



Friends of [the keep] Archives

Newsletter Autumn 2023

FoTKA Officers

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Andrew Blackman,
Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex

Elected committee/ trustees

Chairman: Bill Shelford
Vice Chairman: Christopher Whittick
Membership Secretary: Phil Hamerton
Treasurer: Richard Pursey
Secretary and Newsletter Editor:
Diana Hansen
Visits Coordinator: Annette Shelford
Sheena Parker
Penny Pursey
Clive Wilson
Philip Pople

Visit the Friends of The Keep

Archives website at
www.fotka.org.uk

Contact the Membership Secretary at
membersfotka@gmail.com

Registered charity number 1159372

Contact The Keep

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

Members who sadly missed the AGM may be wondering what a photograph taken on Rapa Nui (Easter Island), is doing on the cover of this Newsletter. We were delighted to welcome Professor Sue Hamilton (right) to give the 2023 Pam Combes Memorial Lecture. Sue is a distinguished archaeologist, and was a very good friend of Pam, who worked with her on many occasions, although not in the remote South Pacific! Sue's talk brought a new perspective to the common view of Easter Island as an ecological cautionary tale. With her obvious affection for the island and its people Sue was able to evoke the living civilisation of Rapa Nui. We are very grateful to her.



FoTKA was pleased to participate in the Keep Open Morning on Saturday 16 September, celebrating the tenth anniversary of the opening of The Keep by HM Queen Elizabeth II. Trustees enjoyed chatting with many of the visitors. Anna Goddard gives us an account of the day



*Trustees,
Philip Hamerton,
Christopher Whittick
and Diana Hansen,
at the FoTKA table*

Please visit The Keep website for up to date visiting information

*Cover:
Rapa Nui (Easter Island) ponies and statues (Sue Hamilton)*



Visitors viewing acquisitions in the Reference Room

A display in the Reference Room included acquisitions funded by FoTKA.

As usual in our Autumn edition we include an account of accessions funded by FoTKA in the financial year. You will also find an article from Alex Taylor, who has the important job of cataloguing the Hutchinson archives which have recently been acquired by the University of Sussex; Richard Wragg wrote about this in a previous Newsletter. Alex will be reporting further on his progress in future Newsletters during the year. I am delighted to include an article from Dr Alexandra Loske of Brighton Museums on a remarkable Brighton woman, Mary Merrifield.

The 2024 visit programme gets under way with an early spring visit to Trinity House in Lewes, while Annette Shelford brings back memories of the summer's splendid visit to Brightling.

Diana Hansen

The Keep will be closed for the Christmas period from 24 December 2023 to 1 January 2024, and from 22 January 2024 to 2 February 2024.

Report from the AGM

The 2023 AGM took place in spite of the Keep being closed to the public by a nearby water leak. We were pleased to welcome our President, the Lord Lieutenant Andrew Blackman to the meeting. The Chairman reported on the year's activities and accessions. The outgoing Treasurer, Colin French, sent his apologies. The Chairman paid tribute to his important work in ensuring that FoTKA's finances remained on a sound basis and acknowledged his helpful and constructive advice over the years.

Anna Goddard, Keep Team Manager, reported on News from the Keep.

We are pleased that following an external recruitment process in September Anna has been confirmed as Team Manager, Archive Services and The Keep. Anna, together with Kevin Bacon from the University of Sussex and Chloe Tapping from Brighton and Hove Museums form the Keep Management Team.

The AGM approved the Annual Report and Accounts for 2022-2023. Annette Shelford and Sheena Parker were re-elected for a further term of three years. Richard Pursey was elected as a Trustee and Treasurer.

Richard Pursey, our new Treasurer

Richard is proud to be Sussex born and bred, having been born in Henfield and growing up in Shoreham-by-Sea. He joined a London firm of chartered accountants where he specialised in taxation, eventually retiring from EY as a senior director of tax in 2002. Richard enjoys walking, a leisurely game of golf, not very serious bridge and watching Brighton and Hove Albion with his wife, Penny, to whom he has been happily married for well over 50 years.



Date for your Diary

FoTKA is delighted to have been able to arrange a very special visit to initiate our 2024 Visit programme. On Saturday 9 March from 2pm to 5pm we will visit Trinity House in Lewes High Street. This conspicuous and historic building has for centuries been the offices and until recently the home of a distinguished firm of Lewes lawyers. Behind its Georgian facade lies a house of Tudor origins, including an armoury. Further details will be sent out nearer the time. Numbers will be limited so apply early!

Open Day at The Keep

The 10th Anniversary Open Morning at The Keep was held on Saturday 16 September 2023. Doors opened at 10am when there were already 33 people queueing, eager to get in. In all, 161 visitors attended the event, not including staff, volunteers or FoTKA and Sussex Family History Group representatives.

There was a good mixture of existing Keep users and many new visitors who were at The Keep for the first time. Demographically, there was a mixture of our usual user profile and young families, with a few young couples also attending.

Tour times were set for 10.15, 11.15, 12.00 and 12.30. Visitors signed up for their tour time. The first tour was oversubscribed within the first five minutes of opening, and we had to put on an additional tour at 11.30am to accommodate the amount of interest.

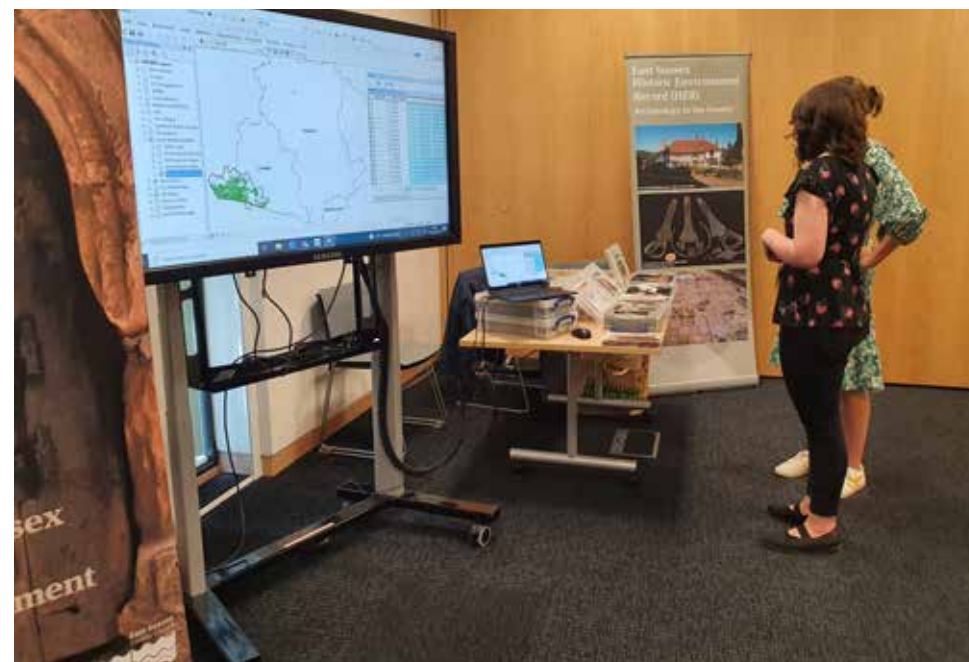
88 people in total attended the tours.

We asked our visitors to provide feedback. Comment cards all rated the event as 'Excellent' (75%) or 'Good' (25%). All visitors who returned comment cards stayed for at least 1.5 hours, with most staying for up to 2.5 hours. The comment cards also highlighted the tour as being excellent.

Comments from visitors included: 'It's been a great day', 'I've learned so much', 'Thank you very much, that was interesting' and 'Thank you. Very enjoyable', and following the event, details have been shared by attendees on social media.

Anna Goddard

*Photos opposite:
Above: Refreshments in The Keep foyer
Below: Visitors intrigued by the East Sussex Historic Environment Record (HER) display*

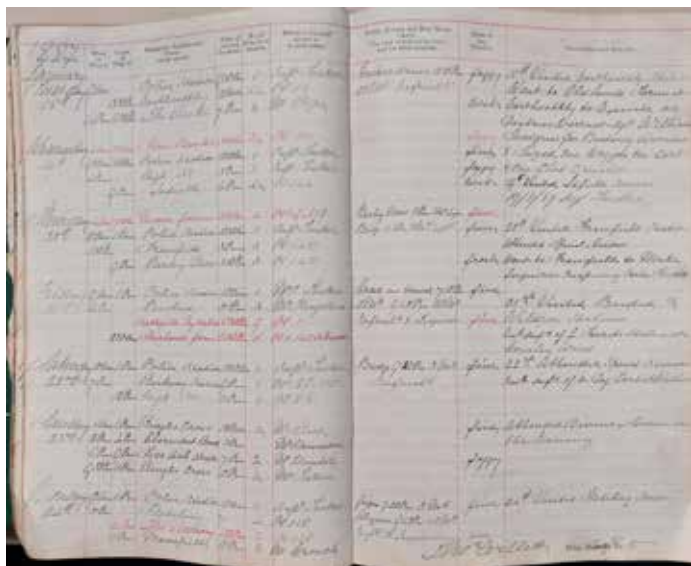


A year's accessions at The Keep, 2022-2023

East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office have taken in 191 accessions since the end of March 2022, 13 of which were reliant on financing from FoTKA.

Within the month before the last AGM we were notified that a journal of the Uckfield Police Station 1886-1890 (photo below), partly filling a 44-year gap in our holdings, would be auctioned at Diss in Norfolk. The volume was secured by a bid of £401 (including fees), funded by the Friends of the National Libraries, leaving FoTKA to find the shipping costs. The station at Uckfield covered a larger area, and

among the many thousand entries in the book are mentions of a reward of £2 5s 0d relating to an attempted murder at Chailey, family business including bastardy and desertion, drunkenness at Battle, embezzlement, game trespass, stolen plough chains, a burglary at Hurstpierpoint Post Office, and a £2 reward for fowls killed at Hailsham. We hope the sergeant enjoyed his trip to Grantham to arrest George McKinley, charged with maliciously wounding a horse belonging to Sir Spencer Maryon Wilson of Searles in Fletching, conceivably a protest connected with the contemporary Ashdown Forest Case.



Even as FoTKA chairman Bill Shelford rose to give his annual roundup at last year's AGM, we were able to tell him that hours earlier, FoTKA had bought a 1655 deed of a house in Hastings, fortunately mis-identified by the auctioneers at Stroud as belonging to Suffolk. The house lay on the east side of a road and north of the town's gun-garden, information which allowed it, with the aid of David and Barbara Martin and Christopher Whittick, *Hastings Old Town an architectural history to 1750*, to be identified as 73 High Street in the Hastings parish of All Saints. A tiny addition to the written history of the town, but as well as the property the deed mentions seven individuals, and the information it contains allows the history of the house to be taken back to the will of Obedient Fuller of Catsfield, who died in 1616.

Since the last AGM, FoTKA have continued to support the acquisition of letters from Brighton solicitors Attree and Co, purchasing 24 letters in August and October 2022.

FoTKA have also purchased several deeds of property in East Sussex including deeds for Cliffe, Lewes, 1763 (ACC 14162), 107 All Saints Street, Hastings, 1718-1837 (ACC 14163) and a deed of land in New Road, Rotherfield, 1906 (ACC 14164).

In October last year FoTKA gave ESRHO a grant for £650 to purchase a volume recording the benefit performances at the Theatre Royal, Brighton, in 1876

for its manager Ellen Nye Chart (ACC 14062). Henry Nye Chart, manager of the Theatre Royal, Brighton, died in June 1876, and his widow Ellen took up the management of the theatre. To show their support, the staff planned a series of performances on 18-20 December 1876, and this album, which includes photographs of the performers, band and front-of-house staff, was produced to record those involved. The album was on display at the AGM.

Another exciting acquisition that would not have been possible to obtain without the support of FoTKA are two diaries written by Lewesian Hannah Fuller (née Morris), purchased for £350 from Liss Books (ACC 14146, catalogued as AMS 7419). Hannah Morris (1790-1866) was born in the parish of Lewes St Michael on 31 January 1790 and baptised at the Independent Calvinist Jireh chapel in the Cliffe on 13 April, daughter of Joseph Morris, a butcher, and his wife Ann, née Shoemsmith, who had married at Laughton on 18 December 1781. The Morris family lived at 217 High Street in the parish of Lewes All Saints; on 29 October 1816 Hannah Morris was married at All Saints church to Thomas Fuller the younger (1792-1867). Their seven children were born in the Cliffe between 1820 and 1832, and the first four baptised at Jireh. The four years covered by these diaries cover the birth of three children and the death of two. Hannah was ready to confide her innermost feelings to her diary,

and as well as her grief, her profound sense of unworthiness and self-loathing are constant themes. Her natal family were intimately concerned with the affairs of Jireh Chapel, and its conduct and dissensions are recorded in full, as are her continuing doubts over her husband's character and beliefs. Entries become increasingly infrequent and retrospective in the second volume, covering 1823-1824. You can read more about the life of Hannah Fuller and her family on the catalogue description for the diaries thanks to the thorough research conducted by Christopher Whittick who first drew our attention to the diary's existence and importance.

Before retiring, my predecessor Anna Manthorpe took receipt of more material from the county libraries including the Brassey Bequest from Hastings, which came to us in September 2022. Hastings Library forms part of the Brassey Institute, originally the Brassey School of Science and Art, built in the town under Lord Brassey's instruction during his time as MP for Hastings and opened in 1879. The public library at the Brassey Institute was opened in 1881. Between 1862 and 1883 Thomas Brassey (1836-1918) and his wife Anna Brassey (1839-1887), née Allnutt, completed numerous ocean voyages on yachts *Meteor*, *Eothen* and *Sunbeam*, documenting their travels with journals and photo albums; it is these records that make up much of this accession. Lady Brassey published many of her own journals and photographs

and was well known as a travel writer. She died from malaria aboard *Sunbeam* near Mauritius in September 1887 and was buried at sea. The Brassey Bequest is catalogued as R/L/60.

Another notable deposit was a collection of 132 glass lantern slides (AMS 7416) that had previously been on temporary deposit from the Nutley Historical Society, who were initially unsure whether to donate them to ESBRHO. Anna won them over with her calm, professional manner and expert digitisation skills and they were gifted to ESBRHO in March this year. There are 132 glass slides (3.25 x 3.25 inches) dating from the 1880s to the early 1900s, featuring people and scenes around Nutley, taken by Arthur Francis of Nutley, possibly Tom Frisby of Uckfield and others. They are mostly in fine condition and provide a wonderful insight into the landscape, buildings and characters of the area. The images of Tinker Wright's house and the hop pickers (opposite) are particularly evocative. Anna has digitised them all and they can be viewed in the Reference Room at The Keep.

This has been another busy year; please bear in mind that only collection highlights have been mentioned here. We thank FoTKA for their continued support for our work.

Ellie King
Archivist ESBHRO



The archive of Jeremy Hutchinson QC: 20th century Britain's foremost defence barrister

In 2020 the archive of Jeremy Hutchinson, Baron Hutchinson of Lullington QC (1915-2017) was allocated to the University of Sussex through the Acceptance in Lieu Scheme. In 2022 the collection (50 boxes) was partially catalogued following professional archival guidelines. The archive is now being completed by the recently joined Alexander Taylor, Project Archivist, who aims to make the collection available to the public by June 2024.

During his tenure as barrister from the mid-20th century onwards, Jeremy Hutchinson was defendant to several prominent cases that garnered media attention and ultimately propelled his career into the public sphere, providing him with a reputation as one of England's finest silks. He appeared for the defence in the prosecution of Penguin Books under the Obscene Publications Act 1959 for the publication of D H Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. In this groundbreaking case, the trial itself became notorious for the inflammatory and elitist words used by prosecutor Mervyn Griffith-Jones QC to the jury:



*Signed first edition of
Lady Chatterley's Lover*

"Is it a book you would even wish your wife or your servants to read?" The prosecution came at a time when post-war Britain was battling moral hysteria and public resentment towards the country's supposed decline into permissive culture.

Jeremy was married twice, first to renowned Shakespearean actress Peggy Ashcroft and then to June Osborne, who was courted for several years by the fashionable 20th century photographer Cecil Beaton. Jeremy had known Peggy during his boyhood (she was 7 years his senior) and she had already been twice married and divorced. Nonetheless the two hit it off when Jeremy made an impromptu visit to her dressing room at the Theatre Royal in Brighton. The two experienced a pre-war whirlwind romance and married on 14 September 1940 in Marylebone after having known each just shy of six months. Their letters during the war period when Jeremy was on duty with the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve demonstrate a deep affection and longing for each other.

The collection also provides an interesting insight into the lives of Jeremy's parents, St John and Mary Hutchinson. The former was a successful barrister and politician, and Mary was a short-story writer, socialite and model. She was closely associated with the Bloomsbury Group, sat for several portraits by artist Vanessa Bell and was a regular visitor to Charleston Farmhouse. Their letters (many of Mary's are now at the University of Texas) include correspondence from notable people of the period such as Virginia Woolf, T.S Eliot, Duncan Grant, Henry Matisse and Lady Ottoline Morell. The Hutchinson archive is a diverse collection of material spanning over a century



Diaries of St John Hutchinson

worth of family and personal papers. Through researching this material, we find a multifaceted man with a plethora of interests and achievements who led an extraordinary life. Outside the law Jeremy was a passionate supporter of the arts, being the vice-chairman of the Arts Council of Great Britain and at the Tate Gallery, first as a trustee and then chairman. On 16 May 1978, he was created a life peer with the title Baron Hutchinson of Lullington, of Lullington in the County of East Sussex. His professional, social and personal experiences give the archive particular depth, and I look forward to making it an invaluable resource to researchers.

Alexander Taylor
(University of Sussex)

Brighton's kaleidoscopic Mary Philadelphia Merrifield

One of the most exciting discoveries I ever made at The Keep was a faded photograph, taken between 1877 and 1885, of a woman of advanced age, dressed in heavy Victorian garb, sitting at a small desk, her hands holding a book and a pen. Her face is framed by a frilled cap, her eyes are sparkling. It was the first time I set eyes on the marvellous Mary Philadelphia Merrifield.

I have been researching colour history for many years and have made it my mission to create a library of women who have written and published on colour. The subject was firmly in male hands until well into the 20th century and examples of women in the field before then are extremely rare. Many women taught painting in watercolour, some even carved out careers as artists, and most allegorical images of colour are female, but those who wrote and lectured about colour were mostly men. The earliest example of a woman publishing on colour that I have identified is flower painter and teacher Mary Gartside (c1755-1819), whose three illustrated books, dating from 1805 to 1808, are among the most beautiful in Western print culture.



Photo of Mary Philadelphia Merrifield

I couldn't believe my luck when I realised that the next significant woman in colour history, Mary Merrifield (1804–1889), had spent most of her life in Brighton. Merrifield was a remarkable self-taught artist, researcher and writer, who left a significant mark on colour research and literature in the 19th century. Born Mary Philadelphia Watkins in Brompton, London on 18 April 1804, she married John Merrifield in 1827.

After he qualified as a barrister, they moved to Brighton, where they lived until John died in 1877. They had at least four children and lived at three addresses in central Brighton, including no. 4 Grand Parade, in a house that does not survive.

Merrifield is best known for the first English translation of Cennino Cennini's *Il libro dell'arte [Treatise on Painting]*, published in 1844. This led to a number of further high-profile publications, including an essay on the colour scheme for the interiors of Crystal Palace, site of the Great Exhibition in 1851, for the accompanying catalogue. Merrifield gave this the title '*The Harmony of Colours as Exemplified in the Exhibition*'.



Vignette from *Harmony of Colours*

Based on the success of her first book, Merrifield was commissioned in 1844 by the Royal Commission on the Fine Arts, under the Conservative government of Prime Minister Robert Peel (1788–1850), to travel to France and Italy, in order to identify and transcribe manuscripts on colour and research the make-up of early pigments and historical Italian methods of painting. On her extraordinary journeys between 1844 and 1846, using ferries, coaches and early trains, when she was accompanied by one of her sons, Charles Watkins Merrifield (1827–1884), she wrote around 150 letters to her family back home in Brighton. This epistolary diary survives at The Keep in the form of transcriptions in ten booklets, along with some original letters¹. It is not known who transcribed the letters, but it is possible that Merrifield or one of her descendants had a plan to publish them. They provide a wealth of information about her personal circumstances, how she used her professional connections and drew on previous research and publishing experience, and what it was like in the 1840s for a woman to travel in Europe. They also reveal Merrifield's particular interests, her character, professionalism, organisational skills, and how she acquired further specialist knowledge in the field of colour history. The trips resulted in two significant publications that highlight the importance of texts on colour as historical documents: *The Art of Fresco Painting* (printed by Charles Gilpin in London and Arthur

Wallis in Brighton) and the substantial *Original Treatises, Dating from the XIIIth to XVIIIth Centuries on the Arts of Painting* (2 volumes, London: John Murray, 1849), which comprises all transcriptions of the manuscripts, each with a commentary and an English translation. In 1850, shortly after Queen Victoria had sold the Royal Pavilion to the Town Commissioners of Brighton, she exhibited her paintings in the first art exhibitions held in the Royal Pavilion, including some painted on her European travels.

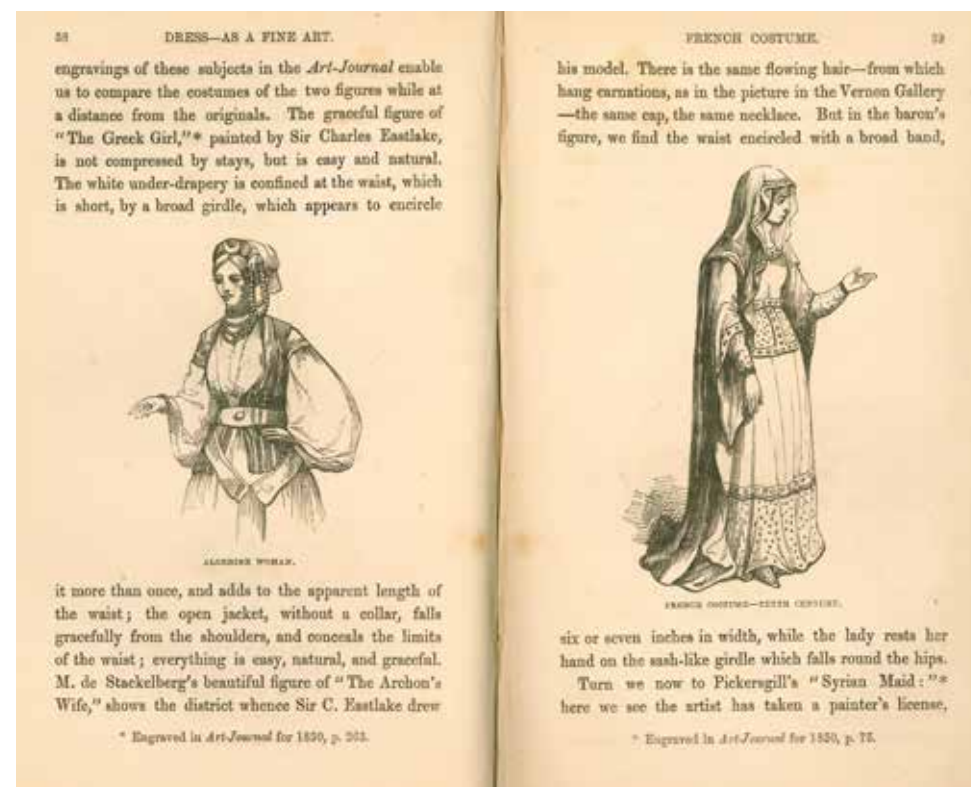
From the early 1850s onwards, Merrifield also authored several guidebooks with practical advice on painting and drawing, published by Winsor & Newton. In these she condensed her remarkable knowledge of many aspects of colour. These little books went into many editions and were still being reissued by Winsor and Newton after her death.

But Merrifield was also a trailblazer in another area. In 1854 she published what is probably the first ever book on dress history, certainly by a woman, entitled *Dress as a Fine Art* (London: Arthur Hall, Virtue, & Co.) (photo opposite) comprising essays that had previously been published in the *Art-Journal* and *Sharpe's London Magazine*. It was a small format publication, illustrated by Merrifield herself, and came out simultaneously in London and Boston. This little book is a fascinating overview of present and historical fashion, focusing on many aspects

of clothing such as particular cuts, embellishments, footwear, patterns, and even children's clothes. Unsurprisingly for a woman who had spent the previous decade researching colour history, there is a long chapter on colour in fashion, and how to find the right colours for your complexion and hair tone.

In 1857 she was awarded a civil pension of £100 for services to art and literature. Her interests then shifted to the field of natural history, and she soon published a book entitled *A Sketch of the Natural History of Brighton* (Brighton: W. Pearce, 1860). Being perfectly situated by the sea, she became an authority on the study of seaweed (an algologist). She wrote many papers for scientific journals in Britain and America, including the *Journal of the Linnaean Society* and the *Annals of Botany*, and continued to publish articles in the journal *Nature* until her death.

Perhaps the most accessible and endearing of her works is a Brighton handbook for visitors, *Brighton – Past and Present*, first published in 1857 (Brighton: Hannah Wallis, and London: Whittaker & Co., London). Merrifield had many good things to say about Brighton, but she praised most the colour and light conditions, which, in her opinion, are the equal of those found in Italy.



Dress as a Fine Art



Right: Brighton – Past and Present

‘Eastward ... the horizontal rays of the sun illuminate the figures seen on the cliff, bringing out the colours of their dresses and complexions with a fiery glow, which reminds one of the pictures of Giorgione; especially when contrasted with the cool blue-grey of the eastern sky and the sea, which forms their background. Those who have been to Venice, will at once perceive how much the effects of colour seen there resemble those beautiful combinations of colour so frequently witnessed at Brighton.’

During her last years in Brighton, she helped to arrange the natural history galleries at Brighton Museum & Art Gallery. She also learned Danish and Swedish to ensure she could keep up with botanical research from these countries, and she had a species of marine algae named after her. Following her husband's death in 1877, she moved into her daughter's home near Cambridge and died on 4 January 1889. She was an extraordinary, kaleidoscopic woman, whose full story cannot be told in such a short piece. I am glad that I found her and have included her in most of my own publications on colour.

1 Ten booklets of transcripts of letters from Mary P Merrifield to her husband, John, 4 Grand Parade, Brighton, and her parents, during her trips to Venice via Dieppe, Paris, Turin, Milan and Padua in 1844-45 and 1845-46. The Keep, East Sussex; Repository: East Sussex Record Office, ESRO reference: ACC 8642/1/1.

Alexandra Loske
Art Historian and Curator of the
Royal Pavilion

FoTKA Visit to Brightling

May 22nd 2023 was luckily a beautifully sunny day for our visit to Brightling House and the nearby church. Brightling is owned by the Grisells and Gardie Grisell was only too delighted to show us around the estate, including a tour by tractor (photo right). Christopher Whittick then gave us a lively lecture on the house and the history of the family.

The Fullers bought Brightling in 1698. They were manufacturers of iron goods, especially cannons for the Royal Navy, but a substantial part of their income came from the sugar produced on their Jamaican slave plantations. Their most notable descendant, Mad Jack Fuller, spent lavishly on the house and grounds, creating a deer park and building in the grounds a Chinese Temple and a Keep. A philanthropist at heart, he was elected several times as an MP, no doubt helped by the prodigious amounts he reportedly spent bribing the electors. He was later High Sheriff of Sussex and a captain in the Volunteer Sussex Yeomanry Cavalry, as well as a passionate supporter of the Royal Institute. He also financed the building of the Belle Tout lighthouse at Beachy Head and was a supporter of Eastbourne Lifeboats. Mad Jack is buried in the churchyard in an extraordinary pyramid tomb. Legend has it that he sits in it at a table with two very good bottles of claret!



St Thomas a Becket, which we visited in the afternoon, has the only church barrel organ in existence, and we were given an unseasonable demonstration of 'Hark the Herald Angels Sing'. Much interesting information about the barrel organ can be found on its own website, brightling.community/barrel-organ-1/. David Martin gave us a fascinating talk on the fabric and history of the building. Sadly, he did not find his wedding ring which he lost down the side of a panel on an earlier occasion.

Altogether a quite wonderful and unique visit!

Annette Shelford

