8th May 2018 ;our joint visit with West Sussex will be to **Shoreham Fort** itself at 2.30. Shoreham Fort is in Forthaven, Shoreham-by-Sea, BN43 5HY at the end of Shoreham Beach.

28 February 2018 ;a talk for members at The Keep given by **John Henty**, who in the late 1980s and early 1990s produced a series of programmes for hospital radio stations. Now digitised with help from FoTKA , the programmes include interviews with celebrities , contemporary music etc. Relive the period with an entertaining companion! The event will run from 2pm to 4.30pm, tea and biscuits included.

Watch out for a visit to the Keep's **Mass Observation** archive, planned for March 2018.

Details of these visits and events will be on the website and emailed to members in due course.

Talks at The Keep

– January to April 2018

Tuesday 9 January, 5.30-6.30pm, £3 **Sodden by the Sea: A History of Insobriety in Brighton**, a talk with historian Dr Richard Robinson

Wednesday 24 January, 5.30-6.30pm, £3 **The Albion in the Archives – a rematch**: talk with author and club historian Tim Carder

Thursday 8 February, 2.30-3.30pm, £3 **Early Brighton Photographs, from the 1840s onwards**, a talk with author and local historian and Christopher Horlock

Wednesday 21 February, 5.30-6.30pm, £3 **Mass Murder, Nazi Visions of Empire, and the Art and Writing of Arnold Daghani: Documenting a Neglected Aspect of the Holocaust**, a talk with historian and writer Harry Bennett

Wednesday 14 March, 5.30-6.30pm, £3 **Sussex Women's Suffrage Marchers**, a talk with author Frances Stenlake

Wednesday 18 April, 5.30-6.30pm, £3 **Eastbourne in the 1950s & 1960s**, a talk with local historian Paul Jordan

Bookbinding and conservation workshops

A series of Saturday sessions to work on your own projects under the guidance of conservator Melissa Williams.

Dates: 13 Jan, 10 Feb, 10 Mar, 14 April, 10am-4pm

Price: £80 per session or £300 for all four.

An introduction to preserving old documents

Find out how to conserve your family treasures for future generations.

Tuesday 20 February, 1.30-4.30pm, £15, includes tea or coffee.

An introduction to Coptic bookbinding

Make a handmade journal or notebook with this centuries-old, hand-sewn method.

Saturday 3 March, 10am-4pm

£80, including tea or coffee and all materials.

Booking recommended as numbers are limited. For more information, plus booking and payment details, please call 01273 482349 or visit The Keep's website, www.thekeep.info/events.

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