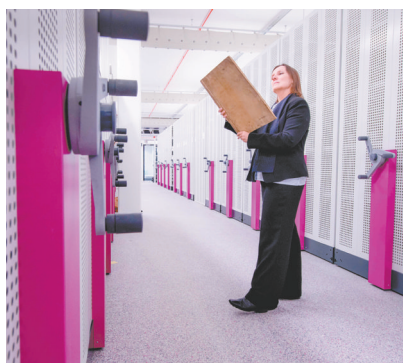


“When you’ve been in my job long enough you realise no story is genuinely new,” says Hughes. “In some ways that’s dispiriting but it can also be quite comforting.”

The Keep’s remit is geographical – anything that reflects the history of Sussex. This can mean weighty public records but is just as likely to include ephemera. When I visit the archives, conservators are restoring several Theatre Royal playbills from the mid-1800s that were bought on eBay. They were never intended to be kept but are a mine of information on everything from lost typefaces to forgotten performers and plays.

Hughes is keen to highlight the value of everyday documents, which are often thrown away or left forgotten in people’s attics. “Organisations have got better at keeping their records but we don’t tend to get so much in the way of personal diaries or letters.” One never knows what will be of interest to future generations, she says. “Modern county council material looks as dry as dust to us, yet the same records from 100 years ago can be fascinating.”



Archives are most commonly used by those researching family or local history but Hughes has seen a recent increase in interest from people delving into their own history.

“People who were adopted or in care are often interested in finding out where they came from and it’s wonderful to be able to help them with that. Although we have to work to data protection and NHS guidelines when it comes to sensitive material, there’s a lot we can help people access.”

Other visitors have more prosaic objectives. “Even if people just want to know where the drains run under their house, we can help!” laughs Hughes. “Archives can be practical, fun or quite serious. I’d be amazed if someone couldn’t find something that is of interest in our stores.”

● **The Keep is hosting an open day today, which includes free tours of the new building, conservation demonstrations and family activities. Visit thekeep.info for full details.**

Day in the life

Patricia Holden is a Brighton-based psychologist and hypnotherapist. She talks to **Nione Meakin** about ballroom dancing, reality TV and underwater adventures...



I’d describe my job as... helping people to overcome their fears, phobias and anxieties. No two days are alike. Although the problems may all be grouped under familiar headings, each client is unique.

I got into this line of work through... curiosity about the human condition and a desire to help people who feel stuck.

When I tell people what I do, their reaction tends to be... fascination, usually – and then making light of what I do by saying “Look into my eyes...”

When I was a child I wanted to be... an underwater explorer. My father was a diver and a founder member of the British Sub-Aqua Club. I had my own aqualung at nine years old and proudly held the title of Tadpole Number One.

The biggest misconception about my job is... that you can make someone do something they don’t want to do.

You wouldn’t know it but I’m actually very good at... ballroom and Latin dancing. I really love learning to dance. There’s no better feeling than when everything comes together. My favourite dance is the Tango.

My absolute favourite part of the job is... when I’ve seen a person’s potential then assisted them in making it a reality.

My biggest distraction is... I’m not easily distracted. However an engaging

psychology programme on TV might draw me in.

The most bizarre thing I’ve had to do in the line of work is... if I told you, you wouldn’t believe it, but I can’t anyway as my work is highly confidential.

I’m most proud of... when I receive feedback from some of my clients, letting me know how much better their lives are or that they’re doing things they thought they couldn’t before their work with me.

In another life, I’d rather like to be... an artist. I was constantly drawing and colouring as a child and at 16 I was accepted into the Birmingham College of Arts and Crafts.

The person I admire most professionally is... [Austrian neurologist and psychologist] Viktor E Frankl. His book *Man’s Search For Meaning* is a seminal work for me.

My guilty pleasure is... the American reality TV series *The Housewives Of...*, a window on to the mindsets of rich and not-so-famous women. I enjoy reality shows because they give an insight into real human emotions. They are modern anthropological lessons.

At weekends you’ll always find me... enjoying down-time with my family.

My life in three words... Creative, happy, fulfilling.

● **Visit hypnotherapy-brighton.co.uk**