

Outreach

The newsletter of the Friends of The National Archives

Vol 6: No 2, April 2019

Joint event with West Sussex Archives Society

Sussex Military Heritage: Exploring The Royal Sussex Regiment in the Archives 1701 - 1966

Monday 20 May 2019, 10.30am –
4pm, at West Sussex Record
Office, Orchard Street,
Chichester PO19 1DD.

In partnership with the West Sussex Archives Society we are pleased to present a one day symposium focussing on the collections and research at The National Archives and West Sussex Record Office. Members of both organisations will be able to come together to find out more about the national and local archives, the military history of the county and the rich and varied heritage of the Royal Sussex Regiment.

A series of RSR archives and museum objects will be on display during the day. We will meet at 10.30am for tea/coffee and biscuits before Wendy Walker, County Archivist for West Sussex, introduces the symposium at 10.55am.

To book your place go to:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/sussex-military-heritage-tickets-57109416803>



Speakers are Dr. Tony Wakeford, chairman of the Friends of The National Archives, on TNA sources for the RSR; Matthew Jones, Assistant County Archivist, on the RSR Archive at West Sussex Record Office and the RSR Heritage Project; Paul Evans, Historical Projects Officer, Army Museums Ogilby Trust, on using military collections and the work of the Trust; Barry Lane, Royal Sussex Regiment Museum Trust, on the RSR Museum collections.

There will be an hour for lunch. The

Chichester Inn and the Crate and Apple pubs are nearby, with restaurants or cafes in the town. There are no lunch facilities at the Record Office.

Coming soon *Magna*



The 2019 Annual General Meeting

Members should note that this year's AGM takes place at 5pm on Tuesday 25 June in the events space on the first floor at TNA. The AGM will include a light buffet.

Following the AGM there will be a talk by Dr Alison McHardy entitled *The*

'secret' MPs of medieval England. The talk will explore the SC10 record series.

The papers with full details will be circulated with the next edition of *Magna*, made available online and can also be collected from the Friends' lounge on or around 15 May.

MEMBERSHIP COUNTER

1128

One thing leads to another

Tony Wakeford highlights a stroke of good fortune.

From reading past editions of *Magna*, you may have realised that I have an interest in gramophone records. I have been an avid collector for more years than I care to remember. It has given me a big storage headache! I am interested in the history of recorded sound and the recording industry, with the Decca and Argo Record Companies being of particular interest.

In 2015, I started an occasional series of articles linking the gramophone records in my collection to the documentary records held at TNA. One rich source is the British Council papers (BW series) that include documents relating to the Council's programme of sponsoring the recordings of composers, authors and poets to promote British culture.

In the May 2016 edition of *Magna* I wrote a short history of the British Council's major project to record the complete works of Shakespeare by the Argo Record Company. The project ran from 1957 to 1964 and comprised the plays, comedies, tragedies and sonnets amounting to 136 long-playing records in 40 box sets. I contacted Decca, the copyright owners and now part of Universal Music, to seek permission to reproduce some images of the artwork from the series. Their permission was readily given but came with a request – Decca was about to publish the



recordings on CD and were keen to include my article in the accompanying booklet. The article provided the history and background to the recordings and was subsequently part of the limited edition set that was released worldwide.

In the follow-up to the Shakespeare project I was asked if I would be interested in being involved with the Decca 90 project. This year marks the 90th anniversary of the company, founded in February 1929. Given my interest there was only one answer to the question. And so I was commissioned to write a chapter on Decca's contribution during World War II for a book on their 90-year history to be published later this year. The history of the company from its origins to the specialist work during the war is right under our noses at TNA.

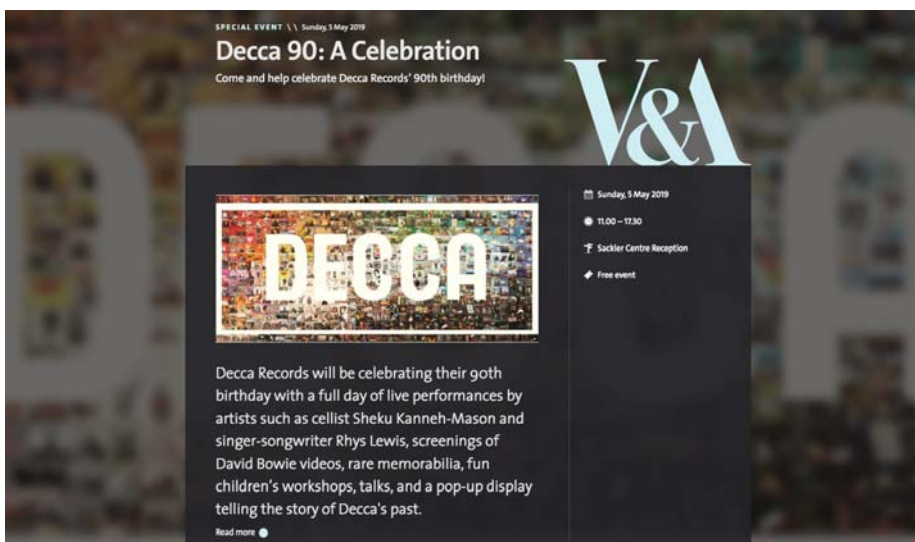
The gramophone record was used extensively during the war for a variety of purposes. Decca produced recordings of German coded radio traffic for training the operators in the Y Service to decode messages. They also assisted Anti-Aircraft Command with training records of the Friend or Foe signals

emitted by Allied aircraft to distinguish them from the enemy. A major contribution to the war effort was the development of a radio-based navigation system that was used secretly on D-Day with remarkable accuracy. It was so secret that it went unmentioned in the official published history of D-Day. The system was developed after the war and brought commercial success for the company with a worldwide system for navigation that endured until the arrival of satellite-based GPS.

Probably the most significant development the company was involved with was the work for Coastal Command and the anti-submarine war effort. Coastal Command needed training records that had a greater bandwidth of sound than was currently possible on a 78rpm shellac record. It had been discovered that U-Boats had a higher frequency sound footprint than British and Allied submarines. Due to incidents of friendly fire, Coastal Command needed to train crews to distinguish the difference. The company was successful in its research efforts and was able to exceed Coastal Command's requirements. Before the end of the war the company put their success to commercial use by producing records with a wider frequency range and thus laid the foundation for the post war recording success and the famous ffr brand – full frequency range recordings.

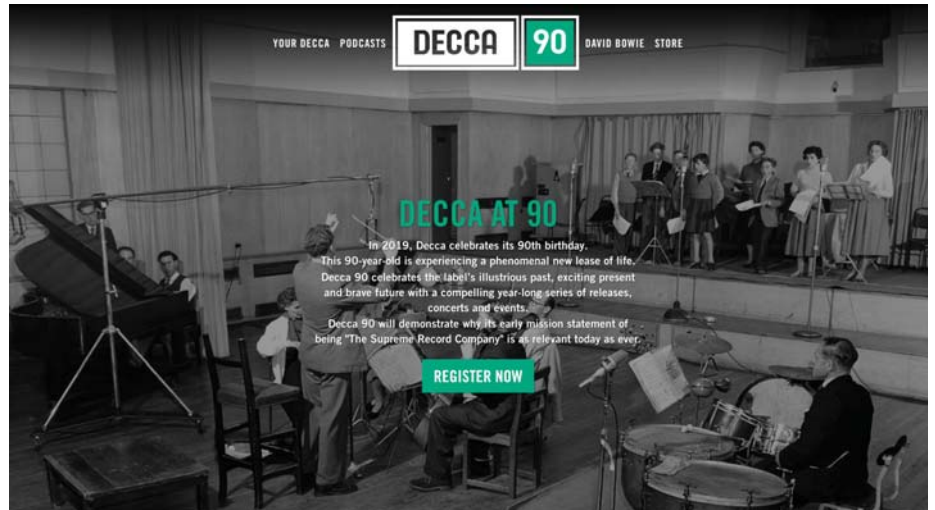
All of this and more will be celebrated at a 90th anniversary event at the V&A on 5 May with live performances, films, and an exhibition. I will be helping out on the bookstall. It will give me a golden opportunity to highlight the role and work of the Friends. I also hope to see some members – do stop for a chat. I shall also be exhibiting some items of memorabilia from my collection. Details of the event can be found at this link:

<https://www.vam.ac.uk/event/qWzn2qWj/decca-day-at-the-v-a-may-2019>



There is another event planned in July at Decca's former recording studios at Broadhurst Gardens in West Hampstead. I will be giving one of the short talks during the event. Details are currently being finalised. I am planning a members' event on Thursday 19 September in the Event's Space at TNA when I will discuss Decca's wartime contribution in more detail. There will be musical accompaniment with Decca recordings of the period and a display of company artefacts. Full details will be published in due course on our website and flyers at the recruiting desk.

Being involved in the Decca 90 project has been a fascinating and interesting experience, and I have learnt much along the way. I have also



www.decca90.com

assisted with illustrations of record covers and catalogues from my collection for inclusion in the book. I

never anticipated that asking for copyright permission would lead to such an interesting and unexpected journey.

Out & About: The 2019 visits programme

<https://ftna.org.uk/events-and-visits/>



London: Monday 20 May at 10:30 am | Duration: 1-1.5 hours
Tour of the Reform Club building and visit to the archive



Windsor - Monday 3 June at 1.45pm | Duration: 2 hours
Afternoon visit to St George's Chapel and Archives



London: Tuesday 30 July at 11am | Duration: 1 hour
Institution of Civil Engineers archive and special exhibition on Joseph Bazalgette



Leeds - Tuesday 30 July at 11am | Duration 2 hours
Morning visit to Marks & Spencer company archive followed by optional walking trail



London - Friday 23 August at 2pm | Duration: 1 hour
Afternoon visit to the National Theatre archive



London - Tuesday 10 September at 2pm | Approximate duration: 1.5 - 2 hours
Afternoon visit to the Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability Archive



London - Monday 30 September at 10.45am | Duration: 1 hour
Morning guided visit to Spencer House

DATES FOR 2019

A Friends
of The National Archives

**NEXT TOUR 1 MAY
AND THEN
27 SEPTEMBER**

Your invitation to see
behind the scenes at
The National Archives

Come on a guided tour behind the scenes.....

- Explore the vast repositories and see how documents are stored and retrieved.
- Experience cutting-edge preservation work taking place in the Collection Care department.

As a membership benefit you can book a free place on a tour to see the work of The National Archives behind the scenes.

To book email: friendsco-ordinator@nationalarchives.gov.uk
or call +44 (0) 20 8876 3444 ext. 2405

Tours start at 11am and last for approximately two hours.
They are run twice a year on:

- the first Wednesday in May
- the last Friday in September

The maximum group size is 10, and places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.



CAR PARKING

A reminder that parking charges are now in force.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Do you enjoy meeting and helping new people?

If so, and you can spare some time (on a regular or occasional basis), you could be just the person we need to be part of our team that supplies volunteers to help with various functions at The National Archives.

These include stewarding at conferences, helping with family days and other TNA and Friends events, **and especially helping staff our recruitment / members enquiry stalls (Kew Desk, or the 'pressgang')**. Which kind of activity you wish to be involved in, and how often, is up to you. To find out more about what the team does and how you might fit in please contact Howard at the email address below:

recruiting@ftna.org.uk

or drop by at one of our stalls to have a chat. The dates when the team are available can be found under the **Kew Desk Tab** (via Contact Us) on our website.

EASYFUNDRAISING

We have raised over £2,205 with grateful thanks to the 64 members who subscribe to this scheme. Please join us and help to raise even more funds to help support projects and activities at The National Archives.

Go to www.easyfundraising.org.uk and create an account. Select the Friends as your charity. When you shop online go via easyfundraising who will link you to the online retailer of your choice (there are over 2000 of them!). When you have completed your purchase in the usual way, the retailer will make a donation to easyfundraising (usually between 1 and 6 per cent of the purchase price).

A Friends
of The National Archives

Friends of The National Archives.
c/o Kelly Kimpton, Friends' Co-ordinator
The National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4DU
email: enquiries@ftna.org.uk
ftna.org.uk

The Friends of The National Archives is a registered charity (number 328630), established in 1988.