

REPORT TO FELPHAM VILLAGE CONSERVATION SOCIETY
2023 HISTORY, HERITAGE & ARCHIVE GROUP

24th July,

Ten members of the Felpham Village Conservation Society History, Heritage and Archive Group were welcomed to the West Sussex Record Office (R.O.) at Chichester by Jenny Mason who is the Collections Manager and Assistant County Archivist.

The building itself was originally just for the R.O. now also holds the Registrar for Births, Marriages and Deaths.

The R.O. was the first purpose building of its kind in the country. From the Reception area we were taken to one of the five strongrooms, which hold in all some 8 miles of shelving, enough to run from Chichester to Selsey. The documents are stored at 17 degrees C. and at 50% humidity.

The aim of the R.O. is to collect, preserve & make accessible documents e.g. from the Diocese, schools, great estates, Shippam's (the fish & meat paste manufacturers) archive, property deeds, maps & photos, micro-film & fiches, etc.

All items offered to the R.O. are taken into the archive reception where everything is screened for such problems as mould or insects, by archive staff wearing safety gear.

We next visited the conservation studio, where repair work and repackaging is carried out. The Record Office has a scanning unit and uses the system Preservica for secure digital preservation, archiving and storage.

Our tour finished at the Search Room where an exhibition had been prepared for us. One item in particular that took the Group's attention was an article regarding a "New Window for Felpham Church". According to a parish magazine the original had been damaged by bomb blast during the Second World War. This event had been discussed previously by the Group and thought not to have happened, because of the apparent lack of evidence. The new window appears not to have gone down to well with some members of the congregation.

Other items on show included a parish register dated 1557; school log books, manor court maps, Bognor air raid wardens map of 1940. The general public has access, by use of an Archives Card, to the search room where all documents are catalogued, and have free use of Ancestry, website data, tithe & other maps.

At the end of the tour the Group thanked Jenny for her efforts and made its way home in the pouring rain.

16th August,

12 members of the Group, including 2 new members were welcomed at our usual venue The Fox.

The evening's discussion mainly took place on two subjects, firstly the fate of the village post office, where the group is very much in favour of ensuring that this facility is kept for the village and secondly Blake's Cottage where opinions differed on the apparent alternative proposed uses.

The next meeting will be on 27th September, same time same place.

R.H.Brooks

7th September 2023

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