Local History News

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AWARDS FOR LOCAL HISTORIANS

- *To encourage research and publication*
  One or more certificates may be awarded each year for published work presenting sound original research in well-written form. To be eligible a piece of work, of any length, must appear in a journal, newsletter or similar publication produced by a local voluntary body, which is sent to Dr Sarah Rose the Reviews Editor for review or listing. All relevant material sent to the Reviews Editor is automatically considered, and a short-list prepared for the Awards Panel.

- *To recognise other kinds of personal achievement*
  Up to six awards may be made each year as a means of publicly honouring local historians who have made outstanding and significant **voluntary** contributions to the subject in their own areas. The purpose of this award is to identify and publicise good practice in whatever form it appears. Nominations must be made on the form available from the Awards Secretary, on our website at www.balh.co.uk/awards.php or in the August issue of *Local History News*

- *To encourage societies to share information locally*
  An annual award for newsletters used by local societies to correspond with their members and other interested readers. Newsletters can be of any length, published at any regular interval, in any style, by any printing method. The contents, and the clarity of communication, are the key factors rather than the glossiness of production. All newsletters sent to the Reviews Editor will be considered for this award, the final decision for which lies with the Publications Committee of the BALH.

Awards are presented at the Local History Day each June

BALH Reviews Editor
Dr Sarah Rose
Department of History
Bowland College
Lancaster University LA1 4YT

BALH Awards Secretary
7 St Mark's Road
Salisbury
SP1 3AY

Cover Picture

Alan Griffin as Leamington Town Mace Bearer.
See profile p.10-11

Local History News

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How to contribute

The success of the Association in supporting and promoting local history throughout the country depends very much on contributions made by members, readers, and all those interested and concerned.

Material published in *The Local Historian* is written by a wide variety of people from many different backgrounds. Offers and suggestions for articles are welcomed, and the editor, Alan Crosby, is always pleased to discuss ideas for contributions and to advise on their preparation. 'Notes for contributors' is available on request, and can be found on our web-site. Dr Alan Crosby, 77 Wellington St, Preston PR1 8TQ

Local History News relies on material - articles, news, pictures, questions etc - from local societies and individual local historians. Please put BALH PO Box 6549, Somersal Herbert, Ashbourne DE6 5WH on the mailing list for your society newsletter and similar regular publications. Information about local initiatives is particularly welcome, and we are always keen to publish items that give examples of best practice, illustrating the diversity and vitality of local history. Readers' comments and queries allow our members to share their knowledge and enthusiasm. If there is a specific event you wish us to mention please allow plenty of time ahead of the date. The mailings are normally sent out at the end of January, April, July and October.

The BALH Reviews Editor is Dr Sarah Rose, Department of History, Bowland College, Lancaster University, Lancaster LA1 4YT. If you have a newly published work, either as an individual or a society, please send her a copy for listing and possible review.

mail@balh.co.uk is the email address
for all parts of the Association,
messages are forwarded promptly to the right person

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A centenarian

Alan Crosby

A very good friend recently celebrated his 100th birthday. He's now a resident in a care home but, surrounded by 34 nephews, nieces, great nephews, great nieces, a few great greats, and his immediate family, he marked the centenary of August 1914 in a much more cheerful way than most other people (and he knew who everybody was!). He's a great man - I've known him for almost thirty years, since he was a mere tot of seventy summers, and we explored parts of Lancashire together that neither of us had been to. He didn't drive, so he'd study the Ordnance Survey map, find somewhere that looked interesting, and we'd go off for the day to explore swallow holes and limestone pavements, disused bobbin mills and medieval ironworking sites, mill villages and wayside chapels.

I first met him when I taught continuing education classes in the late 1980s at Lytham, 'his' town, and he came along to see if I was up to scratch. I'd been forewarned and had done my homework, and fortunately I was up to scratch, because woe betide anybody who got his (or her) Lytham history wrong. His condemnation of factual or interpretational inaccuracy could be, quite rightly, very severe. Though I was an incomer to the area, and thus initially the object of some suspicion, I was partly saved by having, like Stanley, impeccable Manchester ancestry. Mancunian solidarity is an important matter, especially as my grandmother came from the same part of the city as Stanley's father.

He has taught me much and he told me much. He was an eyewitness to great local events and could recall them perfectly-for instance, he had been a precocious seven year old who stood close to the platform party on the day in 1922 when the urban districts of Lytham and St Anne's on the Sea were amalgamated to create a brand new borough, Lytham St Annes, and the royal charter was delivered by special train. He remembered travelling with his father, in the early 1920s, on the Club Train from St Anne's to Manchester-this was the exclusive special train which the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway Company ran for commuter businessmen whose offices were in the city but who had moved to live in the more salubrious environment of the breezy Fylde coast.

In the '50s he'd worked as a certified accountant, checking the accounts of small farms in the great sweep of rural Lancashire between the fells and the sea, north of Preston and south of Lancaster. There he encountered an extraordinarily traditional world, seemingly unaffected by the motor age or electricity. He once visited a smallholding where the farmer was sick and poorly. Stanley was concerned, and asked if he could do anything, but the farmer was adamant that no doctor and no medicine could cure him because "T'coo snortched a' mi". In English, that means 'the cow sneezed on me'. Ancient folk belief was that if a cow breathed on you, any infection could only be cured by time or time-honoured remedies. The NHS was 15 years old, but this might have been 500 years ago.

He once went, at the beginning of the 1960s, to a small and very old farm near Kirkham, a traditional Lancashire longhouse in which there were three or four rooms in a line, with the animal accommodation at one end. Invited to partake of a cup of tea, in the kitchen he was struck by the interesting pattern of the lino flooring, a greyish background with an unusual abstract design of overlapping white circles and squiggles (very 1950s, in fact). At that point some hens appeared from 'the house' (the living room, in Lancashire dialect) and Stanley realised that 'the lino' was actually damp beaten earth of immemorial antiquity, and the white circles and squiggles were untold generations of chicken droppings, trodden into the earthen, flattened, and built up layer upon layer. He changed his mind about the cup of tea.

London in the First World War

Jerry White

For most people in Britain the very thought of 'London at war' means just one thing - the Blitz. That extraordinary drama so dominates the idea of wartime London that it is hard to imagine the city and its people affected in any special way by the war of 1914-18. The truth, however, is much more interesting. From the moment war was declared at 11pm on Tuesday 4 August 1914 London became the hub of an ever-enlarging leviathan of total war. Londoners almost without exception were caught up body and soul in its maw. The war utterly dominated the city's life. It changed everything - not just for those four-and-a-quarter years of the most destructive war that human history had ever witnessed but for generations after.

The war had this impact because London occupied a far more dominating place in both nation and empire in 1914 than it did even twenty-five years later. The national and imperial war effort was directed from London in almost every theatre of war. A very large part of the nation's munitions were manufactured there. Almost every British soldier on his way to active service moved through it and most spent some time there. Soldiers in their hundreds of thousands from Australia and New Zealand, Canada and the USA saw something of the sights of London, from St Paul's to the Alhambra Theatre, from the Houses of Parliament to the brothels of the Waterloo Road. It was to London that the wounded were brought bleeding from France and Belgium, even from Gallipoli and Mesopotamia, and in London where refugees from the war-torn territories sought respite and perhaps to start a new life. And it was London that epitomised the wholehearted commitment - and from time to time the fearful stresses and disturbances - of a nation under nerve-breaking strain, daily affected by the shifting fortunes of total war.

It was small wonder that this strategic centre of the British and Imperial war effort was considered a legitimate target for military aggression; and small wonder too that the very notion of 'civilian' should be blurred when so many adult Londoners were effectively mechanics in this great machine of war. London was the Germans' leading target in their air war against Britain. Between May 1915 and May 1918, Zeppelins and bombing planes killed 668 persons in the Metropolitan Police District and injured 1,938 more. They caused damage to property to the value of over £2 million. The morale of Londoners was never destroyed and the capacity of the great city to wage war was affected not at all. But the nerves of many were shaken, their patience was wearied and their tempers frayed by a bombardment that, though in itself sporadic, had been an ever-present anxiety since the first winter of the war. And the bombing exposed woeful inadequacies in the response of the military and civilian



airship damage in South London, September 1915
© IWM HO 13

authorities in London that caused considerable grievance in working-class districts of the capital.

Can we construct some sort of balance sheet to weigh up the gains and losses to London caused by the First World War? On the debit side, it is likely, given the enthusiasm with which London men enlisted voluntarily in the early months of the war, that something like 100,000 were killed while serving and around 230,000 were wounded; these, together with the casualties from air raids, were the direct costs in flesh and blood of the First World War in London. Among other losses we should note that the important German-speaking minority in London was largely destroyed through deportation, its population falling from some 30,000 to 9,000.

But the war changed everything and some changes were undoubtedly for the better. We might count the progressive political shifts that the war hastened - in the rise of the Labour Party, for instance, and the increasing importance of trade unions in London's economic and political life. We must count too the enfranchisement of women and their enhanced involvement in political life; the increasing penetration of the state, by both local and central government, in the daily life of ordinary citizens, especially in the provision of services to protect health and welfare and to build modern housing accommodation for working-class families; the restrictions on access to alcohol that outlasted the war and which seem to have impacted so much on levels of public drunkenness; and the growth of office work that increased the proportion of the salaried classes in both bureaucracy and management.

These consequences of the war London shared with the nation. But there were some important local effects. One was a westward shift in the economic balance of power within London. Until 1914 London's industrial might had tended to look eastward for expansion along the River Thames and around the Port of London, and to a lesser extent to the north-east along the River Lea. But much armaments manufacture in London during the war planted itself in the west, exploiting under-used road and rail connections rather than river traffic, and building on the new industries - especially motor and to a lesser extent aeroplane manufacture - that had begun to settle in west London even before 1914. Entirely new industrial areas had grown during the war almost overnight in Park Royal, Perivale and Greenford, straddling the borders of Wembley and Acton; and Hendon, Colindale, Northolt and Hounslow saw the expansion of aeroplane manufacture and an extraordinary multiplication of aerodromes during the war. The historic connection between west London and air travel, which later had such a stunning impact on the economic fortunes of the capital, had its foundations laid during these years of the First World War.

This western shift of the economic energy of the metropolis, with its new mass-production manufactures in domestic commodities based on electrical engineering and motor component manufacture in particular and largely reliant on large numbers of women workers, had an enormous influence on the remarkable prosperity of London in the interwar period, including the years of the Great Depression. It was also a key driver in the extraordinary suburban growth of London in the 1920s and 1930s; suburban housing development affected every quadrant of the metropolis but once more it was most dynamic in west Middlesex. All these seeds too were planted and nurtured in London between 1914 and 1918.

Perhaps most of all, and in part related to this powerful push that the war gave London's manufacturing economy, the economic gains won by working-class Londoners from 1914 to 1918 were never reversed. The war largely wiped away the absolute poverty that Charles Booth uncovered in the 1880s and '90s and which had continued to blight the lives of millions of Londoners right up to the end of 1914: in east London, family poverty of 38 per cent around 1890 had fallen to 6 per cent by 1930. The war was the watershed here and it washed away forever the scourge of mass poverty that had made the East End of London known throughout the world as a byword for degradation before 1914.

Professor Jerry White, Birkbeck, University of London.

A Note on Sources

My book *Zeppelin Nights. London in the First World War* (The Bodley Head, 2014) has a full bibliography of manuscript sources (located at the Imperial War Museum, Senate House Library and London Metropolitan Archives in particular), local newspapers, and primary and secondary printed sources.

First World War Engagement Centres

John Beckett

The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) has funded five 'Engagement Centres' to be responsible for connecting the academic community to community groups, including local and regional history groups, to promote research into different aspects of the First World War during the centenary commemorations 2014-19. The five Centres are:

Voices of War and Peace –
http://www.voicesofwarandpeace.org – led by the University of Birmingham. The Centre's key research themes are gender and the home front, religion and belief, childhood, the city at war and commemoration.

Gateways to the First World War –
http://www.kent.ac.uk.ww1/ - led by the University of Kent. The Centre's key research themes are memorials, commemoration and memory; life on the Home and Fighting Fronts; the medical history of the First World War; wartime propaganda and popular culture; maritime and naval history; operational and military history.

Living Legacies 1914-18 –
http://www.livinglegacies1914-18.ac.uk – led by Queen's University Belfast. The Centre's key research themes are the forgotten First World War heritage in our landscapes; migration; and ways of expressing stories about the conflict through drama and theatre.

HiddenHistories –
www.hiddenhistoriesww1.ac.uk – led by the University of Nottingham. The Centre's key themes are migration and displacement, the experience of 'others', from countries and regions within Europe, Asia and the Commonwealth; impact and subsequent legacies of the war on diverse communities within Britain; remembrance and commemoration; identity and faith.

Everyday Lives in War –
http://www.herts.ac.uk/everyday-lives-in-war/every-day-lives-in-war led by the University of Hertfordshire. The Centre's themes include food and farming, theatre and entertainment, conscientious objection and military tribunals, supernatural beliefs, childhood, and family relationships.

A key focus of the Engagement Centres will be to provide UK-wide support for community groups funded through a range of HLF programmes, particularly its £6m 'First World War: Then and Now' community grants scheme.

Each of the Centres has a national remit, and although one institution is named as the lead, they have links nationwide through co-investigators in other universities, an extensive academic network, and supporters in the heritage world. The aim is that the Centres will put local community groups in touch with academics with an expertise in the area of interest of the group. The academic would then work with the group to plan, research and produce outputs from a project, which the Centres will be able to fund. In some cases the community group will already have applied to the Heritage Lottery Fund, or will be in the process of doing so, for support. Outputs may take the form of publications (books or journal articles), websites, exhibitions, drama, dance, art, or other forms of communication and commemoration.

Individuals or local history groups who are interested in the work of the centres are invited to contact them directly through their websites. There is no need to worry about approaching the 'wrong' Centre since they are all linked together for the purpose of sharing information and passing on approaches that they believe would better suit one of the other Centres.

The Centres are working closely with the Heritage Lottery Fund, and with BALH (through Dick Hunter and Kate Tiller), and will be updating *LHN* on a regular basis. With the initial furore accompanying the centenary of the outbreak of the Great War over, the time has

now come to think through some of the issues which relate to the conflict in a slightly less frenetic manner! The Gateway Centre is the most closely related to the actual war, particularly the Western Front, while the others are concentrating on different aspects of the war, notably on how it impacted on different communities.

Professor John Beckett
Department of History, University of Nottingham

Durham at War

On 10 September groups representing various organisations in the County met in County Hall for the launch of an interactive Map and Website devoted to the history of the First World War. **www.durhamatwar.org.uk**

One of the aims of the project is to give online public access to archive , museum and archaeology collections relating to the geographical area of County Durham as it was in 1914-18.

The various boundary and administrative changes that have taken place in the past 100 years have led to the dispersal of relevant material to different record collections and part of the mapping process will be to raise awareness of the location of such material.

Organisers of centenary commemorative events and research projects across the region will be able to promote their activities on the website and it is hoped that individuals and more informal groups will both use and contribute to it once it becomes fully interactive in November.

The launch itself included contributions from those involved in established and ongoing projects and was accompanied by an exhibition of material already available or ready to linked to or to be placed on the website.

It is anticipated that as the pieces of information come together it will be possible to click onto an interactive map of the county to find out what was happening to people living in the various communities during the course of the war and its aftermath.

Win Stokes

Find that medieval word

Margaret O'Sullivan

The completion of the *Oxford Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* marks a truly significant milestone for anyone trying to interpret Latin words or phrases in documents dating from the Middle Ages. The 17-volume dictionary, started in 1913, has reached its final definition, 'zythum', a type of fermented malt drink. Based on original research and comprising 750,000 slips for entries, with more than 100,000 different senses of words and more than 400,000 quotations, the dictionary is almost 4,000 pages long. Many examples were found by amateurs because the project depended on a large band of volunteers, including a retired clergyman, a First World War hero, and a District Commissioner in Burma, who was reported to have carried out his studies while riding on the back of an elephant. This early form of crowdsourcing enabled many unusual terms to be verified and included. For example, in defining the Latin word for 'muzzle', a quotation from 1252 was used which recorded that a muzzle had to be made for a polar bear, kept in the Tower of London, because it had to be restrained when it was taken to fish in the River Thames. The word for chimney - 'caminus' - was sourced in part from a description of an earthquake which hit England in the 1340s and which toppled chimneys. Illustrative examples also came from coroner's reports such as an account of a cat chasing a mouse down a well and then a woman drowning when she tried to rescue the cat.

The editor of the Dictionary, Dr Richard Ashdowne, has commented that such an large-scale project, which closes in September 2014, would be unlikely to be attempted now, not least because the funding of academic projects is much shorter-term. The Dictionary, published by the British Academy, costs £660, but there are plans for it to be made available in digital form.

Recovering lost medieval Yorkshire

David Crouch

Cartularies are one of the prime sources for medieval history. They are registers containing copies of deeds belonging to monastic, borough or gentry archives, made for ease of reference and as an insurance against the depredations of mice and damp on original documents. When the archive itself has disappeared, the cartulary remains a precious record of what has been lost.

From 1270 to 1640 one of the most influential of Yorkshire gentry families was the Methams of Metham (ER) Pollington (ER) and Thorner (WR). Its substantial archive is lost, apart from some isolated deeds surviving in the Mexborough collection in the West Yorkshire archives. Considering the extent of the family's possessions and influence, this is quite a loss to Yorkshire medieval history. But we know the Methams were one of those gentry families who took the insurance option of constructing a cartulary. It survived to be seen by Roger Dodsworth (1585-1654) in 1621 at Metham Hall. He described it as 'an ancient booke in the handes of Sr Thomas Metham in com. Eborum kt of transcriptes of his evidence' (Bodl. Libr. ms Dodsworth 82, fo. 11r). After 1680 there is no trace of it, and the modern catalogue (G.R.C. Davis, *Medieval Cartularies of Great Britain and Ireland*, rev. C. Breay, J. Harrison and D.H. Smith (British Library, 2010) does not mention it at all.

However, it did survive long enough to come to the attention of early antiquaries interested in the history of Yorkshire. Dodsworth has been mentioned, but it also came to the notice of Dr Nathaniel Johnston of Pontefract (c.1629-1705), a native of Reedness across the Ouse from Metham itself. Around 1670, he had his brother Henry make comprehensive notes of its contents which are now to be found amongst his transcripts bound into a collection of Yorkshire material compiled by John Burton (Bodl. Libr. ms Top. Yorks. b 14, pp. 319ff). At some point these came into the hands of Johnston's younger contemporary James Torre (1649-1699), who made abstracts from Henry Johnston's notes in the 1680s (BL ms Egerton 2574, fos 64v-69v; York Minster Libr. ms Add 59, pp. 1069-70). These have come to light during the work on VCH East Riding, volume 10 (Howdenshire).

The lost cartulary has been painstakingly reconstructed from these seventeenth-century notes. It appears that the bulk of the cartulary was compiled in the last years of Sir Thomas Metham III (died 1403) but with a variety of annotations and insertions going on into the sixteenth century. The latest dated deed in the section of the Torre transcript which belongs to the body of the cartulary carries the date 1404. We estimate that the lost cartulary originally recorded around 1,500 now lost charters, of which the contents of around 400 can be reconstructed. Several of these went back as far as the twelfth century, including otherwise unknown charters of the bishops of Durham, lords of Howden. Three-fifths of the cartulary dealt with Howdenshire properties, and the remainder with the Methams' other Yorkshire lands.

The Metham cartulary's rediscovery has allowed us to recover a huge chunk of Yorkshire's lost medieval history. It has, for instance, helped us to reconstruct the twelfth-century draining of the southern carrs of Howdenshire by Bishop Hugh du Puiset of Durham (1153-1195) and the creation of many new manors, including Metham itself (D. Crouch, 'Caville Manor and the Enterprise of the Twelfth-Century bishops of Durham' *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 86 (2014) forthcoming). An edited copy of the cartulary transcript is now available in the search room of the East Riding of Yorkshire Archives at the Treasure House in Beverley.

Prof David Crouch is Director of VCH Howden Project, Department of History, University of Hull



Home and away

Jane Howells

Alan Griffin traces his interest in local history to the encouragement and enthusiasm of his father. He has always been a keen photographer, and as a young man he appeared in print after offering illustrated articles to local papers and magazines: taking the initiative paid off. Alan spent his working life as a firefighter, and wrote *This Noble Duty: a History of Firefighting in Warwickshire* before taking early retirement in 2000. Since then he has become increasingly involved with local history activities, as well as taking on a 'wonderful variety', as he puts it, of part-time jobs. These have included court usher, museum attendant, school caretaker, and for the last 13 years he has been Leamington Town Mace Bearer. He has also found time for various voluntary roles, including stewarding at St Paul's cathedral in London on Saturdays.

In 2005 the History@BathPlace project received a Heritage Lottery Fund grant to collect and archive oral histories and reminiscences of Leamington Spa's recent past. Three years later the key people involved formed Leamington History Group with Alan as chair, to continue and develop the interest in the area's history inspired by the project. The group has grown to a current membership of over 100. They are involved in a wide range of activities, but take particular pride in their magnificent website, also largely due to Alan's initiative: 'we have embraced new technology firmly with both hands'.

Having a firm belief in sharing his knowledge and the results of his research, Alan over the years has become an expert self-publisher. His first effort came to fruition thanks to a sympathetic bank manager who thought he was approving a loan for a new car. £800 was a lot of money in those days! This was for a booklet Walton Explored: its history & wildlife written in response to enquiries from visitors to the local stately home being converted into time share apartments: another valuable maxim - identify the gap in the market. His experience of producing a number of volumes since then has also been shared with other individuals and groups who sought his advice.



Local History Day June 2014: Cheryl Butler with Professor David Hey, President of BALH

Few local historians can say they have received a medal from the President of the Czech Republic for furthering Anglo/Czech military history. Alan Griffin investigated the presence of the Free Czech Army in the area of Leamington Spa for two years during the Second World War. A distinctive parachute-shaped fountain in Jephson Gardens in the town commemorates one of the most daring undercover missions of the war, resulting in the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich, the 'Butcher of Prague'. Alan's book *Leamington's Czech Patriots & the Heydrich Assassination* also relates the terrible price paid by thousands of Czech people as the authorities took their revenge. And 'The Czech Memorial Fountain' began a series of Leamington history leaflets to encourage locals and visitors to look more closely at their surroundings.

His wide interests and deep knowledge make Alan Griffin 'a rich resource for local historians at home and abroad'. In addition to the national recognition given by the BALH award, in 2014 Alan also received a Mayor's Award in Leamington for his services to the town.

www.leamingtonshistory.co.uk

with thanks to Alan Griffin, Margaret Rushton, Barry Franklin and Terry Gardner.

See front cover picture. Alan Griffin writes:

Leamington mace

The Leamington mace is of silver gilt and was given to the then Borough of Royal Leamington Spa in 1896 by the mayor in that year, Alderman T W Thursfield a consultant at the local hospital. It is carried in front of the mayor on all civic and formal occasions such as the annual Remembrance Sunday Parade and the Mayor - Making in May. The mace was made in Leamington by a local silversmith. Coincidentally, the Hon Treasurer of the Leamington History Group, Terry Gardner is Assistant Sergeant-at-Mace in Warwick and Terry carries one of two maces still in regular use in the county town.

VCH Derbyshire

Earlier this year the Derbyshire VCH Trust held a very successful launch for Volume III, which covers Barlborough, Bolsover, Clowne, Whitwell, Elmton and Creswell. This is the first big red book for Derbyshire to be published for over 100 years, and marks a great achievement for the county editor Philip Riden and his team. The event was combined with the annual Marc Fitch lecture, given this year by BALH President Professor David Hey, who spoke on 'The origin and spread of Derbyshire surnames'.

Work is already well under way for Volume IV which will feature Ault Hucknall, Heath, Langwith, Pleasley, Scarcliffe and Sutton-cum-Duckmanton. As draft texts for volume IV become available they will be mounted on the website www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/derbyshire.

Finding archives – your views needed

Rapid progress has been made by **The National Archives** on its project to create a single point of online access to archive catalogue and organisational data from across the archive sector.

TNA's 'Discovery' is intended to enable users to search digital record descriptions for collections across the UK, not only those held by The National Archives. This includes information formerly held on 'Access to Archives' which many users have found an invaluable resource.

Importantly, 'Discovery' is planned to include new tools so that archivists can share and upload catalogues and name authority data easily. TNA is consulting with its data contributors about ways in which information can be updated on a regular basis. Once TNA is confident that 'Discovery' meets the needs of the sector and of users, existing databases will be removed. These comprise:

The National Register of Archives <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/nra/default.asp>,

ARCHON Directory <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archon/>,

Access to Archives <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a/>

The Manorial Documents Register<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/mdr/>.

You can find out more at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/finding-archives.htm> about the reasons for the closure of these resources.

'Discovery' is still in development and, because these changes will radically affect how users access online information about archives, your feedback is urgently needed on how 'Discovery' works for you. Please look at the beta version at <http://beta.discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/> Then use the 'send us your feedback' link in the beta Discovery service to offer your views or suggestions. Do also share the link with your colleagues and invite others try the beta version so that further development can be informed by as wide a range of comments as possible.

TLH medieval and early modern essay prize 2014

Alan Crosby

Last year we advertised the BALH Medieval and Early Modern Essay prize, our aim being to stimulate interest among local historians in these sometimes quite challenging and problematic periods. Many local historians are perhaps deterred from venturing earlier than the later seventeenth century, fearful of palaeography problems, the growing prevalence of Latin as you go further back in time, and maybe by the unfamiliarity of those worlds. We also hoped to redress the perceived imbalance in the content of *The Local Historian*, where there is a relative lack of pre-1700 material (I emphasise the word 'relative' here, since there are many exceptions to that generalisation).

We offered a prize of £150 and the chance to have the winning article published in *The Local Historian* – what greater incentive, and indeed greater honour, could there be? In the event, we only had three entries, which was a little disappointing, as we had advertised as widely as possible. But three birds in the hand is worth a great deal more than thirty-three in the bush, and the essays we did receive were all very interesting.

The winning contribution, by Helen Kavanagh, considered prostitution in medieval Oxford. Her article examined the sources and evidence for this intriguing urban service trade, its geographical location within the city and in the context of the university, the colourful nomenclature of the areas where it was to be found (including street-name evidence), the identity of the customers ... officially-celibate clergy being among them ... and the significance in terms of female employment. Studies such as this could be paralleled in other towns, though Oxford is notably well documented, and Helen's article very commendably drew attention to the comparative aspects, citing the experience of London and Southwark and reminding us of this being not only the oldest profession but also a universal one by indicating the possibility of looking at European studies.

John Lee's essay was about sources and methods for researching a local community in the medieval period – in this instance, the market town of Masham in the North Riding of Yorkshire. He focuses on the use which can be made of published local sources, a key point since the accessibility (or lack thereof) of medieval material is surely one reason why some are deterred. The article sets out the medieval history of Masham and its hinterland, Mashamshire (one of the sub-shires so widespread in the seven northern counties) but shows how the published sources can provide much of the evidence for such an account (and in this instance, in common with all the North and West Ridings, there is no VCH volume).

Jim Sutton also looked at a town – Nantwich in Cheshire – and sought to tease out the evidence for the emergence of its urban character and status. This brought him to the early medieval period, with the question: 'Was it an Anglo-Saxon town'? As one of the celebrated Cheshire salt 'wiches' (Northwich and Middlewich being the other prominent examples) this was a most unusual settlement in the years before and after the Conquest, and Jim analyses a checklist of criteria by which 'urban' identity might be established, concluding that there is sufficient evidence to accept that Nantwich was an urban centre by 1066, but that its distinctive history meant that it was – unusually for the period – an organically-developed trading and industrial centre, without any formal identifiers such as a charter.

I hope that we will be able to continue the essay prize scheme. It's a good way to draw attention to the periods in questions, and it means that we can (ideally) stimulate research interest among those who have not yet ventured that far back, and provide an incentive for those who have done so to bring their findings together. Watch this space!

The hidden heritage on Isaac's Tea Trail in the North Pennines

Roger Morris

Isaac's Tea Trail is a circular walk in northern England that is heritage rich though perhaps not as well known as it deserves to be. The route is over a remote mountainous area, where Northumberland, County Durham and Cumbria meet, more or less in the centre of Britain under open skies with far horizons surrounded by heather moors.

The trail is 36 miles long. Parts can be challenging, particularly over the high fells, with easier going in the riverside meadows linking the villages of Allendale, Nenthead, Alston and Ninebanks. These communities once bustled with the sounds of lead miners and their families in places now often overgrown and havens of silence and solitude. The terminal decline of the industry began around 1860. Since then the area has become the preserve of upland farms, grouse shooters and a refuge for wildlife. Nevertheless, hidden away is an eventful history by no means confined to mining which be discovered by following in Isaac's footsteps.

Isaac Holden was a lead miner who turned to selling tea during the recession in the lead trade in the early 1830s. He made his door to door deliveries on foot and was further motivated by his Methodist faith to raise money, including the sale of his self penned 'poems', for an impressive variety of community ventures. Happily his tea business also prospered with his charity work.

The inscription for 'Isaac's Well' was carved in stone in 1849 and marks the start and finish of the trail in Allendale market place. There are further reminders of Holden's endeavours around Allendale at the old savings bank, a couple of chapels (one now the public library), his memorial in Allendale churchyard and the quaint wayside hearse house at Ninebanks. More about the hearse house shortly.

The trail is a reflection of the unchanged character of the countryside where Isaac Holden travelled doing his tea rounds. Also there is Alston Moor, where generations of Holdens before had been miners and tenant farmers. His cousin, another Isaac born in Scotland, came from similarly humble origins to achieve wealth and fame by building a textile empire run by a dynasty of the next generation of Holdens in Bradford. Later Sir Isaac embarked on a long career as the Liberal MP for Harrogate and Knaresborough. He was made a baronet before his death in 1897.

Going further back in time to the turbulent times of the border reivers, the trail is notable for the large number of defensible farmsteads or bastles with their characteristic megalith shaped doorways passed at regular intervals. In 2009 the contractors for English Heritage repaired the bastle ruin at Rowantree Stobb (above) in the East Allen valley to prevent further deterioration and this is well worth a visit. A bread oven believed to be of 18th century origin was exposed on the first floor during the repairs.



Also of significance is the strong Methodist heritage with the locations of 30 chapels known. Pride of place goes to Keenley chapel

from 1750. Though rebuilt it has been in regular use for worship ever since and is one of the oldest Methodist chapels in the world. At the nearby farm of Keenley Thorn an original Daguerreotype image from 1854 of Isaac Holden was found. This is the only known survivor of the 1000 printed to promote Isaac's philanthropic work. John Wesley is known to have preached at five locations along the trail to the miners and hill farmers.



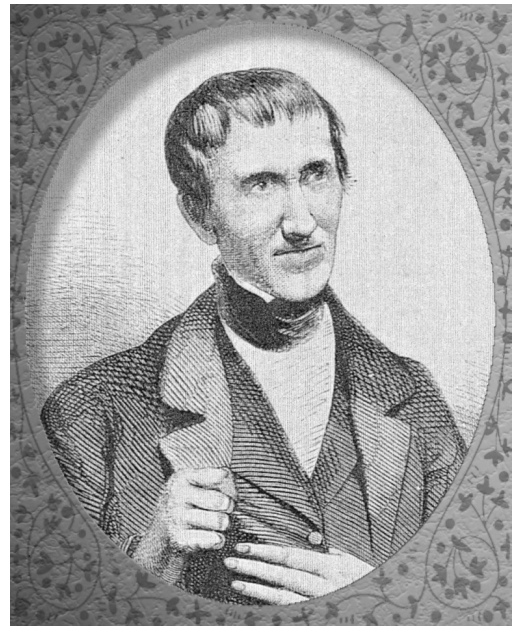
At Ninebanks Isaac Holden raised the funds for a horse drawn hearse for the West Allen valley. This was his last fund raising effort before he died in 1857. There may have been an element of self interest in this undertaking, as he was among the first to need the hearse for his own burial. Remarkably, the building specially constructed for the hearse has survived (above), albeit in poor condition and has been awarded a grant for restoration through the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Allen Valleys Landscape Partnership Scheme.

Isaac's Tea Trail was launched in 2002 to raise awareness of the North Pennines heritage with a support group of Friends, and to encourage the use of local youth hostels. Since 2007, the trail has been administered and developed by volunteers through Allenheads Trust Ltd. The trail is printed on Ordnance Survey Maps OL 31 North Pennines and OL 43 Hadrian's Wall and Landranger Hexham and Haltwhistle 87. Walkers can find their way by the signs with the distinctive image of Isaac Holden based on his original photograph and the occasional dedicated finger post signs at key points.

In 2012 the trail was given a new lease of life with a North Pennines LEADER grant for over £13,500 including other contributions from charities to cover the cost of a quality trail guide with mapping, leaflet, interpretive panels and improvements to the paths. The trail also brings together accommodation and service providers, and has been supported by Allendale Parish Council and Northumberland County Council. A trail steward's group exists to help maintain the trail and its heritage features are represented on Heritage Open Days programmes and at history fairs.

The trail guide, *A guide to Isaac's Tea Trail Hidden Heritage in England's North Country* (2013) also includes a selected 100 people and places of interest to be found along the way. This is available from Allenheads Trust Ltd, Heritage Centre, Allenheads, Hexham, Northumberland, NE47 9HN for £6.00 including postage or £4.95 direct, and from local Tourist Information Centres.

A trail leaflet including a choice of shorter tea trail routes can also be downloaded from the website *www.northumberlandlife.org/teatrail* along with further information.



Peter McNiven
1944 - 2014

It is with great sadness that we record the death on 24 June 2014, at the age of 69, of Peter McNiven, a well-known medieval historian and a distinguished Head of Special Collections at The John Rylands Library in Manchester.

Peter was born in Doncaster, Yorkshire, on 22 September 1944. His family moved to Lancashire and Peter was educated at Prescot Grammar School and Manchester University. He gained a First in History in 1965, and was awarded an MA in 1967 for a thesis entitled, 'Rebellion and Disaffection in the North of England, 1403-08'. His PhD, supervised by Professor John Roskell and awarded in 1977, was on 'Political Development in the Second Half of the Reign of Henry IV, 1405-13'.

Peter joined the University of Manchester Library in 1969. Although he spent most of his career working in the University Library on Oxford Road, he will be best remembered for his outstanding work as Head of Special Collections (1988-2000), based in the John Rylands Library. He played a pivotal role in revitalizing the department through the first John Rylands Research Institute, and the 'Visitor Initiative' which saw the appointment of the Library's first Exhibitions Officer and the refurbishment of what is now known as the Rylands Gallery (then the only space open to the public on the ground floor). He also coordinated the Library's successful bid to HEFCE for a major retro-conversion and cataloguing project in the mid-90s. Another of his lasting achievements was the special issue of the Bulletin of the John Rylands Library in 2000, which contained his articles on the history of the Library since 1972 and a catalogue of the 'Scholar's Paradise' centenary exhibition, which remains an invaluable reference tool.

Peter was a highly respected medieval historian who, despite holding an important and demanding role in the University Library, was able to write a substantial monograph (*Heresy and Politics in the Reign of Henry IV: The Burning of John Badby*, 1987) and many academic articles. He was a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. In Manchester, he played an active role in many historical societies, including the Manchester Medieval Society, the Ranulph Higden Society, the Chetham Society and the Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire.

It was Peter's work as general editor of the Record Society from which he derived particular pleasure, especially after his retirement. He held the position twice - from 1984 to 1994 and from 2002 until 2012, and always said that if he could have afforded to be a full-time editor and writer, he would have been very happy. His work always extended well beyond the vital oversight of layout, or of printing and binding - the bread and butter tasks of a general editor. In all, he supervised the publication of some eighteen volumes. Though three lay in his own specialist academic area of later medieval England, most post-dated medieval times: 'his' volumes ranged from the eleventh century to 1929! He achieved an almost equal spread of subject matter between the two palatine counties.

When colleagues and friends reminisce about Peter, the most common description of him is that of a 'true gentleman'. This is not to say that he was quaintly old-fashioned; he was not. He disliked being a 'boss', although ironically he was good at it. He was a fair man and an exceptionally kind and compassionate person who commanded great respect from all who knew him. His interests were wide. Besides historical pursuits, he was an accomplished amateur ornithologist, artist, budding novelist and a great political and sports pundit. He will be sorely missed by all of us who were privileged to know him.

From a longer appreciation of Dr Peter McNiven's life and work written by Dorothy Clayton, University of Manchester

"My cravings of hunger were more than I could possibly have imagined…."

Natalie Whistance

The Pauper Prisons … Pauper Palaces (Midlands) project will shortly be coming to an end. This saw volunteers from across the Midlands working on digital images of poor law union records from Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Worcestershire and Staffordshire, which are now held at The National Archives.[1] We have uncovered a huge amount of fascinating and detailed information that sheds light on the conditions and experiences of the Victorian poor as well as the of those employed in the workhouses.

As the project progressed we discovered a lot of material concerning the health of the poor: widespread outbreaks of contagious diseases, the unsanitary housing conditions, the welfare of paupers identified as 'lunatics' or 'feeble minded', or individual cases requiring medical aid such as women in labour, people suffering from and being treated for typhoid or cholera, or those who suffered work related accidents.

Such cases as these have highlighted the work of the union medical officers. It was their job to advise on or attend to such matters. They had a wide variety of responsibilities; 'He had to be sanitarian, surgeon, psychiatrist, midwife, and disciplinarian, as well as physician.'[2] We have seen several instances in the records of medical officers being charged with neglect, in the form of refusing to attend poor patients when requested or attending too late to do anything of use, not prescribing proper medicine or making sure it was administered correctly.

While many of these neglect cases were clear instances of malpractice, we do also see incidences of medical officers 'going the extra mile' to professionalise the service and improve the lot of the poor. I thought that in this report on the project I would focus on a single letter. In Bromsgrove in 1868 the workhouse medical officer, Thomas Fletcher, proposed a change in the workhouse dietary to include more meat. The guardians asked the opinion of the Poor Law Board before approving the change and after receiving an unenthusiastic response to the proposed alterations decided to continue with a dietary put in place in 1846. The letter from John Humphreys, Clerk to the Guardians, informing the Board of this decision also encloses a copy of a letter from Fletcher giving his opinion on this old dietary.

It is a fascinating letter (see Fig 1, opposite) and indicative of the intimate detail which the records afford the local historian. It is a damning report of the old dietary in which he states that he was first alerted to the insufficiency of the dietary by 'an Idiot eating gravel 'because he was hungry''. Before suggesting any alteration Fletcher stated that he lived a week in 1837 on the workhouse diet for the able-bodied inmates. He states that 'My cravings of hunger were more than I could possibly have imagined or can describe'. He goes on to say that he has since know the inmates as well as idiots eat 'putrid horse flesh and Oil cake intended for the dogs', while 'others have eaten their poultices'. The quantity of meat per week that the able bodied now have at his recommendation is only slightly more than a tenth part of what the convict or soldier has. Reducing the quantity of meat to half a pound per week would be reducing the dietary to 'a painful and dangerous standard'. [3]

One of the problems faced by the medical officers was that in the early days of the Poor Law Commission and the Poor Law Board they welded less power than they would have liked. Until the 1870's guardians were not compelled to accept the recommendations of the medical officers. The workhouse master and the guardians, who would have been watching the finances of the workhouse, might well ignore the workhouse medical officers' advice, as seems to have happened in this case.

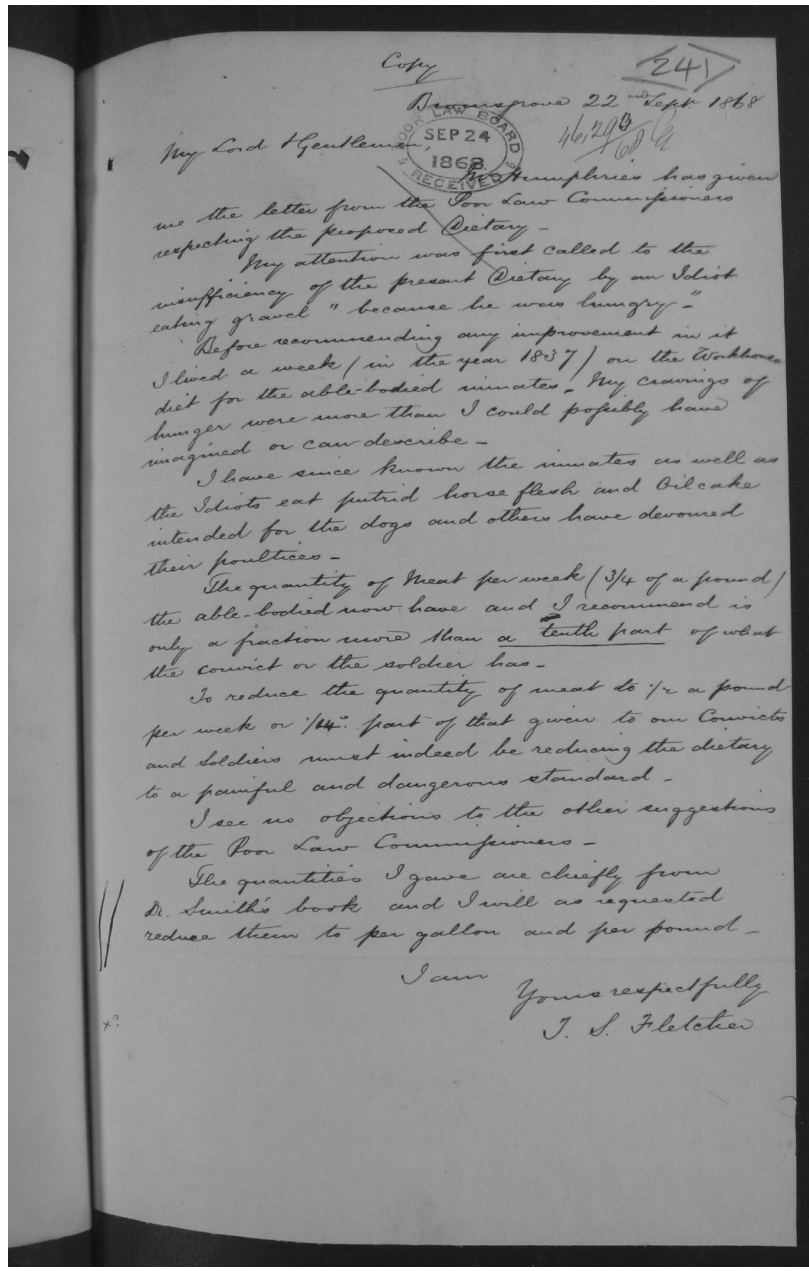
Welfare, then as now, is/was a matter of huge concern for those on the receiving end. The

records, which cover England and Wales, are an essential and detailed source for any local historian

1 These are taken from the Poor Law Union correspondence held in series MH 12.

2 M.A. Crowther, *The Workhouse System 1834-1929* The University of Georgia Press, 1981, pp.163-164.

3 MH 12/13913, Bromsgrove Poor Law Union correspondence, folio 240, 23 September 1868.



Copy

241

Bromsgrove 22nd Sept 1868

POOR LAW BOARD SEP 24 1868 RECEIVED

46,296

My Lord & Gentlemen,

Mr Humphries has given me the letter from the Poor Law Commissioners respecting the proposed Dietary -

My attention was first called to the insufficiency of the present Dietary by an Idiot eating gravel " because he was hungry -"

Before recommending any improvement in it I lived a week / in the year 1837 / on the Workhouse diet for the able-bodied inmates - My cravings of hunger were more than I could possibly have imagined or can describe -

I have since known the inmates as well as the Idiots eat putrid horse flesh and Oilcake intended for the dogs and others have devoured their poultices -

The quantity of Meat per week / 3/4 of a pound / the able-bodied now have and I recommend is only a fraction more than a tenth part of what the convict or the soldier has -

To reduce the quantity of meat to 1/2 a pound per week or 1/14th part of that given to our Convicts and Soldiers must indeed be reducing the dietary to a painful and dangerous standard -

I see no objections to the other suggestions of the Poor Law Commissioners -

The quantities I gave are chiefly from Dr. Smith's book and I will as requested reduce them to per gallon and per pound -

I am

Yours respectfully

J. S. Fletcher

Fig 1. MH 12/13913, Bromsgrove Poor Law Union correspondence, folio 240, 23 September 1868.

ODNB is 10

September 2014 marked the tenth anniversary of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* online, and the update for that month is the 30th release of new biographies in that time. Over those years many people have contributed, drawing attention to omissions of local significance who also played a part in our national history. A good example is the new entry written by William Evans, member of Avon Local History & Archaeology as well as BALH, on Norborne Berkeley (1717-1770). Although described as 'politician and colonial governor' Berkeley was also closely involved with his West Country estates. (Most readers can get access to ODNB at home via their local public library membership).

A guide to bad chairmanship

Phoebe Merrick

Review your practices with the intention of worsening them ...

If you want a guide book to meeting procedures, there are various texts available. One that I was given in the 1950s was *The ABC of Chairmanship* by Lord Citrine. It is a very detailed text and I was fascinated by the section on how to deal with disorder up to the stage where the meeting had to be closed and the Police summoned. Citrine also described the procedures that are allowed under various constitutions, including what constitutes a 'point of order' and the need to keep contributions relevant. The book includes hints on running a meeting.

It is true that most local history societies have a constitution, albeit not as complex as those described by Citrine. It is also true that our members are more likely to fall asleep than riot at meetings, so Citrine's advice while exhaustive, does not wholly apply to our experience. However Citrine was concerned with the good order and management of meetings. I wish to concentrate on the bad management of meetings, and will here only look at the public lectures that most of us arrange.

I will assume that the hall and speaker have been booked and that the speaker knows when and where he or she is expected, and even where to park the car. When the speaker arrives at the hall, perhaps the chairman or speaker's organiser will greet them. If neither is available, then the speaker can be left standing around until greeting is convenient.

Amongst the greetings, the following can be borne in mind: 'We usually have a bigger audience than this'. If the speaker is showing pictures, you need to decide whether to get the equipment set up in advance or after the initial business meeting is over. The latter has the advantage that the speaker cannot test that all is well without keeping the audience waiting and it can put him or her on the back foot if the computer decides to play up.

I assume that you always start the meetings late, because you are waiting for X to arrive, and have no compunction about keeping waiting those who arrived on time. Start the meeting without introducing yourself, or any of the committee who are at the top table with you. After all, your regular members know you and the others have yet to win your acceptance as one of the in-crowd. A good opening line is to berate the audience for the small attendance, since they have turned up and are there to be berated.

The ways of dealing with necessary business is an art form in its own right. There are badly-read minutes, detailed discussions about catering arrangements, glossing over arrangements for outings, reading unsorted correspondence; and what treasurers can do when given the floor is amazing.

If you have an agenda, there are two ways of handling it. You can keep to it slavishly or you can dodge about raising matters that you care about, and overlooking others on the list. 'Matters Arising' give splendid opportunities for confusion. If dealt with conscientiously, you can effectively do the business twice, once as Matters Arising and once under the relevant heading on the agenda. This leaves the members not knowing when to raise issues and if handled by an expert, can lead to debate on when to take a subject, rather than the subject itself.

The business out of the way, you then introduce the speaker, whose name and subject you may have forgotten. If you have been given a few biographical notes you might read them out. Be sure that you have not looked at them in advance, lest you read them coherently. Otherwise just give the speaker's name or title, or whatever you can remember and let the speaker introduce himself or herself.

At the end of the talk, ask for questions, but don't count to five or delay in any way and if no hand goes up immediately, say 'no questions' and call for the vote of thanks, or give the thanks yourself, whatever is custom and practice in your society.

The speaker thus finished with, you can close the meeting by advertising next month's meeting with the words 'And next month we have a really interesting speaker …'

Reference: Walter Citrine, The ABC of Chairmanship, (NCLC Publishing Society Limited, 1952)

Stamford Boys 1911

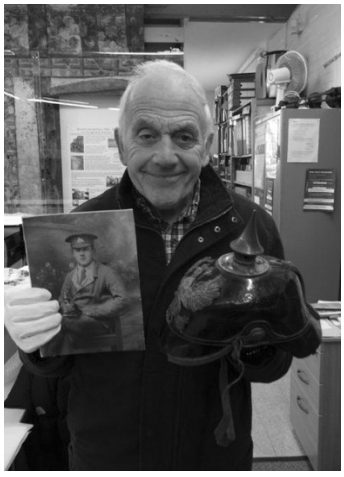
the first research project of the newly formed Stamford & District Local History Society

Sue Lee and Jean Orpin

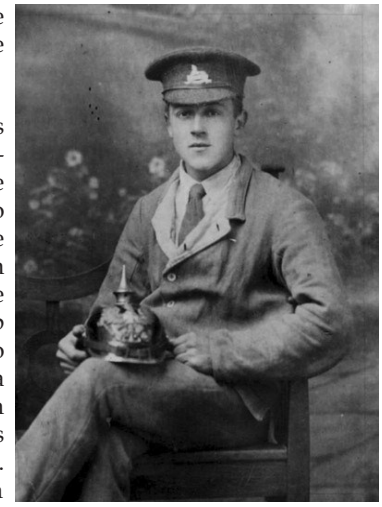
We go to Remembrance Day services and say 'We will remember them' but do we know whom to remember? In most cases, we have a list of names of those who died but often no further information. And should our remembrance be confined only to those who died? What about the others who came back, some maimed for life, others to resume a civilian life - should we not also remember them? We decided to find out more about the Stamford Boys who served in WW1.

Rather than concentrate on those who were killed, our intention was always to include ALL the boys and to produce short accounts of as many of them as possible before, during and after the War. Where did they live? What did they do for a living? Which school did they go to and (for those who went to the war) which regiment did they join? What did the others do at home during the war? What did those who went away do after the war?

The first aim of the project was to identify all the boys aged 11-16 yrs living in Stamford in 1911 (using the census returns) to find out where they lived and more about their families. It was suggested that we should include girls; however by that time the initial list of boys had been created and it was rather a shock to discover that there were 437 in the age group!



Members of the society were invited to join in the research and, as the group began to meet, a record form was devised. Although these forms don't quite fit every boy, we believe they will create a valuable archive for future researchers.



above George Rudkin

below left Phil Rudkin with German helmet at Stamford Museum

Online resources have been available for much of the material we have used such as census returns, military records and records of births, marriages and deaths in civil registration and parish registers. Unfortunately *Stamford Mercury* editions after 1913 are not yet available online, but these are available in Stamford Library and in the *Stamford Mercury* Archive. In 1919, Stamford's mayor collected information about those who had served from families in the town, and this, kept at the Town Hall, has been invaluable. The Town Hall's collection of local Trade Directories is also useful.

The research group has met regularly, about once a month, to share knowledge and progress. Members have been able to offer

various valuable skills - computing, local expertise, collecting data, photography - and appeals to local people have brought interesting contributions. One person brought along a selection of documents and photographs relating to his grandfather including one where he was holding a German helmet. We managed to track down the actual helmet which had been donated to Stamford Museum. Although now closed to the public, the Museum retains much of its collection and he was thrilled when staff located it for him, (see pictures on previous page).

Many of our Stamford boys already belonged to the Territorial Army and others responded quickly to recruitment campaigns. We were surprised to discover that they did not all enlist with the local regiments and through the War served with many other regiments. In due course we will be able to take this further and make an analysis of the regiments and where the boys served.

Something between 200 and 250 of the boys have now been investigated and their stories are often very moving. We have found local examples to supplement the accounts we read about in history books. There are numerous instances of several boys from one family going to war and we have become aware how the impact of death, injury and the experiences of war were not confined to the immediate family because here in Stamford so many families were inter-related. Few were unaffected.

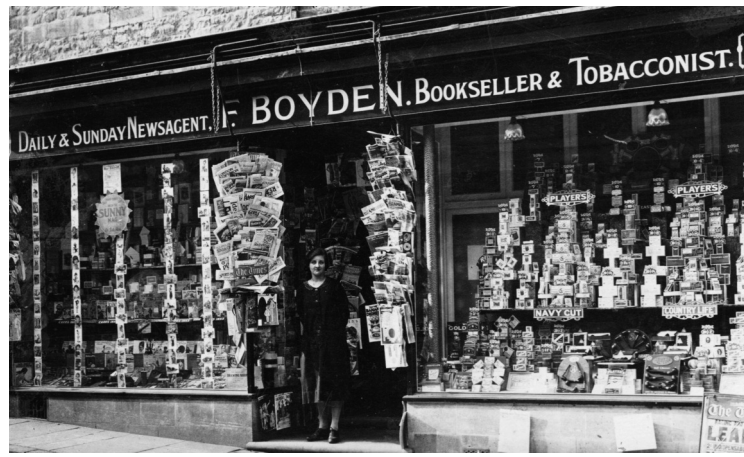
Many seem to have married quite soon after the war, presumably anxious to have a family. Everyone who has come forward with personal recollections has commented on how quiet these men were, how they did not speak about their experiences. Some were unable to return to work due to their physical disabilities. One of the boys who enlisted at the very beginning of the War served in France and Belgium then went to the Dardanelles where he was wounded and reported missing. After three days he was found and went on to serve in Egypt. He returned to work at the local brickworks but was often unfit for work and suffered from recurring mental problems as a result of his wartime experiences. He died in Rauceby Mental Hospital. Some did manage to put the War behind them – two became Mayors and one of our researchers could personally remember another who became a good fisherman despite losing the use of his right arm.

For each boy researched a short biography has been written up and where possible a photograph added. Photographs of the house where they lived (or a street map if the house no longer exists) have been added, and this in particular has created local interest. The pages have been collected into loose leaf files covering individual streets or areas and the files have been designed so that they can easily be altered.

In due course it is planned to put our whole archive online, making it available for further research but there are many more boys to cover before full analysis of the results can be undertaken. Other resources – church records for example - are yet to be to investigated and as more material comes online, in particular later censuses and newspapers, the archive can be augmented in the years to come. This project will inevitably be ongoing.

For further details and general enquiries see www.stamfordhistory.org.uk

For queries on specific people please email suelee54@hotmail.com



Frank Boyden was gassed in 1918 but returned to Stamford, married Rita (pictured here) and ran a successful business at 17 All Saints Street



This issue of *Local History News* has what is perhaps a surprising number of articles with 'medieval' in their title (as well as the First World War, and other more recent anniversaries, of course). So this news review starts with an early medieval project being undertaken by an enterprising local society.

Romsey Local History Society has been fortunate to receive a bequest which is allowing the group to fund a study of the lower Test valley in the Dark Ages. The initial stages of this three-year project have involved producing a detailed plan that sets out clearly the parts that will be done by the 'amateur' members and those that will be contracted to professional and academic contributors. They will be working with the University of Winchester and with Dr Alex Langlands in particular. *www.ltvas.org.uk*

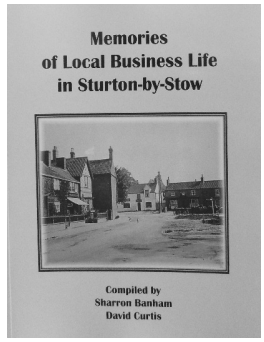
The **Welsh History Forum** aims to promote awareness of Welsh history, and one of their valuable roles is to assist small Welsh history societies to attend the National Eisteddfod each year. In 2014 they helped 12 local societies to be represented which would otherwise not be possible. The Forum also runs an annual conference. This year the topic is the History of Transport in Wales, and the dates are 7 - 9 November (course E1102). The conferences take place at the Snowdonia National Park Study Centre, Plas Tan y Bwlch, a historical venue in itself having been built for the masters of the slate workings in Blaenau Ffestiniog. *www.eryri-npa.gov.uk/study-centre*

Brecknock History Forum gathers together groups in the old county of Breconshire with an interest in local or family history. From a small number beginning a couple of years ago their meetings now average 20, and there is a mailing list of 26 organisations. There is no committee, constitution or bank account, it is a very informal arrangement designed to help the exchange of ideas. Each group now knows about the others, their geographical areas and specific interests. Partnerships have evolved to share exhibitions and other activities. A newsletter *Hanes* is produced three times a year and distributed electronically. Together they have started Brecknock History Week, a long week in September, overlapping with Open Doors which celebrates the architecture and history of Wales. Each member group organises at least one activity – some do ten! All the events are advertised in a booklet supported by local organisations and advertising. It has proved an excellent way to promote local history across a wide public. The Forum requires little administration but generates huge benefits from working together. On a very practical note, can anyone recommend software for creating a computer database of the occupants of property in the town? Please copy mail@balh.co.uk in to your reply. *Welsh History Forum c/o Brecon Library, Ship Street Brecon LD3 9AE*

Some 50 years ago, under the tutorship of Lionel M. Mumby M.A. the Hatfield branch of the WEA researched and published thirteen booklets, under the main title 'Hatfield & Its People'. These booklets are regarded as exceptionally authoritative and informative, and continue to be the primary source of reference for anyone interested in the history of Hatfield. **Hatfield Local History Society** has now reissued the booklets adding comprehensive indexes which greatly improve the accessibility of the text. *Email hatfieldhistory@ntlworld.com*



The **Sturton & Stow History Society** has been running for four years and during that time has built up a large membership growing out of 10 people meeting one September afternoon in the village hall to discuss all possibilities. They hold monthly talks covering a wide range of historical subjects with a Lincolnshire flavour. Four Open Days have come and gone to much acclaim and last month they were delighted to publish their first book - *Memories of Local Business Life in Sturton by Stow. Details can be seen on the website - sshs.btck.co.uk*



On page 30 you will read about the changes at **Yorkshire Archaeological Society**. Since Claire Cross's note was written it has been announced that the Archives would be closed from 1 October 2014 in readiness for their deposit on loan in the Brotherton Library, though the YAS library will remain open under its present opening hours at Claremont until at least 31 December 2014.

The programme of **Leominster Historical Society** demonstrates the variety of topics local historians find of interest – from plant finders, and women's clothing in the Great War, to the development of photography, and the archaeology of the turnpike. The society's meetings will be moving in the New Year from Earl Mortimer College to Grange Court (below). That building has its own fascinating history. Built in 1633 by John Abel it originally stood at the top of Broad Street and housed the butter market. By the mid-19th century it was becoming a traffic hazard and was dismantled, later rebuilt on the Grange park. It became council offices following compulsory purchase in 1939 (to prevent another move) and has recently been refurbished as a 'Community, Enterprise and Heritage Hub'. *Chairman 01568 611398 www.leominsterhistorical.org*



The 49th local History Conference organised by **London & Middlesex Archaeological Society** will take place on Saturday 22 November at the Museum of London. This year the title is 'Coppers, Crooks and Counsel: Law and Order in London'. In addition to a programme of papers on wide-ranging topics, there will be society displays and the presentation of local history publications award.
www.lamas.org.uk/conferences/local-history/localhistory2014.html

Stonehouse History Group has reached issue 4 of its *Journal*. They are keen to encourage members to contribute articles, and provide a useful set of guidelines on their website. Another policy is to bring to their members in-depth research published elsewhere. Most organisations are happy to share such material. For example this issue contains an article about a local 'lost cricket bat willow plantation' that first appeared in the *Journal* of the Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology. The group was able to contribute additional photographs and information. *www.stonehousehistorygroup.org.uk*



part of the willow plantation during the 1920s or 1930s, irrigation channel visible on the left

Merseyside Industrial Heritage Society celebrates its 50th birthday this month with a special meeting at which a hot buffet supper preceded a lecture by distinguished speaker Sir Neil Cossons OBE on 'Liverpool's heritage – the next 50 years'. *www.mihs.org.uk*

A recent talk on 'Folk Lore and Archaeology' generated correspondence for **Basingstoke Archaeological & Historical Society**. Stressing the importance of the evolution of stories and complex beliefs over a very long period of time, it was pointed out that oral traditions over generations had no identifiable origin, though maybe an end point with the written word for working people. *www.bahsoc.org.uk*

Inevitably there will be occasions when a speaker is unable to meet their commitment to a society's programme. Normally someone present will step in to fill the gap, or to arrange an alternative activity at short notice. When this happened to **Edmonton Hundred Historical Society** lecturer Allick Barnett wrote up his talk for their *Newsletter*. In three instalments the history of local electricity, 'The story of the North Metropolitan Electric Supply Company' has been published for all to read. Here is there splendid headquarters on Cannon Hill. *www.edmonton hundred.org.uk*



'Our Warwickshire' is a new website with the aim of celebrating and sharing Warwickshire's history. It has been developed as a collaborative project by Warwickshire's museums, archives, local history groups and communities. Under 'Organisations' local groups can add content about themselves, and groups and individuals can submit articles for publication online. *www.ourwarwickshire.org.uk*

Berkshire Local History Association's *Newsletter* September 2014 contains information about some of the country's activities relating to the centenary of World War One. The quantity and variety of projects by individuals, groups, organisations and businesses is vast. Thames Valley Police, West Berkshire Brewery, Reading Old Cemetery, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Stockcross local history society are just a few. *www.blha.org.uk*



The Heritage Gateway should be the first port of call for anyone interested in local and national information on the historic environment in England. It operates as a portal to allow users to find historic sites, including images of listed buildings. The resources include over 60% of local authority historic environment records; the National Heritage List for England (the statutory record); Pastscape and other English Heritage datasets such as Images of England, and Viewfinder; National Trust Historic Buildings Sites and Monuments Record; Parks and Gardens UK; and Public Monuments and Sculptures Association.
www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/

School registers, attendance records and logbooks 1879-1914 are the latest addition to the subscription website **Findmypast**. A huge digitisation project is making available this material which is such as rich resource for local and family historians. Twelve counties are so far online, and there will be two more phases of release in Spring and Autumn 2015.
www.findmypast.co.uk

School records are an important and popular source that can throw light on many aspects of community life. The latest volume from the **Hertfordshire Record Society** is Weston School Log Books 1876 – 1914. The school, between Stevenage and Baldock, was founded in 1847 but in January 1883 the buildings and almost all their contents were destroyed by fire. One log book survived. *www.hrsociety.org.uk www.harpendden-history.org.uk*

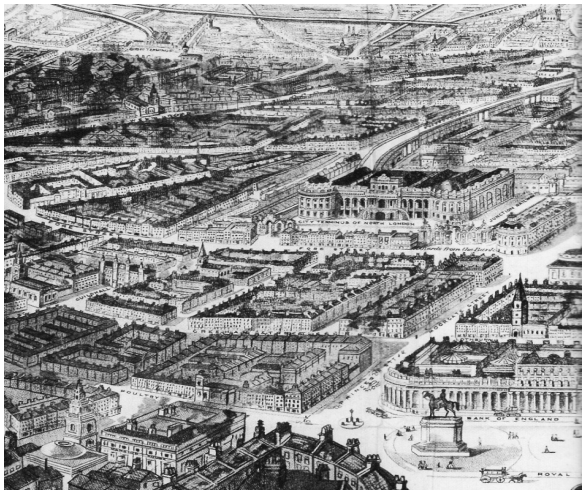
Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies offer free monthly sessions that initiate new visitors to the paper and online catalogues, and give 'top tips' from their experienced staff. *www.hertsdirect.org/services/leisculture/heritage1/hals/*

Whenever you are planning a visit to a record office, do remember to check their particular arrangements. **Bedford & Luton Archives & Records Service** have introduced a booking system so it is necessary to make an appointment before visiting. *www.bedford.gov.uk/archive*

www.heritageheroes.org.uk is the home of **Shropshire's Virtual Volunteers.** This innovative scheme will allow people who cannot get to a museum or archive site to contribute online. They want to attract all levels of expertise and there will be a variety of tasks to be done. At present projects cover Roman coins, commercial directories, bank notes and much more. Volunteers might be transcribing, translating, indexing or spell checking, all helping to enhance the information for the public on the Shropshire Archives online catalogue.

A new addition to the research guides from **Sheffield Archives & Local Studies** describes sources of information for and approaches to studying Disability History. Records include church records in the 17th century, Victorian institutions such as the Sheffield Institute for the Blind, and the birth of the National Health Service in 1948.
www.sheffield.gov.uk/libraries/archives-and-local-studies

The 'Document in focus' in the August 2014 issue of Magna from the **Friends of the National Archives** is a design registered for copyright protection in 1846 for the London Grand Central Railway Terminus. It is a remarkably detailed view of London at the time (part below). BT 43/213/33244 *www.friendsofthenationalarchives.org.uk*



Gloucestershire Archives is the winning applicant of the Business Archives Council cataloguing grant for business archives for 2014. Launched in April 2010, the grant is in support of the National Strategy for Business Archives. The judging panel on behalf of the Council has awarded the grant to Gloucestershire Archives for the cataloguing of the records of Listers of Dursley, engineers. *To find out more, please follow the link below: http://www.businessarchivescouncil.org.uk/activitiesobjectives/catgrant/2014_catgrant*

Birmingham's Assay Office has been awarded a £70,000 grant to create a digital archive. The Assay Office was founded in 1773 by industrial pioneer Matthew Boulton and its mark – an anchor – has already been struck on over 125 million articles in the first 14 years of the 21st century. With thousands of items spanning nearly 250 years of Birmingham's jewellery and metalworking industries, the Assay Office's private silver, coin and medal collections chronicle changes in manufacturing techniques, fashion, social history and lifestyles of the area. *www.theassayoffice.co.uk*

An archive documenting how **Colman's Mustard** impacted on the people living and working in Norwich has been launched to mark the 200th anniversary of the product. The gallery of vintage pictures, which shows the rise of the condiment to a favourite kitchen staple, includes photographs, posters, leaflets and articles dating back to 1814. The popular product was founded by former flour miller Jeremiah Colman and sold as a powder for people to mix into a paste. A special exhibition will be held 10 – 16 November.
www.themustardshopnorwich.co.uk

Guinness has opened up its recipe archives to produce a new range of porters. Guinness Dublin Porter and Guinness West Indies Porter have been based on recipes discovered in the brewery records, dating back to 1796 and 1801. Head of innovation at Guinness Nick Curtis Davies said: 'It's one of the most exciting times to be working in brewing as people are interested in beer again'. *Please see:*
http://www.irishmirror.ie/news/irish-news/guinness-opens-up-recipe-archives-4160039



Thanks to the generosity of thousands of individuals, several businesses and a number of grant-making foundations, the Art Fund's public appeal for £2.7m to save the collections (of archives and pattern books as well as ceramics) at the **Wedgwood Museum** in Barlaston, Staffordshire has been successful within a month of its launch, and well before the target date. The Wedgwood Museum went into administration in 2010 after the pottery firm collapsed and its £134m pension debts were transferred to the museum trust because of liabilities relating to staff. Although the pension debt was paid by the Pension Protection Fund (PPF), a high court judge ruled in 2011 that the collections – valued at £15 million - could be sold to reimburse it. Now the appeal has been successful, the Art Fund plans to gift the Collection to the V&A and for it to remain on display at the Wedgwood Museum near Stoke. It will lie at the heart of a major new visitor experience at the museum, as part of Waterford Wedgwood Royal Doulton's (WWRD) £34m redevelopment of the factory site – set for completion in spring 2015.
http://www.artfund.org/news/2014/10/03/wedgwood-collection-saved

In May 1915 the newly-built Military Training Camp at Clipstone, just outside Mansfield received its first residents. It was to become the largest in the country, housing some 30,000 people at a time when the neighbouring community had a population of about 37,000. A special exhibition at **Mansfield Museum** until 22 November will tell the story of its impact on the local communities, as well as the experiences of the Military Hospital and its nurses, and the civilian workers employed at the camp.
www.mansfield.gov.uk/museum/



Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Community Gallery, will be hosting an exhibition from 10 January to 31 May 2015 on Quakers and the First World War: stories of peace, war, conscience, relief and faith. Using sound, artwork, film, photographs and artefacts, this is the result of a collaborative project of Central England Quakers and Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre. Amongst other topics it will consider the work of the Friends



Ambulance Unit, the struggles of conscience for young Quaker men, the impact of the war on Cadburys and other Quaker businesses, and Quaker relief work in Britain and in war-torn Europe. *www.bmag.org.uk*

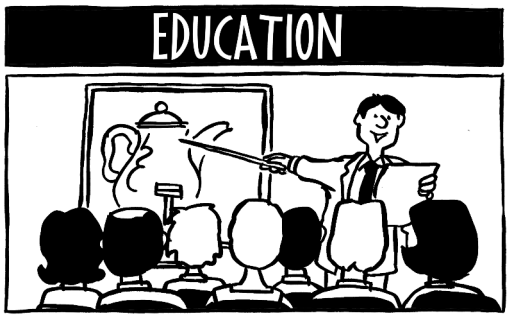
Between October 2014 and February 2015 there is an exhibition at the **Hunterian Museum, Royal College of Surgeons**, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A3PE, entitled 'War, Art and Surgery'. The artist Julia Midgley has created over 150 pieces of reportage artwork, which will be exhibited alongside all 72 of the College's striking pastels of wounded servicemen drawn by surgeon-artist Henry Tonks between 1916 and 1918. *www.rcseng.ac.uk/war-art-and-surgery*

The **British Postal Museum & Archive** has secured £4.5m from the Heritage Lottery Fund, so they have now 95% of the funds needed for the new Postal Museum in central London, due to open in 2016. They have also received planning permission to develop a stretch of the old Post Office Underground Railway – 'Mail Rail' – into a subterranean ride for visitors. Under the Post Office (London) Act of 1913 tunnelling for this route to connect mainline stations by driverless electric trains carrying mail was completed in 1917. However the tunnels were then used to store art treasures from the Tate Gallery and the National Portrait Gallery. Work did

not resume until 1923, and the system finally opened in December 1927, remaining in use until 2003. *www.postalheritage.org.uk*

The **Association of Independent Museums** publishes a series of free downloadable practical information papers called 'Success Guides'. Although their members include some of the largest museums in the country, the advice (used selectively) includes much that would be of use to smaller museums run by volunteer societies. *www.aim-museums.co.uk/contents success_guides/*

National Maritime Museum Cornwall has won Family Friendly Museum 2014, beating a six-strong shortlist from around the country. *www.nmmc.co.uk*



'Teaching history with 100 objects' is the result of a partnership between museums across the UK and the British Museum. Funded by the Department for Education, the project will help equip teachers for the new national history curriculum in England (though the materials and ideas are applicable elsewhere), by 'harnessing the power of objects to motivate young people's interest in the past'. There are 100 sets of resources in object files that can be used individually or together, and can be searched by key stage and theme. In each case there is 'About the object', 'A bigger picture' providing context, 'Teaching ideas' and 'For the classroom' pages that include downloadable images and video, and links to material elsewhere. *www.teaching100.org/*

The new Visitors' Centre at **Stonehenge** has not been without controversy since it opened nearly a year ago. Recent correspondence in ***British Archaeology*** has debated this, with contributions on the importance of school visits. Claire Ryley describes how she and Julian Richards have developed resources for teachers that are available for free on the English Heritage website *www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/stonehenge-teachers-kit*. She stresses the importance of planning and preparation, but also remarks on the achievements of the children in 'skills of observation, perseverance, analysis, debate and interpretation'. Archaeology is a subject where 'we can all work side by side – experts, adults and children'. *British Archaeology Sept/Oct 2014 www.archaeologyUK.org*

The 2014-5 programme for **Locality and Region seminars at the Institute of Historical Research** is now available; they take place at 5.15 pm on alternate Tuesdays. On 18 November Harriett Webster (Southampton University) will be speaking on Medieval Swansea, town and landscape. Two weeks later on 2 December the speaker will be Edward Packard (University Campus Suffolk) who will explore local aspects of the Great War as experienced in the diary of a farmer's wife in Suffolk.



Alice Packard of Shotley, Suffolk

'The Meanings of Military Service' website is now available online: *www.meaningsofservice1914.qmul.ac.uk* This website has been developed by **Queen Mary University of London (QMUL)** as part of a project seeking to create more diverse teaching materials concerning the First World War. Drawing on the college collections and on papers from Barts and the London Hospitals archives, the website explores key themes of the Front Line, Home Front, and medicine to identify individual stories that exemplify essential ideas about wartime service. In the next few months the project team will work with teachers from partner schools and from the Greater London area to produce lesson plans based around these stories and primary sources. The lesson plans are due to be published on the website. It is hoped that the lasting legacies will be these teaching materials, improved connections between the college and its wider community, and improved understanding of the ways in which World War I is taught.

BALH: are we heading in the right direction? The views of society members

Tim Lomas

The last issue of *Local History News* contained a summary of the views of individuals following the recent questionnaire sent to members. This article follows on from that outlining the key points raised by societies.

251 societies responded representing a wide range of interests and sizes. A third have fewer than 50 members whereas another third had over 100 with the total membership of the respondees exceeding 24,000.

In many respects the responses were similar to that of individuals with one notable difference – the insurance scheme. For some societies this was the sole reason for membership with many regarding it as very good value for money. There were a number of comments such as 'you offer a service to small societies like us that nobody else does' or 'the insurance scheme alone saves us a small fortune'. There was the occasional minor criticism such as 'many members are over 80 and excluded from the insurance scheme'.

BALH would be concerned if the sole reason for all society membership was the insurance scheme. A number clearly value others services highly. Fewer than 5% of societies rated *The Local Historian* and *Local History News* as anything less that good or excellent. This was accompanied by comments such as 'I often read items that I would not normally have read' or 'erudition and quality of articles unbeaten elsewhere'. Where there was some negativity, it tended to centre on the over-specialisation or 'looks to be too academic with professors and doctors' or 'too much navel gazing and complaining about local history as a discipline'. The information about what was going on in *Local History News* and increasingly the E-newsletter, was appreciated although one or two would welcome more information about grants available. Several raised surprise that there was an E-newsletter but BALH are working hard to spread awareness, reach and involvement.

Compared to individuals, the involvement by societies in other events such as visits, Local History Day and conferences was lower although a number made recommendations for Awards for long-serving members. Some did use the website and were generally happy whilst recognising some revamp was needed. A few societies felt that they might be more involved if events were closer to their home turf.

Hard copy resources are likely to continue for some time to come if the society responses reflect reality. More than 90% did not use any form of social media, of which fewer than 7% planned to do so in the near future. Three quarters of societies did not want to pay their subscription electronically although there was more interest in receiving some publications this way.

Societies were able to suggest some ways of raising BALH's profile such as getting more flyers and posters out to societies or placing more information in local society newsletters and websites. More regionalisation, attendance at local conferences, fairs and providing registers of speakers was also mentioned. Areas that may attract interest from societies included advice on society bank accounts and developing society websites. There was overwhelming support for BALH being active in consultations such as proposals, reports and forthcoming legislation affecting history. There

was some slight worry about the BALH 'line' or responding to consultations in which BALH did not necessarily have the detailed expertise.

The questionnaire did include a rather subjective one on whether BALH gave value for money. Whatever the criteria respondees used, it was reassuring that 99% responded positively – and not just for the insurance scheme. There were comments such as 'for providing an overview on what is going on' or 'it keeps us in touch with the national outlook' or 'it is worth it for the encouragement to high value research and great to be part of a large group'. In the very few negative comments, there was a slight concern about the price tag for its services and products.

As with the responses by individuals, the impression gained from the societies' feedback is that BALH is not going badly off track. It is responding to the needs of many and there is much satisfaction with the nature and quality of its services. More feedback though is always welcome both as a way of warding off any potential future difficulties and ensuring that BALH remains as close as possible and responsive to its members.

Tim Lomas is Chair of BALH





Making Leeds Medieval

BALH at the Leeds IMC

Gill Draper

The last day or two of the Leeds International Medieval Congress are open to the public and the Historical and Archaeological Societies Fair takes place on the Thursday. BALH has had a stand for the last three years (pictured below left being prepared). The location for societies' stands was much better this year, in the marquee where people collected lunches and sat outside or inside to eat them. We had a fairly steady stream of visitors even though Thursday is effectively the last day of the IMC, blending in with other public events on-site called Making Leeds Medieval: two free lectures, pottery, singing, falcons and hog roasts. 'Impact' or 'public engagement' is behind all this of course.

It was particularly useful to be able to publicise BALH's Medieval and Early Modern Essay Prize since there were many academics there who could pass on the information to their students. It was also good to meet up with some BALH members and potential members, and other societies. It is to be hoped that in future years more societies will attend the Fair and make it a bigger attraction. As regards the first three-and-a-half days of the IMC, hundreds of papers are given in numerous sessions, and I felt I did pretty well to get to thirteen papers as well as giving one, wearing my BALH Events and Development Officer hat as ever. My husband helped me with travel and carrying BALH materials, enjoyed attending many papers, and was rewarded with an official T-shirt.

It is important for BALH to be present at such conferences, to demonstrate its relevance to the study of local history both as an academic discipline and for pleasure. Look out for the free lectures and other events which will be part of Making Leeds Medieval next year, even if you do not want to attend the (expensive) Congress itself.

County Societies Symposium 2014

Margaret O'Sullivan

Another fine summer Saturday saw representatives of forty historical groups and organisations meet for the County Societies Symposium in a brand-new venue, the Wolfson Conference Suite in the newly-refurbished Institute of Historical Research. This event, jointly organised by BALH, the Royal Historical Society and the Victoria County History, was the first to be held in this welcome addition to IHR facilities. The topics for discussion - record publishing, open access and digital publishing – drew delegates from throughout England and the Channel Islands to share views and experiences.

The day began with a presentation from John Chandler, himself also a local history publisher, outlining issues common to many record publishing societies today – dwindling subscription bases, distribution difficulties, competition from online retailers such as Amazon, problems of managing backstocks, and so on. A challenging situation indeed, but one way forward for backstock requests explored by John Chandler was a strong partnership with a commercial print-on-demand supplier who could not only meet high professional standards but could accept online orders and mail books direct to customers. Other suggestions for opening up the rich local history resources in backruns of record society publications were to consider using volunteers to digitise series and to seek to develop collaborative projects, perhaps with local universities, which might offer possibilities of publishing texts or record-based studies prefaced by an academic introduction. 'More of the same' need not be the only option for the output of record societies.

The importance of high editorial standards was echoed by Paul Dryburgh, now of The National Archives. He considered the advantages of different formats – lists, indexes, transcriptions or translations – and quoted illustrative examples. Although some publication choices were much more labour-intensive than others, consistency in editing standards was perhaps easier to achieve now with the availability of detailed online style books, especially in conjunction with adequate investment in training on how to use digital tools. Adam Chapman of the VCH and IHR noted from his initial analysis of questionnaire returns that societies' publishing activity continued to be at a high level. These signs of sustained development promised well for the years to come. Professor Peter Mandler, President of the Royal Historical Society, endorsed this view and commented that editions of texts were now more highly regarded in universities' REF assessments because they could be seen as valuable evidence of outreach activities and proactive sharing of knowledge and information with a wider public.

The next topic was Open Access, a subject of concern (and bewilderment) to many societies. Professor Mandler gave a very clear account of how Open Access will work. Only journal articles are affected; the proposals do not concern scholarly editions of texts or monographs and are unlikely to do so at any time in the near future. He concluded that if record societies were able to comply with the Green route for Open Access, it could be to their advantage to consider it as an option. Those still unclear about what Open Access might mean need not despair: a one-page information leaflet is available on the RHS website.

After a lunch break with chances to catch up with colleagues and to see recent Boydell and Brewer publications including VCH volumes, Jane Golding of English Heritage, (below, chaired by Gill Draper) who is also Chair of BALH's Conference Committee, addressed the



issue of social media tools for publishing. Having ascertained from the audience that many groups were actively using social media, Jane recommended that these tools should be integrated into activities and sustained on a regular basis, rather than functioning as occasional 'add-ons'. While recognising that time and skills constraints would influence the choice of media, it is clear that activities such as regular blogs are essential communication methods, irrespective of the size or nature of the organisation. Enthusiastic contributors should be identified and encouraged to develop their skills.

The venue was not the only new element in the day. We were fortunate that Professor Richard Hoyle was present. From early October he is the new Director and General Editor of the Victoria County History and holder of London University's chair in English Local and Regional History. Previously Professor of Rural History at Reading, he is also Chairman of the List and Index Society. After summarising significant points from the day's discussions (including charitable status of societies), Professor Hoyle stimulated further comments by a suggestion that record publishing had perhaps concentrated too much on medieval records and had overlooked 19th and 20th century topics. He encouraged the commissioning of new works from archival sources nationally and locally. While recognising the immediate accessibility of electronic publications, he pointed out there were longer-term costs especially in respect of sustainability of data and formats. Hard copy publications were not vulnerable in the same way to technological changes. Professor Hoyle foresaw opportunities for building on the success of generic resources such as British History Online which disseminate free of charge historical information from a wide range of texts over long periods. If content could be extended to include record societies' past publications, the whole historical community would benefit. It will be interesting to see how these ideas develop.

This was a very successful day in terms of organisation and venue as well as content. There was perhaps too little time for specific questions from attendees, but the lively discussion sessions testified to the value of the symposium. We left with much food for thought but also quietly reassured that record publishing, whether electronic or traditional, would seem to have a diverse and healthy future.

The recession and the Yorkshire Archaeological Society

Claire Cross

From the beginning the Yorkshire Archaeological Society, which celebrated its 150th anniversary last year, not only assembled an impressive library of printed books relating to the county's archaeology and history but also acted as a place of deposit for important collections of Yorkshire archives long before county record offices existed. Early in its history it also acquired its own premises in central Leeds from which it moved after the Second World War to Claremont, a sizeable Victorian villa near the University. More recently it employed professional librarians to staff its library and a professional archivist to curate its record collection, though latterly the archives have been cared for in collaboration with the West Yorkshire Archive Service.

With three quarters of its assets tied up in buildings and investments the YAS has been very adversely affected by the recent recession. This summer its Management Board reported that its annual income had declined by half between 2008 and 2012 and that, despite considerable savings, the Society was still living beyond its means.

Having taken soundings, the Board therefore proposed at an Emergency General Meeting held on 12 July 2014 that:

1. the YAS Library and Historical Documents Collections should be transferred on loan to the Brotherton Library of the University of Leeds

2. Claremont should be sold and suitable alternative premises acquired, either by rent or purchase, to support the Society's future activities.

This would save the Society approaching £100,000 a year - £50,000 on staffing costs, £45,000 on maintaining Claremont.

These recommendations were accepted by a substantial majority of the hundred or so members present at the meeting. *see also p 22*

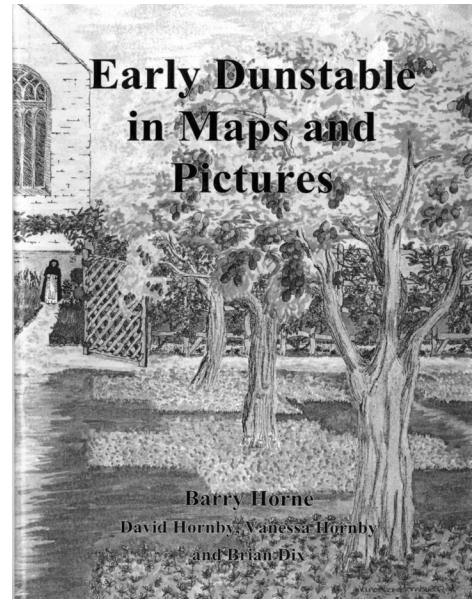
Book Reviews

Sarah Rose

Early Dunstable in Maps and Pictures

Barry Horne, David Hornby, Vanessa Hornby and Brian Dix

2013 Church End Publishing £12 (+ £1.40 postage) from Barry Horne, Beaumont, Church End, Edlesborough, Dunstable, Beds, LU6 2EP



Medieval Kings greatly encouraged urbanization in England and founded many new towns. One of these 'planted' towns was Dunstable, which was founded by Henry I - possibly as early as 1108 - on the crossroads of Watling Street and the Ickneild Way. This book traces some of the features of Dunstable's early layout and development up to the nineteenth century. This is shown using maps, paintings and photographs, as well as several original illustrations which serve to give an artist's impression of particular features. There are a total of 57 images, most of which are in colour. This not only makes this a very attractive publication, but also demonstrates the potential of maps and images in piecing together a place's history. However, this book has a much more rounded approach than its title suggests, by combining these images with essential textual evidence and archaeology.

The first of five core chapters discusses aspects of Henry I's foundation. This is followed by an examination of buildings and construction methods used in Dunstable from Roman times onwards (the town lies on an abandoned Roman settlement called Durocobrivis). The third chapter draws together several maps of Dunstable, although the only useful ones for comparative purposes (being to scale) are a parish survey map of 1766 and the tithe map of 1840. These are juxtaposed on a street-by-street basis, which reveals relatively little expansion in that period, despite an increasing population. While the original medieval eight perch plots were still preserved, few old buildings remained. Two very specific features are the focus of the fourth and fifth chapters: the evidence for a medieval windmill and the orchard of the Dominican Friary. If a windmill did exist from the reign of Henry I, as is argued, it would make it a very early example - if not the earliest in England.

The contributors to this book all have a long-standing interest in the history and archaeology of Dunstable and Bedfordshire; yet they are also able draw upon evidence from other places further afield for comparison. The interpretation and conclusions offered in this book are rather meagre on occcasion. But, as the authors make clear from the outset, their intention was to provide the bones of Dunstable's story, the flesh having been covered by other publications. Helpfully, for those who are stimulated into pursuing particular points (as the authors hope), there are references and an index.

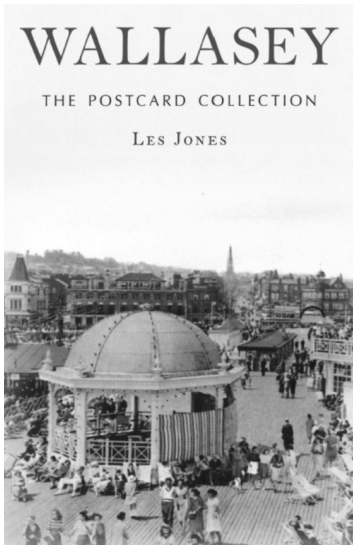
SOUTH SHIELDS: The Post Card Collection
Caroline Barnsley
Amberley 2014 ISBN 978 1 4456 3446 3 £14.99

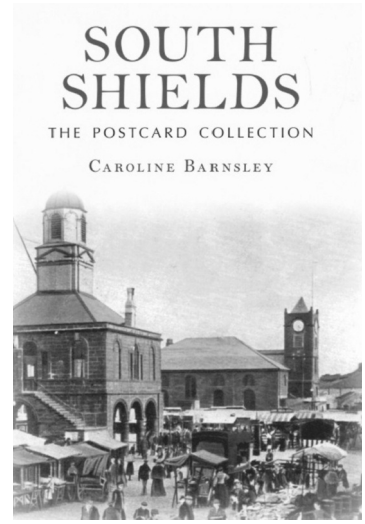
WALLASEY: The Post Card Collection
Les Jones
Amberley 2014 ISBN 978 1 4456 3664 1 £12.99

Both 96 pages paperback

Picture postcards first appeared in the 1870s, before gaining popularity in the early twentieth century. The 'tweets' of their day, these mementos of holidays past can have real value for the local historian, providing fascinating and varied snapshots of daily lives and landscapes in times gone-by. These two attractive offerings from Amberley are based on the collections of two private collectors (known formerly as deltiologists). Each book contains between 160 and 180 full colour images, which have been organised geographically.

Beginning with the leafy, affluent suburb of Westoe, the South Shields book also covers the town centre and coastline, with images dating from 1901 to the 1950s. The town's rich maritime heritage is well reflected, with representations of Tyne Dock (once the second busiest port in the country), the harbour, ferries, fishing and lifeboats. But the majority of the book is devoted to leisure and tourism, underscoring South Shields's popularity as a seaside resort. Visitors flocked to its beautiful coastline and beaches, while the town could boast not one, but two marine parks, as well as a promenade. Reflecting its popularity as a holiday destination, one chapter is devoted to novelty cards. Remarkably, this includes one card designed to reassure the relatives of war-time holiday makers, with an image of a zeppelin that folded back to reveal scenes of the town.





The seaside is also a feature of the Wallasey collection. This town on the Wirral grew out of four villages - Wallesey, Poulton, Seacombe and Liscard - each of which has their own dedicated chapter. Added to these is the grand-sounding 'New Brighton', which was developed out of sandy heathland as a resort in the mid nineteenth century. Away from the promenade, pier, and parks of the resort, street scenes predominate, although there are also specific shots of individual buildings and businesses. Throughout, the author has been careful to select images from before the town's expansion in 1932.

Both books have the same layout: two images per page, intersected by a short piece of text. This can provide some useful background information, illuminating the context of the photograph or, indeed, what was written on the back. Unfortunately, none of the information is referenced, and some readers may be left wanting more factual detail. However, the pictures themselves still contain historical value. For those with connections to these places, the images provide a fascinating walk down memory lane, and may even surprise a few by uncovering the existence of features that have long since been lost.

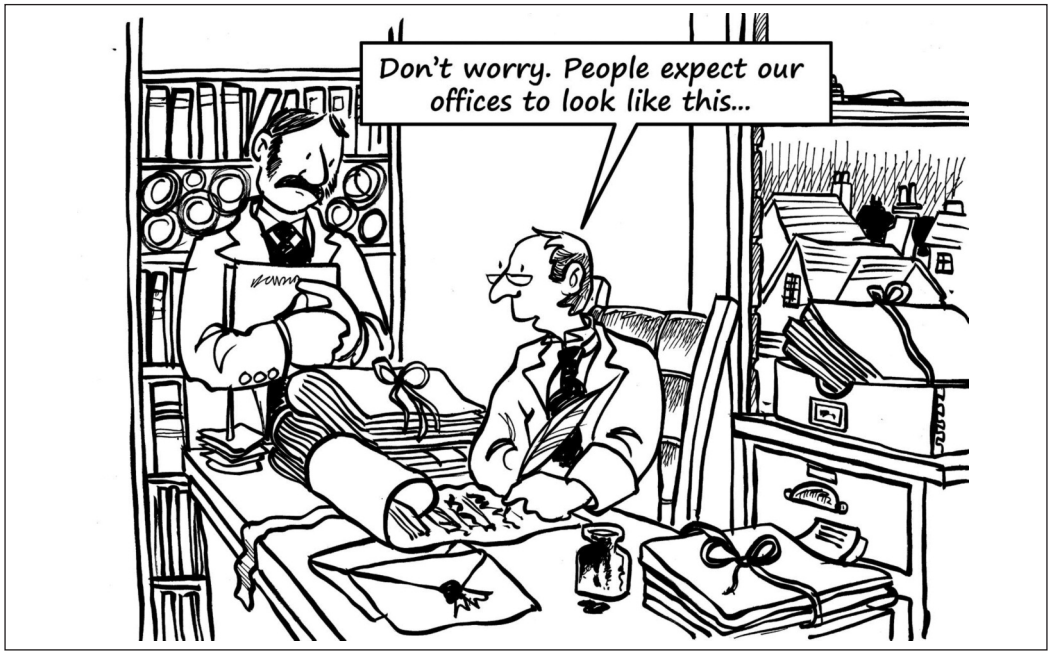
Now, where did I put that?

Alan Crosby

An archivist gave me a copy of a note which she found in a bundle of title deeds. It is dated 11 May 1825 and was sent by a solicitor from the county town to a land agent or steward who was managing a large country estate in North West England. The document reads: 'Dear Sir, The Parchments you will receive along with this, I think will be more properly with you than me - How the [name of place] Agreement came here I have no recollection, but I found it in a Drawer I seldom look into. I therefore think it must have been there for a long time'.

Ah, how familiar it seems! How much of my time is wasted looking for papers or books that I know full well must be somewhere, but cannot track down. I shift piles of paper, scrabble through bundles, and open boxes and files. And then I come across something completely different, not the item for which I was searching but a letter or sheet of notes which I had previously sought and failed to find, or had completely forgotten about. How the item in question 'came here I have no recollection [but] I think it must have been there for a long time'. Sometimes I am reminded of archaeology - my papers are stratified, both vertically and also in terms of distance from the front of shelves or cupboards, in a complex chronology of deposition.

When teaching local history or family history I have always impressed upon my students the crucial importance of being organised and methodical, making sure that papers are sensibly organised and filed so that it's easy to refer to them in the future. I emphasise that they must always include the full reference on every set of notes or abstracts taken from original documents. And, without going into too much specific detail, I give the impression that my study is a clinically efficient, spotlessly tidy, exemplar of rational working methods. If only ...



The solicitor who sent the letter, mind you, was acting in a very responsible manner, unlike many of his professional colleagues in the nineteenth century and into much more recent times. For archivists, solicitors' collections are notoriously a byword for chaos and crazy lack of coherence ... heaps of documents bundled and crammed, unlabelled and unsorted, into tin boxes; papers from different clients jumbled together; the contents of drawers and presses emptied out into cartons; and priceless and irreplaceable documents sent to the local tip, because they are 'no longer needed' even though they don't actually belong to the solicitors themselves.

Of course they aren't all like that, but often the horror pictures used by archivists and conservators in their 'why we need record offices' presentations show (before) the contents of solicitors' offices, to contrast with (after) the same material after it has been conserved and catalogued. I was recently in contact with a prominent firm of lawyers, who admitted that they didn't really known what was in their muniment room, because the only list they used was a handwritten one compiled in the early 1920s. Their finding method apparently involved sending an unfortunate clerk to look in all the tin trunks, one by one, until (if lucky) he came across relevant material.

Deplorable, I thought ... but then I look at that space between my bookshelves and my other bookshelves (they, like their contents, have gone forth and multiplied) and I realise that 'space' is no longer a valid term. A teetering tower of cardboard boxes and stacks of paper, topped off with a few rolled maps, now occupies that erstwhile 'space'. And I can't even reach some of the bookshelves as a result. David Dymond told me he had recently bought an industrial-sized shredder to deal with the same problem. I think I'd better follow suit.

BALH TRUSTEE PROFILE

I first became involved with BALH more than twenty years ago because I wanted to support the excellent services it provided to the user of local archive services, especially those at a distance from London. As an archivist, I worked in Surrey, Staffordshire, Shropshire and Derbyshire until I retired as County Archivist for the last named county. Almost every day I saw in the Search Room examples of the commitment, skills and dedication of users of original documents, many of whom regarded publication as something beyond their aspirations. Articles in The Local Historian served to make them aware that what they did out of personal interest could be relevant to a much wider, national, audience and superb guides such as David Dymond's Researching and Writing Local History offered excellent practical advice and models to follow. Having acted in a number of capacities for BALH over the years, being a member of the Publications Committee remains a most satisfying role.

Retirement has enabled me to broaden my experience as a user of archives. Over the last couple of years I have visited many record offices, sometimes on official business, but often in the course of my own research. It's been salutary to see how standards have been maintained despite budget cuts and staffing pressures. We're lucky to have such a good network of services, large and small, across the country but continuing support through personal visits and use of online resources is essential to demonstrate to hardheaded paymasters their usefulness to the local community.

Other current activities include supporting BALH's involvement with the England's Migrants project based at the University of York and acting as one of the representatives for local history on The National Archives' Users Advisory Group. I'm also a member of the Council of the British Record Society, again reflecting my interest in publication of archival sources.

I also enjoy finding out about what local artists have contributed to national life. I've recently completed a study of a painter who served in World War I and World War II, gaining both the French Croix de Guerre and the British Military Cross, but whose family origins were in china manufacturing in Burslem in North Staffordshire. Similarly, I've researched a local Victorian clergyman and his sister, both prolific topographical artists, who travelled extensively in Britain and abroad. His main contri-

continued opposite

Notes News Issues

Jane Howells

BALH Email Newsletter

It's been brought to our notice that we have been experiencing some problems with members receiving our Email Newsletter. Copies of the newsletter are sent out to individual members with Society members receiving one copy to distribute amongst their history society. The last newsletter was sent out by email on 1st September. If you didn't receive your copy and you'd like to receive future mailings please send an email to e-news@balh.co.uk giving us your BALH unique reference number, your name or Society name, and your email address.

Help wanted in Birmingham 2015

We would be glad of a few helpers on the BALH stall at 'Who Do You Think You Are? Live 2015' at the NEC in Birmingham, from 16 to 18 April. Are there members in the area who could do a morning or afternoon on any of the days, in exchange for a free ticket?

Local History Day will also be in Birmingham in 2015 (see supplement). We would like to offer local 'Midlands' societies the opportunity to have a stand/table to display publications, publicity material etc. We would also be happy to have one or two offers of help on the day. Those bringing and running stands or helping will be given complimentary tickets. Please contact Gill Draper by the end of December (via BALH email, post or phone).

Guided Visits

During 2014 there have been some very successful visits to fascinating places, reported enthusiastically by participants in previous issues of *LHN*. The Events Committee are meeting on Assembly Day in October to confirm the programme of activities for next year, and the Conferences Committee will be considering proposals for co-operative events with other organisations. As the details are finalised we will be announcing them on the website, in *LHN* and the Email Newsletter.

Please do support these opportunities. Sadly, the visits in September had to be cancelled due to lack of bookings. We would be delighted to hear of suggestions from members of places they would like to visit, or of places they know that they would recommend to other members. This would be a great help in planning.

New BALH website

By the time you are reading this our splendid new website will be in action. Please try it out and let us know what you think. All the familiar information will be there in a fresh design, and we hope you will like the new look and find the site easy to use. There is now an additional 'Members Only' section, more features in the Education pages, and it will be possible to make online payments for those who wish.

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continued from p 34

bution, though, was to archaeology – he was a founder member of the British Archaeologcial Institute in Cambridge – and to church restoration, advocating sympathetic restoration rather than wholesale rebuilding. One thing he complained about life in the provinces was lack of access to a good public library; even more likely to be a disadvantage today.

My main research project is women artists associated with the Suffragette Movement. Sylvia Pankhurst was a talented painter who gave up her career to devote her time to the fight for votes for women. She had many contemporaries who are still little known even a hundred years later and it is these women whose lives I am trying to investigate. Their artworks may survive, but biographical information is much harder to find. So, for instance, if you know of unpublished sources about Georgina Brackenbury (who painted the famous portrait of Emmeline Pankhurst now in the National Portrait Gallery), her sister Marie or Louise Jopling, amongst others, I'd be delighted to learn of them.

Margaret O'Sullivan

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BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR LOCAL HISTORY

REGISTERED CHARITY 285467

www.balh.co.uk

The British Association for Local History (BALH) was created in 1982 as the successor to earlier organisations which had supported the study of local history over previous decades. Its purpose is

to encourage and assist the study of local history throughout Great Britain as an academic discipline and as a rewarding leisure pursuit for both individuals and groups.

To achieve this the Association

- serves as the national body representing local and regional historians
- hosts Local History Day, an annual event open to all, with discussions, presentation of awards, AGM, and a specially commissioned lecture based on current research
- publishes the prestigious quarterly journal *The Local Historian* which includes regular features on themes, sources, websites, and a copious reviews section
- produces a quarterly members' magazine *Local History News* reporting on up to date developments and examples of best practice from around the country
- makes annual awards to individuals who have made a significant contribution to local history; for excellence in research and publication; and for an outstanding local society newsletter
- organises guided visits to places of relevant interest, often not easily accessible otherwise
- collaborates with other organisations to arrange conferences and similar events around the country
- provides a website for information and links
- publishes specialist handbooks.

The Association is an unincorporated registered charity, governed by an elected Council with three advisory committees dealing with publications, education and events. It is financed by its members. Subscriptions are for a calendar year but may be started at any time; new members receive the material already issued during the year.

Individual	£30.00
Student on a full- or part-time course in local history	£25.00
Local society or group	£65.00
Institutions	£38.00
Overseas	£42.50
School	£25.00

(Libraries subscribing to *The Local Historian* via agents are treated as Institutional members)

BALH PO BOX 6549, SOMERSAL HERBERT, ASHBOURNE DE6 5WH
01283 585947 mail@balh.co.uk

Very important note!!!

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Local History News

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Supplement

Events 2015

16-18 April	**Birmingham - Who Do You Think You Are? Live. BALH will be at the NEC**
6 June	**Birmingham - Local History Day** (see overleaf for full details and booking form)

Possible Guided Visits for 2015

Birmingham new Library (5 June); People's Museum, Manchester; Old Basing House;
Guildhall Library and Drapers' Hall, London;
new Institute of Historical Research, their local history collections.

Further details will be available as soon as arrangements have been confirmed.
Please get in touch if you would like to suggest a visit destination in your area.
We are sure there must be interesting and exciting places we don't know about,
so we need local members to tell us!

Guided Visits are designed for small groups to visit less accessible places and collections; booking forms for these, and all other events, with full details and prices are available on our website or from ***BALH(V) PO Box 6549, Somersal Herbert, Ashbourne, DE6 5WH.***

This information becomes available at intervals and a separate addressed envelope or label should be sent for each set of details required.

BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR LOCAL HISTORY
www.balh.org.uk
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LOCAL HISTORY DAY 2015

SATURDAY 6 JUNE 10.30 - 4.30

The Priory Rooms, Quaker Meeting House, 40 Bull Street, Birmingham B4 6AF

- **PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION**
  'Public History': what is it and how does it relate to local history? Dr Stuart Davies
- **BALH AGM**
- **2015 LOCAL HISTORY AWARDS: for research & publication, for a society newsletter, and for personal achievement.**
- **BALH ANNUAL LECTURE:**

'By ancient right or custom': the local history of common land in a European context.

Angus Winchester

Professor of Local & Landscape History
Director: Regional Heritage Centre, Lancaster University

Tickets: £25 for members (£35 for non-members) includes coffee/tea on arrival and sandwich lunch

BOOK EARLY! Orders received after 10 May subject to availability.
Please ensure you have sent a stamped addressed envelope with your completed form and cheque.

To: BALH (L) 7 St Mark's Rd, Salisbury SP1 3AY

Please send me ___ tickets for the 2015 Local History Day at £25.00 (£35 for non-members);

A cheque for £ _____ payable to BALH, and a stamped addressed envelope is enclosed*

Please send me details of BALH membership ☐

Please tick here if you do not wish your name to be on the delegates list ☐

* min 110 x 160mm (C6)

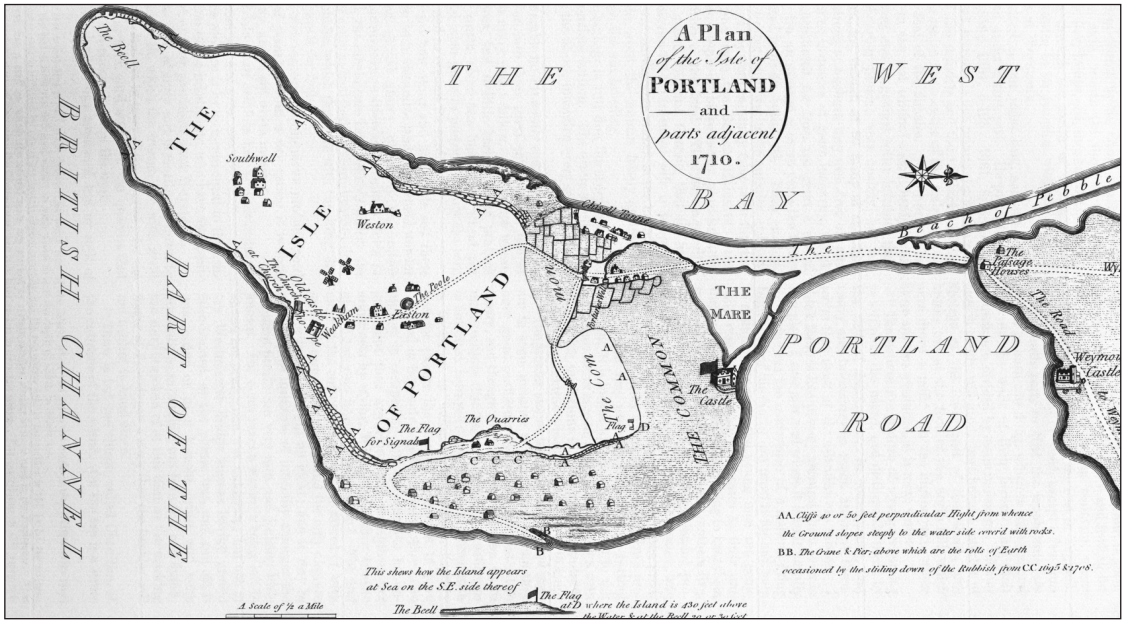
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BALH Annual Lecture 2015

will be given on Saturday 6 June 2015 by

Professor Angus Winchester

at the Priory Rooms, Quaker Meeting House, Birmingham



from Hutchins *History of Dorset 1863*

‘By ancient right or custom’: the local history of common land in a European context.

The shared resources of common land were integral to the lives of many local communities in Britain and Europe before the sweeping land reforms of the 18th and 19th centuries. Even after the waves of enclosure and privatisation of commons in Britain, over 500,000 ha of common land survive in England and Wales today. The resources of the commons were often a mainstay of the local economy, providing a host of benefits: grazing for livestock, fuel for the fire, food, and the raw materials for building and other purposes. Who owned common land? Who had rights to use it and how was its use managed and regulated? This lecture will explore these questions, drawing on examples of commons in England and Wales, and placing them in a wider European perspective.

A MESSAGE FROM THE BUSINESS MANAGER

As last year, your subscription renewal paperwork has been enclosed with the October mailing. The purpose of this is to reduce our mailing costs which will enable us to use funds elsewhere. We hope to improve the renewal process further for next year by introducing on-line payments via our new website – www.balh.org.uk

Insurance Scheme

Any Societies that would like an insurance certificate and factsheet should ensure that they **send a sae with their return slip**. Please also clearly mark the name of your Society on the sae - this will help us to process everything as quickly as possible.

Please direct any insurance queries to Tariq Mian at Towergate on 0870 366 9552 or tariq.mian@towergate.co.uk

General Points

We would really appreciate it if you could take time to read the instructions on the form you have been sent. One of the most important things to note is please only complete the address box on the return slip if your mailing address has changed. We would also request that if you are a Treasurer (of a Society), please do not change the address to your own unless this is to be the 'new' mailing address for your Society.

If you have mislaid the renewal form, we are unfortunately unable to provide a replacement. In this case, please send in a short note detailing your name / name of society, unique reference number and include your payment / payment details. The Finance Officer and I will then be able to update your records accordingly.

Our bank account details for those wishing to set up a Standing Order or pay us by Direct Payment are:

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Account: British Association for Local History
Sort Code: 40-52-40
Account Number: 00009383

Please ensure you include your unique reference number and name.

Finally, a big THANK YOU to all of you that subscribe to BALH – your support is very much appreciated.

If you have any other queries, you can contact me direct at amjones-balh@btconnect.com or 01283 585947.