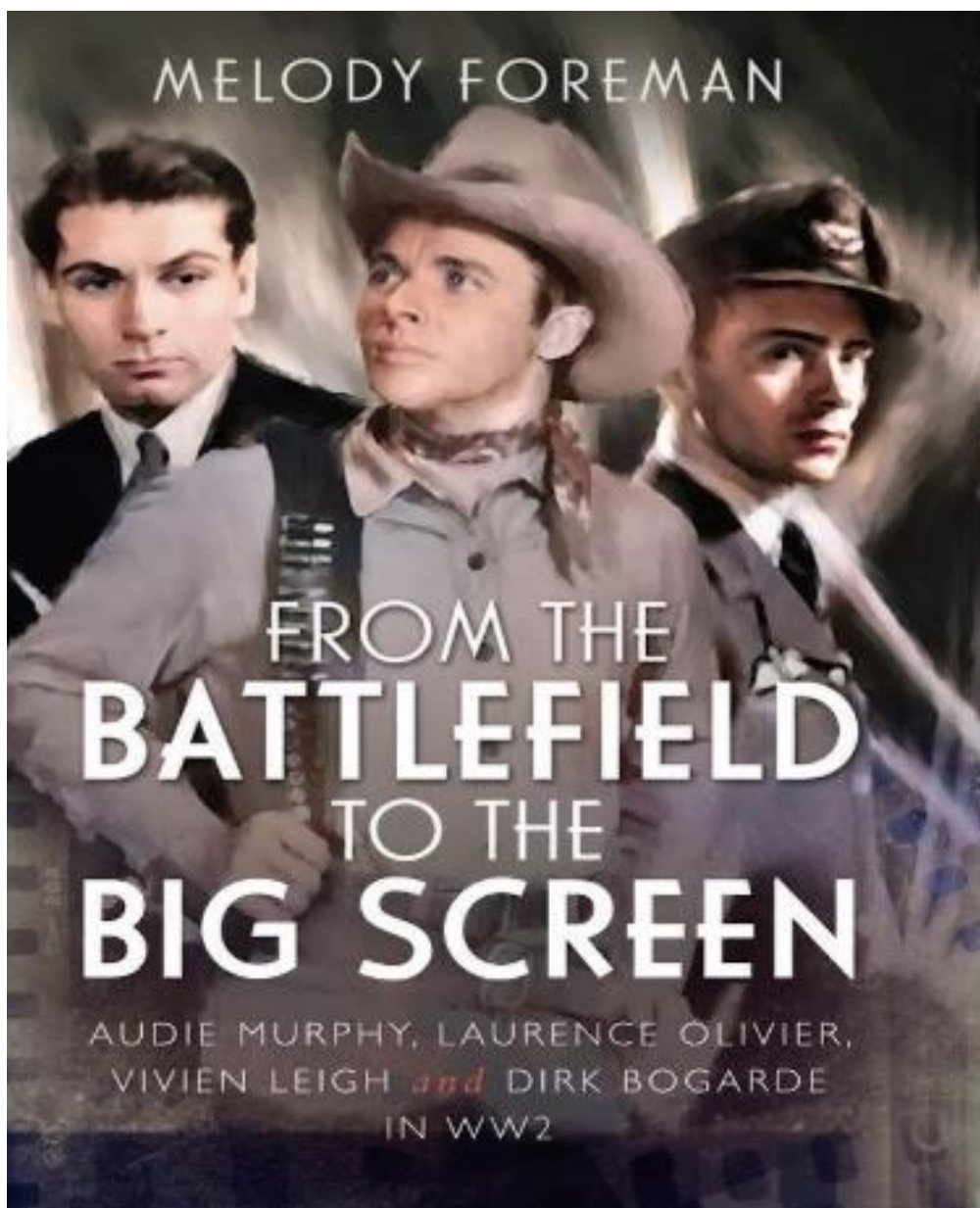


# Wye Historical Society



*Our first meeting is on Wednesday 2 October 2024*

***FROM THE BATTLEFIELD TO THE BIG SCREEN***

*Given by Melody Foreman*

## Newsletter September 2024

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Wye Historical Society is grateful to Mike Wain  
for allowing reproduction of his painting and the scan of the signature,  
to Wye PCC for allowing reproduction of the painting of Wye Church  
and to Melody Foreman for allowing reproduction of the front cover of her new book.

Other illustrations are part of the WHS Archive.

# Wye Historical Society

The following talks have been arranged for the 2024/25 season in the Lady Joanna Thornhill School Hall on the 1st Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm.

**2nd October 2024 From the Battlefields to the Big Screen.**

Given by Melody Foreman.

**6th November 2024 The History of Ashford Market 1856 – 2024**

Given by Roger Lightfoot.

**4th December 2024 The Development of the Kent House.**

Given by Sir Paul Britton.

**8th January 2025 Members Evening.**

**5th February 2025 Sir Christopher Wren.**

Given by Dr Hubert Pragnell.

**5th March 2025 Annual General Meeting at 7.15pm (Note earlier time) followed by**

**Hidden clues, naughty jokes and Becket's lost mitre.**

**New discoveries in the Miracle windows at Canterbury Cathedral.**

Given by Léonie Seliger.

**2nd April 2025 Edith Cavell.**

Given by Melanie Gibson Barton.

Non-Members are most welcome to the talks at £3 a lecture. Annual membership is £12.

To join, please phone Jonathan Timms 07986 603129 or

Email: [enquiries@wyehistoricalsociety.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@wyehistoricalsociety.org.uk)

## Two Notable Residents of Wye in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

### and a Mystery about a Painting

Wye Historical Society has an archive of photographs and scans of local views which have been given to the Society over the years. This is an invaluable collection since, until the advent of photograph in the mid-to-late 19<sup>th</sup> century, sketches and paintings, sometimes the work of local people, were the only means of recording the appearance of the environment. It was exciting, therefore, when Mike Wain, one of the Society's members, bought at auction a fine detailed oil painting of Wye that was not represented in our archive. Mike asked me if I could date the painting, but there was something of a mystery about the identity of the artist.



*Mike Wain's painting of Wye*

In Mike's painting Wye is viewed from the West across the village. The chalkpit is visible on the Downs but there is no Crown memorial. It is a scene of rural tranquility, with the haywain and cows and sheep in the fields. The station building can be seen in the centre, but the railway track is obscured by bushes as are the watermill, the bridge and the public house by the bridge. It is possible to pick out Bramble Farm on the left, the roof of Honeysuckle Cottage opposite the station, and some other buildings in the village, such as the Kings Head and the windmill, which was on the site of the present village halls until 1919. The main difference from the view today is that there were few houses outside the village, and none on the Churchfield which, at that time, was cultivated to provide an income for the Parish Priest. (It was only developed for housing after WWII.) The view of the church shows the tracery of the Victorian West window, which had replaced the Georgian round-headed window by 1878. This dates the painting to between 1878 and 1902, when the Crown was constructed on Wye Downs to mark the Coronation of Edward VII.

The auction house had attributed the painting to someone with the surname 'Morris' and, on cleaning a corner, Mike found a signature which appeared to be 'W Morris' and he suggested that it could have been painted by William Selwyn Morris, the village doctor famous as the author of *The History and*

*Topography of Wye* published in 1846. But there is no evidence that William ever painted, and the signatures in his book and on the painting do not appear the same.



*Left; Signature on the painting. Right: Signature of W S Morris in The History and Topography of Wye.*

In our archive there is a photograph of an almost identical landscape by Charles Jenyns who lived at Spring Grove House (now the school). It was painted from the same viewpoint, probably a site on his land at Spring Grove at about the same time as Mike's picture, but it does feature a train on the railway track. Charles was a fine draughtsman and a talented amateur watercolour artist who painted many pictures of Wye church and other local views. But he was clearly not the painter of Mike's picture.



*The Charles Jenyns watercolour of Wye*

However, while investigating the possible identity of the artist, I became more interested in these two men who were both notable residents in Wye during the 1800s, and I have put together a few details of their lives, in the hope that others may be able to add to this information.

### **William Selwyn Morris**

William Selwyn Morris was the eldest son of the Revd. William Morris, Perpetual Curate of Wye from 1817 until his death in 1832, aged only 44. He and his wife, Elizabeth (Selwyn) had eleven children (7 sons and 5 daughters) and William, born in 1816, was their eldest. (There is a memorial to the Revd. William Morris on the wall of the chancel in Wye Church and a stone in the chancel floor commemorates his son, Selwyn, who died in infancy'.)



*Chancel floor stone commemorating Selwyn Morris. Morris family home above the undercroft.*

After her husband's death Elizabeth and her young family, which included William, aged 16, and her six-month-old baby, Cosgreve, moved from the Vicarage to an old Elizabethan house that stood above the undercroft in Upper Bridge Street, on the corner opposite the Methodist Church. (There is a sketch of this house showing the door to the undercroft.) William went on to become the village doctor and opened a newspaper reading room for local people in the house. Sadly, another son, James Congreve (born 1821), died in 1840. Census records show that Elizabeth and her remaining family were living there in 1841 and that several of her family including William were still there in 1851. But that year saw the tragic death of her youngest child, Cosgreve Selwyn Morris. He was only 19. Elizabeth, herself, died the following year aged 56, and the remaining members of the family left the old house. By 1855, William had emigrated to Australia and was working as a doctor in Avoca, Victoria: he lived there until his death in 1878. His younger brother, George Selwyn Morris (born in 1818), had qualified as a doctor in 1852 and later moved to North Yorkshire. I have not yet been able to discover what happened to William's two surviving brothers: Charles Henry Morris (born 1819) and Selwyn Morris (born 1825) or to his sisters.

### **Charles Jenyns**

Charles Jenyns was born in 1798 in Bottisham in Cambridgeshire and, like William Morris, came from a large family and his father was also a clergyman, as was his younger brother, Leonard (Jenyns) Blomfield, who changed his name to Blomfield in order to claim an inheritance. Leonard was also a renowned naturalist. He is reported to have declined the invitation to go as the Naturalist on board the Beagle and suggested that Charles Darwin should go instead!

In 1842, after the death of his first wife, Charles married Louisa Young. They later moved from London to Spring Grove House, which Charles was able to lease from its new owner after the death of the last of the Brett family who had resided there for many years. He was a businessman who is believed to have come to Wye because the railway, built in 1846, gave him easy access to London. His earliest and

best-known watercolour, dated 1857, is a view across the churchyard from the East, showing a train and was painted twenty years before the landscape that resembles Mike's oil painting, which also features a train. Wye Church own this early painting and two others of the church: one shows the round-headed west window and another, painted three years before his death, shows the later Victorian window installed in 1878.



*The Church of St. Gregory and St Martin, Wye*

After Louisa died in 1876, Charles continued at Spring Grove until his own death in 1887. He may have shared the large house with Louisa's two sisters, Emily and Ellen, as they lived there, at least until 1898, when Emily died. The sisters were benefactors to Wye and, in 1897, contributed to the cost of building the Master's house at the Lady Joanna Thornhill Schools on Bridge Street. (The house was replaced in 1964 by the school hall.)

This brings me back to the question of who painted Mike's picture. It was certainly not Charles Jenyns, and it is unlikely to have been William Selwyn Morris as he had already been in Australia for at least twenty years before it was painted. The fine detail in the painting suggests that it was the work of an experienced artist. The 'Morris' in the signature on the painting is quite clear and it is just possible that the 'W' is actually an 'H'. Could this be the signature of Charles **Henry** Morris, or does it belong to a member of the extended Morris family? Unfortunately, we may never know and the identity of the artist may remain a mystery.

Please contact me if you have additional information about any of the people, places or pictures covered in this article, or own pictures that we could copy for the Society's Archives.

Maureen de Saxe. Archivist, Wye Historical Society.



2024/2025

Registered Charity number 1030571  
www.wyehistoricalsociety.org.uk

September 2024

Dear Member

This is to remind you that the annual subscription is due on 1 October 2024. Please complete and return this form (with your remittance) to the Hon. Treasurer at the address below (or bring it to the first meeting on Wednesday 2 October).

*I enclose my £12.00 individual membership subscription for 2024/25*

**Cash/Cheque enclosed £ \_\_\_\_\_ or I have paid online £ \_\_\_\_\_**

Cheques should be made payable to 'Wye Historical Society'.

**Or pay online to Lloyds Bank, Ashford, 30-90-28. Account no. 00468410.**

Please enter your name in the pay reference.

### Charity Gift Aid Declaration

Gift Aid is simple to declare and helps the funds of the Society. To Gift Aid your subscription donation, **please tick the box below.** (Your details will be sent electronically to HMRC in the annual return).

*I want to gift aid my donation of £12.00 and any donation I make in the future.  
to: **Wye Historical Society***

*I am a UK tax payer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and /or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year, it is my responsibility to pay any difference.*

### My details

Title..... First name.....

Surname.....

Full Home Address .....

.....

Post code.....

Email .....

Tel .....

Signature.....

Date.....

Please return to  
Hon. Treasurer - Anna Clark  
'Burrington'  
Cherry Garden Lane  
Wye  
TN25 5AR

By providing your email address, you agree to being contacted by email until the next membership renewal date. If you wish to unsubscribe, please contact the Secretary: [jjntimms@gmail.com](mailto:jjntimms@gmail.com)



**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF  
WYE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
HELD AT 7.15 PM ON WEDNESDAY 6 MARCH 2024  
AT THE LADY JOANNA THORNHILL SCHOOL, WYE**

The AGM was attended by 33 members.

Members were welcomed by the President, the Reverend John Makey, who explained that he would put the motion to elect Alan Paterson as Chair in order that Alan could then conduct the rest of the meeting. This motion, proposed by Cilla Deeks and seconded by Rosie Fletcher, was approved unanimously. The President then handed over the conduct of the meeting to Alan Paterson.

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies have been received from Anna Clark, Ellie Morris and Francis Huntington.

**2. The Minutes of the last AGM held on Wednesday 1 March 2023** were approved.

(Proposed by Maureen de Saxe, Seconded by Ellie Morris)

**3. Matters arising from the Minutes.** There were no matters arising.

**4. The Secretary's Annual Report.** Noted.

**5. The Hon Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement.** Approved

(Proposed by Margaret Bray, Seconded by Ellie Morris)

**6. Election of Officers**

The Reverend John Makey is Honorary President of the Society and continues in office.

No other nominations to serve as Treasurer and Secretary having been received:

Anna Clark was re-elected as Treasurer to serve for a further year.

(Proposed by Cilla Deeks and Seconded by Rosie Fletcher).

Jonathan Timms was re-elected as Secretary to serve for a further year.

(Proposed by Cilla Deeks and Seconded by Rosie Fletcher).

**7. Election of the Executive Committee.**

Cilla Deeks, Rosie Fletcher, Ellie Morris and Margaret Bray were elected at the 2023 AGM and continue in office for a further year.

No other nominations having been received:

Maureen de Saxe was re-elected to serve for a further two years.

(Proposed by Jonathan Timms and Seconded by Anna Clark).

David Perkins was elected to serve for a further two years.

(Proposed by Jonathan Timms and Seconded by Anna Clark).

**8. Any Other Business at the discretion of the Chair.** There being no other business, the meeting closed at 7.25pm and was followed by John Tattersfield's presentation "The Fascination of Antique Maps".