

# WADHURST HISTORY SOCIETY



## NEWSLETTER NO. 1 - DEC 2003

This first newsletter is being distributed to all who have expressed interest in the Wadhurst History Society - including those who are already paid up members and those who have yet to join. Future issues will be distributed to the members free of charge and will be available to others at cost.

The first meeting of the Society has been arranged for Tuesday 16 December at 19:30 in the Freight Transport Association Management Centre in Station Hill. It is open to anyone interested in adding to our knowledge of Wadhurst and its history; we aim to establish a series of task groups which will explore an area of interest to the group over the next nine months or so; the work of the groups will be reported back to the full membership from time to time—as a short talk to the Society or an article in a future newsletter. Then another task can begin!

We need to find relatively easy challenges - we are, after all, amateurs and enthusiasts rather than professional local historians: so don't be hesitant about getting involved. It will be a long time before we can take on the challenge, set by Chris Whittick from the East Sussex Record Office, of transcribing and translating Archbishop Morton's rental rolls for Wadhurst!

The subject areas already identified as of interest to members are:

Oral history - recording and analysing the reminiscences of our long time residents and others with local knowledge

Genealogy - tracking family trees and studying church memorials

Medieval buildings - listing and studying the significant number of timber framed and other early buildings

Industry and agriculture - both have altered dramatically over the past centuries

The grand estates - there is plenty to be learnt about Wadhurst Park, Whiligh, Monks and many others

Development of Wadhurst - how it has grown and the changes in occupation and use of buildings

## The Committee

Chairman and Editor	Michael Harte 01892 783 292	Greenman Farm Wadhurst TN5 6LE
Treasurer	Ian Adam-Smith 01892 782 835	Trewyck Woods Green Wadhurst TN5 6QS
Secretary	Heather Woodward 01892 783 212	Chequers Stone Cross Rd Wadhurst TN5 6LR
Talks Secretary	Michael Blease 01892 783 317	Oak Cottage High Street Wadhurst TN5 6AJ
Visits & Events Secretary	Rachel Ring 01892 783 456	Chestnuts Stone Cross Road Wadhurst TN5 6LR
Oral History Co-ordinator	Peter Collins 01892 782 326	Rustlings Lower High Street Wadhurst TN5 6BD
Bocking/Parish Council link	Bryan Bell 01892 782 845	Church House Church Street Wadhurst TN5 6AR
Cttee member	John Breeze 01892 782 586	Puck Hill Station Road Wadhurst TN5 6RT

## Do It Now!

Effective research relies on seizing the moment and following leads as soon as they turn up - so don't do what I have done!

Opposite Greenman Farm are two sets of cottages: in both blocks, the occupants of No 2 could have given me a lot of information about the farm during the 20th century - and possibly, from what they had heard, even earlier.

Mr Gibb was born in his no. 2 and lived there all his life. I used to chat to him from time to time, when I was clearing the hedges and we shared an occasional whisky at Christmas. He recalled a raid during the Second World War, when a formation of German bombers dropped their load across the fields on their way back to Germany. Later I found his name - and that of his father - in the torching under our roof.

But I never made the time to talk to him and his wife. Now they are both no longer with us and I shall have to rely on recollections from his son.

In the other no. 2 lived little Winnie Groves - again born and died in the cottage. Her mother was a seamstress to Queen Victoria and she was a highly skilled needlewoman, seamstress and lace maker - but in her later years lived as an almost total recluse. Social Services cleared her possessions into a skip - and, after she died, I learnt that these included a quilt showing Greenman Farm.

Have I learned my lesson? Not really! MJH

PS And when you are clearing out your attic—or moving—or dealing with the aftermath of a death, don't forget that what seem to be trivial possessions can be of real interest to local historians. So—before you bin it, think—and, if in doubt, ask one of the Committee for advice. It is not just old photos, postcards etc; business correspondence, old gas bills, building costs—you never know what interest these may hold in years to come! And pass any potentially interesting material to our Secretary Heather Woodward PLEASE.

## Meeting Schedule

Thur 15 Jan	Dr Al Thomson—'Making the most of memories: the potential of oral history'
Tues 17 Feb	Geoff Mead Local Geology and its social implications
Thur 18 Mar	David Martin Medieval Houses and their construction
Tues 20 Apr	Richard Rose The Courthopes of Whiligh
Thur 20 May	World War I, Aubers Ridge and the Royal Sussex Regiment
Tues 15 Jun	Gwen Jones Agriculture in Wadhurst
July August	No meetings
Thur 16 Sep	Pat Wright The Medieval Life Style
Tues 19 Oct	Elizabeth Hughes Churchyards—and what they can tell us
Thur 18 Nov	Jeremy Hodgkinson Wealden Iron Industry
Thur 16 Dec	AGM - members' talks and social

## Women of Wadhurst

Don't forget their Annual Lecture at Uplands on Saturday 28 February. Nicole Dueck, a professional lecturer and Egyptologist, will talk on

### "Cleopatra—fact or fiction?"

Tickets are £13, from Newingtons or Janet Goldsmith 01892 783 264, and include a home cooked supper. Proceeds from the evening to Macmillan Cancer Research.

## Other Interesting Events for

### 2004

#### Sunday 9 May—the Royal Sussex Aubers Ridge Parade, church service and reception at the Commemoration Hall

Friday 2nd Jan—Uckfield & District Preservation Society  
Open meeting Civic Centre 20:00

Thursday 15 Jan—Heathfield & District History Society  
"Scenes of Heathfield Past"

Tuesday 27 Jan—Tunbridge Wells Family History Society at the Groombridge Village Hall 19:30 for 20:00  
"Papermakers" - Jean Stirk

Friday 30 Jan—Mayfield History Society at the Scout & Guide Hall 20:00  
"The Home of William Morris" - Mrs Biron

Tuesday 5 Feb—Groombridge History Group at the Village Hall at 20:00  
"Sir David Salomons" - Dr Ian Beavis

Visitors are welcome at all of these meetings—there may be a small charge at the door

## Information Wanted

Valerie, Sylvia and Heather **TOPP** and the 1940 plane crash - or was it a bomb? Where? What happened?

# 1851 Census - Returns for the Parishes of Salehurst, Wadhurst & Bodiam; Lamberhurst & Frant;

The East Sussex Census Returns for 1851 were painstakingly transcribed by June Barnes in 1989 and made available as printed booklets and as spreadsheets. I have analysed the returns for Wadhurst and the immediate surrounding parishes - particularly to see if there were any obvious differences between us and the Rest. Inevitably there are errors in the original data, in the transcription and in my further processing but I hope the results are of interest.

In 1851 the recorded population of Wadhurst was 2800 with 19150 in the adjacent parishes; in all 9604 male and 12346 female. The twenty most common surnames are:

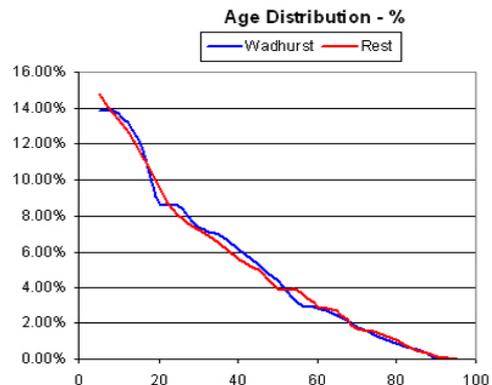
Wadhurst		Rest	
Population	2800		19150
No of surnames	479		1706
Average	5.85		11.23
SMITH	108	SMITH	274
WEEKS	65	BAKER	201
MANKTELOW 18	60	MARTIN	184
MANKLOW 30			
MANCKLOW 3			
MANKELOW 2			
MANKTELOW 7			
WALLISS / WALLIS	56	WESTON	164
BALDWIN	41	WICKENS	160
TOMPSETT	41	KEMP	144
PALMER	34	RICHARDSON	135
STAPLEY	33	RUSSELL	125
BLACKMAN	32	FENNER	119
KITCHENHAM	31	FIELD	116
STEVENS	31	HARMER	115
GIBB	29	MOON	114
SWIFT	29	DADSWELL	110
MABB	26	JENNER	109
ASHBY	25	TAYLOR	105
PLAYSTED	25	ADAMS	104
PACKHAM	24	FULLER	103
RICHARDSON	24	BISHOP	98
ROGERS	24	BLACKFORD	97
BALDOCK	22	DANN	97
BONES	22	CARD	90
CLARK	22	NOAKES	89
HUMPHREY	22	PACKHAM	89
NEWINGTON	22	BROWN	86
STYLES	22	SKINNER	85

Analysis of birthplace suggests that people did not move much: of Wadhurst's population of 2800, 1679 were born there, 152 in Mayfield, 124 in Ticehurst, 54 in Lamberhurst and 53 in Frant - over 75% of the total in these 5 parishes.

First names vary a little:

TOP TWENTY NAMES		
	Ranking	
	Wadhurst	Rest
MARY	1	2
WILLIAM	2	1
JOHN	3	3
GEORGE	4	6
THOMAS	5	4
JAMES	6	5
ELIZABETH	7	7
SARAH	8	8
ANN	9	9
HARRIETT	10	11
HENRY	11	10
JOSEPH	12	22
CHARLES	13	14
SAMUEL	14	19
EDWARD	15	17
ELLEN	16	23
FRANCES	17	15
JANE	18	13
ELIZA	19	12
CAROLINE	20=	20
HANNAH	20=	16
RICHARD	20=	18

Age distribution is essentially identical across the area:



Employment shows the heavy reliance of this part of East Sussex on agriculture; the table below aggregates all related types of employment under a common title - in part the variation in the original returns relates as much to the perception of the enumerator as to the real distinction - house servant/general servant/servant are all counted as DOMESTIC SERVANT. And AG LAB covers a wide range of other tasks.

Some of the distinctions were doubtless important - others less so. Did the cordwainer "a worker in cordwain or Cordovan leather" have a higher social status than the shoemaker or boot and shoe maker? Among the odder trades are the higlers "an itinerant dealer esp a carrier or huckster who buys up poultry and dairy produce and supplies in exchange petty commodities from the shops in town" - Wadhurst had 1 and the Rest 4; both areas had 1 huckster.

In addition to those above, we had one bread/flour seller; there were 6 brickmakers in Wadhurst and 16 in the rest. We had a tinman—John Parks in Sparrows Green ,and a master watchmaker—Owen Newington at 1 Church Street. We had 9 butchers, 3 gingerbread bakers, 11 millers and 2 victuallers. Other important trades were 1 glazier, 3 carriers and 4 carters, 4 coopers, 2 carriers, 2 painters and a plumber, 2 saddlers, 2 stonemasons and 4 waggons.

## Note from the Editor

Inside this copy of the newsletter is the draft Constitution of the Society, so that members can see how the Committee proposes to regulate our affairs; the Constitution will be discussed and approved [with any amendments] at the AGM.

Also inside is a copy of the Membership Application Form. Please use this to gain new members for the Society; forms can be returned to the Chairman or the Secretary

The next newsletter will appear at the end of February 2004—if you have any points [questions, answers, comments, or even short articles] you would like included, please give them to any Committee member by 14 Feb or post them to The Editor at Greenman Farm, Wadhurst TN5 6LE.

## 1851 Census contd

AG.LAB	490	AG.LAB	3172
DOMESTIC SERVANT	84	DOMESTIC SERVANT	766
EMPLOYED AT HOME	72	FARMER	483
FARMER	69	RAIL WORKERS	278
RAILLAB	55	DOM HOUSEKEEPER	195
LAB	34	CARPENTER	136
CARPENTER	31	BRICKLAYER	133
HOUSEKEEPER	22	LAB	122
BRICKLAYER	21	DRESS MAKER	108
DRESS MAKER	17	GARDENER	100
CORDWAINER	16	GROCER	75
BLACKSMITH	15	BLACKSMITH	74
BEER SELLER	11	MILLER	71
GROCER	11	LAUNDRESS	70
MILLER	11	CORDWAINER	67
SHOE MAKER	11	BOOT & SHOE MAKER	65
BUTCHER	9	TAILOR	64
WHEELWRIGHT	9	BAILIFF	59
GARDENER	7	BUTCHER	53
SAWYER	7	WAGGONER	53

Agriculture was dominant in Wadhurst—over 40% of those in employment; for the Rest only 16.5% worked the land in one capacity or another. Looking at households, Wadhurst had 519 heads with an average of 5.4 occupants, compared to the Rest of the area with 3604 households and 5.3 occupants. We had 38 paupers. 674 sons and 598 daughters lived at home in Wadhurst. One in three were married and 132 were widows or widowers.

Some of the categorisations would not be allowed in today's politically correct times. Idiots, 'deaf, dumb and near blind', illegitimate, pauper dwarf and vagrant all feature in the lists. There are also 8 twins and one gentleman in Wadhurst; the Rest also has 2 baronets and 3 esquires. The list goes on and on.

If anyone would like more detail contact me on 01892 783 292 or by e-mail at [whs@greenman.demon.co.uk](mailto:whs@greenman.demon.co.uk)

Michael Harte

## Q & A

We hope this will be a regular feature of the Newsletter—the opportunity to resolve problems that have been bothering you for ages: so send in your queries and also the answers to earlier problems.

In the flier proposing the formation of the Wadhurst History Society, the following challenges were set:

Q: Who was Mr Godden?

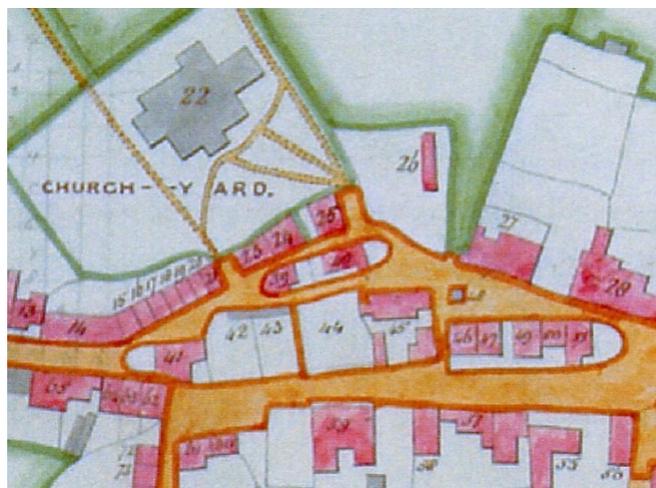
A: Carpenter and coffin maker, who bought a field in Durgates when parts of the Wadhurst Castle estate was sold off

Q: Why is it called St James's Square?

A: We don't know!

Q: Is the Twitten the old High Street?

A: A town plan in the Courthope collection at the College of Arms shows this:



The current High Street looks closed between what are now CHAT and One Stop

Q: Which is the oldest building in Wadhurst

A: The church—but buildings like Carillon Cottage and others backing on to the churchyard must run it pretty close. Some of the cellars in the centre of Wadhurst may be much older than the buildings now above them. There is more to be done here!

Q: Whose family has the longest connection with Wadhurst?

A: Answers here please

Q: Have any businesses been in Wadhurst for 100 years?

A: Not in the same ownership—but Newingtons newsagents have been going for a long time—and The Greyhound has traded in the Lower High Street since 1580

Questions like these could be studied by the task groups we plan to set up at the Society meeting on 16 December—so come along to the FTA at 19:30 and bring not only more questions but also ideas on how to resolve them. Members and non-members are welcome to this meeting.