



## New book reveals hidden history of Parham House

10 March 2009

A new book throws light onto some fascinating aspects of the history of Parham House in Sussex, thanks to work completed by academics, specialist researchers and dedicated volunteers.

Written by Dr Jayne Kirk, and with a foreword by Sir Simon Jenkins, *Parham: an Elizabethan House and its Restoration*, tells the story of the house, and the three families who have lived in it, over the past 400 years. A precious archive of drawings, letters and other papers, combined with specially commissioned studies of the roof, decorative plasterwork and panelling have revealed much about changes to the fabric of the house. Professional and volunteer archaeologists have searched the park for traces of the monastic grange and village that once stood somewhere within it and personal recollections have added yet another dimension. The book also includes new photographs provided by English Heritage and a series of informative panels explaining topics in the book in more detail.

Local volunteers have played a key role in researching the book. Supported by staff at West Sussex Record Office, the group worked through previously unrecorded documents, helping to provide a more accurate archive of the social and architectural history of the house. As well as gaining archive experience, volunteers received training in palaeography and data input. They also worked with an education consultant to identify material suitable for inclusion in school worksheets, aimed at Key Stages 1-3. Trialled by pupils from The Weald School, the teaching packs are available from the EPE Schools Learning Zone ([www.EnglandsPastforEveryone.org.uk/Schools](http://www.EnglandsPastforEveryone.org.uk/Schools)).

Author Dr Jayne Kirk stated: "*The Parham project has relied heavily on the input of many professionals in the field of historic building research, from academics and archaeologists to experts working with timber, stone, and plasterwork. But from the beginning it has been our team of volunteers and the family and staff at Parham House itself who have been at the core of our team effort, and whose enthusiasm, dedication, and sheer hard work have been indispensable in the production of this book.*"

*Parham: an Elizabethan House and its Restoration* will be officially launched at an event at the house on Thursday 26 March.

The Parham project is part of England's Past for Everyone (EPE), a Heritage Lottery-funded, local history project, run by the Victoria County History at the University of London. EPE is working with communities across the country to produce a series of fifteen paperbacks, an interactive website and learning resources for schools.

Further resources from the Parham project, including images and historical documents, can be found at [www.ExploreEnglandsPast.org.uk/Sussex](http://www.ExploreEnglandsPast.org.uk/Sussex)

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For further information on the England's Past for Everyone project in Sussex please contact Mel Hackett, EPE Communications Manager 020 7664 4896 [melanie.hackett@sas.ac.uk](mailto:melanie.hackett@sas.ac.uk)





## Notes for Editors

### England's Past for Everyone (EPE)

[www.EnglandsPastForEveryone.org.uk](http://www.EnglandsPastForEveryone.org.uk)

England's Past for Everyone (EPE) is a Heritage Lottery funded local history project, run by the Victoria County History and involving communities across the country. Volunteers are working alongside authors and researchers in 10 counties to bring local history to life. Their topics include the history of ethnic minorities in Bristol, life and work in the lower Medway Valley, and the origins and townscape of Sunderland.

The research will result in an interactive website and fifteen paperback books, which will provide an insight into the way history is investigated and help inspire people to do their own research. The website will contain images, audio visual materials and historical documents which users will be able to search by place, time and theme. EPE is also working with schools to produce curriculum materials, linked to the interactive website.

### Victoria County History (VCH)

[www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk](http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk)

Begun in 1899 and dedicated to Queen Victoria, the Victoria County History (VCH) is creating an encyclopaedic history of the counties of England, based on original research and ranging from earliest times to the present.

Over the past 100 years over 230 distinctive large red volumes have been published. General chapters cover subjects such as prehistory, and ecclesiastical and economic history and topographical chapters give a comprehensive, fully referenced account of each city, town, and village in the county. This work is carried out by staff in counties all over England, whose research is edited and prepared for publication by a central team based at the University of London's Institute of Historical Research.

### Parham House and Gardens

[www.parhaminsussex.co.uk](http://www.parhaminsussex.co.uk)

Parham has always been a well-loved family home, and only three families have lived here since its foundation stone was laid in 1577 by the two year old Thomas Palmer. The house and estate was bought in 1922 by the Hon. Clive Pearson from the 17<sup>th</sup> Baroness Zouche, whose ancestors, the Bysshops, had owned it since 1601. They in turn had bought it from the Palmer family. Mr Pearson and his wife Alicia found the house and garden in sad repair, and together they revived and restored both with great sensitivity and care. What they created at Parham is a rare survival of mid 20<sup>th</sup> century connoisseurship within a major Elizabethan house. Now owned by a charitable trust, Parham Park Ltd, it is the home of Mr James and Lady Emma Barnard.

The delightful four-acre 18<sup>th</sup> century walled garden has been transformed over the last 25 years into an oasis of colourful mixed herbaceous borders, vegetable garden, herb garden and orchard, together with a 1920's Wendy house. The adjoining Pleasure Grounds include a lake, many specimen trees and a brick and turf maze.

The surrounding Park is an area of Special Scientific Interest and the fallow deer which still roam within it are descendents of the original herd first recorded in 1628. Parham's peace and timeless beauty have changed little over the centuries.



### **The Institute of Historical Research (IHR)**

[www.history.ac.uk](http://www.history.ac.uk)

EPE central support staff are based in the VCH offices at the Institute of Historical Research (IHR), University of London.

The IHR, under its Director Professor Miles Taylor, offers a wide range of services to historians from the UK and around the world. The IHR promotes excellence in scholarship and teaching through its library, seminars, conferences, fellowships, training, publications and the work of its three research centres, of which VCH is one.

### **The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)**

[www.hlf.org.uk](http://www.hlf.org.uk)

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has provided a grant of £3.4million to the EPE project.

HLF enables communities to celebrate, look after and learn more about our diverse heritage. From our great museums and historic buildings to local parks and beauty spots or recording and celebrating traditions, customs and history, HLF grants open up our nation's heritage for everyone to enjoy.

### **English Heritage**

[www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)

English Heritage is providing 510 new photographs and reconstruction drawings of selected buildings and sites for use by the EPE project. EPE are also working in partnership with English Heritage Education and Outreach departments.

English Heritage is the government's advisor on the historic environment. The organisation is responsible for all aspects of protecting and promoting the historic environment.

The National Monuments Record (NMR) is English Heritage's public archive of 10 million items. It's the first port of call for anyone seeking information on the historic environment.

### **Phillimore & Co. Ltd**

[www.phillimore.co.uk](http://www.phillimore.co.uk)

Phillimore & Co. Ltd is the publisher for the EPE paperback publications. Based in Chichester Phillimore is the leading specialist publisher of British local and family history.