

#### **FoTKA Officers**

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Andrew Blackman, Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex

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Diana Hansen

Visits Coordinator: Annette Shelford

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## Visit the Friends of The Keep Archives website at

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Cover images: Latter Parsons and his wife Sarah (ACC 13748)

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#### **Contact The Keep**

Please visit The Keep website for up to date visiting information

#### **The Keep Opening Hours**

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday: 10:00 – 16:00

Thursday, Saturday 10:00 – 13:00 The Keep is closed to the public on Sunday and Monday

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## **Editor's introduction**

We were delighted that so many members attended the AGM. held in the Keep on 6 October. The occasion was special in many ways: we were celebrating another step towards normality, looking forward with some confidence to the resumption of FoTKA visits, and not least saying farewell to Sir Peter Field in his last duty as our President. Peter has retired as Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex. We are pleased that he and his wife Margaret will continue to take an interest in FoTKA as members. The Committee presented Peter with a map of the Royal Pavilion. Responding, Peter thanked the committee and wished FoTKA and the Keep well, observing that if we don't know our history, we know nothing. His successor as Lord Lieutenant, Andrew Blackman, has accepted our invitation to take over as our President

Members approved the Annual Report and Accounts. Ken and Ann Norman have left the committee for personal reasons. Philip Pople retired by rotation, and was re-elected. Members enjoyed socialising with drinks and canapes, and were then treated to a lecture by Professor John Blair, in the series in memory of our past Chairman Pam Combes. John knew Pam well, and recalled her with affection. His lecture on "How Anglo-Saxon was Sussex?" was full of interesting and new information. I was intrigued by the thought that Sussex remained a pocket of paganism well beyond the conversion of the rest of the country. Brighton clearly has long-standing antecedents.

Bill Shelford's report to the AGM is reproduced below. We were also pleased to welcome Ceris Howard, Keep Team Leader, to the meeting and to hear her account of a tumultuous two years in the life of the Keep and her plans for its future, summarised below.

#### Diana Hansen

# Chair's report to the AGM 6th October 2021

It is great to be back in person to meet with you all so I should like to thank Ceris and the staff at the Keep for enabling us to meet here for our AGM. Next year, I feel certain we will be able to open our doors to the public for our Pam Combes Memorial lecture.

Like many small charities we have, during the pandemic, been operating remotely and as many of you are aware last year's AGM was a virtual one. That means, of course, that we have not been able to have any members' visits although visits were about to take place when lockdown began. I think that means that the arrangements remain 'warm', but we have not pressed ahead as most of our members are elderly and we have taken the view that few have been ready to have indoor meetings. Once we are certain that our members will relish meetings with talks indoors, we will advertise our visits once more

In the meantime, I should like to pay a heartfelt tribute to Diana for producing our newsletter.

This AGM marks the retirement of Ann and Ken Norman from our committee. Both have given a lifetime of service to the City of Brighton and Hove, and I always considered that we were extremely lucky that they agreed to join us when we were formed to support the partnership within the Keep. I am certain that you will all join me in wishing them both well and in thanking them both for all they have contributed to this charity.

Since the period to which our accounts relate, we have been notified that the Swire Charitable Trusts are to make a most generous donation of £10,000 to us in memory of Mrs Gillian Fane, wife of the writer Julian Fane. The Fanes (who lived in Lewes) in their lifetimes were strong supporters of this Charity and we are extremely grateful for such a magnificent gift which allows us to continue our work in supporting the Keep.

Christopher Whittick reports that the pandemic has not dampened the rate at which documents emerge and last year's grant giving has seen us offer support towards the conservation of a fascinating collection of scrapbooks relating to the history of Brighton, collaborate with West Sussex Record Office in acquiring some early strays from

the Battle Abbey Archive and add significantly to the archive of correspondence of Messrs Attree, Brighton's oldest firm of Solicitors.

Let me turn first to the scrapbooks of Henry Roberts. He moved to Brighton in 1906, initially employed as a Librarian and subsequently became director of the Public Library, Museums and Fine Art Galleries; he was responsible for a series of ground-breaking art exhibitions. His scrapbooks, compiled between 1886 and 1935 document every aspect of his professional life and in doing so provide a rich insight into the cultural life of contemporary

Brighton and beyond. By way of example. Roberts' first exhibition. 'Modern French Art' took place in the summer of 1910, and is referred to as the first public display of the Impressionists in England. And it is he who records the transformation of the Royal Pavilion into a military hospital, first used for the care of Indian soldiers and later for the rehabilitation of limbless servicemen. These scrapbooks are unfit to handle as they contain many folded items, are highly acid and can crumble at a touch. We offered match funding for the conservation to lever a much larger grant from the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust.



Henry Roberts' scrapbook



Henry Roberts' scrapbook

An auction in Bedford was the improbable source of early documents relating to the lands of the Browne family, Viscounts Montague, who at the relevant time owned both Battle Abbey and Cowdray Park. There was a disastrous fire in Cowdray in 1793 and two weeks later the 8th Viscount did not survive a foolhardy attempt to shoot the Rhine Falls.

The documents East Sussex Record Office now own may have been salvaged from the fire: they include a counterpart lease of land in Battle and copies of account rolls of the former Poynings manors of Henry Percy, 3rd Earl of Northumberland 1453-1457.

Our Treasurer has commented that we always seem to be acquiring the letters of William Attree. I shall explain but no explanation would be complete without first paying tribute to Ian Hilder, whose assiduous monitoring of eBay allows us to continue to reassemble this archive. I also have a particular interest in this story as I was a partner in a London based legal firm which celebrated its 200th anniversary while I was still a reasonably young man. So let me explain. William Attree was the first known principal of Howlett and Clarke, the only Brighton firm of Solicitors that can trace its history back to the 18th Century. His grandfather was referred to as a bricklayer (probably like many builders today a builder and developer) in Ditchling. The firm's archive of 118 boxes was deposited at the East Sussex Record Office in the 1980's but the unique archive of the letters into the firm had by then disappeared. These letters were filed and docketed and covered a period from 1770s to 1890s. Were they sold or were they pilfered by a member of staff? We shall never know. The difficulty for us when these letters appear is that they appeal to postal history buffs so prices can rocket if the postal frank is rare but equally if it is not rare we can acquire interesting letters at knock down prices. So, in 2016 we bought for the princely sum of £4 an informative letter to the firm

from Charles Barry, the architect, written during the construction of Brighton St Peter. I do hope that we will continue to find more letters to the firm.

Last but by no means least I must turn to Sir Peter Field to thank both him and Margaret for their support over many years. Peter has always attended our AGM's without fail, chairing them with his trademark kindness and charm. I also do not recall an AGM without Margaret in the audience always staying to chat over a drink before our lecture. I should like to thank Sir Peter and Lady Field for all the interest that they have taken in the Keep, never forgetting the opening by Her Majesty the Queen with His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh. I think that the latter had his trademark sharp witted questions to keep all on their toes. I have recently learned that His Royal Highness was partial to peanuts dipped in mustard which seems to me to be in character

In recognition of the contributions of Sir Peter and of Lady Field,
Committee members have contributed to a gift to them which I am delighted to hand over. (It is an early picture of the Royal Pavilion). Perhaps you would join with me in clapping Peter and Margaret while Peter unwraps the parcel.

#### **Bill Shelford**

# Acquisitions report 1 April 2020 - 31 March 2021



Quitclaim of Richard Ayenett

A large proportion of the year covering April 2020 to March 2021 was spent in lockdown. Despite the restrictions, The Keep's work did not stop, and we made a number of FoTKA-funded acquisitions.

In May 2020 FoTKA purchased a Quitclaim by Richard Ayenett of Brightling, husbandman, which adds considerably to our knowledge of Abletts, which later became part of the Brightling Park Estate (ACC 13634).

On 5 June a lease to Edward Walshe of Battle of 1633 came up for sale at W and H Peacock of Bedford but in the same lot was a 1595 lease of property in Easebourne in West Sussex; in both cases the lessor was a Viscount Montague, owner of Battle Abbey. Christopher Whittick agreed with Wendy Walker of West Sussex that he would purchase on behalf of both, and WSRO would reimburse FoTKA for its share. He was also able to negotiate scans of another lot - account rolls from 1453-1457 of the former Poynings

manors in Sussex of Henry Percy, third earl of Northumberland (1421-1461). Although these belonged with the rest of the archive at Petworth House, the accounts contained entries for the manors of Hangleton with Aldrington, Preston Poynings in Firle, Pangdean, Waldron and Ashcombe in Lewes (AMS 7375).

The niche trade of constructing hand biers was carried out by Messrs Robert Parker and Son of 16, 17 and 17A Prospect Place, Hastings. In the 1936 catalogue of the firm purchased by FoTKA, Parker proudly announced himself as the inventor of these carriages and that he had

58 years' experience. New ideas were always welcomed from the clergy; one product is described as 'specially built in the first place for the Rev SC Rees Jones, Remenham Rectory, Henley on Thames, who described it as a lovely bier'. One wonders if he tried it out (AMS 7374).

lan Hilder has continued to be assiduous in purchasing items from eBay on our behalf. A batch of photographs included a fascinating depiction of a ruined house in Chuck Hatch, near Hartfield. We would be delighted if any FoTKA member can identify it (ACC 13644/3).



Mysterious ruin

lan spotted deeds of 46 Regency Square, Brighton (ACC 13682) being offered on eBay in June. They contain an excellent diagram showing details of land ownership at the square in 1850. We have also been successful in buying letters to the firm of Messrs Attree and Sons (various accession numbers) which are now accumulating at a good rate and will provide an excellent source for 19th century historians.

A photograph album compiled by an unknown family contained photographs of Great Dixter when it was used as a military hospital during the First World War. It includes a photograph of Mrs Daisy Lloyd, mother of Christopher who made the gardens so famous. She is appropriately depicted with a trug, flanked by two of the nurses (ACC 13726).



Mrs Daisy Lloyd with nurses

The range of items thrown up by eBay can be surprising. An ornithological diary compiled by either Noel Teulon Porter or his wife Theresia at Old Way, Burgh Hill, Etchingham during the 1930s will doubtless be useful to those interested in changes to the bird population (AMS 7386). It was ours for £19 – definitely a bargain.



Portrait of John Latter Parsons

In contrast, three portraits of the Parsons family of Lewes which were auctioned on eBay were purchased with much competition. This was a successful collaboration with the Lewes History Group who contributed £100. The portraits show stone mason Latter Parsons (1773-1848), his wife Sarah Parsons (1771-1827), reproduced on the cover of this Newsletter, and their son John Latter Parsons (c.1806-

1885); the portraits of father and son were probably painted in the 1830s by Archibald Archer, who was responsible for the grand portrait of the 1830 Royal visit to the Friars, on view in Lewes Town Hall. The family played outstanding roles in Lewes's commercial, religious, and antiquarian past, and The Keep already holds a significant business archive for their firm. Unfortunately, the frames are in poor condition so the paintings are awaiting conservation before they can be displayed (ACC 13748).

The most modern acquisition was purchased from an auction house in Nottingham just before the country went into lockdown. The artist's impression of proposed premises for Henry Clark and Sons, paint manufacturer, Crowhurst Road, Hollingbury (ACC 13699/1) dates from March 1953 and is thought to be a stray from Brighton Borough Surveyor's archive. It paints an optimistic picture of how an industrial estate on the edge of the Downs would look and it is hard to imagine this scene when standing in Asda car park.

We are as always most grateful to FoTKA for the funding without which these additions to our holdings would not have been possible.

Anna Manthorpe and Andrew Bennett, Archivists

# **News from the Keep**

Over the past two years, Keep staff have met the challenge of three closures and reopenings, with the transformation in March 2021 of the Keep into a hub for lateral flow tests. There have been staff changes, and the Keep Sustainability Plan has been implemented. The Royal Pavilion has changed its status to become a charitable trust. Projects have continued: Unlocking our Sound Heritage will complete next January after two years on site. The Keep Management Team, that is myself, Rich Wragg of the University of Sussex and Chloe Tapping from Brighton and Hove Museums, looks forward to implementing the new Keep Strategy 2021-2026. Whilst the last couple of years have been very challenging, it feels like The Keep is ready for the next phase in our development. The team are working on lots of exciting new ideas in line with our new strategic goals: Customer Experience, Staff Engagement, Archival Excellence, Financial Good Practice and Developing Digital Access.

We opened the doors to the Reading Room in April and since then have had a steady stream of visitors, up to ten each day, enjoying access to original documents. We have recently removed restrictions on visitors using our Reference Room, so you can now browse our library shelves, view images on our dedicated PCs and use our free access computers to explore your family history on Ancestry and Find My Past. While visitor numbers are still much lower than in pre-Covid times, we hope to keep gradually increasing access as and when it is safe to do so. We hope to welcome volunteers back on site soon and reinstate the popular tours and Meet The Archivist events next year. Please keep up to date with our latest news by signing up to our newsletter, following us on Facebook and Twitter, or via our website.

We were very sad to say goodbye to David Myers and Melissa Williams in May, and Kate Elms from Brighton and Hove this summer. Annette Moss, Public Service and Building Manager, Tomasz Kowalczyk, Development and Communications Officer, have been settling into their new roles. They've been supporting the Public Service Team through the changes in staff structure as well as the pandemic over the summer.

We were very fortunate to have a strong field of Conservators applying for the part time post we advertised earlier this year. Charlie Grimsdell has been in post for several months now and is settling in very well, getting stuck into the backlog of accessions, supporting new members of the public service team with their handling training

and working on funded projects. This month her work bench has seen a second folio Shakespeare in need of cleaning for University of Sussex, some bright and beautiful posters from the Theatre Royal archive and the Pavilion scrapbooks of Henry D Roberts.

I'm delighted to welcome Ruth Kusionowicz as the ESCC Digital Preservation Project Officer. Digital preservation of records is a challenge for all organisations as we transition from paper-based to electronic records. A piece of paper, looked after properly, looks much the same at 10, 50 or 100 years old unfortunately the same cannot be said for electronic records and even finding ways to access them can become tricky within a relatively short time (I know my children couldn't tell you what a floppy disc was for!) This presents us with a huge challenge for preserving these digital records and making them accessible for future years, decades and maybe even centuries. Luckily for the Archive Service, Ruth is an experienced Archivist and Record Manager with a passion for all things digital. She will be leading a two year project to work on the digital preservation needs of the County Council.

Work continues on the amazing Henry D Roberts scrapbooks with the help of the money granted to us by FoTKA and the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust. The good news is that we have found a



Theatre Royal poster

seventh volume, and that several of the volumes have large and intricate items pasted in, such as posters, menus and letters, all of which adds to the historical interest and value of the collection. However, it does mean that the project is more time consuming and therefore more expensive than expected, so we were very grateful to FoTKA for contributing extra funds to help us continue with this project.

## Ceris Howard MA

Team Manager Archive Services and The Keep

# Returning to teaching at The Keep

Twice a year, Diana Hansen, FoTKA's highly efficient newsletter editor, contacts me about a text from the University of Sussex. This time, Diana's email mentioned how difficult a time our students have had recently. Arriving as it did whilst I was in the midst of preparing and delivering teaching sessions, I thought I would reply to the request with a short reflection on the return of a particularly important activity at The Keep.

Teaching at The Keep is important for a couple of reasons. It engages our students with archives and rare books, and it empowers them to return independently as researchers. We spend a lot of time teaching undergraduate and taught postgraduate students how to find and work with original materials. Crucially, we do this by letting them handle, read and interpret items from our collections. The Keep is perfect for this, containing, as it does, good sized teaching rooms. Better still is the way in which we are able to share the use of collections, benefiting from the holdings of our Keep partners. This point was particularly on my mind recently when I was involved in a session for English students working with Victorian photography.

The University's collections aren't particularly strong when it comes to 19th century photographs. However, after a conversation with Anna Manthorpe and Andrew Bennett, archivists for East Sussex and Brighton and Hove, I had a positive glut of items to use .Thanks to our partners, I was able to show students the photograph album of John Bugthorpe, a Brighton outfitter (AMS 6685). We looked at images of members of the Brighton and Sussex Medico-Chirurgical Society (AMS 7216/9/2) and scenes of Newhaven Harbour (R/L/50/1/1). The collections were used to generate discussion on a variety of subjects, from ideas about identity to the difference between official images and personal photographs.

Although the session was about Victorian photographs, I couldn't help but include the diary written by Mary and St John Hutchinson and purchased for the University's collection by FoTKA (see Autumn 2020 newsletter). The volume, written in 1910, contains many photographs and ephemeral items pasted onto its pages. It's always a pleasure to use new acquisitions and the diary is a wonderful example of the interaction between text and image, something the English students were particularly keen to study.



Using new technology to explore the collections

Another teaching session, led by the University's archivist, Karen Watson, would not have been possible without the collections of East Sussex Record Office. It's relatively easy to find items in our collections of relevance for History and English students. It might seem a little harder to prepare something for those studying Accountancy but not when a variety of ledgers and business records can be produced in the teaching rooms. However, despite the excitement

of welcoming students back to the building, we haven't witnessed a complete return to how things were before the pandemic. In the images here, showing the Accountancy session, you might spot that some students joined via a computer from elsewhere. So that nobody misses out on the experience of exploring archive material, the University has invested in some cameras that allow collection items to be consulted remotely and in real time.



Karen Watson (left) leads a teaching session for Accountancy students

Last year, we adapted our activities in order to move teaching activities online. Whilst the last 18 months have been difficult, as we return to in-person sessions, we intend to keep hold of some of the innovative methods of teaching that we've developed. Hopefully our students benefit from the classes, certainly we enjoy them, and none of them would be quite so engaging without the Keep partnership.

#### Richard Wragg Collections Manager, University of Sussex

# 5 High Street, Hastings 'The Rossetti House' (AMS7393)

Those with an interest in the Pre-Raphaelite artistic movement will know that Dante Gabriel Rossetti brought his future wife, Elizabeth (Lizzie) Siddal to Hastings to benefit from the healthy air, and to draw and paint. In August this year, I was delighted to be offered deeds and other material relating to the house where they stayed.

The former owners of the house told me that earlier deeds had been deposited with Hastings Museum. Fortunately, I found that these deeds, which commence in 1659, had already come to The Keep along with others which had been held by the museum. They have been joined by the later batch, covering 1792-1997, forming an almost continuous record of ownership. The first house on the site is thought to have been built c1620 by John Akehurst, who was Mayor of Hastings in 1614.

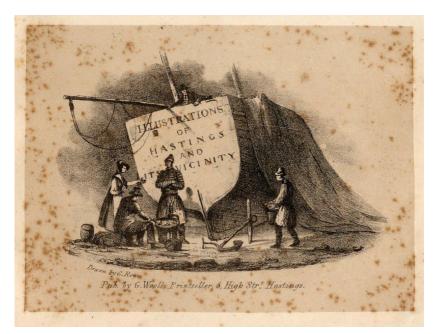
The owners had done an enormous amount of research on the house. It had been the home of the print and book publisher George Wooll, who moved to Hastings in 1823 and set up a Repository of Arts at 5 High Street and worked for two years with George Rowe to produce over 100 lithographs. As part of



Drawing Elizabeth Siddal in a chair by Dante Gabriel Rossetti (Tate Gallery)

the research, they amassed a large collection of Wooll's lithographs, which were generously donated along with the deeds. Wooll emigrated to America in 1835, so the depictions of Hastings during the period he lived and worked from 5 High Street are an important topographical source.

Anne Lister (1791-1840; Gentleman Jack in the recent television series) makes various references to Wooll's



Title page from Illustrations of Hastings and its vicinity drawn by G Rowe, published by G Wooll of 5 High St Hastings c1825 (AMS 7393/2/1)



Hastings from the White Rock December 1823

No.   When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age. Condition.	Bank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Faths
26 May 2	Rante Gabriel Refertte  Migabeth Mano Siddal	Sull Backds	artist		fabrisl Roportte Tharles Sidden	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1
Married in the	Tante Galrey	cording to the Rites and C	Ceremonies of the Es		How a Min	tengals

Marriage register entry for Rossetti and Siddal (PAR 367/1/3/3)

shop in her diaries when she was in Hastings during 1831-1832. Stopping at the shop seems to have been a regular part of her routine.

The seamier side of Hastings life is also represented in this archive. Wooll prosecuted Mrs Ann White for stealing three packs of cards worth 15 shillings from his shop. It was not her first offence, and she was transported to Australia in 1825. The case has been researched meticulously, and we can follow her story to the Female Factory in Parramatta.

The house bore witness to the tortured love affair of Rossetti and Siddal. They stayed at 5 High Street between April and June 1854, although Lizzie was often left alone while Rossetti returned to London. Rossetti avoided the commitment of marriage, making Lizzie's position very ambiguous. In 1859 they did not see each other at all, and by the following year Lizzie's mental and physical health had deteriorated so

much that she returned to Hastings, this time to other lodgings because her old landlady had moved. Lizzie was thought to be close to death and Rossetti was moved to offer marriage, which took place on 23 May 1860 at Hastings St Clement. There was no happy ending. Lizzie gave birth to a stillborn baby girl the following year, and having become dependent on laudanum, died of an overdose in February 1862.

East Sussex Brighton and Hove Record Office is always delighted to welcome accessions of title deeds, which tell us a great deal about a property. But the house in this archive has also been lovingly researched, and it is a great bonus have so much additional material for a building with such a varied and fascinating history.

### Anna Manthorpe

