



Friends of
[the keep]
Archives

Newsletter Spring 2019

Friends of The Keep Archives

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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

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Cover images:

*Front: Silhouette of Anna Deacon
c. 1835*

*Back: Silhouette of Sophia Deacon
(mother of Anna) c. 1835*

Editor's introduction

This Newsletter comes out against a backdrop of challenging financial times for The Keep. The difficulties being experienced by local government will be familiar to members. Casper Johnson and his team are engaged in intensive discussions on the three-year plan for The Keep. FoTKA is keen to play its part in advocating the longterm importance of The Keep's activities. In December last our Chairman wrote to ESCC in response to the Council's consultation exercise, and her letter is included in this edition. We will continue to monitor

these critical discussions. Members may wish to add their voices by contacting their local councillor.

In the meantime, this newsletter continues to illuminate the riches of the collections held in The Keep, and to publicise new accessions which demonstrate the living nature of archives and the commitment to continued support of The Keep on the part of FoTKA and generous donors.

Diana Hansen

FoTKA AGM 9 October 2019

Our AGM will be held in The Keep at 5.30pm on Wednesday 9 October. We look forward to seeing as many as possible of our members on this occasion, which as usual will be followed by a reception and a chance to renew friendships with other members.

We are fortunate that Professor Richard Coates of the University of the West of England has agreed to give the third in the series of Pam Combes Memorial Lectures. This will be on English place names, another of Pam's enthusiasms.

Hastings privateers in the Seven Years' War (AMS 7282)

Last summer FoTKA helped to finance the purchase of a cache of letters and accounts relating to the exploits of small ships owned by Hastings families during the Seven Years' War, 1756-1763.

These ships were known as privateers, enjoying a status somewhere between purely private enterprises and the Royal Navy proper – a status which went back to Tudor times. The letters and accounts have been catalogued and offer some insight into a conflict during which the Royal Navy established its command of the seas. Additional research by Christopher Whittick in Admiralty records has filled in some of the gaps.

The letters concern the *Triton*, a cutter-rigged small ship, which was taken into service in August 1759. The first captain, Richard Harman, writes to the owners, the brothers Edward and Spencer Millward of Hastings and their agents, from his base in Plymouth. At this time the Royal Navy was engaged in a blockade of the French fleet in Brest, to prevent an invasion of England. N A M Rodger's naval history *The Command of the Ocean* describes how the blockade was brilliantly maintained. *Triton* was engaged in carrying express mails to the captains, Admirals Hawke and Garry. But Captain Harman's letters



A model of a cutter similar to Triton

describe the risks of these 'cruises'. *Triton* is a fast ship, and therefore always the ship of choice for the task, but she is also light and not fit to stand up to the winter storms of the bay. She leaks everywhere, and the men are unable to keep their clothing dry. He foresees that they will sign off as soon as they can, and he will have no crew. Why is it that he has had to turn around at the end of one cruise as soon as he arrives in Plymouth, when there are other ships, bigger and more suitable, lying at anchor in Plymouth Sound? He expresses a fervent plea that the owners should get him a station anywhere else in the Channel.

Triton's duties offer a sidelight on one of the decisive naval battles of the war, Quiberon Bay. Rodger describes this in detail. In October 1759 the French fleet made its escape from Brest, sailing south to pick up invasion transports from the Morbihan. In late November, the *Triton* was there 'as a spy' with an express mail for Admiral Garry and was lucky to escape encounters with a French frigate and schooner. Captain Harman records 'our fleet has got out of Quiberon Bay, but the whereabouts of the French fleet are unknown; Admiral Hawke has gone after them'. In fact, on 20 November the two fleets encountered each other, and in a daring move, Admiral Hawke pursued the French fleet onto a lee shore in Quiberon Bay during a westerly



Admiral of the Fleet Edward Hawke, 1st Baron Hawke, 1705-1781

gale, and destroyed it. According to Rodger, 'no British admiral ever ran such navigational risks or gained so dramatic a victory. The threat of invasion vanished.'

Unfortunately there is a gap in the correspondence, and it picks up two years later in December 1761, when the *Triton* has a new master, Captain John Collings. It seems too that she has had a major refit, and there are no more complaints of leaks. In the meantime, *Triton* had captured a Dutch ship with a cargo of tea and silks. However, she was still on the same station, carrying mails to the Brest squadron. This could be risky. On 16 July 1762, the agent

in Plymouth, Jacob Chaille, and the Lieutenant on board *James Baker*, record a skirmish with four row galleys off the French coast by the Isle de Aix, when the acting lieutenant and two men were wounded, and the vessel 'very much shattered'. She was repaired, and in October 1762 was discharged and brought back to Hastings.

The vital commercial aspects are illuminated by the records of accounts relating to other Hastings privateers, among them the *Fox* and *Lyon*. *Lyon* was originally a French privateer, captured off the Isle of Wight, refitted at Hastings and commanded by John Grayling. In 1758 she captured two Dutch ships, and the accounts list their cargoes. The *Drie Gebroeder* carried a huge cargo of Spanish indigo. The 'blue' was valued at nearly 20,000 guilders, or £1812. It seems to have been so valuable that a secondary market developed in bags of indigo, but the Admiralty Prize Court archives make no mention of this cargo. *Lyon* also captured the *Snip*, with a cargo of sugar, coffee and cotton; the Prize Court considered whether the *Snip's* papers were false, and both ship and cargo were condemned. The cargo was sold 'by the Candle' in London in October 1759 at Garaway's Coffee House.

In March 1758 *Fox*, commanded by Richard Harman (later the commander of *Triton*) captured the Danish merchant ship *Constantia*, returning home from St Eustatius to Rotterdam laden with French sugar, coffee and cotton. The decision of the Admiralty Prize Court that the goods were forfeit

was appealed, to no avail, by the Irish owners of part of the cargo. *Fox* was also responsible for the capture of the Danzig merchant vessel *Le Coureur*, bound from Bordeaux into Hamburg laden with wine, brandy, prunes and molasses. The process of seeking a decision from the Admiralty Prize Court could be protracted and expensive. There are invoices for expenses of journeys to London with the Dutchmen, of hotels and good dinners for commissioners.

Rodger gives a summary of the privateers' activities. 'British privateers which ignored the rules [relating to neutral shipping] and whose activities often approached both piracy and blackmail...the roseate memory of the Elizabethan age endowed privateers with a political significance out of all proportion to their real value to the war effort... small Channel privateers had a particularly ugly reputation.' Indeed, the Hastings Chronicle records that in March 1759 two Hastings men, Nicolas Wingfield and Adam Hyde, masters of two privateer cutters, were hanged for piratically boarding a Danish ship. The papers happily give no support to such lurid accusations, but only poor little leaky *Triton* seems to have been of actual use in the war, as opposed to generating profit for the owners.

Diana Hansen

A tale of two maps

In the course of less than a month, and with the close involvement of the Friends, two estate maps were added to our holdings at The Keep. The surveys were a contrast in almost every way – one, of 1724, showed the moated parsonage house at Chailey, with a small amount of land; the other, a very large Wealden estate of 180 acres, was mapped in 1647. Different too were their routes to our custody and the means by which we acquired them. We had to compete at auction – but

in the event not very hard – for John Pattenden's map of Boarsney Farm in Salehurst, which we had never seen before, whereas Thomas Pointin's map of Chailey Parsonage had been on our radar ever since 1985 when we were allowed to photograph it, and came to us by private treaty through the good offices of Messrs Gorrings of Lewes.

Cartographic material is one of the greatest strengths of the East Sussex Record Office, and one upon which



A Map of Chailey Parsonage now in the possession of Mr Richard Porter the present Minister and hath the Perpetual Advowson of the Same January the 20th Day 1723/4, with donors Sheila Wood and Michael Cotgrove, and Melissa Williams, conservator

we have consciously built by an active policy of purchase during the last 30 years. It is not difficult to justify the acquisition of estate maps by an archive repository. Maps convey a large amount of information in a very small space; they capture the appearance of a locality at a moment in time; they contain information of value to the local historian, biographer, historic buildings specialist and student of place-names; and of all the types of document in a local record office they are among the most readily accessible to an inexperienced user.

The £600 required by the vendor of the Chailey map was a little steep, but not unreasonable – its surveyor Thomas Pointin was a very well known cartographer in the 1720s, 30s and 40s, and responsible for the famous ‘elephant map’ of Plumpton Place, in which the scale and dividers are carried on the back of the eponymous pachyderm. The Chailey Parsonage map is his earliest surviving survey, and it is fair to say that his style improved considerably as his career developed. FoTKA used the purchase to appeal to members for assistance, and half the funds required were raised in response to that request.

The original is ink and colour on paper, 17½ x 21 inches, and shows the parsonage house within a moat, bridge, barn and surrounding fields and closes. The moated house was The Rectory until 1938, when the wife of the new

rector, G W Taverner, declined to be responsible for so large a house.

John Pattenden of Lamberhurst and Brenchley in Kent (c1615-c1675) was the most significant and active cartographer working on the borders of Kent and Sussex during the second third of the 17th century. His career, illustrated by a series of maps at the record offices of East Sussex and Kent, spanned the years 1637 to 1664. He surveyed Boarsney Farm – a small manor house – at the height of his powers. The map is a beautifully presented instance of Pattenden’s work, of which ESRO already holds over a dozen examples, one of the earliest of which – Penns Rocks in Withyham, 1638 – was bought with a grant from the Friends in 2008. ESRO has held the records of the Peckham family of Salehurst, as part of the archive of the Iridge Estate, on deposit since 1991. The farm shown on the map was formed by John Peckham of Mayfield, who in 1592 bought Boarsney Manor (70 acres) from the Gray’s Inn lawyer John Hay, and Reeds and Standens (125 acres) from the ironmaster Robert Walsh, both local men. His grandson William Peckham (1603-1679) inherited the estate on his father’s death in 1616, and his wardship – Boarsney was held by knight service of the manor of Etchingham – had to be bought from the feudal overlord for £140. Already in 1642 William was of some standing in the parish, contributing the fifth-highest of 122 parishioners to the relief



Map of Reeds, Standens and Boarsney in Salehurst, part of the estate of William Peckham, esq, by John Pattenden of Lamberhurst, 1647

of Protestants in Ireland. In 1651 he added significantly to the size of the holding by the purchase of a further 185 acres, including a watermill and the site of Iridge Furnace. William, living at Boarsney (a house assessed for seven flues in 1662), continued to add to the estate, which in 1668 he settled on his son William Peckham. His grandson William Peckham, whose father had inherited the Iridge estate, re-fronted Iridge Place in 1717 and the following year took up residence there, leaving Boarsney to become one of the estate's tenanted farms.

Pattenden's map shows a sizeable estate of 180 acres 0 roods and 29 perches of land, of which 25 acres 2 roods and 6 perches consisted of woodland. It is presented in ink and colour on a sheet of parchment measuring 47 x 37.5 centimetres. It shows a substantial yeoman's house with two barns, two other agricultural buildings, an extensive orchard in three sections, fields and woods, with their names and acreages indicated in each parcel. The landscape is dotted with a large number of ponds and pits, the result of the extraction of marl and iron



Detail of Pattenden map

ore. Typically of Wealden surveys of this period, the estate is mapped with south at the top and north at the bottom, confirming that in Sussex, men's mental picture of their environment was focused on the coastal plain and the sea, and not on London as gradually became the case.

The survey appeared in an auction at Stowmarket in Suffolk, fortunately misdescribed to the extent that only a very determined sleuth would have identified its location. It had also become very dirty and crumpled, its potential difficult for anyone but an archivist or a conservator to imagine. Although we had anticipated and prepared for a four-figure price, the

map was knocked to us for £400, and in the event the Friends of the National Libraries, to whom we had applied for matched funding, stepped in to cover the entire bill of £520.

But the story does not end there. Both maps, as I have described, were greatly in need of the tender care of our conservator Melissa Williams, and we were delighted, in these increasingly financially difficult times, to receive a further grant of £500 to cover the necessary work.

Christopher Whittick
County Archivist

An archive united; the story of the Courthope papers (ACC 12833)

Work has been completed on cataloguing thirty archive boxes of papers relating to the Courthope family of Whiligh in Ticehurst. The extensive estate archive had long been deposited with the Sussex Archaeological Society and subsequently transferred to ESRO, but a mass of family papers was subsequently scattered. Thanks to FoTKA, we have been tracking down the archive. We did not have to buy this latest batch of papers and it is hoped that it will be the last sizeable tranche to become available.

The story of why ESRO has needed to buy Courthope papers is a sad one. As well as the Whiligh Estate, the family also owned Sprivers in Horsmonden, Kent. Although many of the papers in this deposit originated at Whiligh, they were moved to Sprivers at some point, possibly for research by Robert Courthope, who left Sprivers to the National Trust at his death in 1966. Robert's sister Joan continued to live there until she died in 1974. The house was subsequently transferred to the National Trust and a dealer was called in to clear it. Many of the letters were sold on to stamp dealers, and as they have come onto the market over the years ESRO has purchased what it could.

A number of volumes from Sprivers were acquired by a bookseller named George Jeffrey who ran a stall near Farringdon Station. It was there in 1985 that Richard Rose, a solicitor with an interest in literary and antiquarian material, spotted the diaries and other material which form part of this accession. Rose started to research the family and discovered that Derek White, another dealer, had already obtained a large collection of family letters, estate records and photographs on the postal history market. In 1994 Rose persuaded White to sell him the Courthope material which he had already catalogued, on the understanding that everything would be passed onto ESRO at his death. In the event this did not happen, but Rose's widow gave the archive to the Hardcastle family, who had inherited Whiligh, and they readily agreed to deposit it in ESRO.

The archive contained some surprises. There was a beautiful coloured pedigree dating from around 1686, and two detailed diaries recounting life in Lewes during the 1820s by a P Campion, who turned out to be Priscilla, the widow of William Campion of Lewes (died 1818), and grandmother of George Campion Courthope (1811-1895) who married Anna Deacon (1817-1897) in 1841.

Friends of The Keep Archives

Anna was the collector or creator of the majority of this archive – it seems unlikely that she ever threw a scrap of paper away. There is also material relating to her family, the Deacons of Mabledon in Tonbridge, Kent, including



Tinted ambrotype of Anna Courthope and her son, George John, c. 1850

some fascinating silhouettes and locks of hair in labelled folds of paper. Silhouettes of Anna and of her mother Sophia, from c.1835, feature on the covers of this newsletter.

Anna was one of eleven children, and went on to have a large family herself. All wrote to each other constantly. It is unfortunate that the dealer who first purchased the letters was only

interested in stamps and consequently the letters lack envelopes, which usually date the letters. There are also diaries, wages books, accounts, photographs, family prescriptions, recipes, letters from friends, tradespeople, present and former servants, and correspondence

concerning Anna's charitable work. These include a small bundle of letters from the Brighton Home for Female Penitents (The Albion Hill Home for Female Penitents) concerning a woman presented by Anna as a recipient of charity.

Although George Campion and Anna had eight children, only the eldest son and heir, George John, married – in 1876 to Elinor Sarah (Lina) Loyd, the second daughter of Colonel Edward Loyd and his wife Caroline Louisa, of Lillesden in Hawkhurst, Kent. The Loyd family too is represented in the archive, largely by a collection of *cartes de visite* of the family and acquaintances. Another large family resulted from the marriage

but tragedy struck when Lina died on Christmas Day 1895, aged 42, after the birth of her ninth child. The younger children were then largely brought up by servants; George John apparently considered remarrying but the family was against the idea. Between 1899 and 1910 one daughter, Elinor Joan (born 1886), known by her second name, kept a large series of diaries, which particularly fascinated Rose and



*Carte de Visite of Lina Lloyd (later Courthope)
c.1870*

he hoped to publish them – possibly emulating the success of *The Country Diary of an Edwardian Lady* by Edith Holden. Together with remaining family descendants, he formed a company, Joan Courthope Ltd, but there was insufficient interest in publication.

George John and Lina Courthope's eldest son George Loyd Courthope had a successful public career, being MP for the Rye Division, 1906-1945, created a

baronet in 1925 and elevated to the peerage as Baron Courthope in 1945. But in this generation too, despite the size of the family, only the eldest of the sons married and had children. George Loyd had two daughters, who were both childless, as were his brothers, the youngest of whom, Robert, lived an increasingly eccentric existence at Sprivers, accompanied by his sister Joan. George Loyd's elder daughter, Hilda Beryl Courthope, who died in 1974, left Whiligh to John Hardcastle, the grandson of Caroline Foster Loyd (a sister of Lina Loyd, the wife of George John Courthope) through her marriage to Alfred Hardcastle (1857-1927) in 1892.

The family story and resulting archive is complex, and the letters are often in difficult cross-hatched writing. But Richard Rose's attempts to publish correspondence and Joan's diaries

as the *Courthope Chronicle*, mean that we have his transcripts for a large percentage of letters as well as Joan's diaries, making access easy for those who would like to dip into the world of this important local family.

Anna Manthorpe
Archivist

News from The Keep

The Keep Board continues to work on the Sustainability Plan covering the next three years. The letter from Lady Teviot, reproduced below, was a valuable contribution to these discussions. I am pleased to report that we came in just below budget for the last financial year, which is a great achievement in challenging times, and a credit to all our staff and colleagues.

I am delighted to say that our online events booking service is now live. We hope it will make it easier to search for our exciting range of events, and to book and pay for places. The latest events listing is at the end of this newsletter.

We are inviting tenders to put online the genealogical records of both East and West Sussex. This should help users undertaking family history research. As part of our income-generating objectives, we will look to make better use of the car park. We also need to make maximum use of our storage facilities, and anyone considering rental storage of archive material should contact us at the.keep@eastsussex.gov.uk.

The Unlocking our Sound Heritage project is in full swing. We are one of ten regional hubs across the UK as a part of this British Library run and HLF funded three -year project. Esther

Gill, our project manager, reports that to date we have been working on collections held by Keep partners, but are moving on to recordings held by the Surrey History Centre and the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu. Collections digitised so far include the University of Sussex British Australian Migration Project, ESRO's Lewes U3A Oral History project, Ashdown Forest Oral History Project, recordings of professional drummer Raye Du-Val and archives of the Lewes-based Headstrong discussion club, as well as the Royal Pavilion and Museum's Radio Brighton collection. Digitisation is proving to be more straightforward than cataloguing, but we have recruited four volunteers and an Erasmus student from RPM to help. Anyone interested in volunteering should contact esther.gill@eastsussex.gov.uk.

Casper Johnson

FoTKA's response to ESCC consultation

Dear colleague,

Consultation on 'A Core Offer for East Sussex'

Thank you for inviting comments on 'A Core Offer for East Sussex' - a clear statement of objectives and implications for the coming year.

I am the Chairman of Friends of The Keep Archives (FoTKA), and feel it is imperative to comment. I shall focus mainly on the 'Communities, Environment and Economy' section of the consultation, which specifically mentions The Keep.

- The Keep is a unique new-build archive centre, opened by HM the Queen in 2013. It is a shared facility, housing collections of three major organisations -East Sussex Record Office; the Royal Pavilion and Museums of Brighton and Hove, and the University of Sussex.

The Keep serves East Sussex, but some functions are of National significance. For example, the Special Collections of the University of Sussex include the Mass Observation Archive, a National archive of personal diary writing, covering mainly the years of WW2, together with an on-going National MO project. The Keep houses the Sussex Family History Group.

- FoTKA is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), with a membership of around 200. Its raison d'être is the support of The Keep through fund-raising and grant-giving. FoTKA has funded 15% of the The Keep's acquisitions in 2017/18, to the tune of £11,000.

FoTKA's members come from all walks of life, some are learned historians and genealogists, some have a more general interest: what unites them is a fascination with their heritage. To quote a respected Canadian Archivist *'of all national assets, archives are the most precious, and the extent of our care of them marks the extent of our civilisation'*. FoTKA embraces this view.

- The world is changing, technology is increasing and perhaps as a result of that, there is a palpable thirst for knowledge of history and identity. The lives of historical figures and events of the past are features of prime time television and films, with highly qualified academics as stars. Websites like Ancestry.co.uk and programmes such as 'Who Do You Think You Are' attest to the huge enthusiasm of the population for such knowledge. The Keep is playing its part in this surge of interest, by developing contracts with genealogical organisations.



Visitors on Open Day

- FoTKA working with The Keep, will continue to increase efforts to reach out to communities and individuals to engage them in supporting The Keep. We are also very supportive of The Keep's management, and in particular Casper Johnson, in their innovative thinking to improve efficiency and effectiveness, without compromising their key fundamental roles, both statutory and non-statutory.
- Given all of the above, FoTKA is *very disappointed* to read that one of the envisaged effects of the budget cuts on The Keep is reduced access of the public to the records. That really is swimming against the tide. Records should not be a dusty static collection; they should be used, and their use encouraged. FoTKA would argue that access to records could be regarded as a potential income generator, quite apart from affirming the intrinsic value of knowledge-based services.
- Similarly, reducing educational outreach of The Keep, and elsewhere in the Core Offer acknowledging that partnership working might be reduced, denies evidence of how better outcomes can be achieved in complex organisations. Children must have access to The Keep and libraries to expand their knowledge of the past and present world. The Keep should be seen as a primary educational resource, and should be expected to go out of its way to engage with the statutory educational establishments.



Young visitors having fun with the past

- As said above, FoTKA understands the severe financial stringencies that are besetting ESCC and other public organisations, and also the prioritisation of front-line services, but would advocate as powerfully as it can for the role of education and knowledge - in this instance both modern and historical - in allowing the development of the aspirations and achievements of the whole population.
- FoTKA would be very happy to forward some of its publications, and to meet with officers of ESCC to give further information

Yours sincerely,

The Lady Teviot
Chairman, Friends of The Keep Archives

Paris Commune cartoon collection (SxMs162)

We are extremely lucky to hold within the University of Sussex's Special Collections The Eugene W Schulkind Paris Commune archive . A large and varied collection, it consists of around 2,500 items, including a huge number of newspapers from 1870-1871, posters, photographs and a wonderful selection of satirical cartoons. There is no other collection of such breadth on the subject available in the UK.

The Paris Commune (La Commune de Paris) lasted only 70 days. Although a relatively short time, those days in 1871 formed a dramatic and bloody moment in France's history. The insurrection of liberal Paris against the Conservative government of France saw the staunchly anti-clerical and socially progressive Communards fight for equality for all. Ahead of their time, the collective established new ideals which saw better provisions for the poor, feminist movements created and civil partnerships introduced. Sadly, the Commune was unable to survive the force of the government and its army; on the 21 May 1871, thousands were



Justice du Peuple

killed and, along with them, the dreams of the Commune.

The revolution may have been short lived, but the concepts put forward had a profound impact, and we are still fighting to achieve some of them today. There is a historical message from this period that clearly still has resonance,

— PARIS SOUS LA COMMUNE —



LA GRRRRANDE ORATEUSE

Du grrrrrand Club des Amazones de la Commune.

Dépot central de l'imagerie populaire,
65, Rue Galande, 65.

Propriété de l'Édition.

(Déposé.)
PARIS — IMP. J. MORONVAL.

Friends of The Keep Archives

which makes this collection even more interesting – so much can be learned from it. The collection is largely in French, making it appear inaccessible to someone like me, who regrettably never progressed past the very basic teaching of French at school. However, with the presence of such a large number of illustrations and cartoons the messages of the Commune are powerfully communicated, transcending the need to understand the written word. Whether this was a conscious thought in 1871, when these cartoons were being produced, we do not know, but what they demonstrate is the ability of images to break down barriers of communication and increase the number of people who can engage with and understand a subject.

Cartoons have a long relationship with political insurgency, and France in particular has a history of using the artistic format to communicate. From the French Revolution through to 21st century magazines such as *Charlie Hebdo*, the politically charged cartoon has been and continues to be a powerful tool. Promoting ideals, provoking and embarrassing those in power and rejecting organised religion are just some of the ways the Communards used cartoons. Included in the images shown is one openly mocking the politician Emile De Girardin.

Both obvious in its derision of the politician, but at the same time subtle – his shadow appearing as a monkey for example – the cartoon is a fine example of not only the satirical prowess of the Communards but also the artistic merit of their cartoons.

The Paris Commune archive is a significant and poignant collection representing a fascinating moment in history and, with the 150th anniversary of the uprising in 2021, it will be exciting to see how the collection will be used to mark those remarkable 70 days of 1871.

Caroline Marchant-Wallis
(University of Sussex Special Collections)



Les Binettes du Jour

Visit to Eastbourne Town Hall, 18 March 2019

Some 30 members enjoyed a very interesting visit to Eastbourne Hall. The Mayor, Councillor Jill Mattock, could not have been more welcoming, and gave us a lively talk on what it was like to be Mayor. We were divided into two groups, so that everyone had a chance to enjoy the splendid surroundings without being too crowded.



The Court Room

The first mayor, Alderman G A Wallis, and his council ran a competition for the design of the new building, which was won by the Birmingham architect W Tachman-Faulkes. They may have been a little surprised by the eventual bill for the building, which amounted to a little over £40,000 – surely a fortune in those days.

However, the result was superb. The Court Room, Council Chamber, Clock Tower, Assembly Hall and Mayor's Parlour are without doubt some of the finest examples of Victorian craftsmanship in England. The Town Hall was not the only building under construction, as the very fine Police Station appeared alongside with an underground connecting passage to the Court Room. The cells were soundproofed, presumably so as to absorb the remonstrations of the inhabitants.

Robert Ramsden, our guide, was extremely informative and obviously devoted to the Town Hall. He was responsible for finding the Charter signed by Queen Victoria, a wonderful document written on vellum which he found folded up at the back of a cupboard. It is on prominent display in one of the main corridors, protected from direct sunlight.

Robert's principal job is as the Mayor's chauffeur, and seeing to the security of the Mace and the Mayor's splendid chain, together valued at some £250,000.

Annette Shelford

Summer visit to Sheffield Park, 11 July 2019

This will be an all-day visit to Sheffield Park, the House and the Model Farm. It will be a unique opportunity to see some of the wonderful apartments in the House, including the Tyger Room, intricately painted in the eighteenth century with depictions of big game. It was later known as the Prince's Room, in honour of Edward Prince of Wales, whose bedroom it was on his frequent visits to Sheffield Park. We will also visit

the Model Farm built by Lord Sheffield, where the animals probably enjoyed better housing than his servants! There will also be the possibility of going up to the cricket pitch, where the first cricket match between England and Australia was held on 12 May 1884. Further information will be on the website and sent to members by email.



*The Tyger Room at Sheffield Park
(photo courtesy of Savills of Haywards Heath)*

Talks and events, May to August 2019

The Secret Sussex Resistance in WWII

Thursday 9 May, 5.30-6.30pm, £5

A Hands-on Introduction to the Care of Old Photographs and Family Papers

Tuesday 21 May, 1-4pm, £15 including tea or coffee

Exploring Manorial Records with County Archivist Christopher Whittick

Tuesday 21 May, 2-4pm, £10 including tea or coffee

The Rise of Thomas Paine

Wednesday 22 May, 5.30-6.30pm, £5

Behind-the-Scenes tour of The Keep

Saturday 8 June, 10.30-11.30am, £5

Tudor and Stuart Brighton, 1540-1750: From Fishing Town to Trading Town

Tuesday 11 June, 2-4pm, £10 including tea or coffee

Turbulent Foresters: Moments of Conflict and Conservation on Ashdown Forest

Wednesday 19 June, 2.30-4pm, £5

Lost Brighton

Wednesday 26 June, 5.30-6.30pm, £5

First Steps in Family History

Wednesday 10 July, 2-4pm, £10 including tea or coffee

Sussex Inn Signs and their History

Wednesday 17 July, 5.30-6.30pm, £5

The Women's Land Army in Sussex

Wednesday 24 July, 5.30-6.30pm, £5

Early Women Voters in Brighton and Beyond

Tuesday 30 July, 5.30-6.30pm, £5

Britain on Film: Rural Life, a compilation of footage from the British Film Institute Archive

Wednesday 14 August, 2.30-4pm, £3

Advance booking is recommended for all events as numbers are limited. Please see www.thekeep.info/events or call 01273 482349

