

# The Researcher

Newsletter of the  
West Sussex Archives Society  
The Friends of  
West Sussex Record Office

Website: [westsussexarchivessociety.webplus.net](http://westsussexarchivessociety.webplus.net)



April 2016

No. 93

## 42<sup>nd</sup> AGM

The 42nd AGM of the society was held at the Fishbourne Centre on Saturday 16th April 2016.

Richard Mant chaired the meeting and gave his report which is included in this newsletter. Richard reported on the many successful activities of WSAS and compared them to the Society's aims. He considered that in the main we had been very close to achieving all our aims except in the case of fundraising and he appealed to members for help in this area. He very much highlighted that it was an enthusiastic committee that had made these successes possible and thanked them for their efforts.

Wendy Walker gave a report about WSRO, which is reported later in this newsletter.

The accounts were presented by Richard Mant as Susan Nicel our treasurer could not attend.

Richard Mant conducted the elections. The only nomination for Secretary was Richard Howell who was unanimously elected. Two committee members were also re-elected: Barrie Keech, editor *The Researcher* and Web Manager & Helen Whittle, editor of *The Journal*. Richard told members of the fantastic work that had been done by Helena Millen, Information Manager who had sadly now resigned. Richard was extremely keen to fill this vacant position and appealed to members for any volunteers.



*Members enjoying the afternoon talk*

After the meeting there was a fascinating talk on *The Secrets of the High Woods* facilitated by Dr Caroline Adams.

Barrie Keech

## Forthcoming Events

May 7th Joint FOTKA event - Arundel Walks

June 4<sup>th</sup> Sidlesham Walk and the Land Settlement Association

July 10<sup>th</sup> - Shoreham Airport visit

September 4<sup>th</sup> - Christopher Whittick talks about the Battle Abbey Archives

Any queries about this newsletter or questions for West Sussex Archives Society please email [wsascom@btinternet.com](mailto:wsascom@btinternet.com)

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE WSAS AGM IN 2016

It could be said that this has been another successful year for WSAS. We have produced a super edition of the Journal; we have published four editions of the Researcher to a standard that has long been the envy of other societies; we have organized ten events in the last twelve months, something which many societies would not attempt.

On the other hand, will it still be counted as a successful year if we measure what we have done against the four aims laid down for WSAS by our predecessors? These four aims are printed each year in the back of the Journal but it is easy to overlook them nevertheless.

If we look at the first aim then, **"To arouse and stimulate interest in historical records and increase awareness of the need for their preservation"**

I would like to suggest we best achieve this with our two Workshops each year and this last twelve months has been no exception. Last November we had the Literary Archives Workshop which revealed how historical records can form the basis of a writer's novel. And in February, we had the Photographic Workshop which showed us the modern methods of preserving photographic records. Without careful conservation and preservation of both the written word and the photograph these records would be lost.

How about Aim No 2? **"To assist the work of West Sussex Record Office by fundraising, working parties or any other means"**

I have to admit we are failing with fundraising, and this needs to be addressed as soon as possible. WSAS does not have a bottomless pot of gold to dip into every time we wish to help WSRO with a purchase, or indeed when we need to cover our own expenses.

There was a time when WSRO could give us room – but not now - to hold a book sale or map sale every other year and the books would bring in about £900 each time. The current committee's talents and interests lend themselves to maps and books. We have no experience of car boot sales or other means of raising money so we would like to turn to you, the WSAS members, and ask you to run fundraising events of your choice. Even if it only brings in £10, £20 or £30 it all helps, for at the moment no money is coming in from fund raising and this situation cannot go on indefinitely. Do please volunteer to help in this way – and preferably today. In the last twelve months we have spent more than £700 on documents. Some of this was funded directly by donations, topped up by Gift Aid, but we cannot always rely on the generosity of individual donors to enable us to continue replenishing our funds.

Let us look at working parties. I have always said to Wendy that I am sure we could raise a working party whenever the need arises and indeed we needed, and we raised, large working parties to make our map and book sales work successfully.

We help WSRO in other ways too. For example, when two people are needed at a weekend history fair to represent the record office, then a member of WSAS may well attend that function to work alongside a member of the record office's staff.

I like to think we publicise and promote the work of the record office at all our events and where we hold our events at the record office, we bring people to the record office possibly for the first time. Furthermore, our two publications, the Journal and the Researcher, always highlight the work of the record office.

**Aim No 3 - "To seek out material of historical interest and persuade owners to ensure its preservation"**

It is very difficult to design a programme that incorporates this aim. We can of course all be vigilant in this respect and we might be lucky with a chance encounter, such as happened after our WSAS walk round Amberley. I found myself talking to a gentleman over tea who was wondering what to do with a collection of Sussex family history papers. Fortunately members of the record office staff were present and I was able to put him in touch with just the right people there and then.

**I feel we achieve Aim No 4 rather well. "To arrange outings, lectures and other activities to foster interest in the history of West Sussex"**

If we look at outings, since the last AGM we have organized visits to Coombe Place, Salvington Mill and Shulbrede Priory.

If we look at lectures, we listened to several at the Oving Conference last October, we had the talk on the Land Settlement Association last month, and we are going to hear about the secrets of the High Woods today.

Other activities that foster an interest in West Sussex history would include our walk round Victorian Chichester last June and our Christmas Get Together normally includes at least one quiz on West Sussex history.

Having looked at all WSAS has done and achieved in the last twelve months, I think we can say this has been another successful year for WSAS and that we have very largely fulfilled the aims for WSAS as laid down by the Founding Fathers back in 1973 due to three ingredients:

1. The support of our members for all we do
2. The work of the committee, and
3. The support we receive from Wendy and her staff at the record office without which WSAS would not be the society we know and enjoy today.

Richard Mant

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### **Sad News**

We regret to say that the following members of WSAS passed away during recent months:-

BRIAN BUCKROYD, aged 84, on July 22nd 2015.

JOHN STRINGER, aged 84, on October 20th 2015.

## **WEST SUSSEX ARCHIVES SOCIETY AGM 16 APRIL 2016 COUNTY ARCHIVIST'S REPORT**

I am very pleased to be able to give the County Archivist's Report to the 42nd AGM of the West Sussex Archives Society and to see so many of you here today. This has been another very busy year both for the Society and for the Record Office and I would like to take this opportunity to share with you some of the highlights as well as to thank all those who have done so much for the Society and for the Record Office over the last year.

This year has seen a number of changes amongst the staff at the Record Office. In November we said goodbye to Rhodri, our Search Room Archivist, who left us for pastures new at the South Bank. At the end of the year we welcomed Lauren Clifton into this role, Lauren having been with us since September covering for Nichola's maternity leave. I am very pleased to report that Nichola herself has now returned from leave following the birth of her beautiful daughter, Charlotte, a sister for Emily. And in what appears to be another game of musical chairs at the Record Office, Sarah has taken over the part-time role of Technical Search Room Assistant, the position vacated by David Milnes last year, whilst continuing to work part-time in the Search Room.

The Record Office continues to be as busy as ever with a regular stream of visitors and enquirers exploring a wide range of topics and interests. Our ever popular Tuesday evening talks and coffee morning workshops continue to generate much interest. We continue to receive excellent feedback from our users whilst receiving valuable help and support from our User Forum in ensuring that we continue to deliver as a good service as we possibly can. Our many volunteers continue to do a wonderful job, including those who come in as part of on-going and very valuable project work, such as the Quarter Sessions volunteers, as well as those who undertake the many individual tasks involved with listing, indexing and digitisation.

Project work and partnerships remain an important part of Record Office life. The work of the Chichester Festival Theatre Project has continued over the last twelve months with Nick completing his work on all of the box lists produced by the many project volunteers to draw up the final catalogue and determine the arrangement and packaging of the archives. 2015 saw the advent of the Admiral Murray Project in partnership with The Novium, Chichester District Council and the wonderful Murray Club. Funded by the HLF the project includes exhibitions at The Novium and the Record Office, and a programme of project talks and events involving schools, sleepovers in the museum, work with local care homes, concerts, re-enactments of Napoleonic naval battles in Chichester harbour, embroidery projects and a service at the Cathedral. All this in the name of Admiral Sir George Murray, friend and compatriot of Nelson and Lord Mayor of Chichester.

We continue to take in new archives and in 2015 almost 300 new accessions were deposited at the Record Office including the records of the Chichester Nurses League, dating from the 1930s, the archive of RH & RW Clutton, chartered surveyors and land agents of East Grinstead, 1950s-1990, and the papers of Sir Michael Marshall, MP for Arundel, 1974-1997. We were delighted to be asked to help with the preservation of the Tatton-Brown and Kitchener family papers, which is a fascinating archive covering the 19th and 20th centuries, including a wonderful series of grants of arms and illuminated addresses belonging to Lord Kitchener.

Another intriguing addition to the collections was the archive of the Marine and General Mutual Life Insurance Company of Worthing dating from the middle of the 19th century. At first glance you might consider this to be a standard business archive with the usual minutes, financial and company records and then you find out that at the time of deposit this was the earliest surviving registered company in the country and that for over 150 years they had been insuring the lives of individual sailors who travelled all over the world. So here in West Sussex we have a fascinating insight into life at sea in the 19th century. The entries record the far-flung cities sailors visited, from Alexandria to Hong Kong, Bombay to Balaklava. The volumes also record the role each sailor performed on board ship, giving a sense of the many and varied jobs which were required to keep a ship afloat. On a more sombre note, the registers list the different causes of death among sailors. Drowning was a common occurrence, as were outbreaks of infectious diseases, like typhoid, which spread quickly through the crew. Shipboard accidents accounted for many deaths too. Thomas Esson, for instance, died after being hit on the head by a paddle wheel float. In fact, life on board a ship was so dangerous (mortality among seafarers was estimated at 50% higher than average) that life insurance for sailors was extremely problematic. Marine and General Mutual, established in 1852, aimed to address this by "*offering advantages to the seafaring portion of the community, which no office has yet attempted*", and by the end of its first complete year, had more than a thousand seamen on the books.

In 2015 we also took in additional archives of the Queen Victoria Hospital in East Grinstead, the centre for the treatment of members of the Allied Air Forces during the Second World War. It was here that Sir Archibald McIndoe developed and carried out his pioneering techniques for plastic and reconstructive surgery and focussed on the rehabilitation of his patients. Some 15,000 patient case-files have now been deposited, of which around 600 are those of the airmen, who became known as the Guinea Pig Club. In acknowledgment of the importance of this archive the Wellcome Trust has awarded us a Research Resources Grant of just over £72,000 to catalogue and preserve the collection and to digitise the Guinea Pig Club files. We are now working in partnership with the Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, East Grinstead Museum and the Guinea Pig Club themselves to deliver this important project and Andrew Rackley has just been appointed to join the Record Office as the project archivist for the next fifteen months.

So the archives that come into the Record Office represent all walks of life and all parts of the globe. We remain very grateful to all of our donors and depositors, at least one of whom is with us this afternoon, and to those who place their trust and their archives with us and join us in helping to preserve these important historical records for future generations.

This year we have been continuing to develop our very successful partnership with WSAS in acquiring documents that have come up for sale through the auction houses and dealers. This can be quite a tricky world in which to navigate, particularly when budgets are limited and price tags are high. The National Archives continues to monitor the major outlets and alert us to forthcoming sales. We in turn look for grant funding opportunities and work with WSAS to make successful bids. The Record Office does not have a specific budget for buying documents but the match funding that WSAS has been able to provide this year has enabled us to unlock significant grant funding from both the V&A Purchase Grant Fund and the Friends of the National Libraries as well as encouraging contributions from private individuals. As a result we have been able to acquire two letters of Richard Cobden, the Radical and Liberal statesman and founding member of the Anti-Corn Law

League, 1843 and 1856, a survey of the estates of William Richardson, 1774, in Trotton, Iping and Stedham, the illustrated diaries of Dr Geoffrey Bourne of Iping, near Midhurst, 1929-1959, and an intriguing chemist's prescription book from Bognor Regis, 1875-1876. The intrigue lies partly in the need to understand the names of the drugs and what they might have been prescribed for and partly in the names of the recipients themselves. One Dante Gabriel Rossetti was given two separate prescriptions whilst staying at Aldwick Lodge in Bognor to recover from illness at that time. We are currently being assisted by two retired pharmacists, who have very kindly agreed to help us in deciphering and interpreting these entries. All will be revealed in subsequent newsletters, when we will be featuring details of all these documents. We will also be displaying the archives that we have managed to buy each year for members to see at our Christmas get together at the Record Office in December. We continue to owe the Society a huge debt of gratitude for supporting us in this way.

Looking back over the last year it is also an opportunity for reflection as we remember those who are no longer with us. In October we said goodbye to Mrs Gill, who worked at the Record Office for 37 years and was the County Archivist for 24 years until her retirement in 1993. It was Mrs Gill who oversaw all of the work for the new Record Office building in Orchard Street, which opened in 1989.

In September we also said farewell to Colin Excell, the chairman of the Sussex Family History Group, who was a long standing and enthusiastic supporter of both East and West Sussex Record Offices over very many years. Both leave remarkable legacies for us to build on.

As well as looking back we also look forward to the year ahead, when we will be celebrating the 70th anniversary of the West Sussex Record Office which was set up in 1946. During the coming year we will be running a campaign that features 70 of our favourite archives, all chosen by our friends and supporters, our depositors, our users and volunteers, our staff and by you. We have selected two different documents from amongst those nominated by WSAS and you will have to keep reading your newsletters and following our Record Office website to find out which ones! One date for your diaries for the coming year is our very special 70th Anniversary Open Day on Saturday 12 November and I hope to see you all there later in the year.

It is very difficult to pick out a specific highlight from the wide range of WSAS activities over the last year. The events and workshops have covered a wide range of topics and interests. If I had to choose I would probably select the workshop that we ran for WSAS in November when we delved into the literary archives in the Record Office and explored the use of archives for creative writing. We ended the day by inviting people to have a go at using a selection of archives to draw up their own synopsis for a storyline. I have to say that members rose to the challenge magnificently. Everyone entered into the spirit of this task with great enthusiasm and showed what hidden talents there are amongst the membership.

In conclusion I would like to take this opportunity to thank the chairman and all of the committee, who do so much for the Society, and to thank all of the members who continue to support the work of the Record Office and everything that we do. I would also like to pay tribute to all of the Record Office staff who work so hard to provide such an excellent service and without whom none of this would be possible. I have enjoyed working with you all over the last twelve months and look forward to an exciting year ahead.

## Events Review

### WSAS PHOTOGRAPHIC WORKSHOP SATURDAY FEBRUARY 13<sup>TH</sup>

This proved a very popular and well attended workshop, which looked at the photographic collections held at the Record Office, and how they are catalogued and preserved.

The workshop took place in the library and our County Archivist, Wendy Walker, began proceedings by welcoming everyone and outlining how the day would unfold. We were then given a fascinating overview of the Photographic Archives held at the Record Office, which was presented by Sue Millard. In total over 250,000 photographs are held by the Record Office. We were shown one of the oldest photographs held there, which is a delightful portrait of an elderly carpenter on the Parham estate, taken around 1870.

The Record Office holds a number of important collections, such as the 70,000 images from the George Garland Collection, which shows many images taken around the Petworth area, many of them taken between the two world wars. Other important collections include the Kevis collection comprising some 8,000 images taken from the 1870s to 1908 and the Fletcher collection consisting of some 1,500 images of mainly Sussex buildings, all taken before World War I. During the talk, many of these images were displayed on a screen giving us a wonderful impression of what Sussex would have looked like all those years ago.

Sue also talked at some length about the evolution of photography from pioneers such as Louis Daguerre and William Fox Talbot in the 1830s, the introduction of colour film in the 1930s, Polaroid photography from the late 1940s, through to digital photography today. We were also told that cataloguing has its own variations – for instance photographs and negatives are catalogued separately.



After lunch Clare Snoad and Simon Hopkins took us behind the scenes to view the conservation facilities at the Record Office. Here we had the opportunity to view some of the equipment that is used, such as the slide scanner, the A3 scanner and the very impressive Cruse Flat Bed Scanner. Clare and Simon talked at some length about the conservation and preservation of old photographs. The greatest enemy of old photographs is light and moisture and great care is taken to ensure that they are stored under the right conditions. We were also shown how even an apparently hopelessly fragmented photograph can often be brought back to life through the use of digitisation.

The day concluded with everyone being given a number of old photographs to study, and from the clues within the images (we were each given a very useful hand-out) attempting to date them. These clues included things such as the style of clothing being worn by the subjects, hair styles, types of vehicles that might appear in the image and even vehicle registration plates. This initiated much thought and discussion amongst the group.

This was an excellent workshop, and clearly Wendy and her team had gone to much trouble to make it both enjoyable and informative. However, perhaps the greatest joy was the opportunity to see so many of the priceless images that the Record Office holds, giving us glimpses of a now vanished past. We all left with a much greater understanding of how these are preserved for the enjoyment and appreciation of generations to come.

Richard Howell

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### **LAND SETTLEMENT ASSOCIATION March 13th**

On a sunny Sunday in March, Dr. Bill Martin, on behalf of the Manhood Wildlife & Heritage Group, gave a fascinating presentation on the Land Settlement Association (LSA) to 18 WSAS members and their guests at the Chichester Record Office. A film entitled "Here is the Land", plus a series of slides, and a short BBC broadcast on the subject, gave visual insight into this largely unknown chapter of West Sussex history.



The Great Depression of 1928/29 had resulted in widespread long-term unemployment for the miners and shipbuilders of North East England and South Wales. To alleviate the situation the Land Settlement Association was set up with a view to relocating these men and their families to land settlements throughout England to provide them with long-term employment as market gardeners and ultimately ensure availability of fresh meat, fruit and vegetables at local markets.

In 1936, these unemployed men made application to the Ministry of Labour and once accepted by an interview panel would leave their families behind and head for the settlement to which they had been allocated for initial training. Of the 20 land settlements established throughout England, Sidlesham was the largest with 120 holdings located on the Keynor, Fletchers and Batchmere estates. Such was the importance of the LSA that King Edward VIII paid a visit to the Batchmere estate during that same year.

Training was intensive, involving major work such as land clearance and installation of roads. Irrigation ditches had to be dug and housing built. Each settlement was run by a warden at a central farm and the men were housed in an army hut until their new homes had been constructed. Each tenant received 4 acres of land, a house, 6 pigs, 250 chickens and one glasshouse. When training was completed and housing ready, the families arrived to start their new lives. The work was hard, but the rewards were significant: full-time employment and the satisfaction of working independently as market gardeners. The central farm supported the tenants by providing the agricultural machinery and tools, helped to manage the grading, weighing and packing of the produce and facilitated shipment of the food to the local markets.

In 1939 when many of the settlement men went off to war their families were evacuated to other parts of the country. This in turn allowed the settlements to be used for evacuees coming in from other places. After the war much changed with regard to the LSA not least the fact that one had to buy one's way in to the land settlement at a cost of £500.

The LSA closed in 1983 and a group of tenants formed a company called the Sidlesham Growers which operated until the year 2000 or thereabouts. Following the closure, properties were sold, stock was auctioned off and families had to move. Some tenants fortunate enough to have 250 pounds to pay for lawyers' fees were able to claim for loss of livelihood and received compensation of between £10-55,000 which allowed them in some cases to buy back their land settlement homes.

Dr. Martin concluded his presentation with some interesting information on the "Sidlesham Heritage Trail" which was established in 2015 to raise awareness of this important episode in West Sussex history. A useful map of the trail is available and provides easy-to-follow details about the walk in and around the former land settlement and indicates many points of interest which remain from the LSA days. See [www.sidleshamheritagetrail.co.uk](http://www.sidleshamheritagetrail.co.uk) for more information.

2016 marks the 80th anniversary of the LSA and there is an interesting exhibition "A Life from the Land" currently showing at the Novium Museum in Chichester. In November the exhibition will be transferred to the "Weald and Downland Museum" for permanent display.

Please do not forget that on June 4<sup>th</sup> there is an opportunity to walk the areas of Sidlesham talked about by Bill Martin (see events later in the newsletter).

Margaret Palacios

# Events Programme 2016

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## **Reminder**

**Saturday May 7<sup>th</sup>** - Joint FOTKA meeting - Arundel Walks, information was in your AGM pack.

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**Saturday, June 4<sup>th</sup>** – There will be a walk around Sidlesham to see where the Land Settlement Association (LSA) had its smallholdings, manager's house, the community hut (where the original miners lived while they were being trained and their houses were being built), the Packing Shed, stores and offices. Much remains to be seen.

The walk, which will be led by Dr Bill Martin, will start and finish at the school in Keynor Lane, Sidlesham (PO20 7LN). The length of the walk will be decided on the day. It is hoped that refreshments may be available en route.

2.15 pm: Meet in the school car park in Keynor Lane. There is plenty of parking space at the school but if it is needed, then use the public lay-by on the road.

3.45 pm approximately: The walk will end back at the school in Keynor Lane.

It is NOT necessary to have attended Bill Martin's talk on the LSA to WSAS in March to come on this walk.

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**Sunday July 10<sup>th</sup> 2pm** - Visit to Shoreham Airport with a guided walk.

Please report to the Visitor Centre on arrival. There is a 'Pay & Display' car park at the airport.

Consisting of an airside tour and visits to the hangars, we are assured of an interesting time. The Airport tour, which lasts about one and half hours, provides an insight into Shoreham's past, along with a detailed explanation about the current day airport. Views of the resident aircraft are available throughout the tour. The Airport Visitor Centre & Museum has interesting displays, information about aviation in general and the Airport itself. The Humming Bird Restaurant is open till 5pm where we may be able to purchase cups of tea after the tour - not included in the booking price.

Cost £6 members £7 non-members.

Numbers are limited by the Airport to 24, for security reasons. Closing date for booking Monday 20<sup>th</sup> June.

Please send cheques to WSAS as per the booking slip.

Include your address in case we need to return your cheque in the event of the tour being overbooked.

Please note that tours are subject to weather conditions.

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There may be occasions when members wish to attend an event but feel they cannot due to transport limitations. Please do not be deterred, we would encourage you to book the event and indicate with your booking slip that you can only attend if it is possible to obtain a lift. Could we also ask please, that any members coming to an event who feel they could give a fellow member a lift let us know with their booking slip. We can then do our best to marry parties together. Thank you.

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### ***WSAS Committee***

*Richard Mant - Chairman*

*Jane Mant - Membership Secretary*

*Leigh Lawson - Vice Chairman*

*Stella Elliot - Committee Member*

*Susan Nicel - Treasurer*

*Barbara Ely - Committee Member*

*Richard Howell - Secretary*

*Helen Whittle - Journal Editor*

*Barrie Keech - Newsletter & Website*

*Gillian Thompson - Information Manager*

*Holly Wright - Committee Member*

*Wendy Walker - County Archivist*

All contactable using [wsascom@btinternet.com](mailto:wsascom@btinternet.com)

Further Society information is available at the website:

[westsussexarchivessociety.webplus.net](http://westsussexarchivessociety.webplus.net)

# Booking Slips

**Any query about any event please contact: [wsascom@btinternet.com](mailto:wsascom@btinternet.com)**

**Events can also be seen at: [westsussexarchivessociety.webplus.net](http://westsussexarchivessociety.webplus.net)**

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**Saturday, June 4<sup>th</sup> – A walk around Sidlesham to see where the Land Settlement Association had its buildings and smallholdings, beginning at 2.15 pm.**

Costs £4 members £6 non-members

Names of members attending .....

Tel No ..... Email or home address .....

Names of non-members attending .....

Tel No ..... Email or home address .....

Amount paid, cheques made payable to WSAS .....

Please return slip by May 27<sup>th</sup> to WSAS, c/o West Sussex Record Office, County Hall, Chichester, West Sussex. PO19 1RN

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**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> July- Visit to Shoreham Airport with guided walk. Please report to the visitor centre on arrival at 2.00pm.**

Cost: £6 members £7 non-members

Names of members attending .....

Tel. No..... Email or home address.....

Names of non-members attending.....

Tel. No..... Email or home address.....

Amount paid, cheques made payable to WSAS.....

Please return slip by 20th June to, WSAS, c/o West Sussex Record Office, County Hall, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 1RN

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## Reminder

We are always looking for articles to include in our Society Journal. There is no requirement for you to be a fully fledged author, we are interested in any research you may have done that relates to West Sussex and that you are happy to share. If you have anything that you would like to see published please can you send it as a WORD document to the society's email address [wsascom@btinternet.com](mailto:wsascom@btinternet.com). If you have any material that you think maybe of interest and you do not have a computer you can leave a note at WSRO reception and we will contact you. The last opportunity for articles to be included in our journal for this year is July 31st. Thank you

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