



Sussex Industrial Archaeology Society

Newsletter

Number 170

April 2016



Copsale Hall. In the early 20th century the owners of Copsale Court lent a field for the local workers to play football and cricket. Subsequently a second-hand corrugated iron hall was purchased. It was dismantled and transported by rail from Peckham Rye to West Grinstead Station then re-erected and opened on January 1st 1907 as a working men's club, but subsequently became known as the Club Room. During WWII the hall was used by Armed Forces and at one time was a canteen for Canadian Troops. After the war a committee of local people organised whist drives, socials and jumble sales. The hall was also hired out for private functions and was used as a base for the Women's Institute and County Library. Electricity was introduced in 1946, replacing the oil lamps and in 1950 a new room was added at the rear. Water was laid in 1950 and brick toilets were built in 1985.

Do you know of other 'tin' buildings in Sussex, if so please advise the editor. (*Martin Snow*)

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Editorial

Welcome to *Newsletter 170*. The winter lectures are behind us and we are looking forward to the sunnier and warmer months (?) : please refer to the opposite page for the events' programme. Do support them, your committee put a deal of time into making the arrangements. If you can suggest any other suitable event, then do please contact a committee member to see if a visit can be arranged, though all too often health & safety seems to trip off the tongue as if a bogeyman. It is a shame as it gives the public a very poor view of a very serious subject, where in the past 'common sense' and a good formal training would protect from most disasters, today we seem to be breeding a better class of 'idiots' skilled in endangering themselves and others. See John Blackwell's report on the Film Night for an example.

A recent conversation regarding the tin chapel at the Weald and Downland Museum made me realise not everyone knows the history of these products of the iron industry. On the front cover is an example using the construction material once so common. There were once many tin tabernacles, and other buildings, that used corrugated iron. These were often supplied as a complete kit of parts for self erection as churches or chapels. The type of design allowed them to be dismantled and moved for re-use. I hope to publish an article on this mode of construction in a future *Newsletter*, if you know of any examples in Sussex or have images - standing or lost - please let me know, better still write a piece!

It may not be too late to book for **SERIAC 2016, 23rd April**, Kingston-on-Thames

Forthcoming SIAS Events

Malcolm Dawes

Saturday 14th May, 10.00 am *The Railways and Mills of Barcombe and district*

A day visit to both stations at Barcombe, the Barcombe Mills and tollroad. After lunch we will be visiting the Lavender Line at Isfield where we will have our own guided tour of the railway collection, visit the signal box and have a filmshow. Full itinerary will be handed out on the day. There will be an admission charge to the Lavender Line. The visit to Barcombe Station is by courtesy of the owner.

Meet at 10.00 am at Barcombe Station (TQ 417 157) in Barcombe Cross - turn into Bridgelands (the former station approach) which is just east of the overbridge.

Parking around Barcombe Mills is limited so please share cars if possible.

It is hoped that it MAY be possible to arrange a visit to the Tin Tabernacle, Barcombe at about 9.30 am, fuller details will be available on booking

Please register with Alan Green (01243 784915) if you would like to attend.

On the day contact number will be 07503 727047

Wednesday 22nd June, 7.00 pm *A walk around Brighton's North Laine*

Led by local historian Geoffrey Mead.

The walk will take us through Brighton's North Laine, now a symbol of the city's 'BoHo-Chic' culture but until the mid-20th century the main location of local industries. These can be discerned through road names - Foundry Street or pub names - Basketmakers Arms. During the walk the geographical location of the area between the market of Brighton and the raw materials of rural Sussex will be considered. We will cover the area from Brighton Station to the Royal Pavilion meandering through the terraced streets, twittens, 'paul-pieces' and 'leakways'. (All will be explained during the evening).

Meet under the clock at Brighton Station at 7.00 pm.

We aim to finish the walk back at the Station at 9.00 pm.

If travelling by car you could use the car park on the main access road into the station, a road with a famous name, Stroudley Road.

Please let Malcolm Dawes know if you wish to attend, - 01273 561867

or email malcolm.dawes@btinternet.com

Fridays 8th & 15th July 10.00 am *Visits to White Eagle Foundry Ltd*

White Eagle Foundry is a small non-ferrous sand-casting foundry in Hurstpierpoint. It casts a variety of aluminium and bronze alloys. It is expected that they will be pouring bronze on those days.

For safety, **a maximum of only EIGHT people** may be accommodated on each day.

It is important that you book with Martin Snow ASAP as it is to be on a first come first served basis, please indicate if you would be available on either of the dates.

Please see the Mills Newsletter for Mills Group activities

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 email to malcolm.dawes@btinternet.com

Sunday 24th April. *Spring Bus gathering*

Vintage buses with rides around the museum. Amberley Museum.

01798 831370 www.amberleymuseum.co.uk

Weekend 30th April - 1st May. *Magnificent Motors Rally*

Classic cars, motorbikes, buses, commercial vehicles. Seafront, Eastbourne.

www.visiteastbourne.com/magnificent-motors/default.aspx

Sunday 1st May. *Motorcycle Show*

Vintage motorcycles cruising into the museum. On display throughout the day.

Amberley Museum. 01798 831370. www.amberleymuseum.co.uk

Sunday 1st May. *Historic Commercial Vehicles Run, between London and Brighton*

Monday 2nd May, 10am to 4pm. *Bank Holiday Open Day at the Brede Steam Engines*

Steam and working industrial engines.

Situated 6 miles from Hastings on A28 to Ashford. 01323 897310

Sunday 8th May. *Spring Mechanicals Day*

Stationary engines, tractors and working machinery. Amberley Museum.

01798 831370. www.amberleymuseum.co.uk

Wednesday 11th May, 7.30pm. *Midhurst Trio: Tudors, Trains and Tony Bungay*

Chichester Local History Talk by Andrew Berriman. £3 non-members.

New Park Centre, New Park Road, Chichester. 01243 784915

Weekend 14th - 15th May. *National Mills Weekend*

See Mills newsletter for further details

Weekend 14th- 15th May. *Southern at War Weekend*

Re-enactors, military vehicles, displays and concert parties. Bluebell Railway.

01825 720800. www.bluebell-railway.co.uk

Saturday 14th May. *Austin Healey Car Club Visit*

Over 70 cars on display. Amberley Museum. 01798 831370

www.amberleymuseum.co.uk

Weekend 14th- 15th May. *Amberley: the war years*

Exhibition of military vehicles. Amberley Museum. 01798 831370.

www.amberleymuseum.co.uk

Wednesday 18th May, 7.45pm. *Worldwide Steam on the Narrow Gauge*

Sussex Transport Interest Group talk by Mike Hudson. London Road Station, Brighton. 01273 512839.

Weekend 21st- 22nd May. *1940s Weekend*

Kent and East Sussex Railway. Period displays and vehicles. www.kesr.org.uk

Monday 23rd May, 7.30pm. *Bluebell Railway Class 2 Project*

Railway Correspondence and Travel Society talk by John Lesson. £2.50 .

Brighton Model Railway Club Room, London Road Station, Shaftesbury Place, Brighton. www.rcts.org.uk

Tuesday 24th May, 6.30pm. *Taskers of Andover from 1813*

Newcomen Society lecture by Garry Wragg. Portland Building, Room PO 1-11 of the University of Portsmouth, Portland Street, Portsmouth. Some on-street parking is available locally but there is a charge for use of the adjacent University car parks. Visitors welcome and admission is free. Information from newcomen.com. To book places and confirm details contact robert.otter@btinternet.com

Monday 30th May, 10am to 4pm. *Bank Holiday Open Day at the Brede Steam Engines*

Steam and working industrial engines.

Situated 6 miles from Hastings on A28 to Ashford. 01323 897310

Weekend 4th - 5th June. *Tinkers Park Steam Rally at Hadlow Down*

www.tinkerspark.com

Sunday 5th June. *Lewes Bus Rally*

Variety of historic Southdown Buses on display together with buses from other companies, commercial vehicles classic cars and motorcycles. Malling Recreation Ground. www.lewesbusrally.org

Wednesday 8th June, 7.30pm. *The History of Graylingwell Hospital*

Chichester Local History Talk by Katherine Slay. £3 non-members. New Park Centre, New Park Road, Chichester. 01243 784915

Weekend 11th- 12th June. *Printing and Machine Shop Event*

Displays and talks illustrating the printing industry. Amberley Museum. 01798 831370 www.amberleymuseum.co.uk

Monday 13th June, 7.30 pm. *A railway roundabout in the 50s and 60s*

Southern Electric Group talk by Keith Goodsell. £3 non-members. Deall Room, Southwick Community Centre, Southwick. www.southernelectric.org.uk

Weekend 18th- 19th June. *Raising the Frame: Medieval House from Kent*

Previously used for the museum's cafe, the dismantled building will start to be re-erected during the weekend. Weald and Downland Open Air Museum. Singleton, Chichester. www.wealddown.co.uk

Weekend 25th- 26th June. *Emergency Services Weekend*

Fire Engines from the Museum's own collection together with visiting fire engines and exhibits. Amberley Museum. 01798 831370
www.amberleymuseum.co.uk

Weekend 25th - 26th June. *Model Railway Weekend*

Displays at Horsted Keynes and Sheffield Park Stations. Bluebell Railway.
01825 720800. www.bluebell-railway.co.uk

Monday 27th June, 7.30pm. *Welsh Narrow Gauge*

Railway Correspondence and Travel Society talk by John Burling. £2.50 .
Brighton Model Railway Club Room, London Road Station, Shaftesbury Place,
Brighton. www.rcts.org.uk

Sunday 10th July. *Eastbourne Bus Rally* Opportunity for trips on buses all day.
www.eastbourne-classicbuses.co.uk/event.html

Weekend of 9th- 10th July. *Railway Gala Weekend*

Steam, diesel, petrol and electric locomotives on display with rides on the trains
all weekend. Amberley Museum. 01798 831370 www.amberleymuseum.co.uk

Weekend 16th- 18th July. *Festival of Archaeology Weekend*

Exhibition about building technology of two of the Museum's houses, Longport
Farmhouse and the house from Walderton Sussex. Weald and Downland Open
Air Museum. Singleton, Chichester. www.wealddown.co.uk

Wednesday 20th July, 7.45pm. *A nostalgic look at the railways in the 50s and 60s*

Sussex Transport Interest Group talk by Terry Cole. London Road Station,
Brighton. 01273 512839

Saturday 23rd July. *Sussex Vintage Model Railway Collectors Annual Exhibition*

Knole Hall, Knole Road, Brighton.

Confirm details at www.sussex-transport.co.uk/svmrc

Sunday 24th July. *Classic Car Summer Show*. Classic motor vehicles and
accessories from the 50s, 60s, 70s and 80s. Amberley Museum. 01798 831370
www.amberleymuseum.co.uk

Weekend 30th - 31st July. *Toy and Rail Collectors Fair*

Horsted Keynes Station, Bluebell Railway. 01825 720800.
www.bluebell-railway.co.uk

Sunday 31st July. *Worthing Seafront Bus Rally* www.worthingbusrally.co.uk

Weekend 6th - 7th August. *Tinkers Park Rail Gala, Model Railway Show and Southdown Bus Event*

at Hadlow Down. www.tinkerspark.com

Monday 8th August, 7.30 pm. *A whimsical view of Amberley's Narrow Gauge Railway*

Southern Electric Group talk by Geoff Boote. £3 non-members. Deall Room, Southwick Community Centre, Southwick. www.southernelectric.org.uk

Weekend 13th- 14th August. *Vintage Transport weekend*

Displays of historic classic and vintage transport including cars, steam road engines, commercial and agricultural vehicle at Horsted Keynes Station. Bluebell Railway. 01825 720800. www.bluebell-railway.co.uk

Wednesday 17th August, 7.45pm. *Frogs, Ears and Pull-offs*

The history of the development of overhead current collection for trams and trolleybuses. Sussex Transport Interest Group talk by Peter Williams. London Road Station, Brighton. 01273 512839

Thursday 18th August, 8.00pm. *Medieval Winchelsea - Fame And Fortune*

An account of the destruction of the original Winchelsea, which stood on a shingle bank in Rye Bay, and its rebuilding under the direction of King Edward I. The reasons for Winchelsea's decline and later importance and influence will be reviewed. Wivelsfield Historical Society talk by Malcolm Pratt. Visitors £2.50. Wivelsfield Village Hall. 01444 451568

Weekend 20th - 21st August. *Vintage and Steam*

Steam engines on display and working around the museum grounds. Other displays include, commercial vehicles, military vehicles, working narrow gauge railway, model boats, classic cars and traditional vintage fairground. Weald and Downland Open Air Museum. Singleton, Chichester. www.wealddown.co.uk

Sunday 21st August. *Petrol Locos Day*

Working petrol locos including World War I Simplex and Wickham sets. Amberley Museum. 01798 831370. www.amberleymuseum.co.uk

Weekend 27th- 29th August. *Hellingly Festival of Transport*

www.ehvc.biz

Advance notices of AIA conference

9th - 14th September This year's conference will be held in Telford at the University of Wolverhampton.

Do please always 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.

What of the Future

I posed the question at the AGM as to where our Society would be in 10 years time. In common with many other organisations from the WI to youth organisations, from heritage railways to wind and watermill preservation groups all are seeing an ageing group with few younger members. Looking at our Committee there are at present no successors to The Principal Officers posts and we have no Vice-Chairman. These posts need some skills, mainly computer literacy, but above all enthusiasm and commitment. If you can help or have ideas as to how the problem can be addressed or would like to attend a Committee Meeting to find out how things work please contact myself or any other officer. Remember it is your Society and can only be effective with your support.

John Blackwell

Chairman



Patricia Bracher 1928-2016

John Blackwell

Pat was born in London and moved to Crawley when the New Town was being created. Her interest in history led to a study of timber framed buildings in the Weald and over the years she recorded those in and around Crawley. Learning of the proposed restoration of Ifield Watermill, in the early 1970s, she joined Crawley Museum Society and with her husband Don became valued members of Ted Henbery's team.

She made, together with Jean Shelley of Charlwood, numerous trips to London archives and Lewes and Chichester Record Offices researching and writing the booklet *Ifield Watermill: Its owners and occupiers*. This work led to membership of SIAS and she served on the Committee from 1990 to 2007, latterly as Programme Co-ordinator. Always willing to take on any task with thoroughness and good humour she proved an ideal Committee Member. She will I know, be fondly remembered by many Society members.

Ron Martin and I attended the service of thanksgiving.

Towards the end of 2016 the Museum will be moving into its new premises in the High Street . "The Tree" , one of the oldest premises in Crawley which is currently undergoing a complete restoration. Ed

January Evening Meeting

The Village Pumps of Sussex - Talk by Paul Snelling

Report by John Blackwell

A large audience welcomed a return visit by member Paul Snelling following a week of radio and TV interviews celebrating 500 years of Royal Mail* (a somewhat dubious anniversary) and, more appropriately, 40 years of the Letter Box Study Group of which Paul is Vice Chairman. Pillar boxes were the subject of Paul's previous talk four years ago.

The earliest pumps were in existence by 250 BC. In Britain pumps dated from about 1700 and declined in number from about 1854 due to contaminated sources water giving rise to cholera epidemics. In 1857 the Public Health (Water) Act gave responsibility to each parish to supply wholesome water. With water mains being laid from the 1850s, taps and water pillars began to replace pumps but for many villages the pump remained a source of water into the twentieth century. (The village pump at Brixworth, Northants remained in service until c.1963.) There were two types of pumps the lift pump and the force pump both operated by either a handle or a flywheel and crank. Paul then presented a superb set of images showing most of the pumps in Sussex which he had located and photographed (a surprising number and judging by audience response more are to be discovered). These range from the very plain to ornate versions under cover or in a well house. Those that caught my interest were Birdham, on the green by the church, where the pump is enclosed in a wooden casing to prevent freezing. A superb large flywheel and crank pump at Findon under a timber framed and roofed shelter. A decorative example in a hut at Fletching. A cast iron clad pump at Hartfield with the date 1831 and Hill (presumably the maker) on the cladding and an almost identical one at the end of Cliffe High Street Lewes dated 1830 and also Hill. A chain operated pump at Lodsworth and a double pump at Steyning, the lower at ground level for domestic use and the higher one for filling water carts to dampen the town's dusty roads. All these pumps can be viewed along with many more at www.villagepumps.org.uk to which Paul has contributed many of the Sussex entries. Single subject talks can sometimes become somewhat repetitive but Paul's informative commentary interspersed with anecdotes and complimented by fine visuals, held the attention of his audience.

*The postal service was created in 1516 according to Royal Mail, when Henry VIII knighted the first Master of the Post, Sir Brian Tuke. The service was only for by use the king and court, it was not until 1635 that it became available to the public.

There is a collection of different types of pumps at the Coultershaw Heritage Site and other examples at Amberley Museum. Ed.

February Film Night

Martin Snow assembled another fine collection of films and clips from a variety of sources and gave an enthusiastic audience a great night's entertainment. Our Chairman here picks his favourite items commencing with a 1948 film of one of Ernie Johnstone's midget coaches performing along Brighton Seafront.

Ernest Johnstone built his first midget in 1935 a pedal powered model of a Southdown TS2 coach, followed in 1937 by a motorised version using a two-stroke 125cc Villiers motorcycle engine. During the next 20 years, 63 were constructed included a double-decker bus and three fire engines, most seating four children and a driver. Built at the Old Forge in Preston Village and operated from c.1948 to November 1960 on a figure of eight miniature roadway, complete with road markings and signs, at Peter Pan's Playground on Madeira Drive, Brighton; they were a must see attraction to young visitors (and residents) in the late forties and fifties. The coaches here were based on the current Southdown fleet but others with varying bodywork and liveries provided attractions in other seaside towns. Several survive today in private collections; Brighton Model Museum in Trafalgar Street has one, I believe, which was formerly exhibited at the Engineerium.



Johnstone's Midget bus, featured in one of the video clips .

The Motor Railway (1923) showed Colonel Stephens' first pair of Ford railmotors (coupled back to back) delivered in 1922 to the Kent and East Sussex Railway (KESR) which ran between Robertsbridge and Headcorn. The section between Bodiam and Tenterden is now the KESR preserved railway. Stephens was an early user of petrol railcars, most of which he personally purchased, not only to reduce costs but to increase rail miles in the hope of attracting more passengers. They were not popular; as one traveller wrote "they emitted a loud ringing noise from the pressed steel wheels, which acted like cymbals". Supplied by Edmonds of Thetford in Norfolk, with bodywork by Eton Coachworks of Cringleford near Norwich, they were filmed in their original form

with headlights attached to either side of the bonnet and small square buffing blocks above and forward of the mudguards, later replaced by a solid bar. The clip, filmed from a preceding steam engine, showed the railcar being cranked up and departing from the branch bay at Headcorn, followed by an interesting interior shot showing that the steering column had been retained, minus the steering wheel, with the hand operated throttle lever on the right and the ignition retard and advance on the left (the foot pedals, not filmed, were from left to right, clutch, reverse, footbrake). The railcar which seated 20 on very basic reversible seats proceeded through St. Michael's tunnel and Tenterden St. Michael's, a simple halt, to Frittenden Road Station (although on an actual journey Frittenden Road preceded St. Michael's). This northern section of the branch closed on 2nd January 1954.

The highlight (no pun intended) of the evening, for many, was a clip from Albania showing an industrial tramway with an overhead power wire, current being delivered to the motor by the driver holding a cable, ending in a crudely insulated metal rod, against the overhead wire. A thousand words could not convey a total lack of health and safety, the only concession being the gloved hands of the driver. A night time shot would have revealed a wonderful spark show. All the films were full of interest and, Martin, you must have spent many happy hours collecting them and your audience are looking forward to next year's show.



Overhead current collection - Albanian Style!

March Evening Meeting

London Road to Eastbourne - Talk by Mike Slamo

Report by John Blackwell

The final winter lecture featured a welcome return of Mike Slamo, illustrating the changes that have taken place during the last 40 years on the East Coastway line between London Road (Brighton) and Eastbourne including a trip along the Seaford branch. The line to Hastings opened in 1846 with branches to Newhaven in 1847 and Eastbourne and Hailsham in 1849. The branch from Newhaven was extended to Seaford in 1864.

London Road station featured in its shocking pink livery of the late seventies when vestiges of the down platform shelter remained, then through the tunnel glimpsing the wooden Kemp Town Junction signal box which probably dated from the opening of the branch in 1869. Following closure in 1971 it became a garden shed before “disappearing” some ten years later.

Onwards through Moulsecomb, opened May 1980, to Falmer showing the now demolished signal box under the platform canopy and so to Lewes where we discovered the 1889 goods avoiding loop; (originally the main Hastings line) now the car park. Then a quick look at the goods shed and the yard entrance from what is now the pedestrian precinct leading to Cliffe Bridge. Branching off at Southerham junction we passed Newhaven Town and Harbour stations before arriving at Bishopstone station. Members may recall the exploits of Ron Martin when he surveyed the two Second World War pillboxes, on the roof above the booking office ceiling, to which access was by his rope ladder. Mike’s slides from 1976, a year after singling of the track, show the disused down platform with shelter and closed off stairs from the footbridge, a scene that remains the same today, except for the loss of the shelter.

Back on the Eastbourne line we passed Glynde and Berwick with the 1846 station buildings on the down side and an attractive disused signal box of 1875 and on to the 1986 Polegate Station built on the site of the original 1846 one. Here we saw the changes that have occurred to this station over a relatively short period of time and also the complete removal of the second station’s island platforms sited 100 yards to the east. This second station was built in 1881 to facilitate through running to Tunbridge Wells from Eastbourne along the Cuckoo Line which closed in the 1960s. Fortunately

the second station building remains as a pub/restaurant.

On to Hampden Park, where it was noticed that the signal box had recently been demolished but the station, apart from the removal of the down canopies, remains largely unaltered. Finally arriving at Eastbourne the changes were more noticeable, gone were the goods yard (the goods shed remains with alterations to provide a shops complex), gone were the parcels bay and the lines which welcomed excursion trains from the North and Midlands at platform four.

Mike has over 30,000 slides taken all over the U.K. At a time when film was relatively expensive he recorded the whole scene in detail, when others merely photographed only the station buildings and platforms, thus providing many interesting shots for his audience of largely rail enthusiasts. It was unfortunate that some slides had deteriorated a useful reminder to those of us with collections and raising the question of the quality of digital images forty years on.

Thanks Mike for a fascinating and nostalgic evening.



The Warnham level crossing gates from the west, after re-signalling in 2005 led to their permanent closure. Note the signal box leaning on a wooden crutch. Both are gone now, see back cover for a recent view.

Following the recent removal of the listed gates at Plumpton, no 'gates' remain in use on the main lines in Sussex

(Pete Chapman)

Harsh times at Cuckmere Coastguard Station

Peter Tyrrell

The landmark properties known as the Cuckmere Coastguard Cottages, nestled between Beachy Head and Seaford in East Sussex, are an area of considerable intrigue, concern and some controversy. The original block of men's cottages were built about 1821 with rendered stone and brick, their purpose being to monitor coastal shipping, to deter smuggling and generally to police the coastal area. This installation was an extension of the Sea Fencibles, Riding Officers and other previous Coast Blockade preventative organisations. However in 1921 after a century of service the then Board of Trade transferred their role to the Admiralty. When occupied by the Coastguards, the walls of the main men's block were coated in bitumen for weather proofing which gave a black appearance, similarly the Officers bungalow downhill to the east which was weather-boarded.

The main block of eight men's quarters were converted into four homes, two up and two down format.



This old scene shows the properties when coated in black bitumen. The water tanks are shown by the doors.

The redundant Coastguard Station was acquired by Mr Albert Smelt of Portsmouth Road, Surbiton in 1921. He used to bring his family to Cuckmere Haven in a horse-drawn caravan. Albert duly allocated six of his properties to members of his family, before he passed away in 1947. Property

No. 3 was bequeathed to his daughter Rosalie. No. 4 went to his son Bert and No. 5 to Alice Bone (nee Smelt). No. 6 to his other daughter Doris, no. 6 was left to Rosalie on the death of Doris. Des Abbott's wife Betty (nee Ayres) inherited No. 3 with John Ayres their elder brother on the death of their mother. Betty and Des purchased No. 4 after



Bungalow for officers

Bert died in about 1985. Janet Mutter inherited No. 6, part of the former Station Masters bungalow, on the demise of her mother. Today the top west property half is adjoined internally and owned by Nigel Newton - it was previously owned by John Bloomfield. The original ablutions block was at this top westerly end of the site but it has long been demolished.

During the inter-war period Florence 'Minnie' Hutchinson married George Hutchinson and they occupied No. 1. Her brother-in-law Bill was a popular character who lived next door; at No. 3 was Charlie 'Brassy' Hall whilst at no 1 then lived Mrs Wittiers, adjacent to the outside toilet block. Interestingly George worked as a boulder picker – hand picking blue stones off the beach. The flints were punted up the river to Wilson's Wharf near Exceat Bridge. These sea worn flints were shipped around to Newhaven Harbour where they were loaded for Runcorn in Cheshire for processing in the potteries glazing industry. Some of these ground pebbles went to works locally at South Heighton where they were sorted for domestic cleaning products.

The lower weather boarded twin-bayed property numbered 5 and 6 with cellar is the former Station Masters bungalow. No. 5 after Alice died was occupied by Matthew Copley and was sold in 1989 to the present occupier Carolyn McCourt.



The coastguard by the wall, would be in the sea today.

The property origins at this site are uncertain – being built after the main men's block. There had been an upturned boat for shelter, or large shed, that housed Life Saving equipment and on the beach was a tea chalet, but these were lost to the tides. The men's block was originally built as eight homes, two up and two down format with dividing stairs between them. As can be seen at the extant thresholds of the (now inland facing) front doors. The current front doors were originally the back doors, out to gardens where the men had to be as self-sufficient as possible due to their isolation. Allotments and poultry-keeping were common pastimes. Rainwater, for washing and cooking, was channeled off the roof into large water tanks beside the back doors. Drinking water had to be filtered. When the water tanks ran dry, water had to be bought over by a budge – a huge cask holding 52 gallons of water – from Chyngton Farm a mile and half away. Oil lights and lamps served as lighting plus

candles. For travellers along the cliff tops in fog and dusk conditions small piles of chalk, five feet apart, would mark the footpaths.

Eddie Ransom came to live at the Cuckmere Coastguard Station aged six years in 1888 when his father was the Senior Commissioned Boatman. He recalls going into his upstairs bedroom it still had a kitchen sink



Early 20th century view

in situ. The children, of course, had a rich life style on the foreshore with passing vessels, jetsam/flotsam and a variety of passing escapades to enrich their childhoods. Access proper for carts was from Exceat Bridge, past the Shepherds Cottage - that became the *Golden Galleon*. This once broad track is now little used as a part of the modern Vanguard Way footpath. The popular uphill track to South Hill Barn is a post-war development.



Today the former Coastguards location with its chalky Seven Sisters backdrop may appear idyllic - short of superlatives. But in reality the quality of life for the Coastguard families there was low. Children had to travel several exposed miles by foot via Short Cliff across the golf links to school in Seaford – or

stay at home and miss their education. On one occasion a rain soaked group were sent home to get fresh clothing. A horse-drawn cart would sometimes take them to school and collect supplies.

Cable Station Hut 14

Little is known about the interwar years of the Cable Station that was acquired by Capt. Douglas Ann as WWII ended. The GPO Telephone Service required a telephone sub-station closer to the A259 to take the Western Union cables overland to the Eastbourne Exchange. The Cuckmere Cable Hut 14 of the Western



Union Co. was severely damaged by friendly-fire during WWII. It had been built circa 1900 and its inter-war period may have seen it adopted as a machine gun post, hence its wide embrasure. Some photos exist of its severely damaged postwar condition.

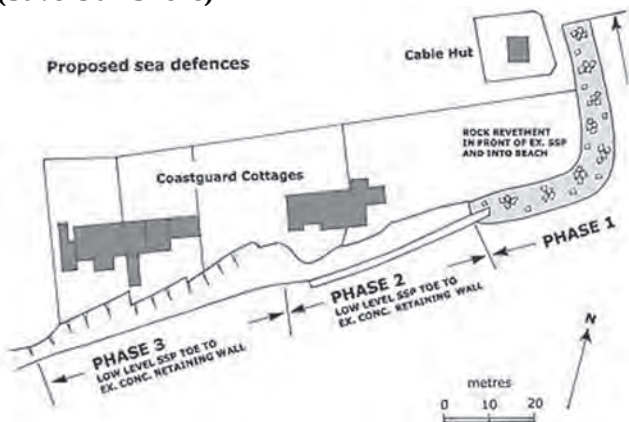
Commandeered in WWII

The properties were 'pretty knocked about' while they were taken over for troops in WWII and a couple of pillboxes and a shelter survive from those hostilities. At 6.05am on 9th July 1942, before the RAF Regiment at the adjacent RAF Friston could get their guns up, a pair of Messerschmitt BF109Es made a bold raid skimming across the Channel and dropped a pair of 500lb bombs on the RAF Friston aerodrome. The enemy fighters banked at Exceat Bridge and roared down the valley out to sea, firing at anything, strafing and bombing. Camped close to the Cottages were a company of Canadian soldiers. Two tented men, a Sapper and a Medic, were killed and Lt. Robert Craufurd from British Columbia, their CO in cottage No. 3 was shaving when a shell penetrated the wall and shattered his shaving mirror.

The term 'military wall' here applies to the concreted cliff face at the Officers bungalow. This was created in 1947 from War Reparation funds as the Coastguard Cottages site was rather desperate at this time. Much of the woodwork was missing; the floorboards, doors and windows.

Cuckmere Haven SOS (Save Our Shore)

Towards the end of 2014 it was noticed how the tides were pounding on the pebble sea wall on West Beach. The relentless south-easterly winds were seriously threatening to arc the sea inland and isolate the old Cable House and potentially the Coastguard Cottages.



Cross-Channel submarine cables laid in Victorian times were becoming exposed. In the autumn of 2014 residents there, led by Michael Ann OBE, who owns the Cable House, found that they could get no official funding and support for revetment protection. Whilst the site is one of the top tourist attractions in the nation, no official funding is available to help preserve the asset. Cuckmere Haven SOS is a UK registered charity - www.cuckmerehavensos.org - formed to attempt to monitor tidal erosion at this volatile location, but one cannot fail to conclude that in time mother nature must have its way.

Further research

An inquiry at the East Sussex Record Office prompted the following response, which is to be investigated.

‘We hold quite a lot of material on the Cuckmere coastguard cottages (many of them postcards), although any record of their de-commissioning might be held at The National Archives at Kew.’

‘We do hold a sale particular for the outlying portions of the Chichester estates (with plans), for sale at auction in 24 lots by Alfred Savill and Sons at the White Hart, Lewes. These include the four Coastguard Cottages at Seaford owned by C. F. W. Russell and occupied by C. J. Hall, G. S. Macrae and J. Ayres, 13th Jun 1927 (ACC 4600/257).’

The sale appears to have been unsuccessful as we hold a sale particular for the second sale of outlying portions of the Chichester estates (with plans), for the sales at auction in 14 lots by Alfred Savill and Sons at the White Hart, Lewes, 4th Jun 1928, which also includes the Coastguard Cottages (0a 2r 9p), Seaford, occupied by C. J. Hall, G. S. Macrae and J. Ayres (ACC 4600/258).’

‘We hold a planning application for 3 - 4 Old Coastguard Houses, Cuckmere Haven, Seaford; additions for A. Smelt, Thames Villa, Surbiton, Surrey by Messrs. Parker and Gibbins, 8 North Street, Alfriston, builders, 12th Mar 1934 (DL/A 34/1957). Unfortunately this document is too damaged to be produced. Interestingly, we hold an application for drainage for three New Coastguard Cottages, Cuckmere Haven, Seaford, 13th May 1948, which was rejected (DL/A 34/3476).’

So there is much more research to undertake on this absorbing topic.

Sources:

Personal files and fieldwork.

Des Abbott Esq.

Michael Ann OBE

AMS6666/1/32. ACC72677/20. The Keep, Brighton BN1 3BP

Sussex Express series.

John Odham, *Bygone Seaford*, Phillimore Co. Ltd 1980. Shopwyke Hall ,Chichester. 1980.

Monty Larkin, *Seven Sisters – the history behind the View*. Ulmus Books. 2008.

Peter Longstaff-Tyrell. *Reflections from the Cuckmere Valley*. GoteHouse 2014.

RAF Friston Operation Record Book Form 540.

Images from authors collection.



Former tin tabernacle in Nep Town, Henfield, currently vacant after being in commercial use.
March 2016. (*Martin Snow*)

All in a lifetime!

Nick Kelly

2015 has seen the end of the deep mined British coal industry with the closure of the three remaining collieries, Hatfield (South Yorkshire) in June, Thoresby (Nottinghamshire) in July and Kellingly (North Yorkshire) in December. When the NCB was founded in 1947, there were some 980 collieries at work. From Argyllshire to Kent and from Somerset to Perthshire. There were even some small mines in Devon and Sutherland! The industry has gone in a lifetime.

Another Rail Map

Martin Snow

Members of a rail inclination (you know who you are!) may be interested in a new venture on the internet - www.railmaponline.com - click to select the UK.

Included are works tramways, sidings etc. I discovered the construction tramway for the Palace Pier featured, I had previously missed this, despite it being in *Piers of Sussex*, complete with an image. Some lost stations and features in the Sussex area needed adding or relocating, these were promptly corrected following an email.

Changing Lewes Station



Looking east from Station Road December 1967 with the goods avoiding line fence bottom left.

Now a car park. The goods avoiding line is out of view to left'.

(Both images © Terry Shearing)



From the Papers

Extracted by John Blackwell

“London and Brighton Railway– Curious Accident - On Tuesday a singular accident happened to one of the passenger trains. It appears that a gentleman engaged for the conveyance of his carriage to Brighton, and the truck on which it was placed was the last in the train. The owner, although advised to the contrary, insisted in riding in his own carriage. On the train reaching Balcombe tunnel by some means the truck became disengaged, and left the carriage in the middle of the tunnel. The unfortunate occupant, perceiving the train leaving him, called after them, but in vain, and finding they proceeded on their journey, he became dreadfully alarmed, being afraid to alight, and not knowing whether in a few minutes he might be dashed to pieces by the next train. He had not been long in this suspense when an engine entered the tunnel puffing away, and the whistle screaming; he now considered his doom sealed, but the engine proved to be a pilot one sent to look after him, the truck and the carriage having fortunately been missed on the train arriving at the next station. The carriage and occupant were then conveyed to Brighton, where they arrived soon after the train, and the only inconvenience was the great fright the gentleman sustained. The accident ought to be a warning to the servants of the company, as the consequences would be fearful to contemplate had a train come in collision with the truck.”

The Times, Friday January 21st 1842

The first London and Brighton Railway timetable noted that passengers riding in their own carriage paid Second class fare, plus the rate for conveying the carriage. That remained the case in 1846, but by 1869 passengers had to pay a First class fare to ride in their own carriage. Astonishingly, the 1912 timetable still quoted that passengers could pay a First class fare to ride in their own carriage! However, the information was hidden in the small print and it seems likely that the increase in fare to First class by 1869 was designed to dissuade the adventurous from taking up the option.

Ian White. Brighton Circle

Subscriptions are now due

Unless you are paying by Banker's Standing Order your Subscription became due on the 1st of April 2016.

The rates remain unchanged at £15 for full membership, plus £5 for a Family membership, Junior and Full Time Student membership.

Cheques payable to S.I.A.S. should be sent to me Peter Holtham,
12 St Helens Crescent, Hove, Sussex BN3 8EP

Early payment would be appreciated.

The Mystery Towers in Shoreham Harbour (I want to save a little piece of history)!

Brianne Reeve

In June, 1918 Shoreham Harbour became a hive of activity, but nonetheless, surrounded in secrecy. With our knowledge of history we know now that the first World War was coming to an end but it did not seem so to those living through the summer of 1918. The general public could not know that 253 German submarines had managed to get through a barrage of mines and nets in the English Channel, causing much concern and a huge amount of damage. Behind the scenes designs were prepared, models made and tested and finally Shoreham Harbour was selected as the place to build new anti-submarine defences. It was obviously impossible to keep such large constructions a secret but nevertheless comparatively few people really knew what they were and there was a great deal of speculation. People were told they were for research into future lighthouses or a clever way to raise sunken ships. They became known as the Mystery Towers. Information came through newspapers and the radio and was not as immediate as we have come to expect in 2016.

In the early 1990s, Dr. John Stafford, a trustee of the Marlipins Museum in Shoreham, was asked if he could build a model of one of the Mystery Towers. He was pleased to be asked and set out to research the history. Again, I repeat, even in 1990, information was not readily available, very few of us were computer literate. There were quite a lot of postcards in the Marlipins depicting the building of the Towers but no details of the size so John worked out the probable dimensions by using the height of a man standing near the base of the Tower! He contacted the Ministry of Defence and the Imperial War Museum but was given very little help. Eventually he wrote to John Dunn of the BBC who liked to answer unusual questions on his Radio 2 programme. Much more was learned mainly from the Naval Library in Great Scotland Yard.

The Towers were intended to be part of a line of 10 - 16 to be sunk into the Varne Shoal between Dungeness and Cape Gris Nez in the Straits of Dover linked by steel nets to block U-Boats. They were to be the base for a field of magnetic anomaly detectors (MAD), a kind of loop laid on the sea bed, which would alert men in the upper part of the Tower when a submarine passed over it, who pressed a button to blow up the enemy submarine. Lloyd George approved the scheme.

The Admiralty had been used to making vessels which floated but these towers needed to sink and that was much more problematic. Tests were carried out in Portsmouth, they sank but not in an upright position! It was not until a dry-dock specialist was consulted that the problem was solved.

Construction of two towers started in Shoreham Harbour in June 1918, the bases were of a hexagonal design, the width 190 feet. Nine thousand tons of reinforced concrete formed in a hexagonal shape were to rise like a wedding cake with four

platforms diminishing in stages. On top of these would be a 1,000 ton, 100 foot steel cylinder capable of housing up to 90 men, supplies, detection equipment and a special electricity generator. Wooden battens hung from the lower level to prevent damage to the construction and the boats in the water.

This obviously required a vast workforce, involving 3,000 civilians and up to 5,000 army personnel (there was a huge camp on Southwick Green for some of these men). A railway link was laid from the sidings at the site of the original station, along the bottom of the embankment, across Kingston Lane, crossing the coast road and along the edge of the wharf to the single lock that was there then, to join several miles of sidings serving the works south of the harbour arm.

Naturally all this attracted a great deal of attention and those who wanted to could walk round the Towers for a small payment!

Two of the Towers were almost completed and three half constructed when the Armistice was signed in November 1918. After the war, on September 12th 1920 one completed tower was floated out of Shoreham Harbour and towed by two paddle-wheel tugs to its new position. People were astounded that this enormous building could float but this was due to the honeycomb construction of the concrete base creating eighteen watertight compartments. It became the Nab Tower on the Nab Sandbank off the Isle of Wight, replacing the former lightship. It is the navigation station for a very busy area of shipping lanes. When it sank it was 3 degrees off the vertical, which can still be seen to this day. Since 1983 it has become fully automatic, the conversion cost about £200,000 compared with the original cost of £1,000,000 for each Mystery Tower.

Meanwhile, the second tower was taking up too much space in Shoreham Harbour (the Admiralty was even charged by the Harbour Board for keeping it there) but it was discovered that this tower was six feet too wide at the base to be able to float out of the harbour! It had to be demolished. The local engineering firm of Mackleys was given the job and it was far from straightforward. Eventually they developed a pneumatic drill which was capable of dealing with the structure, but even that was a very slow business. Then what was to be done with the vast quantity of reinforced concrete? The answer is that they were used in many places in the local area: in many buildings, in gardens, various places on Shoreham Beach, the War Memorial on Southwick Green, greenhouse bases in Worthing and the footpath along the western bank of the River Adur between Ricardo's and south to the steps near the railway bridge.

The latter area, a mere footpath, I am anxious to bring to people's attention because we do have this little piece of history, with an extraordinary story behind it, which may disappear into oblivion when the new flood defences are begun. These are obviously very necessary but please could the footpath be removed to another place where the interesting story could be passed on to future generations?



A superb example of Edwardian architecture, c.1904, at the corner of De Courcel Road Arundel Street, Brighton. Built using the products of Meed's brick and terra-cotta works at Burgess Hill. Sadly the brickwork is now painted over. Note the tiles, chimney pots, ridge crestings, terra-cotta urns, surmounting the pillar caps, and wyvern finials. Apologies for omitting this image from page 9 of the last Newsletter. Ed.

Ferries in Sussex?

Martin Snow

Ferries of the Lower Thames, by Joan Tucker, was published in 2010 by Amberley Publishing, this paperback covers those water borne crossings of the Thames from Staines to the estuary. It makes an interesting volume to pick up, although outside our area, it does make a change from bridges and tunnels.

My reason for mentioning it, is that it occurred to me that there appears to be little or maybe no study of Sussex ferries. Our county rivers are on a much smaller scale than the Thames, but from earliest times needed a means of crossing before bridges replaced fords and crossings.

There is a little about the Adur prior to building the Old Toll Bridge at Shoreham. There is the assumption that the Romans had a ferry on the tenuous route for the citizens from Chichester to spend a dirty weekend at ancient Brighton? This supposed route also requiring crossing the Arun near Arundel, Ford further downstream is thought not to refer to a crossing of the Arun, but that of a small stream (Binstead Brook) in the area.

There was the ferry across the canal at Portslade for workers at the gasworks.

I am unaware of any vehicle or foot ferries still in use on Sussex rivers, or other bodies of water, but there must be some records of the earlier ones, please let me know of anything you know of, images too if possible.

Don't Lose Your Way in Sussex

Chris Smith

The green lanes, tracks and paths that lead to industrial archaeological sites form an integral part of those sites. This is particularly true of sites that date from before the coming of the railways, when these routes would often be the only means of access. Quite a large number of these routes fell out of use when the industry ceased or moved, or when more modern forms of transport took over, for example when a turnpike gave way to a modern road or a railway was built.

These routes are an important part of our heritage. For now they are still rights of way and can be claimed as such - but not for long.

In 1949 the government decided to list all paths and other ways where the public had a right to walk on a "definitive map". If something was on this map you had a right to use it. If it was not then you did not. In the 1950s and 1960s lots of surveys were carried out. Some discovered lots of rights of way. Others, where the landowners were able to discourage researchers, did not.

Sometimes a right of way just stopped at the boundary of a parish. Sometimes no one bothered recording it because they thought it was a road that did not need to be recorded. Lots of alleys in towns were missed out. Often simple mistakes were made so that a right of way ended a couple of metres or so from the road it was supposed to join.

Everybody knew that the survey would not discover all the rights of way, so people were allowed to ask for routes to be added later. They could do this by showing that a route had historically been a right of way and had not been legally stopped up. But in practice this rarely happened.

2026 represents our last chance to get unrecorded rights of way on the map. *The Countryside and Rights of Way Act* specifies a cut-off date of 1st January 2026. Any rights of way that existed before 1949 but are not on the legal map of rights of way in 2026 will be extinguished, even if they are in regular use. Experts have calculated that a typical parish might have half a dozen routes which were once highways, but which are not recorded on the definitive map. These may be routes that have fallen out of use, or routes which are used on a daily basis, even though there is no recorded right to do so.

In 2026 we will lose the ability to get these on the map based on historical evidence. (Routes that have come into being after that date will still be claimable, if we can show that they have been used as if they were rights of way for 20 years, but there is a question mark hanging over whether we will be able to claim older routes under the 20 year rules. It is, in any case difficult to claim routes under the 20 year rule)

A group of people in Sussex, representing walking, riding and trail riding interests have launched a campaign to identify possible unrecorded rights of way and to apply to have them added to the map of rights of way.

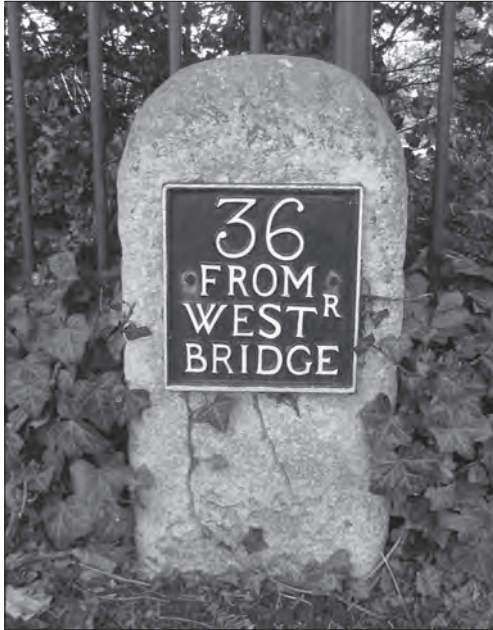
We need your help.

We particularly need people who either have experience at doing historical research, or would like to start doing it, but we also need people who know their local area and may be able to identify old rights of way.

If you are interested please contact the convenor of the Sussex "Don't Lose Your Way" group, Chris Smith, by email at cs@hbhelp.co.uk

Mystery Photo

Do you know your IA?



No Prizes for what this is, but where and when would this have been installed, by whom?.

There has been one at the site, as indicated on maps from the 1870s, could it possibly be the original from before then?

Answers on a postcard (or via email!) to the editor. *(Paul Snelling)*

Update

There were two mystery images in *Newsletter 169* the Granolithic plate is in the pavement of Holland Road, Hove, opposite the Baptist Church.

Granolithic screed, also known as granolithic paving and granolithic concrete, is a type of construction material composed of cement and fine aggregate such as granite or other hard-wearing rock. It is generally used as flooring, or as paving (such as for sidewalks). It has a similar appearance to concrete, and is used to provide a durable surface where texture and appearance are usually not important. The 'watery' image was in fact Fulling Lock on the Upper Ouse Navigation, taken by Nick Catford, who walked the entire length of the waterway in chest waders capturing details of the remains of each lock as they were at the time - over thirty years ago. Much (almost all?) of what he recorded has been swept away in the name of progress(?) or by floods or for river management. Many thanks to Nick for allowing use of the image.

Please keep you eyes open for unusual features on your travels, or it may be something you pass every day, but the rest of us are unfamiliar with.

I am always looking for examples of our IA heritage. If possible, let me have a picture, either for this feature or to provide inspiration for a future article(s).

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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*



The former coastguard cottages at Cuckmere Haven with the cable hut at the right. This view from January 2014 shows the encroachment of the sea: refer to article inside.



Warnham, the site of the former level crossing on the Horsham - Dorking line. There were wooden gates operated from the signal box, that has also been removed. The line was re-signalled in 2005 and the road permanently closed then, requiring a long detour via the Horsham northern bypass. The gates used to be locked closed at night when the signalman ended his shift. See page 13 for an image of the old gates. Members may be aware of the recent farce enacted by Network Rail over the Plumpton Gates - now unfortunately gone. There is a planned report on this, written by a local, who was very much affected, in the next *Newsletter*.
(*Google Streetview July 2012*)

