

Friends of [the keep] Archives

Newsletter Spring 2020



FoTKA Officers

President

Peter Field,
Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex

Elected committee/ trustees

Chairman: Bill Shelford
Membership Secretary: Philip Hamerton
Treasurer: Colin French
Secretary and Newsletter Editor:
Diana Hansen
Visits Coordinator: Annette Shelford
Ken Norman
Ann Norman
Sheena Parker
Clive Wilson
Philip Pople
Penny Pursey
Christopher Whittick

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

Contents page

Editor's introduction – Diana Hansen	1
News from The Keep – Ceris Howard	2
Album showing Newhaven Harbour and Dock works – Anna Manthorpe	5
Photographic displays to enjoy from home – Kate Elms	8
The diary of Lucy Webster's visit to East Africa, 1923-1924 – Christopher Whittick	11
Letters of John Collier – Anna Manthorpe	16
Preview of visit to Rowland Halls houses – Clive Wilson	21

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

**The Keep
is currently
closed**

Cover image:

*Watching the Herd, possibly near
Fairlight, photograph by George Woods*

Editor's introduction

Circumstances, in particular the closure of The Keep, have meant that this edition of the Newsletter will reach most of you online. This is a temporary expedient, and it remains our policy to produce a printed Newsletter which can be picked up and enjoyed from time to time, and shared with friends. Not all of our members have online access, and we have made special arrangements to ensure that printed copies go to them.

I am grateful to Phil Hamerton for looking after this. We intend to produce a printed version of this edition when logistics allow.

In the meantime, our loyal contributors enable you to keep in touch with the Keep collections and the activities of Keep staff. I wish them, and all Friends, the very best in this difficult time.

Diana Hansen

FoTKA AGM

The AGM is scheduled for Wednesday 14 October at 5.30pm in The Keep. We are fortunate that the Pam Combes Memorial Lecture is to be given by Professor John Blair. John is Professor of Medieval History and Archaeology at Queen's College Oxford. His particular interests lie in the settlement, landscape and society of Anglo-Saxon England, especially the built landscape. John proposes to talk on 'How Anglo-Saxon was Sussex?'.
[View the AGM agenda](#)

However, arrangements for the Keep events programme will depend on Government guidance at the time, and we will need to fit in with whatever The Keep can do. We will keep you in touch.

News from the Keep

Sadly, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, we have had to close The Keep to the public until further notice; happily, all staff are well and working safely from home.

Annette, our Building Manager, is on site regularly to check that security and conditions in the stores meet our usual standards and to make sure nothing grotty is growing in the staff room fridge. Projects and planned work, including the Keep Sustainability Plan, are mostly on hold or delayed while the service is closed and all events, tours and workshops are cancelled. We hope to resume our usual work and rebook the events as soon as it's safe to do so.

Staff are working on projects from home that have long been on their to do lists. Archivist Anna has been working on the Collier letters (see her article below) and Melissa, our



Kelly's Directory, 1940

Conservator, has been working on the 1940 Brighton and Hove Kelly's directory which now has a new spine and internal repairs. She has also been repairing the University of Sussex's Woman's Own bound magazine from 1940. It is a big job as most pages require repairs and every time you touch a page a piece will fall off. Thanks to her patience and care this is now ready to go



Extract from Kelly's Directory, 1940



Woman's Own pressing



Woman's Own 1940 repaired image

Friends of The Keep Archives

back out into public use and should last for many more years.

In March we said goodbye to Neil Johnston, our Public Service and Business Manager. The recruitment to that post is on hold whilst the public service is closed. We have appointed a student from Waterloo University, Canada, for an internship at The Keep. Anneke originally planned to join us this summer; her placement has been deferred until the winter but she is very keen to get to us and has some great ideas for making more of our collections available digitally.

Despite closing part way through March and lower visitor numbers since the Covid 19 outbreak, our statistics were pretty impressive for this year. Document productions totalled over 6000 across the collections and we had nearly 14,000 individual visits to The Keep. The team are posting regular updates on our [blogs](#) and social media and getting very positive responses from the public; we recently had the highest engagement rate of any East Sussex County Council [Twitter](#) accounts and second highest for [Facebook](#). I recommend you check them out for interesting updates, conversation starters and our brilliant new quiz.

The Keep will be marking the 75th anniversary of VE Day with a series of illustrated blogs, which will be posted daily during the week beginning 4th May. These are being written by staff from across The Keep partnership to represent the archives in our care. A physical display of relevant archive material will follow when the building reopens to the public.

The Mass Observation archives recently featured in a BBC Radio 4 programme about the [mantlepiece](#) and they are gearing up for the 10th anniversary of their Diary Project on 12th May. You too can contribute to the archive by recording your experiences of COVID 19, just follow the guidelines on their [website](#) and tell them all about your days in lockdown.

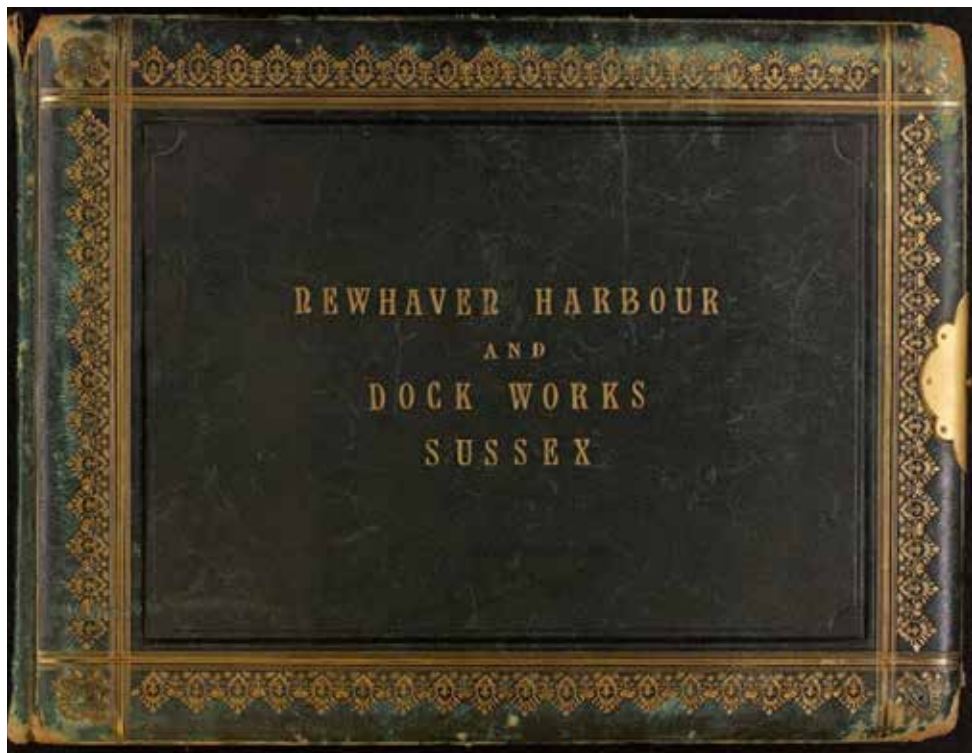
I'm currently working from home in my sunny summer house at the end of the garden, balancing my work to support the teams from the Keep, Modern Records and Libraries while home educating my two sons. I'm thankful the sun is shining and the dogs are getting me out and about into the fields every day.

Best wishes to all our Friends

Ceris Howard MA

Album showing Newhaven Harbour and Dock Works

R/L 50/1/1



The album

Unlike many of the documents featured in this newsletter, ESRO did not need to ask FoTKA to purchase this album – it came to us free of charge from East Sussex County Council Library's Bibliographic Services. Fortunately, a sharp-eyed member of the team noticed that the photographs dated

from 1879 to 1883 and thought that they would be best stored at The Keep.

The photographs document the expansion of the harbour by the newly-formed Newhaven Harbour Company. The extension of the railway to Newhaven in 1847 and the



Soon after commencement of work December 1879

commencement of a regular steamboat service to Dieppe meant that there was great potential for the expansion of passenger and goods traffic.

The Newhaven Harbour Company planned to improve the harbour by constructing a breakwater westward of the entrance to the harbour, widening and deepening the harbour entrance, lengthening the piers, extending the railway wharf, and constructing large-scale docks on the east side of the harbour. Frederick Dale Banister (1823-1897) was appointed Engineer-in-Chief (he was already Chief Resident Engineer to the London, Brighton

and South Coast Railway), and Alfred Edward Carey (born 1852 in Wargrave, Berkshire; died 1922) was Resident Engineer. Carey was the compiler of this album.

But the album is also important for its record of Tidemills village in the last years of the mill's existence. It was bought in 1879 by the Newhaven Harbour Company from Emily Catt (widow of George Catt, a son of William Catt the owner responsible for the mill's expansion) in 1879. The company then granted a 14-year lease of the mill to John Catt and Edgar Stonham, but the lease was surrendered

on 26 March 1883 because it was decided that the site could be more profitably used for cement making.

The tidal flow up the Mill Creek was restricted because of the need to complete the East Quay, although sluice gates still allowed water to reach the village. The mill had therefore recently ceased operations by the time most of the photographs showing it were taken. Negotiations with the Portland Cement Company about the use of Tidemills collapsed in 1884, and in 1885 the harbour company decided to fill in

the mill ponds with chalk brought by train from building works at Brighton College.

As for the dock works, money ran out in 1885 when the western breakwater had not been extended to its full length. The project started again in 1887 and completed with minor modifications by 1892, although the ambitious docks scheme was abandoned.

Anna Manthorpe
East Sussex Record Office



Tidemills August 1883

Life in Lockdown: Photographic Displays to Enjoy from Home

When The Keep closed to the public due to the coronavirus pandemic, staff adapted quickly to working from home, remaining connected to each other by technology and thinking creatively about how to engage with customers during this difficult period. Much of my time at The Keep is spent either assisting members of the public with their research, or working on our talks and events programme. Neither of these is currently possible, so the focus has switched to communicating and sharing as much material as we can digitally, through our website, blog and social media channels.

The Keep's digitised resources include some wonderful photographic collections, some of which have been acquired with support from FoTKA. Over the past year or so, we have been printing and framing scanned copies of some of these images to create themed exhibitions on the 'gallery' wall in the building. In recent weeks, we've adapted the idea for an online setting, posting similar 'displays' on our blog. This enables us to share 'micro' collections of photographs for people to enjoy from home.

Our first online 'gallery' featured [photographs from *The Argus* archive capturing life in Brighton in the early years of the Second World War](#). The 14 images featured illustrate vividly some of the preparations undertaken for war, from fundraising, filling sandbags and testing gas masks to digging trenches for ARP shelters. They are just a tiny part of an extensive archive of glass plate negatives dating from the late 1920s to the 1960s ([ARG](#)). Work to clean, digitise and catalogue the negatives is ongoing, so expect to see more of these wonderful pictures in future.

Also from Brighton, we've featured [a selection of photographs taken by or for the local Borough Surveyor in the 1930s](#) – it was common for such photographs to be taken before buildings were demolished, to ensure there was a 'before and after' record. Where *The Argus* images in our blog focused on people, who seemed keen to engage, smiling, with the camera, the 'Lost Brighton' pictures ([AMS 7203](#)) have a cinematic quality – the streets of Brighton resemble film sets that hark back to another era, when there were few cars on the road and the town's central shopping streets were lined with department stores.



Red Cross workers in an air-raid shelter in Brighton c. 1939



Stafford's department store on Western Road, Brighton c. 1935



Group of soldiers in camp outside Lewes c.1910

Photographs taken by Henry John Bartlett form the basis for another online 'exhibition'. A solicitor's clerk who was born in Lewes in 1878, Bartlett took up photography in the 1890s but never tried to make a living from it. His collection of 750 glass plate negatives ([ACC 8509](#)) provides a fascinating record of life in and around Lewes from around 1900 to 1930, and is particularly rich in images of First World War soldiers camped around the town, Bonfire celebrations and topographical views. It also includes some wonderful portraits of unidentified individuals and family groups.

We have been delving into the archives deposited at The Keep by East Sussex Reference Libraries, which also include some superb collections of photographs. George Woods (1853-1934), was a skilled amateur photographer who moved to Hastings in the late 1880s. His camera captured holidaymakers in the town, but he ventured into the surrounding rural areas too, to record life before mechanisation transformed farming methods and traditions. Woods' glass plate negatives ([ACC 12375/1](#)) were acquired by local historian John E Ray, who bequeathed them to Hastings Library.

A selection of these photographs was displayed at The Keep last year and this online 'gallery' features some of our favourites. This means that, like all the displays mentioned here, you can view them on your computer, tablet or

phone, and can enjoy them wherever you are!

Kate Elms

Brighton and Hove Museums

The diary of Lucy Webster's visit to East Africa, 1923-1924 – AMS 7319

Lucy Webster (1900-1989) was the elder daughter of Sir Augustus Webster (1864-1923), 8th baronet, and his wife Mabel Crossley. In the year after Lucy's birth, Sir Augustus had bought back the family home, Battle Abbey. Her elder brother Godfrey (1897-1917) was killed at Ypres on 3 August 1917. Lucy and her sister Evelyn (1904-1988) were managed by Sir Augustus's sister Amelia, who found Lucy trying – 'Lucy on the loose is like a steam engine with the valve blown off', but had affection and hopes for her; in 1921 she wrote 'she's still very young and rather erratic, but she is the right stuff and after all she is only 20' (ESRO BAT 4865/18).

While Evelyn was in Paris (where her governess opined that her mental development was that of a child of ten), in 1920 Lucy, to whom her father had left Battle Abbey for life, began a year with the steward of the Earl of Harewood, learning estate management. Sir Augustus died on

13 August 1923 and the visit recorded by this diary took place while his trustees carried out a sale of 2365 acres of outlying land.

This diary, which covers 2 November 1923 – 2 April 1924, records Lucy's journey with her friend Olive Archer and her father Sir Geoffrey Archer (1882-1964, *ODNB*), travelling to Entebbe to take up his appointment as governor of Uganda. Lucy was clearly intent on enjoying herself, but also interested in her surroundings, and particularly in industrial and agricultural processes – included are diagrams of the ship's engine-room, and descriptions and drawings of the preparation of coffee, sisal and cotton. She also records encounters with members of the British community in East Africa including Sir Geoffrey Archer's private secretary Rupert Gunnis (1899-1965, *ODNB*) and Denys Finch-Hatton (1887-1931, *ODNB*), naturalist, safari guide and lover of Karen Blixen; and includes

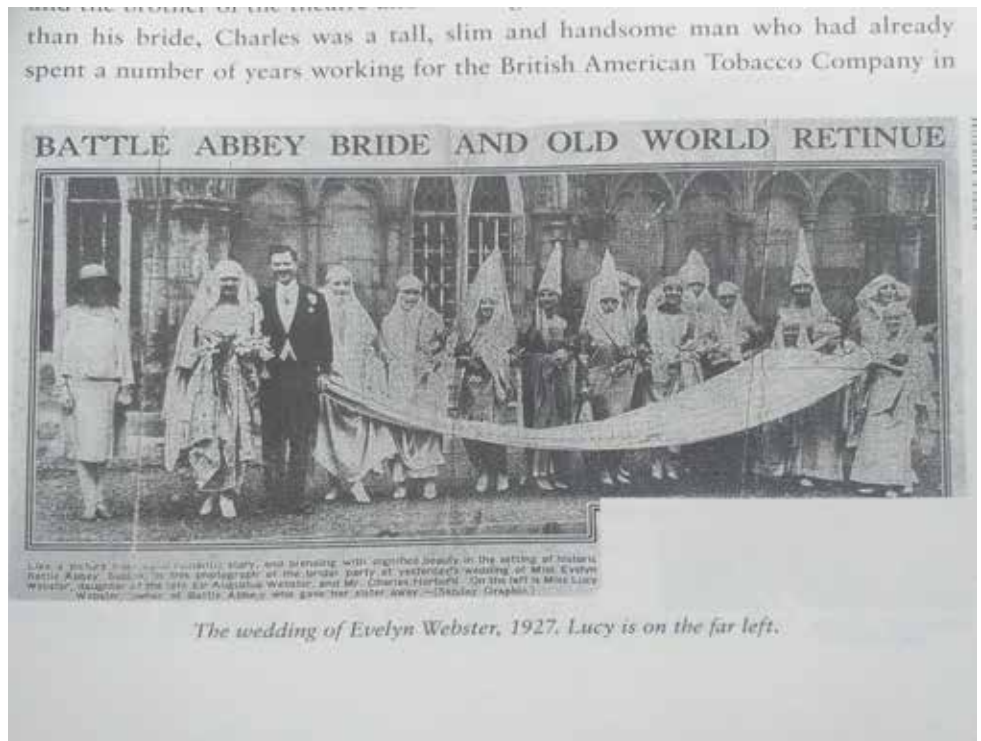


Lucy Webster as a baby, with her brother Godfrey looking on

several seating-plans for dinners at Government House. Lastly the diary, through many passages of introspective self-reflection, allows us to observe first-hand the development of the character of its author with hints of its tragic outcome. On 19 December 1923 'Olive and I danced on the dining room table – much to Dame Alice's horror!! – after all one can only be young once'; 'Olive gave me a ripping talk – reserve and dignity are qualities I must cultivate without being standoffish'. The diary is punctuated by frequent expressions of religious devotion; on 14 March 'had

a proposal for the first time in my life – time and God will show me what to do'.

Lucy's mental instability led to her confinement in asylums for most of her long adult life. It was a tragic fate for a lively and intelligent – though wayward and impulsive – young woman which might have been avoided had modern treatments been available and had it not been more in the interests of her family to have her safely out of the way. Her sister's only recorded comment was that her disappearance from the scene



Evelyn's wedding, Lucy on the far left



'was a great loss for the men of Battle'. Thereafter Evelyn lived a lordly and quasi-theatrical existence as the *grande dame* of the Sussex market town, although saddled with debt and with a son, Godfrey Harbord also known as Webster, whose own behaviour was far from conventional, and whose death in 2003 would bring about the acquisition of the family archive by ESRO.

Lucy Webster was a particularly interesting person, a beacon of individuality amid a sea of dull members of the later 19th-century family, all doubtless intent on living down the excesses and profligacy of its previous generations. As well as augmenting their existing archive, it is a fitting tribute to her memory for ESRO to acquire her diary, recording as it does a short period of happiness in her long life, and re-unite it with the papers of her family.

ESRO is grateful to FoTKA and the V&A Purchase Grant Fund for making this possible.

Christopher Whittick

*Opposite:
Happy Camping – Lucy's certificate,
from her diary*

Letters of John Collier



Anna working from home

I have never before worked from home for any length of time for the reason that an archivist normally needs to be where the records are stored – which is in the record office. So the news that I would have to work from home for a considerable time was a challenge.

Modern technology does mean that staff can access email and cataloguing software from home by remote access. It is great that staff can continue to deal with enquiries which do not require direct access to the records, stay in

contact with each other and maintain The Keep's social media presence.

The fact that the records have to remain locked away in the repository is rather a problem, but it can be overcome by using copies. Fortunately I had a few days to prepare for the present shut down of The Keep and was able to provide myself with plenty of photocopy letters for cataloguing. I also have many old lists with information to add to our online catalogue.

Letters of John Collier (1685-1760) which cover the period 1731-1746 were edited by Richard Saville and published by the Sussex Record Society in 2016 (vol 96) but a considerable number remained uncatalogued.

Collier was enormously talented, trained as an attorney and became Town Clerk of Hastings at the early age of 20 and was Mayor of Hastings five times. As well as working for the Corporation, he became solicitor for the Cinque Ports and commissioner for the Land Tax in Sussex and developed a legal practice in London. He was Surveyor General of the Riding Officers of the Customs in Kent. More importantly he became an agent of the endlessly influential Duke of Newcastle, who had houses at Halland, in East Hoathly, and Bishopstone, and his brother Henry Pelham who served as Prime Minister from 1743 until his death in 1754.

Having the time to list the letters has given many insights into 18th century life. A patron and useful contacts were essential if you wished to get on in the world, and gave influence in turn. I was slightly surprised to find a letter asking Collier to intercede in favour of an applicant for the living of Guestling, who states confidently 'if attended with success, I have the best authority for saying my Father intends you a very handsome acknowledgement' (SAY 228).

Life was not always straightforward, even with the necessary patronage. It is fortunate that in many cases we have copies of Collier's draft replies as well as incoming letters. Getting payment for his expenditure from the Duke of Newcastle was very protracted and requests had to be couched in the most polite of tones. In December 1755 he asks for payment of £174 12s 2d for discharges up to last May and would be obliged to receive it against the approaching holidays, being the time of paying tradesmen and workmen's bills. He has since had the expense of celebrating the King's birthday, oil for the Corporation's lamps for the now current year, and for fish sent to London (SAY 202). But he is still asking for the money in the following November (SAY 239).

Collier would sometimes be asked to supply fish for the Duke's table, and he was always concerned about the quality. In October 1754 he is asked to send a pot of baked herring to Newcastle House in London because the Duke feels that he does them better than in London (SAY 182). Collier sends this but worries that carriage to London is difficult, and they must go by sea and be swung in the cabin or they will be broken to pieces and entirely spoiled by the 'pickle swashing' (SAY 183).

The pineapple was a sought-after accompaniment to fashionable dinner parties at the time. In August 1755 the Duke's agent wrote from Bishopstone

that he had hoped to procure Collier some fruit but they had so much company that they demolished all the pineapples and left nothing worth sending apart from a melon or two (SAY 197). Later that month he sends another six melons – he had intended a pineapple but someone stole it (SAY 237).

In 1754 there were hostilities with France, in the run up to the Seven Years War. On 24 July Collier is asked to look out for 13 or 14 men who are making to the coast to embark for France and enlist as soldiers. It is thought that they might make for Pevensy where a smuggler's boat is expected shortly (almost as if a timetable were in operation); names and descriptions of the men are given – two have their own hair (a reference to the prevalence of wigs) and stereotypically one has a large scar on his left cheek (SAY 174).

In June 1756 Collier's nephew Captain Thomas Smith who is stationed at Bristol is dismayed to receive orders to command an Independent Company of Invalids assembled from the Chelsea Pensioners, which is to proceed to Cork for garrison duty. Smith does not know what he has done to receive such a posting, and asks Collier for advice. But his uncle feels that he can only obey orders (SAY 229). Smith's premonitions come true. In September 1756 he writes that he has got his company to Guernsey 'with a great deal of difficulty being most of them very old and infirm and intirely wore out and in no respect

fit for duty' (SAY 238). The following March he writes that the troops are ready to mutiny for want of bread. Their men are almost starved; they have not had bread for some time, and are served with hard brisket, which is very bad for old men that have hardly any teeth to eat it with (SAY 244).

Demands of the war finally forced Collier into retirement as a Surveyor General of the Riding Officers of the Customs. In 1756 he was ordered to undertake a survey of the Kent coast but was by then suffering from 'a paralitick disorder', and had a bad attack of gout which affected his feet, knees and one hand necessitating a visit to Bath. He had reached the age of 70 the November before (SAY 214). Many carefully-worded missives go back and forth until Collier's wishes are granted – his son-in-law Edward Milward is made Surveyor General in his place.

I have a great many more letters to complete, and am finding the project a wonderful distraction from the problems of coronavirus despite the challenges of reading Collier's increasingly disordered draft letters. I feel very privileged to have the opportunity of escaping to the mid-18th century.

Post script: since writing this, I have been tackling an earlier bundle and can add to the military career of Thomas Smith mentioned above. In 1748 he is sent to Scotland in the aftermath of the Jacobite rebellion of 1745.

[illegible]

Age encroaches – Collier writing after his stroke

Ken. Mad^r

Fort William June 15 1792

15 June 1792
15
Since I did my^d of the Honour of Writing to
Your Father from Edinburgh, I received Orders to go for Fort William
the Ambassador with five Companies, in Order to make a shorter
Road from this place to Perth, I was obliged to stay at Ding
ton Days for my Baggage, in which time I had the pleasure of
seeing a great Number of fine well Drest Ladies, in that place they
are remarkable for being very Gay, and I think more so, than anywhere
else, in any Town I ever was in before, this City is very well situated
near the Sea, and has a very Pleasant Valley round about it, but the
streets are very Irregular, for up the Grand Street you will see one
house one or seven Storeys high, and the Road, not a two or three
which in my Opinion entirely spoils the Beauty of the place, and
then they have an excessive disagreeable way, of thoroughing all
these filth and Nastiness out of the Windows, so that you are never
stop any more in the Day time, but in the main Street - On my
Journey from thence to Fort William, after the first Day, we met with
very bad traveling on the Mountain, being obliged to go with the
Post, not knowing the long Road, and at the same time could not speed
any thing of Pace, which is a Language peculiar to the Highlanders
we were five days on the road, and had very bad weather during the whole
time, three Nights of which I lost in my Clothes for want of a bed to lie on
and could not get any thing for my horse to Eat nor a stable to put
him in, and the last ^{night} we should have lay exposed to the weather all
Night, at the ferry, at Glean Coe, had not a Gentleman come up to the
Water Side and seeing that the Boat would not under take to come
across, the weather being so bad, and the Water ran so

On 15 June he writes to his aunt Mary Collier (photo opposite) that he has visited Edinburgh, and is dismayed that they have 'an excessively disagreeable way' of throwing all their filth and nastiness out of the window, so you are never safe anywhere in the daytime. He then has an unpleasant journey to Fort William – five days on the road with bad weather all the time, three nights of which he sat in his clothes for want of a bed to lie on. At Glencoe the weather was so bad that the boat would not undertake to carry them across, and they would have been exposed to the weather all night, had

not a gentleman offered him lodgings. This turns out 'much better than I thought it was possible for that part'. He is surprised to find out that his host is the son of one Mr McDonnel, now a rebel prisoner held at Edinburgh Castle, 'but his son was in no way concerned, and it is thought that his father's Estate will be given to him' (SAY 1906).

Check our blog for other news from The Keep (www.thekeep.info); I will add updates concerning the letters.

Anna Manthorpe

Proposed visit to houses in Seaford designed by Rowland Hawke Halls

Born in Sussex in 1879, Halls lived in Lewes and then East Blatchington, running his architects' practice from Seveirg Chambers at the foot of School Hill, Lewes. He worked in the Arts and Crafts tradition in the early years of the Twentieth century, and most of his commissions were for private houses in Rottingdean, Newhaven and Lewes and, in particular, a large number of houses in Seaford. Most of his work was carried out in his 20s and early 30s, before he joined the Army in 1916 and was posted to the Western Front. Sadly he died at an unmanned crossing at South Heighton in 1919, very shortly after being demobilised.

It is unusual that so much of an architect's work can be seen in a small area. The Keep holds a large collection of documents related to Halls' houses, of which more than 20 record the design of houses in Seaford.

We have enlisted two speakers with a keen interest in Halls' work. David Scott Cowan is Halls' grandson and has researched his grandfather's life in depth. Charlie Grimble lives in Seaford in the midst of many of Halls' houses.

As yet we do not know when this visit will be feasible, but we will keep you in touch.

Clive Wilson

