

Wye Historical Society



Statue of William Harvey at the William Harvey Hospital, Ashford

Newsletter November 2020

Society Matters

November sees the second edition of our Newsletter and a big thank you to those who have sent your comments.

We hope to improve the presentational style and perhaps bring you two or three new articles each month. Some of these articles may form the basis for future talks when we are able to meet formally again. I would also like to invite members to submit articles for publication and to make requests for topics for future articles. If you wanted to learn more about local or Kent history, let me know and I'll try and find an expert (or enthusiast) who can provide the information in the form of a one or two page article.

If the Newsletter proves popular then we might continue publishing with pre-views of upcoming talks and other occasional items of interest together with Society news of a general nature.

Another topic which might be of interest would be a regular 'From the Archives', short articles taken from our own or Wye Heritage Trust collections.

Let me know how you feel about these suggestions and if you have items you wish to submit but are not sure how to present them, then we can find an expert to help you to prepare and present your idea.

All communications please to Tim Betts, via email at timb164@btinternet.com

Or by post to our Secretary, Priscilla Deeks, 42 Chequers Park, Wye, TN25 5BA

A committee meeting was held by Zoom on Thursday 5th. (Thank you to Rosie for hosting) to discuss keeping the Society active during lockdown and to review matters concerning 2021. The committee supported Paul's idea of a Wye centric dig by members and friends on plots of their own land, items discovered will be analysed by experts and guidance on how to prepare a trench will be given, there will be details about this enterprise in next month's newsletter. The committee also decided that as we cannot provide speakers and a meeting place for the foreseeable future, we should halve the subscriptions for 2020/21. This is our only source of income and as production and delivery of the newsletter is a monthly cost to the Society, we thought that a £5 subscription would be appropriate.

Please send your subscription to: - Wye Historical Society, Lloyds Bank, Ashford, 30-90-28

Account No. 00468410, including your name in the payment reference.

Alternatively, you can post, or hand deliver to our Treasurer, Anna Clark at

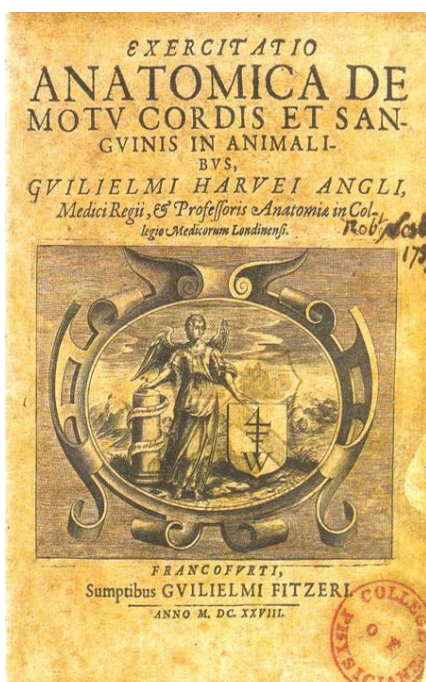
Burrington, Cherry Garden Lane, Wye, TN25 5AR

William Harvey

William Harvey, after whom our local hospital is named, was a very influential physician at the time of the English civil war. Almost a local lad, he was born in Folkestone on April 1st. 1578, the first of nine children born to Thomas Harvey the Mayor of Folkestone. After attending elementary school in Folkestone, he went to live with his uncle in Canterbury while studying classics at King's Grammar School. At age 15 he won a scholarship covering living costs and tuition fees, to study medicine at the University of Cambridge. He also visited the elite universities of France, Germany, and Italy where medicine and science were most effectively taught. In 1599 at the age of 21 he enrolled at perhaps the most prestigious University for Medicine and the sciences, Padua (Galileo had been teaching mathematics, physics and astronomy there for seven years) where he came under the influence of Hieronymus Fabricius, a skilled anatomist and surgeon. Fabricius followed the teaching methods of Vesalius where students were much more intimately involved with anatomical dissections as opposed to sitting around a demonstration being read extracts from Galen, a Greco-Roman physician whose published works formed the basis of all medical tuition across Europe.

Fabricius had discovered small one-way valves in human veins in 1574 but only published his discovery in 1603 a year after Harvey had graduated as a Doctor of Medicine, having passed his dissertation with flying colours. When he returned to England, he received another Doctor of Medicine degree from the University of Cambridge before commencing work as a physician in London at St. Bartholomew's Hospital. By the time he was 40, as the best physician in London he was appointed Physician to the King (King James) in 1618.

In 1628 Harvey published an article that was to change medicine forever. The title, in English, was Anatomical Studies on the Motion of the Heart and Blood in Animals.



The frontispiece of Harvey's seminal work

Usually referred to as 'De Motu Cordis'

This was the first time that an accurate description of the heart and circulation of blood around the body had been published.

The publication led to much controversy as it went against accepted wisdom passed down by the great physician Galen on whom doctors relied to justify the practice of bloodletting, a lucrative trade.

In 1632, aged 54 he was appointed physician to King Charles I, to whom he remained loyal throughout the civil war.

Harvey had to fight to get his theory accepted and because the heart is surrounded by a membranous pericardium, straight observation of the living organ did not lend itself to any great understanding, it was Harvey's skilful dissections and demonstrations on animal hearts that eventually persuaded the medical profession to accept that blood was pumped to the lungs, returned to the heart and thence to the rest of the body via the aorta. The invention of the microscope eventually confirmed his circulation theory when capillaries were observed for the first time, thus completing the link between arteries and veins.



Harvey demonstrating to King Charles the anatomical structure of a Deer's heart, note his distractors behind the door. (Picture hangs in The Royal College of Physicians, Regents Park)

Harvey's elucidation of the heart and circulation were eventually accepted in his lifetime and his professional life became easier, he would have been aware that Galen himself fled Rome because his methods threw doubt on the practices of Rome's lesser physicians.

Our cover picture shows his statue at The William Harvey Hospital, Ashford, with his hand on his heart and an excised heart in his left hand.

Harvey died in London aged 79, on June 3rd, 1657, probably of cerebral haemorrhage, he was buried in the village of Hempstead in Essex.

Wye College – a new view of the historical site

The history of Wye College has been thoroughly researched by Paul Burnham in his book “The College at Wye - a Historical Guide” and also the centenary history of the College written by Stewart Richards, “Wye College and its world”. It is interesting to note that both Paul and Stewart lectured at the College, not on history of course, but Soil Science and Animal Physiology respectively!



The memorial window - 500 years of community interaction

I have been working with James Burnet to obtain some new photos and videos of the old buildings, in some cases using a drone as well as access to the church tower. I thought I would share some of the images from “outside” the College (no access at present), and also outline proposals for the Grade I site that have been developed by the Wye College Regeneration group (WyeCRAG). The proposals would bring the site back into community use through the creation of Wye College Centre.

Stewart Richards describes the earliest construction of the College as follows.....*“The College stood on the eastern boundary of the churchyard. It consisted of an intimate cloistered quadrangle enclosed by buildings of stone, flint and timberthe south side of the buildings, prefaced by a small garden accommodated the chapel (probably what became the Senior Common Room), the Master’s residence and the kitchens, while the North side contained the Chapter House lodgings and common room (Parlour). On the east side was the refectory (Old Hall).... From the south –eastern corner projected an outbuilding which contained the bakehouse and stables (Wheel room) and a small, detached building at the*

south-west corner of the garden was probably the original grammar school (now known as the Latin School)."

Remarkably these buildings, despite some modification, remain intact and largely in their original form. It is hardly surprising that they are listed as Grade I or Grade II*.

New views of the campus

Viewing the site from the drone highlights the central place that the College has played in village life for over 500 years.

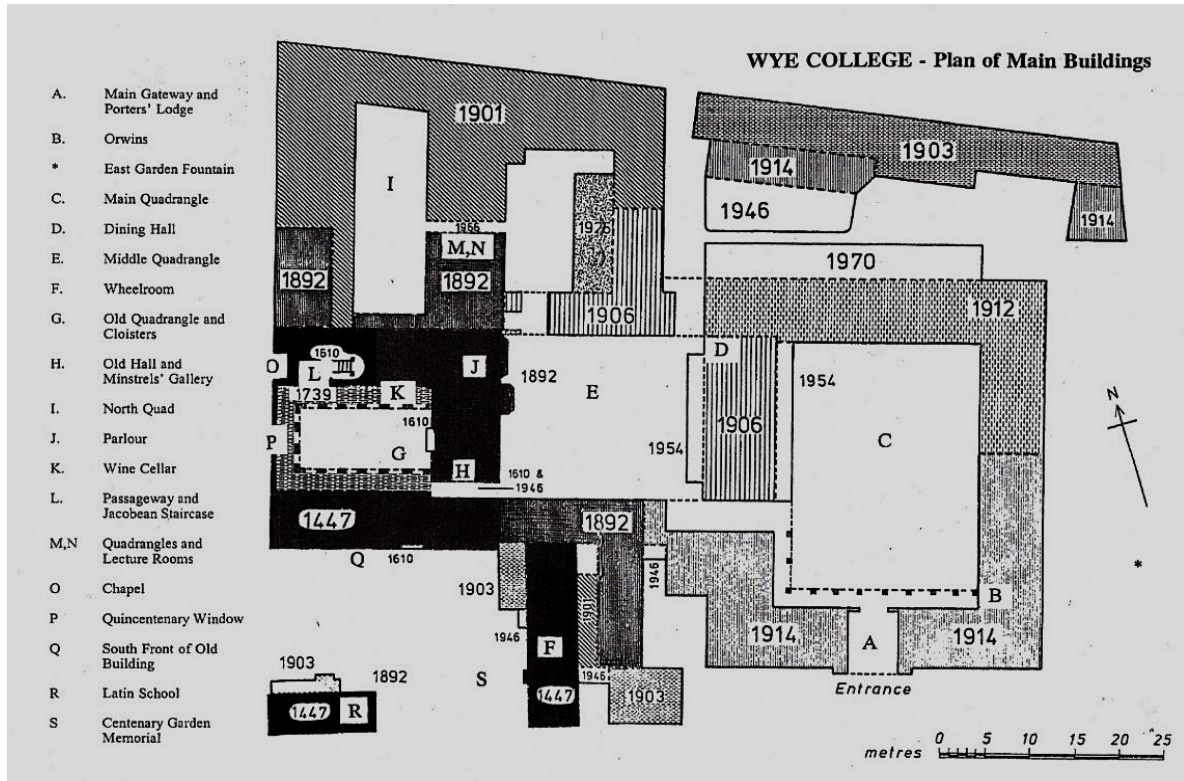


Church, campus and village looking south

The video clip focuses on the Grade I parts of the site and provides a good view to surrounding countryside to the south. Wye is perfectly placed for environmental exploration.

<https://vimeo.com/459284496> View from the church

The dates of construction of the different parts of the campus are noted in the old map that is brought to life by the aerial view below. The Grade I listed buildings are at the south east of the site as described by Stewart Richards.



Views from the air and access “leaning over the wall”

Looking down from the air and into the Latin School gardens allows a good view of the historic buildings, the Latin School itself, Wheel room and Master’s house, and their integration with the rest of the campus.





Wheelroom and gardens



Master's House



Entrance to the Master's House

The video provides a glimpse of the Downs and an overview of the leafy gardens approached from the churchyard.

<https://vimeo.com/459285786> Latin school gardens

The Master's House and Cloistered quadrangle

From above we can see how the Master's house integrates perfectly with the Cloistered Quadrangle and Old Hall and Parlour. The Solar on the first floor above the parlour is reached by the Jacobean staircase (labelled L in the old map) that was once adorned with the nationally famous carved Jacobean "Ancient Briton" statues.



Master's House

Cloistered Quadrangle

Solar

Old Hall and Parlour bay windows



Statues from the staircase

The quadrangle viewed from above and through the memorial window reveals its enduring, atmospheric quality. The quad originally included oak arches and these were replaced in 1735 with the brick columns we see today.



Quadrangle from above

Old Hall

Looking in towards the Old Hall....



Quadrangle through the memorial window

Looking out.....



Church from the quadrangle, through the memorial window

Although the drone provides a new perspective on the site and the village, wonderful views of the College and Downs are always possible from the top of the church tower.



What next for historic Wye College?

Proposals for housing The College site has been empty now for over 10 years. The owners Telereal Trillium are property developers and have planned to convert the listed buildings into 40 private residential units. The conversions will include the Medieval and Jacobean buildings at the heart of the village. Many buildings will be restructured as private houses and lost to the community forever. For example, the Master's House, Wheel room, Solar and Parlour will all become parts of private houses, and the Latin School is destined to be a garden outbuilding. Sadly, the Dining Room in the Grade II section of the campus, that I have not considered here, will also be divided up into two dwellings. The Old Hall and Cloistered quadrangle will become places for the residents of the private complex to enjoy and there may be some highly restricted access to these areas for the general public, at the discretion of a management group and reassessed on an annual basis.

In short, community access to the core Grade I and II* buildings will be lost forever. The only assured access currently in the Telereal Trillium plan is to allow the Heritage Centre to occupy a small part of the Grade II buildings. This may work but surely, we should aim to save other parts of the site for the community.

Proposals and vision for Wye Centre WyeCrag's proposals are to regenerate the heritage buildings as a dynamic cultural and community centre including a tourist information office, public library, exhibition space, education facilities and a 10-room hotel and cafe. The centre will also be able to provide facilities for Wye's societies and archives, including the Heritage Centre, Historical Society, Agricola Club, and Parish Council. Highlights will be the conversion of the medieval Solar into a Museum of Wye, to be reached by climbing the Jacobean staircase, and development of the Wheel room and Latin School Gardens into a thriving café. The Cloistered quadrangle and the Old Hall will be developed as flexible exhibition space, and the old Senior Common Room in the Master's House into a large community area, ideal for a wide range of activities. Importantly, village residents and visitors will have unrestricted access to all ground level areas of the Grade I listed buildings. The vision is to increase public access beyond that achieved when Wye College was in its heyday. Picture the café tables in the Latin School gardens shown in the video!

These viable proposals are supported by a robust business plan, detailing core funding, restoration costs, income revenue flows, and estimated running costs. This plan has been developed by a team of experienced professional advisers.

I hope that this brief newsletter will provide fresh insights into the quality of the listed buildings. Planning permission for conversion of the site to private housing has not yet been granted by Ashford Borough Council and they have put forward a strong defence of their decision in response to TT's appeal for non-determination. Encouragingly, ABC are at last supporting the guidance given in Wye's Neighbourhood Plan. The campus and two other sites in the old Imperial College holding known as WYE3, ADAS and North of Occupation Rd., will all be the subject of a public enquiry to be held early in 2021.

For more detail about the WyeCrag initiative please access the following links either directly or by copying into your browser.

<https://www.change.org/p/save-wye-s-heritage-from-the-housing-developers>

<https://www.wyecrag.org.uk>

John Mansfield
November 2020

Please note Wye Historical Society does not take a position on any of the proposals for planning permission, we prefer to leave this debate to our members in their private capacity.