

# Sussex Industrial Archaeology Society

## Newsletter

Number 209

January 2026



Tunbridge Wells West Station and berthing sidings  
Winter 1970s (*John Beauchamp*)



# Newsletter 209

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January 2026

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## Editorial

Welcome to *Newsletter 209*.

SERIAC 2026 is on Saturday 25 April - Please see details on page 8, be sure to book.



High Rocks halt, Spa Valley Railway 1950s (*Lens of Sutton*)

## **Forthcoming SIAS Events**

All the autumn and winter meetings will be held at  
West Blatchington Mill Barn, Holmes Avenue, Hove BN3 7LF

### **Saturday January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2.00pm The Art of the Georgian Engineers**

The Georgian era was one of engineering mastery, ushered in firstly by canals and ending with the birth of the railways. Underpinning it all was the Industrial Revolution, beginning in 1704 and running throughout. In this talk Alan Green will explore the art of the greatest Georgian Engineers, their evolving technology and impact of their creations upon the landscape.

### **Saturday February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2.00pm The Last Edwardian Forge in Eastbourne followed by The Brighton Station Cab Road**

SIAS member Adrian Backshall recalls visits to the forge in Lower Road when he had plans to turn his Victorian railway plate-layers trolley into a Wickham trolley. He recognised how old and interesting the building was and photographed it extensively. With the help of local historians he has managed to trace its history. It is now closed and awaits development. This will be followed by a selection of Adrian's superb photographs of the cab road under Brighton Station.

### **Saturday March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2.00pm Railways Around Brighton**

Our Chairman John Blackwell delves into his collection of railway photographs and looks at the history of the lines and their infrastructure including the Kemp Town Branch, the route from Brighton to Shoreham and at the port of Newhaven.

### **Possible visit to Wienerberger brick and tile works near Ockley Surrey**

We are investigating the possibility of a visit to the Wienerberger Works during the summer. The Wienerberger works manufacture a wide variety of bricks and tiles including Keymer Bricks the manufacture of which were transferred when Keymer closed.

Weinerberger runs day visits on weekdays consisting of a welcome and induction conducted by a senior manager; a tour of the factory with guide and could cover the full manufacturing process for bricks including the Keymer handmade department. The day includes a meal.

They need information on the group size so it would be of assistance if you would let us know whether you would be interested in going on the visit. Please send an email to Malcolm Dawes at [malcolm.dawes@btinternet.com](mailto:malcolm.dawes@btinternet.com)

## Date for August

### **Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August. Visit to Fawley Hill Railway and Museum near Henley-on-Thames**

Details of this trip were provided in the October Newsletter when we asked members to provide their details if they would be interested in going on the visit.

Fawley Museum have now offered to let a group from SIAS visit the museum on the 16<sup>th</sup> August. Would all members who contacted us to confirm their interest in the visit please confirm with malcolm.dawes@btinternet.com that they are still interested and further details will be emailed.

The Museum has suggested that all visitors pay a donation of £15 for the visit.

There are a few additional places available for the visit. So if anyone else is interested please contact malcolm.dawes@btinternet.com



### **Events from other Societies**

#### **Malcolm Dawes**

Detailed below are events organised by other societies, which may be of interest to our members. If you have details for future events please send these to:

Malcolm Dawes, 52 Rugby Road, Brighton, BN1 6EB

or e-mail to [malcolm.dawes@btinternet.com](mailto:malcolm.dawes@btinternet.com)

#### **Wednesday January 21<sup>st</sup> , 7.45pm. *Chat and Snap***

Members chance to show their favourite slides or image on PowerPoint. Sussex Transport Interest Group.event.. London Road Station. Non-members £2.50. Provisional information, essential to check with Paul Snelling paul.snelling8tg@gmail.com nearer the date.

#### **Sunday 1st February, 10.00am. *Geoffrey Mead's "Ambles not Rambles"***

University of Sussex boundary walk. Meet Sports Centre carpark nr A27 (pay by phone parking, or bus or train).g.mead@sussex.ac.uk

#### **Tuesday 3rd February, 7.30pm. *The Channel Dash***

Story of the failure of the Royal Navy and RAF to prevent two German battleships to return to their homeport unscathed and how the Navy's response was coordinated from HMS Forward a communication centre under The Downs near Newhaven. Newhaven Historical Society & Museum talk by Bill McNaught at the Hillcrest Centre, Bay Vue Road, Newhaven. Free parking next to the Hillcrest Centre. Non-members £5. [www.newhavenhistoricalsociety.org.uk](http://www.newhavenhistoricalsociety.org.uk)

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> February, 10am to 4pm. *Open day at the Brede Steam Engines***

Steam and working industrial engines. Situated 6 miles from Hastings on A28 to Ashford. For any enquiries email [bredesteamgiants@hotmail.com](mailto:bredesteamgiants@hotmail.com) or phone 01424 844882.

**Wednesday February 11<sup>th</sup> 2pm. *“Hurrah for Shippam’s Exhibition”*; talk & visit behind the scenes and optional walk round Shippam’s sites in town**

Members & guests only. Refreshments available. The Novium Museum Tower Street, Chichester, New members welcome - Membership - West Sussex Archives Society. More info in: [The-Researcher-2025-4-Oct.pdf](#). [www.wsas.co.uk](http://www.wsas.co.uk)

**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February 7.30pm. *Some Street names of Chichester***

Chichester Local History Society talk by Anne Scicluna, City Guide and past Mayor. Non-Members £5. New Park Centre, New Park Road, Chichester. 01243 784915. <https://chichesterlocalhistory.org.uk>

**Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February, 8.00pm. *Witchcraft in Sussex***

Burgess Hill Heritage & History Association talk by Chris Horlock. Cyprus Hall, Cyprus Road, Burgess Hill. Small entrance fee. [www.burgesshillheritagehistory.org.uk](http://www.burgesshillheritagehistory.org.uk)

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> March, 10.00am. *Geoffrey Mead’s “Ambles not Rambles”***

Bedelands Farm LNR, Burgess Hill. Meet Burgess Hill Football Club, Leylands Rd. [g.mead@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:g.mead@sussex.ac.uk).

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March, 10am to 4pm. *Open day at the Brede Steam Engines***

Steam and working industrial engines. Situated 6 miles from Hastings on A28 to Ashford. For any enquiries email [bredesteamgiants@hotmail.com](mailto:bredesteamgiants@hotmail.com) or phone 01424 844882.

**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March, 7.30pm. *The Priory Park Archaeology Project***

Chichester Local Historical Society talk by James Kenny, District Archaeologist. Visitors £5. New Park Centre, New Park Road, Chichester. 01243 784915. <https://chichesterlocalhistory.org.uk>

**Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March, 8.00pm. *Genealogy in Burgess Hill***

Guidance on how to use genealogy sources. Burgess Hill Heritage & History Association talk by Helen Rimmer. Cyprus Hall, Cyprus Road, Burgess Hill. Small entrance fee. [www.burgesshillheritagehistory.org.uk](http://www.burgesshillheritagehistory.org.uk)

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2.30pm. *Researching house history***

Local History Forum of Brighton and Hove Archaeology Society talk by Janice Winkworth. £5 non-members. Fellowship Room, Central United Reformed Church, 102 Blatchington Road, Hove. [www.brightonarch.org.uk](http://www.brightonarch.org.uk)

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March, 7.45pm, *Wandering around Europe***

Sussex Transport Interest Group talk by Nick Kelly. London Road Station. Non-members £2.50. Provisional information, essential to check with Paul Snelling paul.snelling8tg@gmail.com nearer the date.

**Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 3pm. *From Stagecoach to Stagecoach - 300 years of transport in the Lavant Valley***

West Sussex Record Office talk by Alan Green. WSRO, Orchard Street, Chichester. Book via the WSRO website.

**Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March, 7.15pm. *Chasing steam in western Europe***

RCTS Chichester Branch Meeting. Bassil Shippam Centre, Tozer Way, St Pancras, Chichester. <https://rcts.org.uk/branches/branch-chr-chichester>

**Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April, 10am to 4pm. *Open day at the Brede Steam Engines***

Steam and working industrial engines. Situated 6 miles from Hastings on A28 to Ashford. For any enquiries email [bredesteamgiants@hotmail.com](mailto:bredesteamgiants@hotmail.com) or phone 01424 844882.

**Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April, 10am. *Geoffery Mead's "Amblés not Rambles"***

Henfield; rail & riverside. Meet "Old Railway" pub, Upper Station Road in public carpark. [g.mead@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:g.mead@sussex.ac.uk)

**Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> April, 7.30pm. *First the School and then the Steeple – Petworth 1942-50***

Chichester Local Historical Society talk by Miles Costello, Petworth historian. Visitors £5. New Park Centre, New Park Road, Chichester. 01243 784915. <https://chichesterlocalhistory.org.uk>

**Friday 10<sup>th</sup> April, 8.00pm. *The history of tram and bus transport in Brighton***

In 1937 Brighton was the last town in the world still building open topped trams. Burgess Hill Heritage & History Association talk by Ian Gledhill, Cyprus Hall, Cyprus Road, Burgess Hill. Small entrance fee. [www.burgesshillheritagehistory.org.uk](http://www.burgesshillheritagehistory.org.uk)

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2pm. *Hormouth to Seal Island: A short maritime history of harbour and coast***

West Sussex Archives Society talk by Ian Friel. Harbour Conservation Educational Centre, Dell Quay Road, Chichester. [www.wsas.co.uk](http://www.wsas.co.uk)

**Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 7. 15pm. *Lines to Midhurst, via Petworth, Petersfield & Chichester***

RCTS Chichester Branch Meeting. Bassil Shippam Centre, Tozer Way, St Pancras, Chichester. <https://rcts.org.uk/branches/branch-chr-chichester>

**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 10am to 4pm. *Open day at the Brede Steam Engines***

Steam and working industrial engines. Situated 6 miles from Hastings on A28 to Ashford. For any enquiries email [bredesteamgiants@hotmail.com](mailto:bredesteamgiants@hotmail.com) or phone 01424 844882.

**Weekend 9<sup>th</sup>– 10<sup>th</sup> May. *National Mills weekend***

See Mills *Newsletter* for further details

**Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May. *Historic Commercial Vehicles Run, between London and Brighton*** [www.hcvs.co.uk](http://www.hcvs.co.uk)

**Local Exhibitions of interest**

**Novium Museum, Chichester**

Main exhibition, *Hurrah for Shippham's* exploring the story of this famous brand and its vigorous advertising. Until February 2026.

***Do please check details before travelling***

*The details of these meetings and events organised by other groups are only included as a guide and as a service to members: Inclusion here is not intended to be seen as an endorsement*

## **Reminder**

### **Annual Subscriptions are due on April 1st**

Could those members who pay by Standing Order kindly ensure the amount payable is correct namely  
£20 Full Membership,  
£30 with family member at same address.

Many thanks  
Membership Secretary

#### **NOTE**

*Please let me have your images and memories for the next Newsletter (or two!) It may be it something you pass every day, but the rest of us may be unfamiliar with. Social media , Facebook, YouTube, etc are growing with increasingly interesting groups that I find impossible to keep up with, if you spot one please let me know. I am always looking for examples of our IA heritage.*

South East Region Industrial Archaeology Conference

# **SERIAC 2026**

**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2026**

Following the success of SERIAC 2024  
that SIAS organised in Chichester in October 2024  
GLIAS will be hosting this years event

**At Stanley Arts, 12 South Norwood Hill, London, SE25 6AB**

The Programme will include presentations on:

More than Biscuits, Beer and Bulbs

Reading's Other Industries

Brunel's Timber Viaducts. Masterpieces or Aberrations?

The Working Coast

West Ham Pumping Station

Stanley Arts – How Did We Get Here?

Our Industrial Heritage – Fieldwork in Cyberspace

## **BOOKING**

All Bookings bookings and payments to be made on line at

<https://tinyurl.com/SERIAC-2026>

Conference place @ £25 per person

Box lunch £6.50

**Closing date for bookings**

**with lunch 15<sup>th</sup> April, without lunch 24<sup>th</sup> April**

Further details to be provided on the GLIAS Website in due course

<http://www.glias.org.uk>

## November Talk

# The Spa Valley Railway Restoration 1985 to 2025

Report by John Blackwell

Following the AGM we welcomed Brian Halford a long time volunteer with the Spa Valley Railway with his presentation on the Railway's origins and restoration.

### To Closure

The East Grinstead, Groombridge and Tunbridge Wells Railway, an extension of the Three Bridges to East Grinstead line, was opened in 1866 by the London Brighton and South Coast Railway (LB&SCR). Following the Beeching Report many rural railways closed in the 1960s, including the line from East Grinstead to Groombridge, on January 1st 1967. Although originally proposed for closure the section between Groombridge and Tunbridge Wells West (West being added to the name in 1923) survived following public pressure. Closure of the Lewes to Uckfield line and the link from Groombridge to Ashurst in 1969, services from Uckfield to London Bridge, via Oxted, used the spur from Birchden Junction north of Eridge to Ashurst causing the branch to Tunbridge Wells West to become a withered arm with one train per hour in each direction forming a shuttle from Eridge to Tonbridge using Grove tunnel (see below), decline set in and closure came on 6th July 1985.

A preservation society was formed straightaway whose aim was to reopen the line between Tunbridge Wells West and Eridge, *The Tunbridge Wells aund Eridge Preservation Society* (TWERPS). The site at Tunbridge Wells West consisted of the original 1866 station building where the booking office and the section under the canopy were illuminated by gas until closure. A subway leading to an island platform, both electrically lit, but where the canopy and platform buildings had been previously demolished. Other features included a two storey goods shed of 1866 (the only LB&SCR one with a hipped roof and its large goods yard which was latterly used for stabling DEMU's. A four road engine shed of



Tunbridge Wells West Booking Hall 1970s

1891, the east and west signal boxes and the single line track, which had opened to passengers in 1876 through Grove Road Tunnel to Tunbridge Wells Central Station completed the ensemble. Fortunately the station building, but not the interior, was listed Grade II in 1986 (the gas lit gents toilet adjoining probably went before listing.). The station is now restored and trades as a Smith and Western wild-west themed hotel and restaurant and retains the original booking hall with modifications to suit its present business.

## **Hope**

By the end of 1988 Sainsbury's had bought the site for a new supermarket but the planning permission required a strip of land, by the side of the engine shed to be retained and an extension to the main old station platform for access to what was to become the new station using part of the engine shed. Items of historical interest were preserved including part of the west signal box's Saxby & Farmer frame and following removal track from the site, courtesy of Network Rail. Sainsbury's also agreed to replace the windows and corrugated asbestos roof panels of the 1891 engine shed, (this had replaced a smaller one of 1866 on a slightly different location) and to restore the station building, but not for railway use. A long term lease to the Society was also provided by the supermarket chain. A Light Railway order was granted in 1993 which specified two railways 1. TunbridgeWells West Station to Birchden Junction and 2. Birchden Junction to Eridge Station and the hard work could commence on the dream of reopening.

## **Help**

The North Downs Steam Railway which had been operational at Dartford with a ¾ mile long horse shoe shaped line with a collection of industrial locomotives. They suffered vandalism on the site and with likely redevelopment sought a new home. They transferred their assets and crucially brought much needed volunteers with a wealth of experience in railway operation. A name change to the Spa Valley Railway (SVR) was made following a competition in the mid 1990s, It relates to the railway operating from the spa town of Royal Tunbridge Wells and running through the Valley of the High Weald to Eridge. In 1996 the line as far as Birchden Junction was finally purchased.

## **A New Beginning**

After much work clearing vegetation and restoring the track over a period of many years, the railway reopened in December 1996 as far as Cold Bath Bridge three quarters of a mile from Tunbridge Wells West. The inaugural train was hauled by industrial loco Robert Stephenson and Hawthorn (RS&H) Works No 7846 'North Downs' drawing three Mk1 carriages which had arrived in 1993 and been stored at Eridge. The following year, in August, Groombridge was reached creating three and a half miles of railway. At Groombridge the 1866 station building and its platform

remained having been converted to residential and commercial use but a housing estate had been constructed over the goods yard and island platform. However a piece of land had been left specifically for a track to be laid under the road bridge to a site west of the original station.



This new station opened as a platform and small hut for shelter with access along the extended platform from the original station where an office and shop had been established by the preservation society. After nearly twenty years the original station still houses the booking office with the new station boasting a waiting room, bookstall, refreshment kiosk, with seating area, and signal box. The signal box controls a passing loop just beyond the station which opened in 2014 using the lever frame from the closed Birchden Junction box a mile further on.

### **Progress**

A motor train halt between Groombridge and Tunbridge Wells West had opened in 1907, for access to the High Rocks a popular spot for climbers. Constructed entirely of wood with staggered platforms either side of the road over-bridge, it closed in 1952. The present owner of the High Rocks Inn, a great supporter of the railway, constructed a new halt also named High Rocks. Situated west of the original it consists of a platform illuminated by some fine lamp posts, a hut and a gateway to his hotel; a restaurant and wedding venue. This opened in 1998 and is served by the preserved railway. More track clearance and sleeper replacement helped by Lottery funding opened the line to Birchden junction in 2005. This junction is where lines from Uckfield and Eridge, and Oxted and Ashurst meet the line from Groombridge.



High Rocks Halt 2006

## Success

The final push to Eridge could now be started and in 2007 the railway entered in negotiations with Network Rail for access into the still operational station where services to Uckfield and London Bridge via Oxted, depart from platform 1 (formerly 2). From Birchden Junction the track for the SVR runs parallel to the Network Rail line before entering the station. At Eridge the down island, platforms 3/4, had been leased by the early 1990s with cab rides in a diesel shunter, ex Southerham Cement Works, operating up and down the long siding from platform 4. With valuable assistance from Network Rail's contractors clearing vegetation and replacing sleepers and Westinghouse Rail Systems Ltd who upgraded a private crossing SVR trains entered Eridge on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2011. Volunteers had spent many hours repainting the

1880 platform buildings, and the fine cast ironwork in the Southern Railway colours of cream and green providing a splendid backdrop to the trains after their five and a half mile journey.



Eridge Station 2013

## Now

Brian then gave a rundown of events and galas that the railway has held past and present, naming among others, Bulleid Pacific 34053 'Sir Keith Park' and 'Thumper' unit 1317, which worked the line on the final day in 1985, both now resident attractions at the railway, Many other industrial steam and diesel locos have traversed the rails including the former Caledonian Railway's No. 828 built in 1899 which is on long term loan to the railway. Finally, Brian mentioned a problem that heritage railways can face, a failing bridge at Broom Lane between High Rocks and Groombridge. This life expired steel bridge will cost an estimated £400,000 to replace!

Brian's talk was a unique record, splendidly illustrated, of the time and effort and fund raising that professionals and volunteers needed to restore to operational use a disused railway line and make it a visitor attraction which the SVR certainly is. It was much appreciated by his audience.

## The Boulderers

### Geoffrey Mead - From the Newhaven Times

There are many things that Newhaven does not have, but what Newhaven does have is an almost endless supply of stones, boulders and rocks from the beach to the West of the breakwater. One type of rock was known as the blue boulder.

For many years blue boulder collection off the foreshore employed a considerable number of men. Special 'hards' were laid down by the Newhaven Harbour Company on which the boulders were placed and they were in use as late as 1900. At one time between 4,000 and 6,000 tons were collected and exported annually. These bluish flint boulders were destined for the Potteries district. Ground down they were used in the manufacture of glassware, while quantities formed an essential ingredient in the making of 'blue' for domestic and laundry purposes.

The heavy work of collecting boulders is performed by crews of old fishing boats which, no longer fit for trawling, have still a 'good heart' for their timbers are of oak, and oak, as any sailor will tell you, takes "a 'undred years to grow, an' a 'undred years to wear out, which makes two 'undred years altogether." In days gone by there was a fleet of some sixteen 'bouldering boats' working from Newhaven. *Peacehaven Post October 1921*



Richard R. Collard engaged in this activity with his ex. Hastings sailing excursion boats - 'Albertine' one and two. Albertine one is in the foreground of this photograph.

Photograph Newhaven Museum A004P079

The local folk, often fishermen, engaged in collecting the blue boulders were known as 'Boulderers'. They would collect the boulders in baskets and load them into railway skips



Tom Winder and his sister Elizabeth (Harvey) blue boulder picking on the West Beach for Mr Amy - 4/6. per ton in 1928. The West Beach railway skips would hold a ton of boulders. Crushed and ground the boulders were used in pottery glazing, glass work and face powders. Photograph Newhaven Museum A013P096

The tradition of boulder picking at Newhaven goes back to the mid 19th century, and not without incident.

Article in the *Times* May 13th 1847

MELANCHOLY ACCIDENT AT NEWHAVEN – An awful catastrophe, attended with the loss of four lives, occurred at this place on Saturday. The labouring men of this town obtain their livelihood principally by collecting large stones called boulders, which are exported to potteries in different parts of the world. Six boats went to sea for that purpose early in the morning on Saturday, the wind being then very moderate, but about 11 it increased to a gale and the sea raged furiously. Assistance was sent along shore to the boatmen, and two of the crews, after using their best endeavours to save their boats (which belonged to Messrs. W. Stone and Son, and John Bull, and have since become total wrecks), wisely abandoned them and climbed the cliffs by means of a gap lately made for the purpose near Bearshide. Another boat nearer, belonging to a labourer, was saved with great difficulty by being hauled up the beach: two others came safe into the harbour, but the last, in attempting to make the harbour, was upset by a gigantic wave, having at the time five men in her. Three of the crew arose, and two of them being excellent swimmers, John Shepherd and Joseph Lower, almost reached land, when the sea struck them against the pier head, and they sank to rise no more. The other, Tom

Bussey, clang to a plank, and was rescued from a watery grave by a man named Philip Mantle, who fastened a rope to his waist and jumped off the pier just as he was sinking. He was carried to his home, and with the assistance of Mr. R. Geere, and the exertions of Mr. T. Stone, animation was restored, and the sufferer is slowly recovering - *Sussex Advertiser*.



An example of glassware made from blue boulders.

This glass made from 'blue boulders' by Henry Towner and friends in his workshop at 'Tipper Brewery' before WWI.

The glass was given to the Newhaven Museum by N. Jenner and E. Towner.

Photograph Newhaven Museum  
A022P027



Groombridge Station 1980s

## Extracts from Friends of Coultershaw Newsletter No. 37 November 2025

### A record breaking year!

With over 1,100 visitors over all our open days a new record has been set. Special event days including the Petworth Heritage Weekend, Father's Day, the 'River Rother' day and Heritage Crafts were particularly well supported. Feedback from visitors has been so positive it really does make it all worthwhile.

One of the first jobs for the maintenance team to tackle after the season finishes is to thoroughly check the waterwheel. Quite a few of the paddles and 'starts' (the pegs supporting the paddles) had decayed earlier than expected. This may be down to the wood used - local Oak and Larch - or the warmer weather. The best wood for waterwheels is Elm but it will probably be 50 years before we see affordable local Elm again.

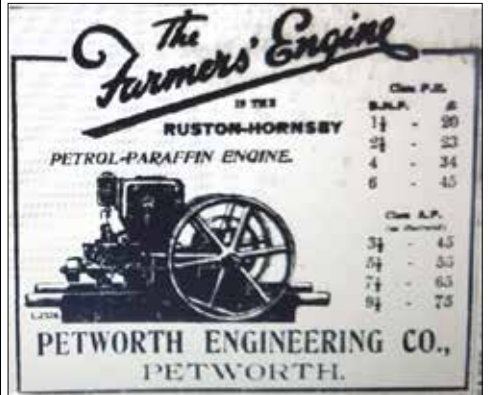


### The 'Petworth Engine'

A new addition to the collection is a portable agricultural stationary engine originally supplied by The Petworth Engineering Co. in ~1928. This will be running on some event days.

### Miles Costello writes...

I won't deny that the workings of the internal combustion engine leave me somewhat baffled. However, the recent arrival at Coultershaw of a stationary engine that had many years earlier been supplied by a local business certainly piqued my interest. Almost a hundred years old the immaculately presented machine with its petrol-paraffin engine bore a shiny brass plate proudly announcing that it had been supplied by The Petworth Engineering Co.



Now long forgotten, the business traded out of premises in East Street which would later become the Petworth branch of the Southern Counties Agricultural Trading Society (SCATS) and is now home to the Petworth Antique Market. Owned by Frank Calnan in partnership with his brother-in-law Frank Brooksbank, the business was established in about 1921 and took over the building that had previously been used by William Maybank who ran a coachbuilding business from the premises. Among many other things the company was a dealer in Chevrolet cars and Wallis tractors, both American brands, and it was one of the first local garages to serve petrol from a pump. At the rear of the East Street workshop was an enclosed yard where a selection of stationary engines were displayed for prospective customers. A specialty of the company was the supply of country house electric lighting systems, installing and servicing the engines that drove the plants. With a staff of up to twenty the work was really diverse and ranged from contract ploughing to the drilling of artesian wells. The maintenance and repair of well pumps was a regular job and it could involve the service engineer descending up to seventy feet down the well, not an experience for the faint hearted.

The Petworth Engineering Co. finally closed its doors in 1945 when it was taken over by Scats.

Besides the engine, which will be on display, the Coultershaw Archive contains several items relating to The Petworth Engineering Co., which are available for viewing upon request.

## South Warehouse renovation

Work continues on the future exhibition space in the South Warehouse. New windows and shutters are being fabricated in the workshop under the direction of Alan, our architect. Some interesting old oak timbers will be reused on the right-most section but unfortunately most of the originals have succumbed to rot or alteration.



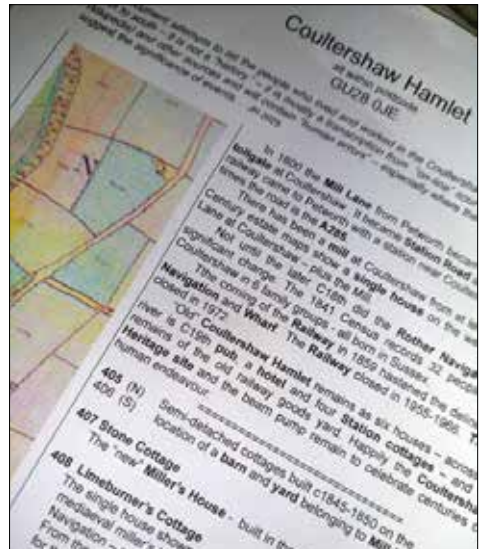
## Coultershaw Research

We are delighted to welcome two new members to the research team. Annette Lloyd Thomas, who has written a book about Mad Jack Fuller of Brightling, is keen to get involved. John Hurd, who spent many years volunteering at the Weald & Downland Mill, has already proved useful searching records on Ancestry and now researching the Coultershaw hamlet.

Hazel Flack is currently researching the Gwillim family who as well owning Coultershaw Mill, also, at various times had North Mill Midhurst, Fittleworth Mill and Ebernoe Mill.

Planning for the Rother Valley History Project and ideas for the shape of the South Warehouse exhibition are progressing well.

We are beginning to make some good connections with other local history groups across the Rother Valley and aim to hold a meeting shortly to share the vision for the History Project.



## Sussex Industrial Archaeology Society

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Please send contributions for the next *Newsletter* to the Editor by the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2026

Opinions expressed are those of the respective authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Society unless specifically stated

Subscribing to the Sussex Industrial Archaeology Society gives automatic membership to the Sussex Mills Group

The Sussex Mills Group also produces a *Newsletter* that is sent to members with this *Newsletter*



Tunbridge Wells West 1970s



Tunbridge Wells West new station

