Local History News

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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 website. 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.

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Warsaw

Alan Crosby

In 1944 Heinrich Himmler declared, during the viciously brutal suppression of the Warsaw Rising, that 'The city must completely disappear from the surface of the earth ... No stone can remain standing. Every building must be razed to its foundation'. His orders were carried out: by April 1945 there was scarcely a living soul left where six years before had been 1.25 million people. Vast swathes of 'the Paris of the East' were tumbled rubble, stretching as far as the eye could see.

In April I went to Warsaw, searching for places associated with my family history - my great-aunt and her family lived there during the war, and were interned in the nearby Pruszków transit camp after the Rising. I'd never been to the city before and it was an extraordinary experience to compare it with the terrible images which my cousin and I studied at the Museum of the Warsaw Rising where, surrounded by throngs of lively schoolchildren and grim-faced elderly people, we traced the horror in which our own family had been entangled.

For Warsaw, of course, rose from the ashes like a rather ungainly phoenix. Among the fascinations of walking through it and seeing it from the tram was to note how, in only seventy years, a complex many-layered townscape has emerged. The modern has become historic within a single lifetime, while the historic is often new. We walked along the broad boulevards which occupy the site of the Ghetto, whose bones and crumbled bricks are hidden beneath a modern residential area. We moved on to the magically restored Old Town where, despite knowing what I do about the city and its reconstruction, I could scarcely believe that the streets, the beautiful buildings, the royal castle and the market square were not three or four hundred years old but a mere thirty or forty. We walked along ulica Piwna (Brewery Street) *(below)* where, in the early 1960s, my father's cousin Maciek and his new wife had lived for a few months. Then, it had been the first part of the old town to be lovingly reconstructed. Now, it has apparently been there for centuries, the occasional graffiti, peeling plaster and slightly grimy brickwork giving an extraordinary air of complete authenticity.



Later we found, in Nowy Świat, the Branicki Palace built in the 1750s and in 1919 taken over as the new British Embassy, the place where my great-aunt worked as a translator in the early 1920s. Badly damaged in the war, it was rebuilt and now (most appropriately) houses the offices of the city and provincial buildings conservation agency. From there to the Łazienki Królewskie (the Royal Bath-House!), an exquisite white palace, set on an island and bridges in a long lake and surrounded by superb English-style parkland, all laid out in the third quarter of the eighteenth century - a genuine and authentic landscape which miraculously survived the horrors of war.

We walked back to the railway station along ulica Marszalkowska, a wide street of the late 1940s lined with monumental Stalinist architecture, blocks of workers' flats with colonnaded street frontages behind which are rows of

shops, the facades of each building decorated with massive relief sculptures of heroic workers and sturdy peasants. Ahead was the Palace of Science and Culture, the 758-foot high megabuilding 'gifted' to the Polish nation by Stalin and completed in 1955 *(below)*. One of the great classics of Soviet architecture, it was of course loathed and detested by all Varsovians ('What is the best view in Warsaw'? 'The view from the Palace of Science and Culture'. 'Why?' 'Because it's the only place from which you can't see the Palace of Science and Culture').

Now, though, it is regarded with great affection. Memories of Communism are beginning to fade or to be tinged with nostalgia. The Palace of Science and Culture, massive embodiment of external oppression, a building plonked down in a ruined city by its latest conquerors, now symbolises 'the old days' and, strangely, is part of Warsaw's complex identity, its fantastical shape with madly opulent decoration a highly distinctive landmark.

And now, in sharp contrast, the latest layer of townscape has been added: beside Stalin's gift, and not yet rivalling it in height, are the blandly anonymous, sleekly smooth, gleamingly corporate towers of banks and finance houses, the multi-national headquarters of corporations. They could be anywhere in the world. There's nothing Varsovian about them. They do not reflect a local history of a rejuvenated and reborn city. They are deeply unloved.



Dunham Massey and the first world war

Dunham Massey, the National Trust owned house in Cheshire, is housing a special exhibition until the end of 2015 marking the centenary of its use as a military hospital during the first world war. The details from the National Trust website are as follows:



'Sanctuary from the Trenches. During the First World War, this Georgian house, set in a magnificent deer-park, was transformed into a military hospital, becoming a sanctuary from the trenches for almost 300 soldiers. To mark the centenary we have turned the clock back. Discover what life was like for the patients and how members of the Stamford family helped injured soldiers to recuperate. Spend time in the ward, nurses' station, and operating theatre as you experience the Stamford Hospital as it once was. This season is the final chance for visitors to experience the house presented as the Stamford Hospital. Please note that we will be operating a timed token system and may have limited availability on tickets to the house and hospital during busy periods. We look forward to seeing you soon'.

The house is open from Saturday until Wednesday until 11 November 2015.

If you are in the area, a visit is highly recommended.

You can read more at: http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/dunham-massey/

Dunham Massey is a finalist for the Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year 2015.

Kate Thompson

Mapping local responses to food shortages in World War I

Karen Hunt

The outbreak of war had an immediate effect on everyday life in communities across Britain. Food prices rocketed and there was panic buying. So from the beginning of the war, the question of food – its availability, its price and its distribution across the nation – brought into focus the challenges of a new kind of war, 'total war'. Now civilian morale would be central to the conduct of the war and might make the difference between victory and defeat. For an island nation heavily dependent on imported food, economic blockade was at least as powerful a weapon in the hands of its enemies as the more conventional weapons of the war front.

Although for a time in the autumn of 1914 prices returned to their pre-war levels, the trend was relentlessly upward. By 1917 food cost about twice what it had cost in 1914. Food shortages became an increasing problem. It was in local urban neighbourhoods, towns, villages and in scattered rural settlements that individuals, households and communities faced these shortages and had to find imaginative ways to deal with them. Much of the burden of this was borne by women who had the principal responsibility in most households to translate the household income (itself significantly affected by the war) into meals on the table. For working-class women that meant a relentless daily struggle to shop and to cook food as fuel shortages bit, while women from the servant-keeping classes had the responsibility to manage household consumption even if others queued, shopped and cooked for them. Just as women's experiences were largely shaped by class differences, the place in which a woman lived was equally important as food shortage and the responses to it were marked by the particularity of local home fronts.

We still know relatively little about everyday life on local British home fronts and the different responses that communities made as the effects of blockade intensified. There are lessons to be learnt from the histories of everyday life in other belligerent nations.[1] These studies show how the struggle to maintain daily life exacerbated tensions between social groups, particularly between rural and urban civilians, but also for the first time empowered many urban working-class housewives. They show how civilian and military morale were profoundly interconnected and that the food crisis held real dangers for the stability of government. After all, as the British government was only too well aware, food riots in Russia led to the fall of the Tsarist regime and the withdrawal of Russia from the war.

Social histories of the British home front touch upon the food crisis but the everyday struggle for food is not their central focus.[2] Similarly, the burgeoning local studies of particular cities or counties during the war usually focus as much on local volunteers/conscripts and their fate rather than systematically uncovering the changing shape of everyday life on the specific local home front.[3] All of these studies offer material for those who want to reconfigure our understanding of the British home front by creating a history from below of the war's effect on everyday life across the whole country. In addition, there is now research that focuses on women and the food crisis: on how housewives responded, particularly why Britain was spared the often violent cost-of-living protests of unorganised urban housewives that flared up across the world in 1917 and 1918.[4] The context for local responses to the food crisis comes from national studies of food and government policy; the extension of the state and its uneasy collaboration with organised labour; the moral economy of the home front; and the effect of the wartime food crisis on the health of the nation.[5] Together these rather different studies can provide the stepping-off point for a more nuanced account of everyday life on the home front and its importance to the war effort as a

whole. Mapping responses to local food shortages is one way in to this.

Responses to food shortages ranged from individual strategies to make ends meet (eg. keeping hens; preserving fruit; cooking with a haybox; 'stretching' meagre supplies; growing food; and cutting consumption and avoiding waste) to collective responses. These might take the form of protests against high prices and the food queues through spontaneous direct action including food riots, forming local protest groups such as Food Vigilance Committees or engaging in consumer boycotts. Here the language was increasingly one of justice and calls for the state to intervene to ensure that resources were shared fairly and those who hoarded were punished. In the same spirit collective solutions were explored such as local communal kitchens and restaurants, voluntary and then compulsory systems of rationing and even local consumer councils. In between these two kinds of responses were philanthropic relief activities which targeted the poor or newly vulnerable, such as Belgian refugees. To begin with local communities were left to their own devices by a government which remained committed to laissez-faire despite the growing food crisis. In the end the success of the German's U-boat campaign in sinking merchant shipping coupled with the poor harvest of the previous year meant that by spring 1917 the country had only three or four weeks supply of food in stock.



C R W Nevinson 'The Food Queue' 1918 © Art. IWM ART 840

Discontent among the industrial workforce about prices and inadequate distribution was also now worrying government. First, voluntary restraint was called for to discourage waste, to encourage thrifty shopping and cooking, to encourage imaginative ways to stretch what food there was and most of all to decrease the consumption of bread. As one of the many posters now created urged, 'Save Two Slices Every Day and Defeat the 'U' Boat'. Every council had to set up a Food Control Committee (FCC) to work locally to curb consumption and promote food production where feasible. Initially this took the form of local economy campaigns, setting and policing fair pricing, acquiring land for allotments and setting up their own systems of local rationing and finally implementing compulsory rationing.

Evidence of the range of formal and informal responses to food shortages can be found in a range of sources. The local press is extraordinarily rich in this respect. Here can be found local food prices, court cases against hoarders, adverts for tea rooms or for jobs in the food industry, appeals for funds to relieve those suffering from the food crisis as well as reports of protests, food economy lectures and the meetings of those concerned with devising new systems of food control. Discussions of all the possible strategies, together with anxieties and advice, can be found in the editorial and letters columns of the local press. As one might expect, collections of wartime letters and diaries (Liddle Collection, Leeds; IWM) can reveal how individuals coped and how experience varied over the war, depending not only on class and location, but also gender and age.

Buried in the formal records of local councils are glimpses of local responses to food shortages, particularly through the minutes of FCCs.

Records from civil society also reveal how shortages were experienced whether in parish magazines, school log books or the minutes of local co-operative societies. The voluminous papers of the War Emergency Workers' National Committee include local examples of protest groups which otherwise have left few traces. In addition records compiled for other reasons, when read against the grain, reveal the changing effects of the food crisis on everyday life. The papers of local Military Service Tribunals can show how individual bakers, grocers, farmers and agricultural workers as well as consumers were being affected by the challenges of erratic food supply and rising prices.

Notes:

1 B. Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics and Everyday life in World War I Berlin* (University of North Carolina Press, 2000); M. Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Hapsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (CUP, 2004).

2 A. Gregory, *The Last Great War* (CUP, 2008); G. DeGroot, *Back in Blighty: the British at Home in World War I* (Vintage, 2014).

3 For example, S. Lomax, *The Home Front. Sheffield in the First World War* (Pen & Sword, 2014).

4 K. Hunt, 'The Politics of Food and Women's Neighbourhood Activism in First World War Britain', *International Labor & Working-Class History,* 77, pp.8-26; K.Hunt, 'A Heroine at Home; the Housewife on the First World War Home Front' in M. Andrews & J. Lomas (eds.), *The Home Front in Britain: Images, Myths & Forgotten Experiences since 1914* (Palgrave, 2014).

5 M. Barnett, *British Food Policy during the First World War* (Allen & Unwin, 1985): R. Harrison, 'The War Emergency: National Workers' Committee, 1914-20' in A. Briggs & J. Saville (eds), *Essays in Labour History, 1886-1923* (Macmillan, 1971); B. Waites, *A Class Society at War* (Berg, 1987); J. Winter, *The Great War & the British People* (Macmillan, 1985).

Karen Hunt is Professor of Modern British History at Keele University.

100 Faces 100 Stories

This is a partnership project involving the Cornish Archives Network, Cornwall Museums Group and Penryn Museum. Funded by the HLF 'First World War: then and now' programme, Cornish Mining World Heritage and participants, the focus is on remembering the people, and animals, of the First World War through their portraits, stories and personal artefacts. Some of the stories are directly related to WWI experiences in Cornwall, others are more tangential. A quarter of the entries relate to women, and an attempt has been made to get a balance between combatant and non-combatant stories.

The first four entries demonstrate the variety to be found here:

The Hon Constance Agar-Robartes of Lanhydrock House (NT) became a nurse shortly after the outbreak of war. Nursing became her passion and she remained in the profession for the rest of her life.

Truro School pupil Joseph C Akester saw his first plane in 1912, was inspired to become a pilot, he landed behind enemy lines and remained as a POW.

At the beginning of the war two St Agnes heavy horses were hidden in an adit and cave to prevent them being requisitioned by the army. Albert was the prized lead horse of a team that hauled machinery in Cornish mines.

Dickie Barr was born in Perranuthnoe and was of African descent. He served in the Royal Navy in France and the Dardanelles where he was badly wounded.



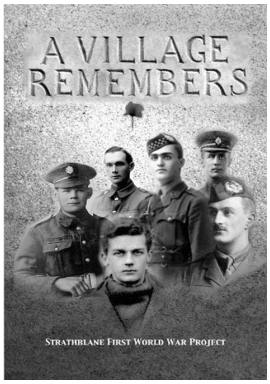
www.100firstworldwarstories.co.uk



Local history as therapy

Jane Howells

Strathblane is a community in Stirlingshire, 12 miles north of Glasgow. In 1914 it had a population of around 1200, and although described today as 'a dormitory village for Greater Glasgow' it clearly retains its own identity. *A Village Remembers,* published in 2014, explores the inspirational, and often heart-breaking, stories of the people behind the 27 names on the village war memorial. While many places have published significant volumes on the impact of the First World War in their area, the results of Anne Johnstone's enthusiasm and dedication have been particularly noteworthy.



Anne is a professional journalist who has used her skills to lead a voluntary community project in Strathblane. Only four of the 27 men on the memorial had families still in the area. Research into their biographies covered a wide range of sources and methods. Anne herself wrote some of the stories, and encouraged other people to take part in both the research and writing, providing advice and support to those less experienced in such activities. In the narrative, personal experiences are used to illustrate different aspects of the conflict, such as bantam battalions, patriotic propaganda and the Derby Scheme. The extended introduction places the individuals in the wider context of the war, and of life in rural Scotland at the time.

Armistice 1956 wreath laying by scouts and guides at the war memorial



Anne grew up in Dorset. She has an MA in Modern History from the University of Oxford. Since 1978 she has lived in Stirlingshire and worked for *The Glasgow Herald* as a feature writer and ultimately chief leader writer before being diagnosed with leukaemia in 2013. She used her recovery from chemotherapy to put together *A Village Remembers*. Sales have raised more than £5000 to date for the Scottish veterans' charity Erskine.

This was her second book; *Strathblane and Blanefield Now and Then* was also, as her referee put it, 'a testament to her expertise in bringing research of local history to life'. She is currently working on a history of Erskine, which





'Rainbow in Strathblane at Blanefield'
(from Geograph)
© Ben Brooksbank and licensed for reuse under this Creative Commons Licence

celebrates its centenary in 2016, and is awaiting a bone marrow transplant. She is married with three grown-up children.

We are very sorry Anne was not able to join us at Local History Day in Birmingham last month, but we send best wishes from everyone there for her renewed health, and a speedy return to such impressive contributions to local history.

With thanks to Anne Johnstone, Lesley Duncan, Magnus Llewellin and Robert Davy

Copies of *A Village Remembers* are available from www.strathblanefield.org.uk for £12.50 inc p&p,

www.strathblanefield.org.uk/history/avillageremembers.html www.erskine.org.uk

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European Local History Competition

LoCloud is launching an international competition focusing on local heritage and culture. The competition has two categories:

My Local Heritage: this encourages people to explore a favourite place or part of their local history through the online resources in Europeana, and to present their experience online through web pages, a blog or even a video. The video should be no longer than 5-8 minutes. (See for example this video http://vimeo.com/62602290);

My LoCloud Services: this is for developers, aggregators and individual cultural institutions to showcase their use of the many services developed as part of LoCloud. For information about the services: http://support.locloud.eu/

The deadline for the entries is 1st October 2015. Competition winners will be announced at the LoCloud final event, which will be held in Amersfoort, Netherlands on 5th February 2016. Accommodation and travel costs will be covered by LoCloud for up to 2 people for each winning entry. Gunnar Urtegaard, from the National Archives of Norway (project coordinator) says: 'I think cloud based services and infrastructure for the heritage sector are the future. Such services will help institutions to offer better services and more high quality content to users all over Europe'

LoCloud's overall goal is to add to over 4 million digital resources from European cultural institutions to Europeana, an on-line portal providing access to millions of digitised materials from European museums, libraries, archives and multimedia collections. LoCloud started on 1 March 2013 and is a Best Practice Network of 32 partners, co-funded under the CIP ICT-PSP Programme of the European Commission. It runs for three years. Further information and rules for the competition are available at **http://locloud.eu/LoCloud-Competition** or can be requested by writing to: competition@locloud.eu . For more information about the project please visit **http://www.locloud.eu/**

See also **Europeana 1914-1918** in *Local History News* 115 p 13

The first Huguenot Museum opens in Rochester

Amy Adams

With the help of the Heritage Lottery Fund Britain's first museum dedicated to the history of the Huguenots opened in Rochester this May.



Since the early 1960s the French Hospital, La Providence, has been situated at the heart of Rochester High Street. Originally founded in London in 1718 to provide accommodation and assistance to Huguenots and their descendants, this institution has over the years amassed a beautiful collection of artefacts which relate to the history of French Protestants and the Hospital. It is this collection that forms the basis of the museum displays which give an overview of the history of the Huguenots in England.

Using the stories behind the artefacts the galleries cover the persecution of the Huguenots in France, their arrival in England, the skills and trades they brought with them and the organisations they created. The displays also set the arrival of the Huguenots in the context of the wider history of refugees in Britain.

On the top floor of the museum a vibrant and engaging learning space has been created. Here visitors will be encouraged to continue to explore the Huguenot story, whether through taking part in one of our craft workshops, lectures or demonstrations. In 2015 we are hosting events such as 'Huguenots of Kent' a talk by Dr Gillian Draper on 18th July, a full day bookbinding workshop for adults on the 13th June and an introduction to Huguenot family history with genealogist Celia Heritage on 4th November (see www.huguenotmuseum.org for further details).



For family historians and researchers the museum has a small archive room. Here researchers will have access to publications and academic articles from the Huguenot Society, normally only available at The National Archives. We also have a state of the art museum store where researchers can call up objects and archives from the museum's collection to research. The museum catalogue is currently being developed but will be available to view prior to a visit at www.huguenotmuseum.org and will be updated regularly as we work our way through the cataloguing of the collection. The archive room will be available during our opening hours but we do ask that visitors book an appointment before they visit to ensure we have space to accommodate them.

The Huguenot Museum is open Wednesday – Saturday 10am – 5pm on the top two floors of 95 High Street, Rochester, Kent. Entrance is £4 for adults and £3 for concessions and can be validated for 12 months with gift-aid (entrance to the archive room is included in the price). *For more information or to get in touch visit www.huguenotmuseum.org, call 01634 789347 or email learning@huguenotmuseum.org*

Studying resorts

Sue Berry

No 'local' history can be studied in isolation because of the need to discern between the unique and the shared histories of communities. Seaside resorts cannot be exempted from this practice. The huge task of rewriting the history of the City of Brighton and Hove has been enriched by such comparisons.

Seaside resorts have a wide range of origins. The earliest group were declining towns seeking new employment. Brighton's development as a town was a bit later than the other four which evolved into resorts at the same time. Brighton was by the time of Domesday a seaside farming and fishing community. Evidence for its history in the Middle Ages is scant. The community rapidly expanded into a town in the sixteenth century when state papers and manor court books provide a good in depth study of what happened. The economy depended on sending a substantial fishing fleet for herring in the North Sea. This town was but one of many communities along the length of the south coast of England involved in fishing well beyond the English Channel, and as equally vulnerable to any changes in the trade.

Brighton's population peaked at around 3,500 in about 1640 due to ease of accommodation, profitable fishing and and high unemployment in its hinterland. For two generations, Brighton was the biggest town in the county but without the more balanced economies of the market towns such as Lewes, Chichester and Horsham. The quite rapid decline of the fishing industry by the later seventeenth century, for a variety of reasons which affected all the coastal communities involved, emphasised the danger of depending on one economic sector for a living.

The development of Brighton as a resort is far more interesting than the long established misrepresentation of it as being transformed from a fishing village by an individual. This sycophantic celebrity story published in guide books began in the later 1700s as a dedication to Dr Richard Russell, was transferred to the Duke of York, and finally to George Prince of Wales.

The first stage of Brighton's transformation into a resort was between about 1730 and the early 1750s. This was at about the same time as other early resorts which were also small declining ports such as Margate, Scarborough and Weymouth. At this stage of resort development all of them utilised existing urban infrastructure such as the small inns, houses to let and shops, and depended on investments from the surrounding region for new facilities.

In the early 1750s, the number of visitors to Brighton attracted investment from Lewes, a prosperous marketing town nearby. An innkeeper from Lewes raised the capital to convert a large house with a sea view, which stood beside the open area which served Brighton as



More to the seaside than Bathing Machines - these supposedly in front of the eastern cliffs at Brighton in the 1820s.
Private collection

a promenade, into the Castle Inn and Assembly Room. Inward investment remained important but slowly the town's residents generated enough assets to invest and to influence local politics.

By the early 1780s Brighton was the leading seaside resort, helped by a ferry service to Dieppe which, due to the lack of a harbour, hoved to off-shore. So when George, Prince of Wales he visited his uncle, the Duke of Cumberland at Brighton in the mid-1780s he knew many of the visitors. Thirty years of investment in facilities and the well established daily schedule of activities co-ordinated by the Master of Ceremonies attracted this fun loving young man who became a regular visitor during the season. He emulated other wealthy visitors to this and to other resorts and established a town house. George converted a lodging house into the Pavilion, a charming villa designed by Henry Holland still encapsulated within the later revamp by John Nash. In common with other south last resorts, Brighton flourished during the Napoleonic Wars; the presence of the Prince (latterly the Prince Regent) was not the key influence, part of the evidence for that is the success of the others, most of which did not have a prince in residence. It was the soldiers stationed around the resorts and the navy in the Channel providing the impression of security in the face of invasion, well connected young men, and novelty which helped resorts to grow along this coastline and resulted in the spread of seaside villas.

The period when Brighton's Regency identity was truly established lasted for just over a decade, between c1816 and 1825 after which a recession hit the resort badly. By then local, regional and London based investors had transformed the resort to keep abreast with fashion and built a magnificent seafront which stretches some three miles. Many resorts have grand schemes dating from this period but Brighton and Hove have the most.

Sadly, like the setting to the Pavilion and the public gardens so essential to the older more central buildings, all of this is under threat from a long period of third rate management by a succession of weak councils. Such councils are a threat to the heritage of all our historic urban areas and should be held more to account by residents if they want to foster the essence of a strong local urban identity which is key to keeping a town's sense of place, encourages the private sector to invest in employment and, supporting the value of housing investment.

To read articles published by Sue using her research see the *Journal of the Georgian Group,* and Sussex Archaeological Collections, and her book *Georgian Brighton* (Phillimore, 2004) The *JGG* will soon be on JSTOR and how to obtain back copies of articles in SAC is on *www.sussexpast.co.uk*, the website of the Sussex Archaeological Society under 'Research'. Her work on Robert Adams revamping of a villa in Brighton and on his hoped for commission from Mrs Fitzherbert will be the subject of a talk at the conference about the Adam Brothers organised by the Georgian Group in September 2015.

Sue wishes to acknowledge the support of her husband Pat. Like most putative volunteer contributors to the VCH we meet the costs of the research. We look forward to clarity as to the future of the VCH as a result of the current review, and that it will result in a more publicity accessible series of publications suited to a wide range of issues in local and regional history.

Dr Sue Berry, 17 Penny Acre, Chichester PO19 6DY email: pat.sueberry@btopenworld.com

see also front cover image

M K Ashby

Reading Joan Dils' sympathetic tribute to Mabel Ashby (see page 16) I fetched my copy of *Joseph Ashby of Tysoe,* to discover it was given as an anniversary gift from my father to my mother; it is the hardback CUP edition, newly published in 1961.

The foreword by J W Robertson Scott begins 'This is the best piece of village history since my friends the Hammonds' *Village Labourer.*', and ends ' ... Miss M K Ashby, that cultivated and honest writer to whom all who care for rural life in Britain and out of it are indebted for the present outstanding work'.

JH

Exploring how World War 1 lives on
through our localities and communities

Keith Lilley

Local historians across the UK will be well aware of the ongoing commemoration of World War 1. But how did the war shape the identities of these who live in these islands, not just in Great Britain but Ireland too, and how does remembering and commemorating WW1 today reflect contemporary concerns about our nations' cultures and identities across England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland – north and south? Addressing these key questions is important. There are continuing, 'living' legacies of the war, a complex heritage that ought to be carefully and critically studied through local research undertaken within a national (and international) context. This is the remit of ***Living Legacies 1914-18***, From Past Conflict to Shared Future, a WW1 'public engagement centre' and its researchers.

Funded for three years from 2014-2016 by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) in collaboration with the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), *Living Legacies 1914-18* is one of five WW1 AHRC public engagement centres designed to help connect community-based researchers with academic researchers in UK universities to share their interests and expertise on both the war and also its continued presence. Of these five centres, *Living Legacies* is especially interested in exploring how World War 1 lives on in the 21st century world. Based at Queen's University Belfast, the centre includes academics at the University of Ulster and National Museums Northern Ireland, as well as community-based researchers across Northern Ireland. The centre's network spans academic and community-based researchers based in other parts of the UK, including Wales, the north-east of England and London.

Why Northern Ireland? It is a place where the past is very much present in everyday life today, and indeed, in the whole of Ireland. The First World War has a complex impact and longstanding effects, as shown by the enduring legacies of the conflict in the histories and identities of Britain and Ireland, through its politics and places. Within this context, *Living Legacies* researchers are particularly interested in exploring research themes that link localities with wider 'national' issues through commemoration of the war, promoting a greater and deeper understanding of the war and its impacts, past, present and into the future.

Living Legacies has a series of research themes at its heart that combine the work of archaeologists, geographers, and historians with museum studies, drama and performing arts and digital approaches to recording and interpreting WW1 heritage. These themes include:

moving lives – why and where people moved as a result of the war;

performing arts – expressing stories about the war through drama and theatre;

material cultures and archaeology – rediscovering the forgotten First World War heritage in our landscapes;



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digital technologies and digitisation – working with digital technologies to understand the past;

museums and exhibitions – telling stories about the war through personal objects and sharing these with others.

Through these themes, *Living Legacies* aims to develop a stronger shared understanding of the WW1 and its legacies through Britain and Ireland. *Living Legacies* researchers believe that documenting these modern-day community engagements with WW1 heritage is as important as researching the war itself. By linking projects that share a common interest in the war's continued presence in our lives and memories, for example by linking with HLF-funded *WW1: Then and Now* projects, the centre seeks to bring together disparate communities from localities across the UK and Ireland, to move from past conflict to a shared future. To this, *Living Legacies* researchers are interested in partnering with community-based networks and projects to explore, interpret and record the 'living legacies' of the First World War, in particular helping communities across the UK to:

tell their stories and share these stories with others;

rediscover the forgotten First World War heritage in our landscapes;

find out why and where people moved as a result of the war;

express stories about the conflict through drama and theatre.

If your community group or project has an interest in one or more of these areas, please do get in touch with us – see contact details below.

Living Legacies also produces public events, workshops and talks related to the centre's themes. Events are being held in Northern Ireland, north-east England and Wales during 2015 and 2016. Through these events and activities, the centre's academic researchers offer practical support for community researchers, providing training in specialist areas such as digitisation, object identification and conservation as well as access to expertise and resources.

Visit the ***Living Legacies*** website for listings of our events and projects – see http://www.livinglegacies1914-18.ac.uk/. Living Legacies is also on Twitter at @LivingLegacies3 and Facebook.

For more information please contact *Living Legacies* researchers by post:

Dr Keith D Lilley,
'Living Legacies 1914-18' AHRC Public Engagement Centre,
Institute for Collaborative Research in the Humanities,
18 University Square,
Queen's University Belfast,
BELFAST.
Northern Ireland, BT7 1NN.

by email: LivingLegacies@qub.ac.uk

by phone +44 (0)28 9097 3725



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Mabel Kathleen Ashby 1892-1975

Joan Dils

Local historians are frequently the beneficiaries of serendipity. A chance conversation with a friend on a Reading bus resulted a few days later in a brown envelope falling through my letter box. It contained a note and 'a few bits [which] should be preserved in memory of a lovely lady'. The 'few bits' included a typescript of an undated hand-written letter from M K Ashby to 'Edward' (the eminent historian E P Thompson) which he later copied and sent to Miss Maude Warwick, a student at Hillcroft College for Working Women in 1954-5 when Miss Ashby was acting principal. Maude Warwick, a WEA tutor-organiser in Middlesbrough, seems to have made some copies, one of which my friend, then working at Hillcroft, had preserved.

By another happy chance, 2015 is the fortieth anniversary of the death of M K Ashby who is best known to local historians as the biographer of her father, Joseph Ashby of Tysoe. Her book, *Joseph Ashby of Tysoe, 1859-1919: a study of English village life* published in 1961 was described in a fulsome review in the *New Statesman* as an 'intimate chapter of rural history in the 19th century ....the growth of a mind and the changing of a place.' It deservedly won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize for biography that year.

Although the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* has an extensive article on Joseph, based on her study, the only reference to his daughter is a brief mention of her long tenure as principal of Hillcroft College and an acknowledgement in an endnote of the debt of the article's author to her biography. Thankfully this omission is rectified by an account of her career in the letter written at Thompson's request. Brought up 'in the deep countryside' and until the age of 14 suffering from a 'hampering and painful lameness' which prevented her attending the village school, she had good reason not to 'sentimentalise' about her rural childhood. She escaped thanks to the award of a County Scholarship to King's High School, Warwick in 1907 which gave her the qualifications needed for entry to a teacher training college though she regretted its failure to provide 'the education that means knowledge and balance and humour and humanity'.

She was no more sparing of the ethos of the University of Birmingham despite the degree and teaching certificate which gave her access to a series of posts: as Rural Pupil Teachers' Guide in Staffordshire; with the Education Department of the Co-operative Union in Manchester; as Warden of a small university hall in Bristol; and an Advisor to Rural Schools in Cambridgeshire whose 'schools were largely staffed by half-qualified teachers'. Convalescing in a shared cottage in Oxfordshire from an illness brought about by frequent journeys on Cambridge's inadequate railway network and by bicycle, (she never learned to drive) she wrote *The Country School: its History and Practice* (OUP, 1929) which she complained was not widely publicised 'nor in any way made known'.

More satisfying was her short period as a lecturer in Education at Goldsmith's College. However her enduring interest in adult education and the WEA took her in 1933 to Hillcroft College where she remained until her retirement in 1946, returning later for a short spell as 'locum'. She saw it as a place where her students gained new qualifications in a disciplined, hard-working environment, at once stimulating and supportive.

Like many other local historians, it was in the comparative leisure of retirement that she began to research and write not only her father's biography but also a study of Bledington, where she shared a cottage. Although she regarded herself as an amateur historian, Thompson did not, praising her 'mastery of the sources and the tough quality of her analysis'. She is an ideal role model for women, teachers and historians and indeed should be remembered, not least as a 'lovely lady'.

50th anniversary of Warwickshire Local History Society

Neville Usher

Warwickshire Local History Society is celebrating its 50th anniversary with an event at Stoneleigh Abbey on 19 September. The headline speakers will be Professors John Becket, Chris Dyer and Michael Wood. There will be a tour of Stoneleigh Abbey, lunch, and entertainment by Lesley Smith as Queen Elizabeth I. There may still be a few places available: for details see the society's website. To mark its anniversary the society has also sponsored an essay competition on an aspect of Warwickshire's history. The winner will be announced at Stoneleigh and the essay published in the next issue of *Warwickshire History.*

The society was established after a meeting in Leamington Pump Rooms on 30 September 1964. Its first chairman was Dr Levi Fox (later President) and the Secretary was Dr Joan Lane. The committee included Robin Chaplin, Dr Arthur Gooder, Professor Rodney Hilton, Philip Styles, and the County Archivist, A.C. Wood. The fees were 10/- p.a., Juniors 5/-. The first lecture was held on 10 May 1965, when Professor W.G. Hoskins spoke on 'The Study of Local History and the role of the Local History Society.' By December 1965 there were 154 individual members & 11 institutions. Today there are 239 members, including 29 local history groups and 15 institutions. Over the last fifty years some of the most prominent British historians have spoken to the society. They include Margaret Gelling, Joan Thirsk, Howard Colvin, E.P. Thompson and Chris Dyer. The current President, Elizabeth, Lady Hamilton was an early member and became President in 2007.

During the winter the society meets in Warwick for lectures. In the summer it explores the Warwickshire countryside, especially those places with historical connections. In the last year there have been lectures on early modern almshouses and parish housing for the poor, and the archaeology of Farnborough Hall; the places visited have included Polesworth, Brailes, Kinwarton, the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, and Baddesley Clinton.

In 1969 the first issue of *Warwickshire History* was published; volume 16 is the current issue. The first editors were Robin Chaplin and Joan Lane. Dr Robert Bearman succeeded Robin Chaplin in 1971 and became sole editor in 1992. Since 1998, eight of its articles have been awarded a BALH prize. The society's website includes an index of its contents. Since 1980 it has also included an annual bibliography of books and articles on the history of Warwickshire. An amalgamated version from 1997-2012 is available on the website. The society also publishes a twice-yearly *Bulletin,* with information about local history in the county. Occasional papers appear as funds permit. These have ranged from a biography of Dr Jephson of Leamington Spa, a history of the Shire Hall, Warwick, and architectural histories of Warwickshire country houses.

Warwickshire Local History Society works hard to live up to its objective to promote the advancement of public education in local history in Warwickshire, acting as an 'umbrella society' for smaller groups within the county, to encourage closer links and the better sharing of resources and information, including details of programmes. A list of those societies for whom the society has contact details is available on our website, with a combined list of events. The society hopes to hold a third 'umbrella' conference in 2016.

The society has joined Warwickshire County Council's bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a website to record and share the stories of our county. It will allow people all over the world to celebrate Warwickshire's heritage by uploading digital content, sharing their knowledge, and participating in events. The result of the bid is awaited; meanwhile the website is already available at ***http://www.ourwarwickshire.org.uk/*** The society's own website is undergoing re-development, which will allow more material to be made available, including digitized versions of the earliest volumes of *Warwickshire History*.

Details of membership and activities of the society are available on the website
http://www.warwickshirehistory.org.uk/

Nichols Archive Database

Gordon T Cox

Review of a lecture by Mr Julian Pooley on the Nichols Project, at St Albans and Hertfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society on 27th March 2015

I was privileged to attend a lecture as a guest of the St Albans and South-West Hertfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society by Mr Julian Pooley (FSA) on the subject of the Nichols Archive Database, of which he is both the originator and co-ordinator. The lecture focused on the three generations of the Nichols family of printers and antiquarian publishers (1745-1873), their connections with Hertfordshire in general, and St Albans in particular. John Nichols, his son John Bowyer Nichols and grandson John Gough Nichols were giants of British antiquarianism, not only for the significance and volume of their output, but for the position they occupied at the centre of a huge network of collaborators, acquaintances and friends. The entry relating to their documentary remains covers six columns in Papers of British Antiquaries and Historians, far more than any other person, and that only covers the material in British collections.[1]

John Nichols began his working life as an apprentice printer to William Bowyer the younger, and built up a regular clientele amongst literary figures and antiquaries. Mr Pooley listed for us the staggering scale of John Nicols' researches on *The History and Antiquities of the Town and County of Leicester* which when published reached almost seven million words, and his *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*. His publication of the works of others was just as heroic in its variety and size; to say nothing of the voluminous editing and writing of *The Gentleman's Magazine* which he undertook from 1782. Nichols' entire stock of printed material, both finished works and works in progress, was destroyed in a disastrous fire in February 1808. This event brought out the best in his colleagues, competitors and friends, who all offered him various kinds of support, something we may not have known about except for the survival of his valuable library, personal papers, correspondences and business records. Nevertheless they were subsequently broken up and dispersed by will and by sale, so that they were now distributed between eighty different archives, libraries and collections. The purpose of the Nichols Archives Database is to catalogue the manuscript letters and make available to researchers the information contained in the largest antiquarian archive in private hands.



portrait of John Nichols (1745-1826) drawn by J Jackson on 1811 and engraved by Charles Heath in 1812 (from Nichols project website)

How Mr Pooley discovered this material is scarcely less remarkable than the size of the task he is undertaking. It began in a second-hand and antiquarian bookshop in Flask Walk, Hampstead, with the discovery of a diary of Mary Anne Nichols, grand-daughter of John Nichols. Anyone familiar with the said bookshop will realise what a happy chance brought this manuscript volume into Julian Pooley's hands. As he began to transcribe it he quickly realised how valuable a social document it was; revealing the perceptions of a young girl between the ages of ten and twenty-one years concerning her family and their personal and business connections.[2] Information within the diary led him to explore the five major collections of Nichols documents in private hands, the British Library, and the Bodleian in England, and the Folger, Columbia and Yale libraries in the USA. But it was the discovery of the location of many thousands of papers in private hands that caused him to begin the Nichols Archive Database. He planned to create an analytical guide which would enable researchers to obtain a complete picture of a correspondence, rather than only one party's

side of it, and to enable then to discover who were the anonymous contributors to *The Gentleman's Magazine*, or the real names of those who preferred a *nom-de-plume.*

The project is already revealing a 'network of improvement' involving literary as well as antiquarian figures; something which goes far beyond mere 'networks of knowledge'. Correspondence with the Nichols family elucidates personal relationships, aspirations and fears of their authors, their difficulties and doubts. To illustrate the versatility of the material in the archive Mr Pooley produced some interesting examples of the interaction of Hertfordshire antiquaries from the late 18th to mid 19th centuries, including as one of his illustrations a sketch of the murderer, Thurtell, possibly never seen in public before. A wealth of detail about James Brown (FSA) and Sir William Domville, two people familiar to students of the history of St Albans, was provided, including a particularly interesting letter from Brown to John Nichols giving an account of a social event at the very close of the eighteenth century. Details of the social life of small towns which were not on the tourist trail and had no assembly room, theatre of other indoor space for public entertainment in the 18th and 19th century are not easy to find. With a searchable database such as this one no longer needs to imagine Miss Austen's protagonists removed from Margate or Bath to one's chosen location, there are letters and diaries which can tell us who was there, and at least some of what went on. It was encouraging to see that this project is going ahead to provide a resource which will be of benefit to so many sub-disciplines within the broad field of history, and Mr Pooley certainly achieved his aim of conveying the excitement that he feels to have originated it and carry it forward.

1 *Guide to Sources for British History*, vol. 12: Papers of British Antiquaries and Historians, Historic Manuscript Commission, (2nd impression, 2004), pp.144-147.

2 See Julian Pooley, 'The Diary of Mary Nichols: its Value as a Source for Local Historians', *The Local Historian*, 25.3, (August 1995), pp. 130-144.

http://www2.le.ac.uk/centres/elh/research/project/nichols

BALH AWARDS 2015

for personal achievement

Brian Boulter, Berkshire

Richard Brockington, Cumbria

Anne Johnstone, Stirlingshire

Iris Pinkstone, Worcestershire

for a society newsletter

Forest of Dean Local History Society

for research and publication

Margaret Bird, 'Supplying the beer: life on the road in late 18th century Norfolk', *The Glaven Historian* no.14 (2014) 2-29 [winner: long articles]

Peter Gutteridge, 'Shipbuilding in Selby in the nineteenth century', *East Yorkshire Historian* vol.15 (2014) 17-48

John K Little, 'Merchants, mariners and yeomen: what does the Hearth Tax tell us about early modern Stockton-on-Tees?', *Cleveland History* no.105 (2014) 3-32

Edmund Lyon, '"An avalanche of wrathful violence": physical opposition to the Salvation Army, 1881-1883', *Hackney History* vol.18 (2014) 27-36

James H Thomas, 'County, commerce and contacts: Hampshire and the East India Company in the eighteenth century', *Hampshire Studies* vol.68 (2013) 169-177 [winner short articles]

Geoffrey Ball, 'The 'War Ag' in Saffron Walden district during the Second World war', *Saffron Walden Historical Journal* new series vol.13 no.26 (Autumn 2013) 21-27

Anne C Brook, 'The communal history of Jews in Huddersfield', *Huddersfield Local History Society* Journal no.25 (2014-2015) 9-17

E J T Collins, 'The Great War in the Berkshire countryside', *Berkshire Old and New* no.31 (2014) 13-31

Introducing Historic England

Jane Golding

On the 1 April 2015 **English Heritage** separated into two organisations:

Historic England, is the new name for the public body that champions and protects England's historic environment, everything from prehistoric remains to post-war office buildings, and

The English Heritage Trust, a new independent charity, retaining the name English Heritage, continues to look after – on behalf of the nation – the National Heritage Collection, consisting of more than 400 historic sites across England such as Stonehenge, Dover Castle, and parts of Hadrian's Wall.

Historic England has three key objectives in its work: to be expert, to be constructive and to champion our historic environment. It is responsible for advising government on listing (designation) and planning whilst also undertaking research, publishing guidance, managing a significant archive of historic photographs and making grants. While many areas of Historic England's work will be familiar and of ongoing interest to local historians, under our new name, we'll be launching imaginative new initiatives, new opportunities to access information and more opportunities for the public and local groups to take part. The selection highlighted below will help you find your way around Historic England and might introduce one or two pleasant surprises!

National Heritage List for England (NHLE) is the statutory record of formally designated heritage in this country. It is the only official and up-to-date database for important historic sites and structures which have been officially recognised by the Government as deserving special consideration. From its origins in 1882, the List has grown to include almost 400,000 items ranging from prehistoric monuments to office blocks, battlefields and parks. Recent additions include a First World War 'acoustic mirror' and the country's first skate park to be listed!

http://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list

Our newly published ***Designation Yearbook 2014-2015*** includes an astonishing variety of additions or revisions to the List. As well as individual buildings, the Yearbook shows how Historic England approaches a whole cluster or type of building that is at risk. For example, the Small Rural Schools in Norfolk project is a response to the increasing rate of school closures in the late C20 and early C21, which placed at risk the varied architecture of the county's historic village schools through conversion to domestic or commercial use, or possible demolition. Swafield School (illustrated above) is one of 12 buildings being newly listed, only five of which are still schools. The Yearbook is available as a free download from the Historic England website.



Exterior of former Swalfield School, Norfolk, now a village hall © Historic England

http://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/designation-yearbook-2014-15/designation-yearbook-2014-15.pdf/

War Memorials Listing: only around 1,700 of the country's tens of thousands of war memorials are listed, and very few are listed at Grade I or II*. We've set ourselves the challenge of getting 500 a year listed over the 2014 - 18 First World War centenary period and we need your help! We're working together with Civic Voice and War Memorials Trust and would love local history groups to get involved. Here's how:

https://www.historicengland.org.uk/news-and-features/first-world-war-home-front/how-can-i-get-involved/protecting-our-war-memorials/

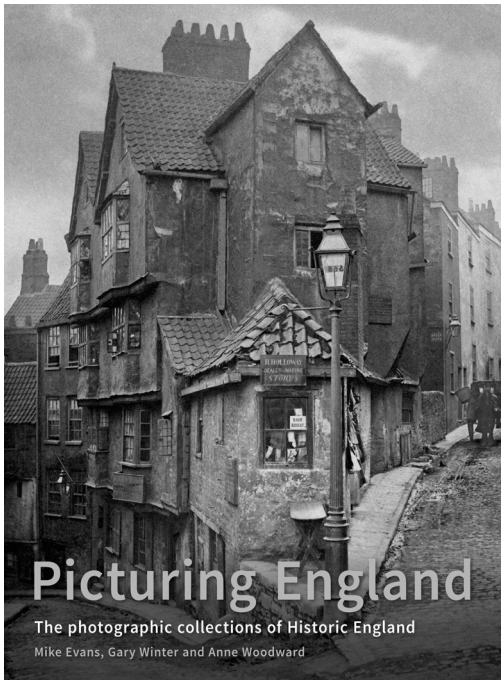
Late in 2015 will see the launch of **Enriching the List**; this exciting project will encourage people to upload information and images that relate to NHLE entries in a separate, publicly accessible part of the List. It'll be another great project for local history groups to tackle – adding colour, depth and detail to the official information on local listed buildings.

The Historic England Archive holds major collections covering archaeology, architecture, social and local history. The collections contain drawings, plans, documents and over 9 million photographs - including over 4 million aerial photographs covering the whole of England and dating from the early C20th to the present day. This unique collection, held in the Archive in Swindon, captures the changes in our urban and rural landscape over a period of almost 100 years. More than 1 million catalogue entries may be searched online and over 95,000 oblique aerial photographs are available online via the **Britain from Above** website.

http://archive.historicengland.org.uk/
http://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/

Historic England is creating new online access to more than 620,000 historic photographs of cities, towns and villages all over the country. This new resource, to be known as **England's Places**, is the digitised version of the well-known Architectural Red Boxes.

One of the first books to bear the Historic England brand is ***Picturing England***, a journey through 150 years of English history via beautifully-preserved photographs from the Historic England Archive. Over 300 images illustrate the changing appearance of England's buildings, landscapes and people, and reveal how the method, subject matter and purpose of



Picturing England, *a journey through 150 years of English History via photographs from the Historic England Archive © Historic England*

photography have dramatically evolved over time. Many of the images have never been published before. An exhibition accompanies the publication at The Library of Birmingham, 2 July to 21 September 2015.

BALH is partner to Assessing the Value of Community Generated Historic Environment Research, a project funded by Historic England. The project is led by Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service and will combine local case studies with an England-wide survey of local history and archaeology societies, diving groups and historic building enthusiasts. Whether your interest is in medieval manors or inter-war industry, your response will enable a better understanding of the contribution of your work to heritage research, and to make sure that local history, historic building and archaeological research is better valued by those making decisions on planning issues and research agendas.

http://community-heritage-research.blogspot.co.uk

Jane Golding works in Historic England's Designation department supporting the development of locally held Historic Environment Record services

SOCIETIES



East Yorkshire Local History Society is running a study day, in association with BALH (see NNI p 35), on 17 October 2015. 'Archaeological Studies in and around East Yorkshire' takes place in Beverley, a delightful market town and a hidden gem in the East Riding of Yorkshire. Among its charms are Beverley Minster, the remains of a Dominican Friary, a Guildhall of medieval origin, the Fifteenth Century North Bar, the Market Cross, Westwood Pasture with its cattle, many Georgian houses and a number of original timber framed buildings hidden behind more modern facades. All the speakers are experts in their field and can jointly boast almost one hundred years of experience. Rodney Mackey is an independent professional who has led numerous projects in his career; Dr Peter Halkon is an archaeologist, author and lecturer at the University of Hull; Ed Dennison runs his own consultancy business; and Dr Dave Evans is the Manager of the Humber Archaeology Partnership. Full details of the programme are on the ***BALH website.***

Also on 17 October is the 10th Black Country History Day organised in partnership between the **Black Country Society** and the **Centre for West Midlands History, University of Birmingham.** The speakers will be Jenny Dixon talking about the River Tame in the Black Country; Yvonne Jones who has written about Japanning in Wolverhampton; Philip Jones who has researched industrial accidents in the Black Country, particularly the Millfields boiler explosion in Bilston, and how these contributed to health and safety legislation; Dr Chris Upton from Newman University talking about Birmingham and the Black Country. *Contact details for booking are Dr Malcolm Dick, Black Country History Day, School of History and Cultures, The University of Birmingham, Edgbaston Birmingham, B15 2TT m.m.dick@bham.ac.uk 0121 415 8253 www.blackcountrysociety.co.uk*

Avon Local History and Archaeology's 2015 annual general meeting, hosted by ALHA member Abbots Leigh Civic Society, will be held at Leigh Court, Abbots Leigh, on 14 October. It will be followed by the 2015 Joe Bettey lecture, delivered by Professor Murray Stewart of UWE and ALCS, who will introduce his booklet (edited by Dr Jonathan Harlow), the latest to be published by ALHA, titled *Village in Transition: The Sale of the Abbots Leigh Estate October 14th 1915*. *www.alha.org*

Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society is holding a conference to celebrate the 700th anniversary of the birth of Bristol topographer William Worcestre. **Bristol Record Society** published in 2000 the Bristol part of WW's Itineraries, edited by Frances Neale. The conference will be on Saturday 31 October, in Mshed, Bristol. *www.bgas.org.uk*

Oxborough History Group describes itself as 'fledgling', having passed its first birthday in April. 'A group for people interested in exploring, researching and preserving the history of Oxborough, Norfolk', they have big ideas, including 'getting down to some serious research'. There has been a visit to Norfolk



Record Office for some training and advice. On the first Monday of the month they hold an Open Day at the Village Hall where people can visit the Oxborough Archive. Display cases in the hall's foyer show images and stories about the village (Oxborough ferry, below). Their website is developing successfully, and their newsletter demonstrates topics of interest. Plans are underway for a publication in January 2018 - *A New History of Oxborough*. We wish them well and look forward to hearing of more achievements. *www.oxboroughhistorygroup.org*

Prize labels in books can identify chapels, missions, Sunday and day schools that might no longer exist. A member of **Birmingham & Midland Society for Genealogy & Heraldry** is developing a list of these which, while initially aimed at identifying and dating individuals, will also be valuable for those seeking these institutions within a local community. She would be pleased to hear from anyone with examples on their shelves. *kaywhalley2@gmail.com* *www.bmsgh.org*

Troon@Ayrshire Family History Society's *Journal* Spring 2015 contains an article of interest to local historians. 'Hotels, holidays and hoteliers' considers the numbers of people who must have worked in Scotland's hotels and inns over the years, the impact of railways and steamers, holidays with pay, shopping, and many more related issues. *www.troonayrshirefhs.org.uk*

Hotels were key parts of the local economy in many places (for example see Sue Berry's article about the development of Brighton in this issue of *LHN*). **Shanklin & District History Society** report the recent refurbishment of one of the oldest purpose built guest houses in the town. The construction of a new road between



Ryde and Ventnor provided an opportunity, and Jeremiah Rayner opened Daish's Hotel in 1833 in an ideal spot to provide refreshment for people and horses along that route. Its popularity grew during the Victorian period, and its reputation was said to be known throughout Europe. *www.shanklinhistory.webplus.net*

Large quantities of tea and cake commonly feature in reports of school feasts reported in parish magazines. **Harpenden & District Local History Society** have been looking at such events in 1869. Evidence is revealed about the weather, the games that were played, the 'friends' who attended, supplied the refreshments, or presented prizes. *www.harpenden-history.org.uk*

More recently, last January's meeting of **Project Purley** was a Members' Evening on the theme of the First World War. Not only were there displays, talks and reports on individual research, but home-made Anzac biscuits were provided with the tea and coffee. Their May 2015 journal prints the recipe. *www.project-purley.eu*

Long associated with the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, established in World War 1, popular tradition has it that these biscuits were baked by army wives to send to the front. It is thought more likely that the recipe used today (oats, coconut, golden syrup etc) made biscuits sold at home to raise funds for the troops.

On p 20 above, Jane Golding mentions historic village schools being put at risk through conversion or even demolition, and now being listed. The May 2015 *Newsletter* from **North East Derbyshire Industrial Archaeology Society** takes up that point, saying 'school buildings are a neglected part of our national heritage'. The author has been doing some research into the work of architect George H Widdows (1871 – 1946) who pioneered changes to school building design to enhance the heath of the children. He is now getting recognition from professionals, and his buildings listed, but no blue plaque yet. The research results can be seen on *http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_H._Widdows* *http://nedias.co.uk/?page_id=300*

Amongst the topics being explored in local investigations on the First World War is the impact on the home front. In ***Bedford Local History Magazine*** No 95 an article covers 'Zeppelin scares and raids in Bedfordshire'. Numerous places, not just London, received attacks in 1915 and 1916, and many felt helpless to provide any protection. There were lighting regulations, and blackout requirements but this was difficult for factories with glass roofs, and lack of people to enforce them. Reporting restrictions on newspapers are a limiting factor for local historians trying to research this subject. *www.baalhs.org.uk*



Oxfordshire History Centre digitisation projects. Three sets of our archival records which have recently been scanned are now available in digital form in our searchroom:

Baptism, marriage and burial registers of about 300 Oxfordshire parishes.

District Valuation maps and survey books dating from 1910-1915 and covering land and property holdings in pre-1974 Oxfordshire.

Tithe maps of over 150 Oxfordshire parishes, covering the period 1838-1865, though not the accompanying written apportionments.

These collections are not currently directly accessible online, although Oxfordshire Family History Society which funded the digitisation of the parish registers is pursuing a project to make the digitised parish registers available via a commercial provider. For researchers who are unable to visit us at Cowley, Oxford, digital images from these collections can be supplied by email. For further details please contact us via our website: *www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/oxfordshirehistory*



Cuddesdon tithe map 1840
digitised in the project described above

Parks and Gardens UK is a website dedicated to historic designed landscapes. It gives online access to more than 7,000 records on historic parks and gardens, contributed by England's County Gardens Trusts, the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust, and other organisations such as Historic England, Cadw, Historic Scotland and the Northern Ireland Heritage Gardens Committee. The website also incorporates a UK-wide Gazetteer of war memorial parks and gardens. Digitised maps, plans and images compliment many of the records, and there are a range of education resources and articles on aspects of design, social history, conservation and associated people. Contributions are welcome. *www.parksandgardens.org*

Royal Archives: digitisation of papers of King George III. A project to make the complete collection of King George III's papers available online was launched at Windsor Castle on 1 April 2015 in the presence of HM The Queen. This is a collaboration between the Royal Archives, the Royal Collection, and King's College London, and will make available all the historic manuscripts from the Georgian period, totalling more than 350,000 pages, of which only about 15% have previously been published; it is part of a wider programme by the Royal Archives to open up access to its primary source material. The intention is to create a web resource available to academics and the public, which will present the documents and allow them to be searched and analysed in new ways. The Department of Digital Humanities at King's will play a central role from the outset , working on the development of core metadata and design, alongside departments including War Studies and History, and the Centre for Enlightenment Studies, which will each bring their own expertise. The project, expected to last about five years, will involve the development of international partnerships with appropriate global experts, initially with the Omohundro Institute of Early American History & Culture at William and Mary College in the USA.

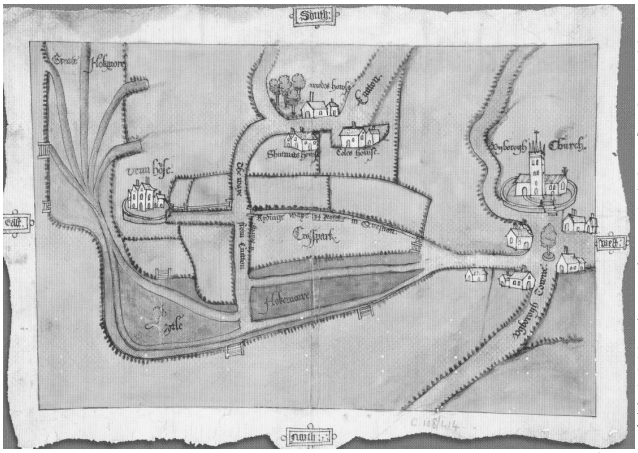
The tyre company Michelin has transferred its archives – including photographs, newsletters, guides and memos – to **Stoke-on-Trent Archives.** The collection has been built up since the company first opened in London in 1905 and will be made accessible to the public. The firm wants help to catalogue the information and has appealed for assistance from its employees, past and present.

As part of the reorganisation of Northumberland County Council's property , **Berwick Record Office**, a branch office of the Northumberland Archives, will move from its existing location in Wallace Green to Berwick Library. The Record Office closed on June 8th to allow the move to take place and will re-open in the Library in October 2015. Because of the scale of this transfer, there will be some disruption to the public service between June and October.

Newly accredited archives services: Four more archive services have been awarded accredited status – recognition by The National Archives that they have reached appropriate professional standards. These are:

- **Flintshire Record Office**
- **Manchester Central Library**
- **University of the Arts: University Archives and Special Collections Centre**
- **Warwickshire Country Record Office**

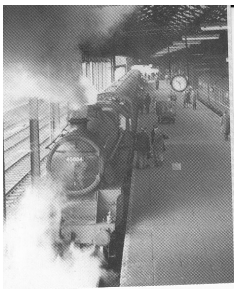
The 'Map in focus' in the May 2015 issue of *Magna*, from the **Friends of The National Archives** is this 16th century map (MPA 1/86 below) of Ugborough on the southern edge of Dartmoor in Devon. It is not known why it appears among the records of the Court of Chancery, but the comment 'Rydinge Waye in Question' across the middle of the map might indicate a legal dispute. To see it in more detail, and in colour, there is a copy hanging in the map room at Kew. *www.friendsofthenationalarchives.org.uk*





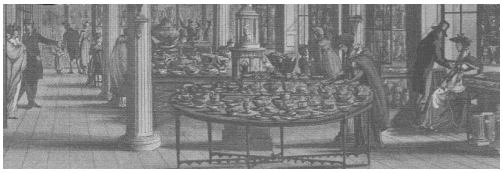
Enfield Museum is holding a free exhibition of the wedding traditions of the people of Enfield. 'Just Married: 150 years of Enfield Weddings' is at The Dugdale Centre from 2 April 2015 to 10 January 2016. The exhibition will explore how society has changed over time through alterations in wedding practices. It will also highlight interesting and important weddings that took place within the borough. *www.enfield.gov.uk/museum*

It is 175 years since the opening of the Chester to Birkenhead and Chester to Crewe railway lines. Four exhibitions, 1 July to 18 December 2015, at **Chester History & Heritage**, St Michael's Church, Chester are: 'All Aboard!' (trains, rolling stock, workers and passengers); 'Homeward Bound' (railway streets of Hoole, Newtown and Saltney); 'A Strangers Guide' (the 19th century tourist in Chester) and 'This Train Don't Stop Here Anymore – the Lost Stations' (the closure of many local stations). *Email chh@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk*



Resources for museums and local history groups: 'Temporary exhibitions' are exactly that, so many materials end up in a skip to make way for the next. **Museum Freecycle** is a UK-wide recycling network to encourage recycling and resuse in the sector. Items include display cases, mannequins, donations boxes, storage boxes, retail units, light fittings and much more. *https://groups.freecycle.org/group/MuseumFreecycleUK/pots/all* from **Oxford Local History Association** *Newsletter.*

Until 31 December 2015 there is a major exhibition at **Fairfax House** in York 'Consuming Passions: Luxury Shopping in Georgian Britain'. On display are exotic luxury goods newly available to a society obsessed by consumption, silver, silks, porcelain, leather, even medicines. Items have come from major collections around the country. *www.fairfax-house.co.uk*

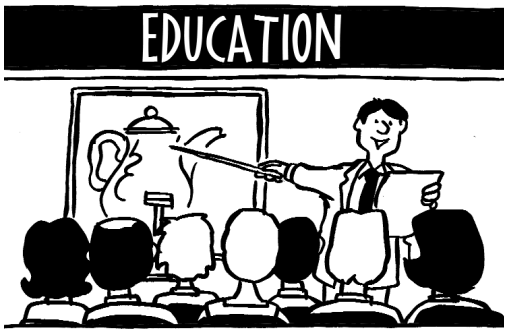


Aberdeen Art Gallery, Cowdray Hall and the Remembrance Hall complex is closed for a major redevelopment, reopening Winter 2017. Collections can be seen at other venues in the city, and on loan around the country; exhibitions continue at **Aberdeen Maritime Museum** and the **Tollbooth Museum**. At the latter, until 24 October, there is an exhibition taking the 300th anniversary of the 1715 as its focus, exploring the involvement of Aberdeen and the North East's involvement in the two major rebellions of the 18th century. There is a free lunchtime talk on 'Jacobites in the city archives' on 9 September. **www.aagm.co.uk**

Keach's Meeting House is tucked away in a quiet corner of Winslow, Buckinghamshire.



Built in the 17th century by a company of dissenters, it was a regular place of worship until the 1930s. One service a year is now held, on the fourth Saturday in June. Visitors can obtain the key during normal working hours from Wilkinsons Estate Agents, 12 Market Square, Winslow.



Cambridge initiative to teach teenagers research skills: To commemorate the centenary of the death of Rupert Brooke, King's College, Cambridge (where the poet was an undergraduate) has created an online resource using his papers to teach A-level and GCSE students the skills required for archival research. Initial sections cover topics such as what archives are, how to find them, how to use catalogues and what to expect when visiting a reading room. Then users are presented with interpretation activities based on Rupert Brooke's life and works. To show the variety of types of research possible in archives, these later sections focus on local history ('Grantchester'), military history ('The Soldier') and biography ('The Myth'). The website, which also includes digitised resources from repositories other than King's, can be found at *www.kings.cam.ac.uk/archive-centre/introduction-archives/index.html.*

During 2014-5 **London Transport Museum** hosted four apprentices who gained a broad experience of the museum and the sector, while working for level 2 NVQ in Cultural & Heritage Venue Operations. In an article in the **Association of Independent Museums** *Newsletter*, the museum's learning officer reflects on the benefits to both the young people and the museum itself. They have worked with Creative & Cultural Skills who run the Creative Employment Programme which offers financial support to organisations looking to create an apprenticeship or paid internship. 'Almost 1,000 employers have been helped, but only 8% of these are museums and galleries. This is a real shame given the importance of museums to the visitor economy. The programme closes for funding applications on 13 November this year, so I urge all independent museums to engage with this programme and each other to help secure the workforce for our future'. AIM June 2015 *www.aim-museums.co.uk www.creative-employment .co.uk*

Kilpeck church receives visitors from all over the world, attracted by its Herefordshire School of Romanesque sculpture. **Hereford Decorative & Fine Arts Societies** have created a church trail for children to introduce them to this very special building (right). Last year Hereford DFAS produced their first trail for St Faiths church at Bacton, which houses a variety of treasures including the memorial to Blanche Parry, lady to Queen Elizabeth I. *Reflections* Summer 2015 Diocese of Hereford



Wessex Academy for Field Archaeology aims to enable anyone, regardless of age, ability and experience, to gain the skills that will enable them to confidently and responsibly explore the past. 'For adults we want to impart transferable skills that once learnt can be applied to help local groups or individuals in other areas carry out their own independent explorations. For children we want to create a connection with the past, with those who have shaped this landscape. And above all we want to show that exploring the past can be exciting and fun'. The list of courses available in the remaining months of 2015 includes a finds workshop, aerial photography, 'the joy of flint', crops and fields, and a winter solstice gathering. *www.wafa.org.uk*



At **Canterbury Christ Church University**, the following 3 Day Schools will to be offered in the autumn, taught by Dr Gill Draper (BALH Development Officer):

1.Parish records: reading old handwriting Saturday 3 October 2015.
2. Wills, testaments and inventories: how to find and read them Sat. 24 October 2015
3. Exploring urban heritage: understanding and interpreting historic representations and records of Rochester and Bristol 21 November 2015

Details are available online at https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/cae/day-schools/autumn-2015/autumn-2015.aspx or email education.communityarts@canterbury.ac.uk or from

April Doyle
Canterbury Christ Church University
North Holmes Road, Canterbury, Kent.
CT1 1QU.
Tel: 01227 863451
(Mon - Fri 9.30am - 2.30pm

The Department for Continuing Education, University of Oxford continues to offer a wide range of courses of interest and relevance to local historians. For example, 'Families, Fields and Farms: sources for village history' is available over two ten week terms, in Oxford. Online you can study 'English Landscape Gardens 1650 – present day', 'Exploring Roman Britain' or 'Investigating the Victorians'. *www.conted/ox.ac.uk/course/*

Those of you who were at Local History Day in June heard Stuart Davies discuss Public History and its relationship with local history. You can read Paul Anderton's reflections on page 28 here. In the latest issue of *Open History*, from the **Open University History Society**, Catriona Manners adds to the debate. She quotes various definitions, and offers examples of courses in 'public history' such as the new MA at Ruskin College where we read that Public History 'will appeal to those interested in the role of history in contemporary society …' . To take this further go to the History & Policy website where 'high-quality historical research is freely accessible online … and demonstrates the relevance of history to contemporary policy making…'. *www.ouhistory.org.uk www.historyandpolicy.org.uk*

BALH Local History Day 6 June 2015

Paul Anderton

The size of the gathering in the Quaker Meeting House in Birmingham when the sun shone so temptingly was testimony to a popular devotion to studies of the past. The personal reactions of those attending will vary and will not necessarily share this reflection upon the day. Anything which encourages local historians to lift their noses from the parish chest to view a more distant horizon is to be welcomed. Dr Stuart Davies accepted the challenge with a lecture on Public History: what is it and how does it relate to local history? His career in the worlds of academia, museums, heritage lottery administration and as a visiting professor in London made him admirably qualified for the task. In a quiet and undramatic way he pulled no punches.

Dr Davies rehearsed aspects of a move over the last twenty years or so to identify a particular sphere of activity enigmatically labelled 'public history'. He aimed to raise issues and promote debate about the use and validity of the term, the nature of History and the role of local history. He located the origins of public history in North America, but not in postmodernism and cultural studies. For him the unifying characteristic of public history is as a process whereby those in academia are connected to a range of publics. It is a highly contestable umbrella term, liable to be variously defined, but much concerned with the way history is presented in public spaces. Put bluntly, it's about how historians earn a living outside academia. The term was taken up in Australia, widened to take in features of other disciplines, and in Britain became associated with social history and such institutions as History Workshop. The test of good public history is the width and depth of the audience reached, for the aim must always be to maximise the size of public involvement.

An audience grows in proportion to the extent to which it is drawn into a dialogue with the presenter of history. There is necessarily a two-way process of engagement. By definition, public history is both collaborative and eclectic in the range of other disciplines accepted into the discussion. Public history is that interpretation of the past which informs and entertains. It must always be useful and stimulate thinking about the current world situation. The ambition is to give history 'a new and refreshing image'. It recognises many truths, not one; it does not seek overall patterns, but accepts the chaos of the past. Public history allows debate and dissention, and responds to the public taste for 'authenticity' as the key to understanding the past. In all these respects it challenges an academic orthodoxy about the nature of History.

There was, however, a cautionary note and an undercurrent of criticism to which there were passing allusions. On one hand, producers of public history don't need an academic background in historical studies, but their work must meet academic standards. Dr Davies noted the frequent clash between curatorial ambitions to use an exhibition to achieve a particular informational objective, and the ideas of graphic designers and art directors with wholly different purposes in mind. There was small acknowledgement too that there is something in the criticism that public history is prone to a descent into simple commercialisation.



The Priory Rooms in Birmingham, where Local History Day was held, is on the site of an early building associated with the Cadbury chocolate business. Family memorial stones are let into the courtyard, where we had lunch in the sunshine.

Floating in the background, a kind of ghost at the feast, was the 'academic' historian. The implication that here is to be found the non-public historian was not further examined. By definition, if there are public historians, there are non-public ones too.

Dr Davies continued with a survey of public history in practice, reporting on developments in museums, heritages sites and National Trust properties as public spaces in which the visitors acquire an understanding of the past. For him, although there is a danger of Disneyfication, the crucial advance was towards demonstrating the 'authentic' past, and democratising it by, for example, the National Trust acquiring back-to-back houses. He also had much to say about television and print media, noting the effect of Simon Schama and programmes such as The 1940s House. Oral history was the third example of public history in operation, and was much praised.

The problem Dr Davies claimed with local history was that it was difficult to get a handle on. No one has measured its volume, range, varieties and impact. In this age, statistics are all, and in public history inescapable. For him there was nothing wrong in seeing local history as a hobby, a diversion a pleasant Sunday afternoon recreation. Does it have to have academic credibility, he asked? On the other hand, local history is public history in that its obviously large number of practitioners so much depend upon public services for their information springs. Libraries, museums and archive offices, in this age when anything public is ideologically damned, are victims of a Chancellor of the Exchequer's obsession with cutting away public services. The supposed alternative forms of financing public history through bids to the Heritage Lottery Fund are fraught with dangers. Not the least of these is the increasing dependence, ironically enough, on volunteers – that is, the public. Waiting on the sidelines are commercial interests which, of course, have already infiltrated the system through the medium of the internet.

It was disappointing that the audience did not respond to the invitation Dr Davies extended to debate his questions with the exception of his last point about the Heritage Lottery. This stimulated a comment which went to the heart of the matter. In effect, local historians, by offering themselves so willingly as volunteers in projects mounted by public bodies are undermining the very services they are ostensibly defending.

Local History Day is designed to stimulate, refresh and reinvigorate those attending, not just by nodding through an AGM agenda, but by distributing awards for great achievements. This reflection is a grievous understatement of the significance of this meeting in this respect. It similarly does a grave disservice to Professor Angus Winchester in not responding to his densely packed lecture. If there be an excuse it is that awards to individuals will be reported elsewhere in *Local History News*, and the lecture on Common Land will appear in *The Local Historian*. For BALH membership as a whole, however, the message of the words of Dr Davies on the effect of public service cuts, and the immediate comments from the audience, deserve great attention.

The 2105 award winners are listed on p 19. As is our usual custom, recipients of the Personal Achievement Awards will be profiled in *LHN* during the forthcoming year. The photograph of those who could come to Birmingham and receive their scrolls in person can be seen here.



Our photographer this year was David Griffiths, to whom many thanks.

JH

GROWING LOCAL HISTORY

Volunteers, innovative projects
- and an exciting future

British Association for Local History Conference

Ipswich: 8-10 April 2016

'Local history is at a crossroads' ... 'Local history faces unprecedented challenges': we often hear or use phrases like this. In fact, they've been used for decades, but today there is a real sense that the challenges are great and immediate and we need to meet them. Now that familiar sources of public funding – never lavish – have dwindled, we need to be active and vigorous in finding fresh ways to take local history forward.

GROWING LOCAL HISTORY picks up this theme and focuses particularly on the wealth of experience and dedication which volunteers bring to local history at all levels. From transcribing and interpreting documents, recording sites, monuments, buildings and artefacts from the Saxon to the modern, to providing different perspectives on the experiences of communities, families and individuals, volunteers are at the heart of our subject. We want to celebrate their uniquely valuable work and to provide fresh ideas, based on real-life projects, for societies, groups and individuals to carry on existing work or to develop new and creative directions.

The ancient town of Ipswich and its hinterland have an exceptionally rich and nationally and internationally important history, but are surprisingly little known. This conference will give you an opportunity to discover more about an area which for 1500 years has been a focal point of eastern England. We'll be based in the heart of the town by the riverside which has been crucial to its prosperity since early Anglo-Saxon times. The conference programme will include talks and a walk reflecting the heritage of this historic place. Presentations on the Saturday will highlight the tremendous diversity of volunteer projects in progress in this region. Throughout, the aim is to inspire. We want you to come away thinking 'Great, that's something we can do in our community ... that's a project which our society can think about'.

In local history, we focus on specific places but we draw from the infinitely varied wider experience. That's what Ipswich 2016 will show you!

Events

Guided Visit Salisbury
5 September 2015

Magna Carta and the Salisbury Museum

Salisbury Cathedral houses the best preserved of the four surviving original copies of Magna Carta. In its 800th anniversary year, our visit provides an opportunity to see this iconic document, and an exhibition of associated medieval material from the cathedral's archives.

This will last about one hour. There is then plenty to see in the Cathedral itself and also in its magnificent Close.

For lunch, there are places to eat in the Cathedral, in Salisbury Museum, in the Military Museum and in Mompesson House (NT), all in the Close. And of course many more in the city just outside the High Street Gate. If the weather is fine, the Close is a lovely venue for a picnic.

In the afternoon there will be a guided tour of the Salisbury Museum's new award-winning Wessex Gallery which contains an internationally important archaeological collection from the city and surrounding area. The museum's special exhibition for Summer 2015 is of paintings by JMW Turner (which would need booking separately

www.salisburymuseum.org.uk

BALH Guided Visits

see also Supplement p1

Booking: see the website
www.balh.org.uk/events or contact
BALH PO Box 6549, Somersal herbert,
Ashbourne DE6 5WH
01283 585947

Details are published as they become available. The Events Committee would be delighted to hear of suggestions from members to help planning the Guided Visits programme.

Five stone steps

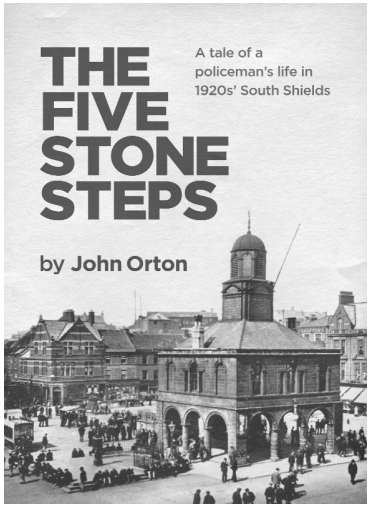
William Evans

The five stone steps: a tale of a policeman's life in 1920s South Shields
John Orton, 262pp pb, ISBN 978-1-910223-17-18, UK Book Publishing 2014, £10.45

John Orton has for many years lived in Portishead in north Somerset, but he comes from South Shields. He wouldn't call himself a local historian, but he has written a work of fiction based on local history material. *The five stone steps* consists of a dozen stories, presented as the reminiscences of a Scot who joined South Shields police from the trenches in 1918: his early years as a bobby on the beat, and tales of life, love, crime, booze and hardship in a town that, like Bristol, Swansea, Southampton and many others, was a seaport where coal mining, shipbuilding, domestic violence, betting and beer were important. The text is illustrated with evocative 1920s images from South Tyneside library, with references to their versions on the library's website, and a lucid map.



The author's main sources were a handwritten manuscript which sergeant Thomas Gordon left, together with his stave (truncheon) to his son; and tales told by the author's grandmother, daughter of a North Sea pilot. The author has fictionalised the accounts, and in some cases enhanced the dramatic content; some individuals' names have been changed. The result is a vivid, pungent portrayal of life,



which was sometimes on the margins of survival, in a seaport town in the 1920s. It is a fascinating read.

Turning local history into fiction is not new. Catherine Cookson, who also came from South Shields, developed the genre with great success. Soaps such as *At the Luscombes'*, *Dixon of Dock Green* and its more realistic successors, *Emmerdale Farm, The Wire* and so on are familiar enough. Any novel set in the past must draw to some extent on at least the social component of local history, from *Middlemarch* through *Lark Rise to Candleford* to *Poldark*. Merely setting a narrative in a locality is bound to involve references, intentional or otherwise, explicit or oblique, to that locality's history. But the vividness of *The five stone steps* suggests that this is a genre that local history people might like to consider, whether they aim to tell interesting stories or to capture the distinctive flavour and nuances of aspects of life in a locality. The categories of local history writing are not closed.

A Tale to Two Cities

Sarah Rose

PERTH: A Comprehensive Guide for Locals and Visitors
John Hulbert (Luath Press 2015 ISBN 978 910021 43 9) £12.99 - 223 pages

THE STORY OF STIRLING: How a Rock Became a City
Bruce Durie (History Press 2014 ISBN 978 0 7509 6067 0) £14.99 - 191 pages

Two books providing fascinating insights about two ancient Scottish cities are the subject of this review. *Perth: a Comprehensive Guide for Locals and Historians* is an attractive, informative, and fairly compact book designed to appeal to citizens and visitors alike. The author, John Hulburt, is the former Provost who helped to win back city-status for Perth three years ago, it having been demoted to a town in 1975. Taking the reader on a tour through the streets of Scotland's former capital, this book focuses on institutions and individual buildings, past and present. The text is amply supported by numerous colour photographs (many taken by the author), which allows the option of an arm-chair tour of the city. The first five chapters focus on Perth's origins and development. The only walled and moated city in Scotland, its political pre-eminence lasted from the ninth century until the murder of King James I at Blackfriars Monastery in 1437. In later centuries it enjoyed some importance as a military town (the Black Watch Museum is located in Balhousie Castle), and featured various industries, including whisky production (Chapter 5). The central relationship between Perth and the River Tay is clearly highlighted, with two chapters devoted to the history of bridges and flood defences. The main part of the book, however, is arranged geographically, allowing the reader to explore the city section by section. This is a necessary arrangement for anyone on foot. Beginning with Perth's medieval streets and city centre, the guide then takes us beyond the Lade (a large watercourse surrounding the medieval city) to examine the cultural quarter and the Georgian New Town. This is followed by the railway and developments east of the Tay, before taking in the city's parks and suburbs. The final four chapters are devoted to themes such as tourism and public art. Those with specific enquiries will find the index a helpful addition to this guide, which does justice to the 'Fair City'.

Lecturer, author and broadcaster, Bruce Durie is well-known in Family and Local History circles as one of Scotland's foremost genealogists. His book, *The Story of Stirling*, was first published in 2003, but this updated edition has been extended to include some comment on recent milestones in Stirling's history, not least of which was the 700th anniversary of the battle of Bannockburn in 2014. The first and shortest chapter deals with the first 600 million years of Stirling's history, offering a brief explanation of the crucial role that geography has played. The seven subsequent chapters examine the city's development, all the way from medieval citadel and favoured royal residence, to modern-day heritage centre. Yet the attention paid to trade and industry in the central chapters helps reveal that there is more to Stirling then Bruce and Wallace. As this is not intended as a guidebook, the quantity of text is justifiably more extensive than in the Perth volume, yet it is punctuated by over 120 illustrations - mostly in black and white. These predominantly feature buildings and interiors, although people (in the form of statues or portraits) do appear on occasion. In all, this book provides a comprehensive and accessible introduction to the city and its history.



Old Stirling Bridge from Stirling Castle
(from Geograph) © kim traynor licensed for reuse under Creative Commons Licence

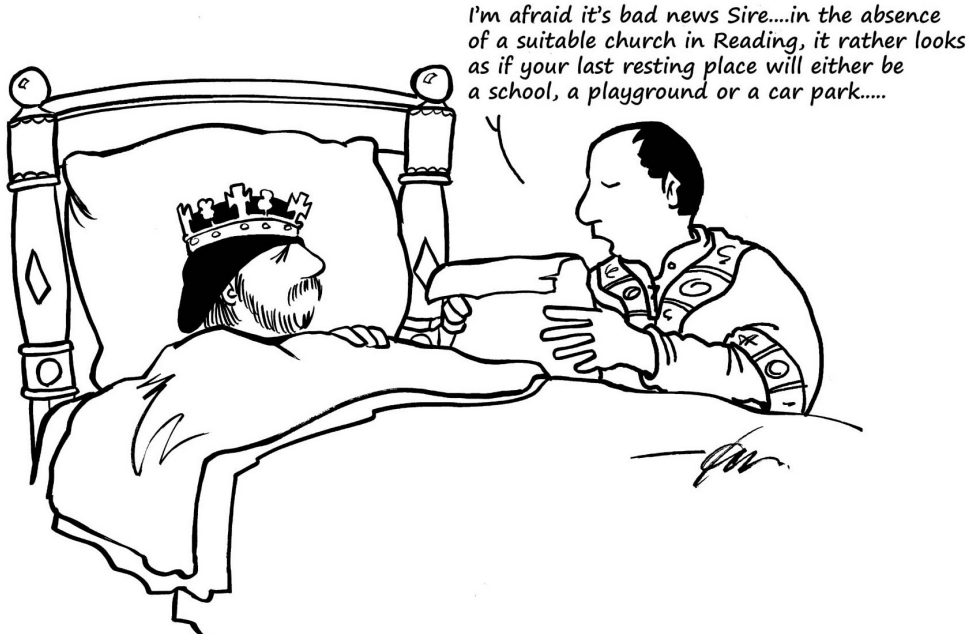
Where is Henry I?

Alan Crosby

My heart sank as I read the item on the *Guardian* website. Philippa Langley, not content with resurrecting Richard III and bringing fame and glory to Leicester, is now determined to put another 'also ran' city on the map. I don't mean that rudely, but places like Leicester and now Reading are overlooked, under-regarded and passed by en route to somewhere else more interesting or obviously historic (I live in Preston, so I know the feeling well). How will she achieve the apparently impossible and turn the fickle gaze of the world's media upon the Jewel of the Middle Bit of What Used To Be Berkshire?

Easy! By finding Henry I under a car park. The youngest son of William the Conqueror died in 1135 and was buried in Reading Abbey. Problem solved. Map the extent of the abbey, assume that he was buried before the high altar, stick a spade in a metre, and bob's your uncle – or Henry's your skeleton. Simple ... although 'experts' (they always are, aren't they, no matter what their actual qualifications) suggest that maybe the burial place lies beneath a school. Alternative sites suggested are a playground and yes, a car park. It wouldn't be the same without a car park ...

There is much excitement, and Reading is looking forward to becoming famous for a good reason (Reading Gaol being famous for a bad reason, of course). Historic England, not averse to a passing bandwagon now that it's in the commercial world of the 21st century, is supportive: it has (according to the press) told Reading Council it is keen to champion the value of its abbey ruins 'for social and economic reasons'. Hmmm... Richard Buckley, the archaeologist who dug up Richard III, is more circumspect. You can't pour cold water on such wizard schemes, because of media attention, but he is hesitant: 'If his tomb is in any way intact, it would be a remarkable discovery ... I



can't think of any medieval monarchs who have been exhumed intact. To have someone like Henry, who would have been buried with full honours, would be special ... If it comes off, it will be absolutely amazing, but the odds are very long'.

But suppose that, improbably, a burial is discovered and, even more improbably, the skeleton can be reliably identified in the absence of hunched back or twisted spine, what then? Henry I is not big news. Most people know nothing about him. He did not star in a Shakespeare play, there are no really sensational stories about him, he lived almost four centuries before Richard and the documentary evidence is scarce. Nobody weeps real tears for him (he died of natural causes, allegedly from a surfeit of lampreys ... I expect one of the telltale clues will be lamprey bones in the area of the stomach).

Actually, he was a very interesting monarch. He holds an unassailable record, never again to be challenged, as the English monarch with the most children (at least 22, only two of whom were legitimate). Known as 'Beauclerk' because of his ability to read and write fluently (the youngest of four sons, he was probably destined for the Church), his personal life was clouded by tragedy but he was talented and effective as a ruler (unlike elder brother William and nephew Stephen) and is most famous for being the father of Matilda, who so nearly became our first queen regnant. He may, or may not, have been implicated in the mysterious death of William Rufus in the New Forest, but that doesn't have the poignancy and emotional impact of 'the Princes in the Tower'.

Crucially, there isn't a Henry I Society with pots of money, ferociously and single-mindedly putting forward his case – mainly because there isn't a case to put forward. So, assuming that his mortal remains are discovered and a suitable resting place is found (he wanted to be buried in Reading but the town has no great church: St Lawrence, next door to the abbey ruins, should stake its claim right now) will cameramen come from across the globe, and queues of mourners and bystanders stretch all the way to Tilehurst? Probably not. But stranger things have happened. After all, they discovered Richard III under a car park!

BALH TRUSTEE PROFILE

Local history is both my profession and my personal enthusiasm. It has been a lucky and rewarding combination. I am Reader Emerita in English Local History at Oxford University where, as Director of Studies in Local History in the Department for Continuing Education, I was able to plan and implement the University's first graduate degree course specifically designed for part-time students,. This was followed by part-time doctorates, completing a range of opportunities to pursue local history including weekend and summer schools, weekly classes, undergraduate-level certificate and diploma courses, and the online Advanced Diploma, which has brought students to the subject from a round the world.

I am also a Founding Fellow of Kellogg College, established in 1990 as Oxford's college for part-time graduate students, and this year celebrating its 25th anniversary. Over the years I have met, and worked with, many hundreds of enthusiast historians, whether aiming at research degrees or involved in local societies or individually in the history of their place. It has been a great experience, which continues as I teach and supervise graduate students and work with county and local groups, with colleagues in other universities and of course with BALH.

From 1983-8 I edited *The Local Historian*. Now I chair BALH's Education Committee, with a particular interest in fostering the Association's links with other bodies and as wide a range of local historians as possible. This involves, amongst other things, developing joint conferences; creating new content for the website; adding to BALH's print publications; and extending networks. Recent projects have included writing *Remembrance and Community. War Memorials and Local History*, published by BALH in 2013; representing BALH on the organising committee for the Anglo-American Conference of Historians 2014 on the Great War at Home, and negotiating BALH's new link with the American Association for State and Local History, becoming the first corresponding member to help develop this.

My academic interests are in British social and local history, with particular research interests

Notes News Issues

Jane Howells

Study Day at Beverley

For the past few years attendance at events in the regions organised by BALH has sometimes been limited. Sadly, a number of events have been cancelled for lack of any support. This year BALH Events Committee has decided to promote an event arranged by one of the member local history societies. This is a trial which the committee hope will increase the numbers attending such regional events.

The one selected for this trial is being run by East Yorkshire Local History. See page 22 for further details. The full programme is on our website; booking must be made to the Society. Please support this initiative, and let us know your views.

Local History Day 2015

A huge thank you to everyone who came to Local History Day in June. The Priory Rooms, Birmingham's Friends Meeting House was a very welcoming and comfortable venue and we were delighted to have a full house. It is probably just as well that the weather was favourable to allow lunch to be taken outside in the courtyard. Listening to our speakers, receiving the award winners, dealing with the business part of the day, and meeting familiar and new faces: we hope to see you all again.

Annual General Meeting

Members can read the names of the new Council of Trustees elected at the recent AGM on p36. The President thanked Jane Golding, Bill Moss, Jan Shephard and Anne Tarver who were standing down. We shall miss their specialist knowledge, their wisdom, and their enthusiasm for local history in its many guises.

Who Do You Think You Are? Live

Another thank you to members and friends who supported us at WDYTYA in April, moved this year to the NEC, Birmingham. Gill and Stephen Draper provided the backbone staff and the organisation of our stall, and we are most grateful to the others who helped, Sue, Linda and George. Gill and I gave talks, and we did an excellent trade in publications. Numerous visitors stopped to talk, and discuss points where family and local history interlink. That is our message - as seen on the mini-banners we have - 'local history hand-in-hand with family history'. Family history approaches can lend personal detail to local history studies, and methods and sources usually first considered by local historians place families in their communities.

We will be back there next year.

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in English rural change post-1750, and in religion and community in Britain since 1730. I also write on the practice of local history, with current interests in local histories of the 20th century and of remembrance and community. A Shire book on the history and architecture of parsonages is due out early in 2016, and I am planning a new edition of the textbook, *English Local History: an introduction.*

Other involvements include membership of the national advisory committee of the Victoria County History, an honorary visiting fellowship at the Centre for English Local History, Leicester University, chair of the VCH Oxfordshire Trust , trustee of the Oxfordshire Record Society, a Patron of the Historic Chapels Trust, Hon. President of the Hook Norton Local History Group, and history advisor to the Aldeburgh and District Local History Society.

Life is not quite all local history. Since 2004 I have been a Deputy Lieutenant for Oxfordshire and, as a keen sports fan, I became in 2001 the first woman member of the committee of Oxford University Rugby Football Club, and am currently University Senior Member for OURFC. *www.kellogg.ox.ac.uk/discover/people/kate-tiller*

Kate Tiller

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