

CLHS Newsletter

May 2021



Dear Member

1. Programme

Wednesday 12th May – zoom presentation at 7pm ('doors open' 6:55)

History of Art in Chichester Cathedral

Anne Scicluna

Zoom Meeting ID: **810 7843 9986**

Passcode: **CLHS0521**

The future programme will be governed by Government advice and the protocols adopted by New Park Centre.

Wednesday 21st July: *An evening stroll around Georgian Midhurst*, led by Alan Green

Next Newsletter: 28th May 2021

2. Chichester History (number 37) 2021

Greg Slay, our editor, reports that he now has enough material to fill *Chichester History*, Number 37, published in September. This is an encouraging sign of the health of our local history, and we go forward open for business for *Chichester History* No 38, September 2022.

3. **Breaking Seas, Broken Ships: People, Shipwrecks and Britain, 1854–2007**

by Ian Friel

Review by Terry Carlisle

Readers of the December newsletter will have seen a glowing recommendation for the first book written by Ian Friel about shipwrecks - *Britain and the Ocean Road: Shipwrecks and People, 1297-1825* - and this second volume covering the period 1854-2007 is just as interesting and easy to read as the former. Once again Pen and Sword Books have published a volume that is pleasant to hold, well-illustrated (with the aid of Ian's daughter Helen again) and absolutely fascinating.

There are seven chapters, each describing and analysing a shipwreck, which cover a variety of ships of differing construction and quality brought to grief by the forces of nature, wartime attacks, man's greed or human error. Dr Friel once again provides detailed accounts that remind the reader of the human cost as well as an explanation of

the wreck itself. One storm in December 1872 was to cause the loss of at least 5 vessels along the Northumbrian coast within 24 hours; a chilling reminder of the forces of nature. Yet a local paper failed to see there to be any reason not to place an advertisement for an auction of the 'hull and stores' of the Collier Brig *Russell*, the vessel covered in chapter one, upon the same page as the account of the five shipwrecks that it describes as 'this appalling series of disasters'.

There are several threads throughout the book; showing selfless heroism and devotion to duty, greed and a lack of compassion amongst many shipowners, and the way in which the nature of shipping and indeed uses thereof have changed as the ships became faster, larger and more expensive. This is a book that you will read with pleasure and then refer back to on many occasions!

4. **Transport of Delight * in Chichester - before the bus station** **Alan H. J. Green**

In September 1956 a brand new bus station opened in Chichester, a much-needed facility adjacent to the railway station providing integrated transport and previously undreamt-of facilities for travellers such as a waiting room, toilets a cafeteria and shops, Opposite, in Basin Road, was a new bus garage, an impressive structure with a clear-span pre-stressed concrete roof At last all Chichester's omnibus activities had been brought together on one site to the great benefit of staff and travellers alike.

Today Chichester District Council is hell bent on sweeping away both the bus station and its garage as part of its Southern Gateway redevelopment so it is an appropriate time to recall how Chichester coped before it existed.

Bus services in and around Chichester were provided by Southdown Motor Services with their famous apple green and cream vehicles, and by 1950 there were few outlying towns and villages that were not served by them. The exception to the Southdown monopoly was Service 19 from Aldershot to Bognor via Midhurst which was operated by Aldershot & District.

Prior to the opening of the bus station the company's centre of operations was in West Street next to the Cathedral. Here there were bus stands on both sides of the road, and it was the termination point for those services whose journeys ended in Chichester. Anyone arriving in the city by train and needing to continue their journey by bus had first to make their own way from the station to West Street.

West Street was also the staging post for coach services, including the famous *South Coast Express* which Southdown operated jointly with East Kent and Royal Blue. Chichester was, of course, served by Southdown's flagship Service 31 from Brighton to Southsea, on which the company's newest double-deckers always appeared first. It ran every 15 minutes during the day taking 4½ hours to cover the 50 miles so was not a journey for the faint hearted.

* With obvious apologies - in chronological order - to Henry William Baker (1821-77) and Flanders and Swann .



Fig 1. A post card view along West Street, looking east circa 1950. A Southdown Leyland TD4 has arrived from Selsey on Service 52. Before making the return journey it will have to reverse using Tower Street, pick up its passengers on the other side of the street and then negotiate the Market Cross on the wrong side of the road. In the background another Southdown bus on an unidentified service is squeezing past the north side of the Cross. The building with the arched fascia next to the General Post Office is the Southdown Bus Office. The photographer must have waited patiently for this quiet spell to get his shot; at most times there would be buses lined up at the stops on both sides of the street. (Author's collection)

The company's Chichester offices were at 10 West Street, next to the General Post Office, which building served as a booking and parcels office as well as providing accommodation for bus crews between turns.

West Street, whilst being handy for the city centre was far from ideal from an operational point of view, presenting as it did two logistical challenges. The first was the Market Cross. Whilst East and West Streets line up perfectly, South and North Streets do not; this and the narrow passage along the north side of the Cross could be tricky for large vehicles such as buses. Whilst large vehicles travelling from east to west and south to west could easily negotiate the Cross in accordance with the accepted practice for roundabouts, moves in other directions could not, and had to be made on the wrong side in contravention of the Highway Code. To this end there was always a policeman on point duty at the Cross to stop traffic in order to allow these 'wrong side' moves to take place.

The other problem was with terminating services which, naturally, had had to turn round before embarking upon the return journey. This was accomplished by performing a three-point turn in the entrance to Tower Street next to the church of St Peter the Great. At busy times of the day this was the cause of much congestion since traffic in West Street had to be brought to a stand whilst the manoeuvre took place. An inspector, armed with a whistle, was usually on duty to signal to the crew when it was safe to reverse out.



*Fig 2. A pre-war Leyland TD5 on Service 52 has just reversed out of Tower Street, completing its three-point turn, and is about to commence its journey south to Selsey, whilst an almost-new Leyland PD2/12, on Service 60 from Midhurst, stands in Tower Street and will reverse out when the 52 has departed and resume its journey to Bognor via Rose Green. The boy hurrying past cannot be me – I would have stopped by to watch the fascinating manoeuvre!
(John Iden)*

West Street was not actually on a direct route for Service 60 from Bognor to Midhurst, but nonetheless it was required to divert there and so had to perform the ritual three point turn, but with a full complement of passengers, for which up to four minutes were allowed in the timetable. It then resumed its northward journey via North Street. The operation had to be repeated on the return journey.

The bus garage was the former Olympia Electric Theatre in Northgate where vehicles were serviced as well as garaged. Before I started school, I would accompany my mother on her daily shopping expeditions and would insist on making a detour via the bus garage on the way home to Orchard Street in order to admire the vehicles therein. Our daily appearances were anticipated by the mechanics, and on the day I started school Mum went there on auto-pilot without me, to be greeted by, “what have you done with him then?” She withdrew red-faced.



Fig 3. The Southdown Bus garage in the former Olympia Electric Theatre. In this early 1950s view the company's name can be seen emblazoned above the door. The building in the foreground was Mr Petto's high class cobbler's shop, a building which - miraculously - survived the 1960s and 70s clearances. (Ken Green collection)

Envoi

Those who attended the Society's 'virtual' AGM in December 2020 watched the marvellous 1953 film *Did you see our Jalopy in Chichester?* which demonstrated how congested East and South Streets were then, and just how many buses were adding to that congestion.

The opening of the bus station in 1956 brought an immediate end to the congestion in West Street caused by the three-point turns and at the same time removed all bus services from East Street, those from and to the east of the city being diverted via Market Avenue to the bus station

The West Street bus office closed and was annexed by Morant's to house their shoe department. The garage at Northgate was abandoned and the Festival Theatre currently hire the semi-derelict building as a scenery store. If you examine carefully the peeling grey paint on its doors you will detect a hint of Southdown green beneath.

Buses continued to serve West Street but it was only westbound services that did so. Northbound services now proceeded directly from South Street to North Street, and in so doing added a new 'wrong side' bus move around the Cross. This continued until the city centre was pedestrianised in 1975.

Chichester's Bus Station is actually a rare survivor of its breed for when the mighty Stagecoach was swallowing up myriad operators (including Southdown) at privatisation they generally sold off acquired building assets for development. However, that at Chichester had actually been built by Chichester City Council who leased it to Southdown; ownership duly passed to Chichester District Council in 1974 and so Stagecoach have been unable to close it down and sell it off. Now, ironically, Chichester District Council are proposing to do just that. *Sic Transit*.

5. There is an Earl of Chichester

Philip Robinson

There is an Earl of Chichester; the current earl is the 9th, and his family seat is Little Durnford Manor, 3 miles north of Salisbury on the River Avon. He and his wife, Lady June, have one child, a daughter and thus, on the death of the 9th earl, the title passes along the male line to his second cousin, Richard Pelham, also resident in Wiltshire.



The Pelhams are long established, originally part of the family of the Barons of Beke or Bec-Crespin in Normandy and given land after the Conquest in Hertfordshire. It was from here that they adopted the name Pelham reflecting the land they held under the Bishop of London. At the time of the Domesday Survey the Pelhams (*Brent Pelham, Furneaux Pelham and Stocking Pelham*) had 105 households. The family migrated to Sussex in the late thirteenth century, first to Hailsham and then to Laughton, north of Lewes. One of its members, John de Pelham, distinguished himself at the Battle of Poitiers, in September 1356 in the capture of the French King, Jean II, for which he was awarded the buckle from the King's sword. A buckle that became the emblem of the family, displayed on buildings owned by the Pelhams and today on the village green at Laughton.

By the sixteenth century the Pelhams featured as members of Parliament for Sussex. In 1588, Thomas Pelham was levied at £100 for a loan in support of the navy against the Spanish Armada, the highest assessment in Sussex. In 1611 James I, created Thomas the 1st Baronet Pelham, in return for cash to support the defence of the plantations in Ulster. It is from his direct line that the Earls of Chichester derive their title.

Sir Thomas Pelham's grandson, Sir John Pelham, had two sons, Thomas (1653-1712) and Henry. (1661-1721). The former, also had two sons, Thomas, and Henry, each of whom became Prime Minister; Henry from August 1743 until his sudden death in March 1754, then succeeded by his elder brother, Thomas, Duke of Newcastle, from March 1754; neither had children.

Sir John Pelham's younger son, Henry (1661-1721) bought Stanmer House and Park, north east of Brighton, for £7, 500 in 1713. He had two sons, would you believe, called Henry and Thomas, and it was the former who demolished the old house and built anew

under the guidance of the architect Nicholas Dubois. Henry didn't live long to enjoy his house as he died of consumption in June 1725 and his estate passed to his younger brother Thomas (1705-1737). This Thomas, sometimes referred to as Thomas the Turk because of his extensive commercial interests in that country, also died young, in his case "*of drink.*" In February 1725 Thomas had married Annetta Bridges in Constantinople and their eldest child, the future 1st Earl of Chichester was born in Westminster, London in February 1728 and christened, - you've guessed it - Thomas (1728-1805).

Thomas benefitted from the patronage of his uncle Thomas, Prime Minister, for '*whom he was in confidential correspondence.*' Maybe through this he had had introductions to the King, George III, and from 1775 to 1782 "*held the appointment as master of the great wardrobe.*" On 15th June 1801, **The London Gazette** reported that, "*The King has been pleased to grant the Dignity of Earl of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland to the Right Honourable Thomas Lord Pelham, and the Heirs Male of his Body lawfully begotten, by the Name, Style, and Title of Earl of Chichester.*"

Despite the title, the Earls appear not to have played any significant part in the interests and concerns of Chichester, with the possible exception of the 3rd Earl, Henry Thomas (1804 - 1886). Henry Thomas "*was a strong evangelical who expressed his views temperately. He was deeply interested in religious, social and educational questions.*" The 3rd Earl made a significant contribution to the establishment of Bishop Otter Teacher Training College in Chichester, which opened in St. Martin's Lane on 11th April 1840, with three students.

The title, and Stanmer Estate, passed through the sons of the 3rd Earl to the 6th Earl Jocelyn Brudenall Pelham, OBE, Deputy Lieutenant of the County, J.P., and Lieutenant-Colonel of the Royal Sussex Regiment. The 6th Earl died of influenza, aged 55, on 14th November 1926 and, to compound that loss, his eldest son, the 7th Earl, died a week later, aged 21, also from influenza. Neither event was reported in the *Chichester Observer*, though extensively across the rest of Sussex. The 8th Earl, John Buxton Pelham, younger brother of the 7th Earl, inherited the title, aged 14. He completed his education at Eton and Trinity College Oxford before entering the diplomatic service. When war was declared in 1939, he was Press Attaché to the British Consulate in The Hague where he married a Dutch woman, Ursula de Pannwitz. When the Nazis invaded the Netherlands in May 1940 the Pelhams returned to England where his wife gave birth to a daughter, Georgina in 1942. Tragedy struck the Pelhams on 21st February 1944 when the 8th Earl, then a Captain in the Scots Guards, was killed in a road traffic accident near Doncaster, on the Great North Road. Seven week later his wife, Ursula, gave birth to their son, John Nicholas, the 9th and present Earl of Chichester.

Stanmer was sold in 1947 to Brighton Corporation for £250,000 and from 1966 the family home of the Earl of Chichester has been Little Durnfod Manor, listed Grade 1 by Historic England.