

Local History News

Number 118 Winter 2016

www.balh.org.uk



Magazine of the British Association for Local History

AWARDS FOR LOCAL HISTORIANS

- *To encourage research and publication*

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

- *To recognise other kinds of personal achievement*

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

- *To encourage societies to share information locally*

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

Awards are presented at the Local History Day each June

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

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

Cover Picture

Front Cover: Special Collections, Leeds University Library. See Alison Fell's article p 5

Local History News

magazine of the British Association for Local History

ISBN 0969 3521

Local History News

edited by Jane Howells

*published by the British Association for Local History
Chester House, 68 Chestergate, Macclesfield SK11 6DY mail@balh.org.uk*

www.balh.org.uk

printed by Salisbury Printing Company Ltd, Greencroft St, Salisbury SP1 1JF

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 Chester House, 68 Chestergate, Macclesfield SK11 6DY on the mailing list for your society newsletter and similar regular publications. Information about local initiatives is particularly welcome, and we are always keen to publish items that give examples of best practice, illustrating the diversity and vitality of local history. Readers' comments and queries allow our members to share their knowledge and enthusiasm. If there is a specific event you wish us to mention please allow plenty of time ahead of the date. The mailings are normally sent out at the end of January, April, July and October.

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

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

*Views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the
British Association for Local History.*

Local History News

Number 118 Winter 2016

A terrible beauty - Alan Crosby ponders on some 2016 anniversaries	4
The impact of the First World War on women's lives - Alison Fell writes the next in our series on local history and World War One.	5
BALH Awards 2015 - profile of Iris Pinkstone	8
Trustee profile - Prof Claire Cross	9
Researching the history of the Women's Institute - Mavis Curtis makes some suggestions	10
Local history on the Isles of Scilly - Amanda Martin introduces us to the far south-west	12
All history is a stage - Simon Fowler gives a dramatic example	14
Relaunch of VCH in Shropshire - developments described by James Bowen	16
First World War Engagement Centres - John Beckett presents an overview	17
Publishing by Wandsworth Historical Society - from editor Neil Robson	19
Country houses database - a new resource described by Margaret O'Sullivan	21
News from Ireland	22
News from Societies	24
Archives	25
Museums	27
Libraries	28
Education	29
Local History Day 2016 and Visit to Lichfield	30
Book reviews from Amanda Pullan and Sarah Rose	31
Gone Chopin - Alan Crosby has been to Mallorca	33
Notes News Issues	35
BALH Officers and Committees	36

Centre Pages
Events • Trustees Report • AGM

A terrible beauty

Alan Crosby

In 2016 another series of sombre centenaries and anniversaries will punctuate the year. The date 1 July 1916, the first day of the terrible Battle of the Somme, will resonate in many places and among many families. My grandmother's fiancé was killed on that day, serving in a Lancashire regiment. She wore his engagement ring for the rest of her life - my mother now has it - and every 1 July for twenty years she wept, until my mother pointed out that this was unfair to my grandfather, whom she had married six years after Jack Grant's terrible death. It's a story repeated thousands of times.

In July, therefore, towns and villages across Britain will commemorate the slaughter of those young men who had so willingly joined up, some having formed 'Pals Regiments' to carry the banner of patriotism and local pride to the shell-torn fields of France. My own town will mark the Preston Pals, who managed to avoid being sent over the top on 1 July though they suffered grievously later, while up the road in Accrington, the place which had perhaps the worst experience of all, they will be reminded that 584 of the 720 young men of the town's Pals were killed on that first day alone: that's an 81 per cent casualty rate or, put another way, 1.29 per cent of the town's population slaughtered in ten hours. Accrington was emotionally scarred for three generations. It can never forget. Local history and global events collide in such experiences.

Before July, though, the Irish Republic will commemorate the centenary of the Easter Rising, a seminal event in the history of the British Isles, one which led within six years to the emergence of a new independent state and also stimulated a remarkable outpouring of poetry and prose. W.B. Yeats's wonderful poem, 'Easter 1916', hauntingly highlights the ambiguities and contradictions of the Rising itself and the subsequent execution of its lead-

ers, the confusion and the chaos and the gathering whirlwind that was unleashed. Its celebrated refrain, 'All changed, changed utterly: A terrible beauty is born' stands as an epitaph not only for the events of 1916 in Dublin, but for those across Europe. Countless lives were lost or changed, destiny itself was altered. Yeats's terrible beauty is a contradictory amalgam of patriotism and sacrifice, brutality and devastation, national identity and individual loss, to be read alongside Wilfrid Owen's 'Dulce et decorum est' and the jingoistic patriotism of the contemporary press as a way of seeing the multiple dimensions which are present in the experience of, and attitudes to, war and conflict.

A particularly interesting aspect of the large output of research and writing on the 1916 Rising, and the War of Independence and Civil War which followed in 1919-1923, is the sharpened focus on the local and regional dimensions, drawing attention to the fact that the experience of Dublin in 1916, though much the most traumatic and dramatic, was not the whole story, while the political and military action in the two subsequent wars was highly regionalised. I was in Ireland in 1966 when the fiftieth anniversary of the Rising was being commemorated, and Nelson's Pillar in O'Connell Street, hated symbol of a colonial past, had just been blown up. There were many still alive who had fought in 1916-1923 and memories were still strong and bitter. Drinking in a pub in Tinahely, County Wicklow, a famous centre of anti-British action half a century earlier, my parents were warned not to go near an elderly man in the corner: he had fought and not forgiven. Now, an Ireland transformed socially, economically, politically and spiritually reflects upon those struggles of a century ago which helped to shape the fate of all of these islands. They are just beyond memory. they have become history.

The impacts of the First World War on women's lives

Alison S Fell

Current approaches to the impacts of the First World War on women's lives derive from critical responses from the 1970s until the late 1990s that can be categorised into two broad schools of thought. Firstly, the war is viewed as a watershed in women's history, transforming gender relations and, potentially at least, 'emancipating' women from the pre-war limitations of middle-class domesticity. This approach was influenced in the 1970s in Britain by the Imperial War Museum's exhibition, accompanied by Arthur Marwick's illustrated book *Women at War 1914-1918*.¹ Both were influential in educating the public about women's diverse roles during the conflict, and Marwick's study attempted to include the experience of ordinary women as well as that of exceptional 'heroines', which had been the focus of David Mitchell's more celebratory 1966 study, *Women on the War Path*.² Focusing on the variety of women's wartime activities, *Women at War* argued that the war had opened doors for women, improving their social status. Yet both the book and the exhibition reproduced the photographs compiled for the Imperial War Museum's 'Women at Work' collection in 1917-18 somewhat uncritically, not analyzing the extent to which Horace Nicholl's photographs had been used for the government promotion of female wartime employment.³ The conclusions of Marwick's book were challenged in the 1980s by Gail Braybon, Deborah Thom, and James McMillan, who argued that European women's progress in terms, for example, of employment rights was both limited and temporary.⁴

Anti-feminist novels, newspaper articles and images bemoaning an apparent erosion of the traditional dominance of the ideal of woman as wife and mother were not in short supply in the interwar period, and, along with the mass redundancies of female war workers, are used as evidence by proponents of the second key approach to post-war gender relations that

directly challenges the 'emancipatory' approach to the issue. This focuses on the notion of a 'backlash' against (real or perceived) wartime transformations, on the desire to reconstruct conservative models of both femininity and masculinity. In the early 1990s two influential cultural histories of the war—Mary Louise Robert's *Civilization without Sexes: Reconstructing Gender in Post-War France, 1917-27* (1994) and Susan Kent's *Making Peace: The Reconstruction of Gender in Interwar Britain* (1993)⁵—crystallized this approach. Both analyse widespread cultural images expressing anxieties about the impact of war on gender norms to argue that the interwar period was characterized by privileging discourses that attacked women who forged identities outside traditional models of women as wives and mothers, such as single, childless, lesbian and working women. Both authors also link the drive towards the reconstitution of pre-existing gender norms to the demise of feminism as a political force, with Kent concluding that in Britain 'Pre-war feminists had vigorously attacked the notion of separate spheres and the medical and scientific discourses about gender and sexuality upon which those spheres rested. Many feminists after World War I, in contrast, pursued a program that championed rather than challenged the prevailing ideas about masculinity and femininity.'⁶

Studies that present the post-war period as an inescapable return to a conservative gender order rely on top-down history, taking as primary evidence those discourses that make it their business to define and police the boundaries of women's roles. But other work, such as Adrian Bingham's study of the interwar British women's magazines, and Siân Reynold's study of the politics of gender in interwar France, suggests that focusing on antifeminist journalists and popular novelists risks exaggerating the power and influence of a conservative 'back to the hearth' message. Bingham notes, for

example, that: 'Certainly, newspapers often stereotyped and patronized women, and the women's sections they included were dominated by fashion and domestic advice. But [...] rather than trying to confine women to a narrow domesticity, newspapers generally embraced modernity, encouraged women to become active citizens, and included careers advice for those unable or unwilling to achieve marriage and motherhood'.⁷ Reynolds concludes that if French women remained disenfranchised, having 'responsibility without power' in the interwar years, the 'permeability of public life' for women was nevertheless fundamentally changed by the nation's experience of war, which undermined the all-male monopoly over public life.⁸

Other historians of the late 1990s and early 2000s including Susan R. Grayzel, Nicoletta F. Gullace, and Janet S.K. Watson incorporated a cultural analysis of wartime evidence to offer a more nuanced take on the war's impulses towards both change and continuity, considering societies and individuals that might yearn for equal treatment while also celebrating, even elevating gender difference.⁹ Such accounts note subtle and gradual shifts in expectations and aspirations among many women in the interwar period. We can point, for example, to significant changes in leisure activities, reading habits and sexual behaviours, not to mention the renegotiating of the public sphere and notions of citizenship.¹⁰ Some cultural studies of interwar domesticity such as those by Alison Light highlight the arrival of an apparently paradoxical period of 'conservative modernity'.¹¹ This exploration of the tension between a nostalgic drive for the past and the intermingled excitement, acceptance and tolerance of modernity and its changes in everyday life merits further attention. Like the contradictory evidence from the war years themselves, the experiences and cultural expectations of post-war women (and men) emphasized new opportunities, heightened anxieties, and grievous losses.

Thus, other historical research reveals that the relationship between dominant patriarchal discourses and individual women is not as oppressive as some proponents of the 'backlash' approach may imply. Furthermore, it remains important to differentiate between women of diverse classes, races and nationalities. Many groups of women defined them-

selves not primarily in terms of their gender, but by seeking admission to other communities, imagined or real, some of which were created or expanded by the war, for example as pacifists, as nationalists/fascists, or as war veterans. Other women's conceptions of their gendered identities were complicated by a simultaneous allegiance to another minority identity. Recent studies, for example, have productively focused on the particular issues faced by 'internal minorities', such as Jewish women, and 'external minorities'. For the latter, Santanu Das's discussion of Indian women's conceptions of their wartime roles reveals a complex and conflicted relationship to the British Empire during the war.¹²

To conclude, in many ways, one can characterize interwar Europe as trying to promote a traditional 'breadwinner model', as evidenced by the rise of the Welfare State that positioned women primarily as wives and mothers.¹³ There were several reasons for this, both economic and social. Equally, widespread cultural anxieties existed around perceived changes in female behaviour, as explored by Roberts and Kent, and these anxieties found their way into the broader cultural milieu, including many novels, images, and newspapers of the period. However, we need to address questions of agency in relation to women's responses to the journalists, novelists and politicians disseminating conservative messages about women's post-war roles that glorified motherhood. There was ongoing contest from without and within about what women's rights and roles should be. While acknowledging the power of the western gender system and the centrality of motherhood and soldiering as linked oppositional ways to define the national/public function of women and men, we also need to understand how the war set in motion elements of change that allowed women to begin to carve out identities beyond those circumscribed by traditional models.

Notes:

1 Arthur Marwick, *Women at War 1914-1918* (London: Fontana, 1977).

2 David Mitchell, *Women on the War Path: The Story of the Women of the First World War* (London: Cape, 1966).

3 See Gail Braybon, 'Winners or Losers: Women's Role in the War Story,' in *Evidence*,

History and the Great War: Historians and the Impact of 1914-1918 (Oxford: Berghahn, 2003), 86-113.

4 Gail Braybon, *Women Workers in the First World War* (London: Croom Helm Ltd, 1981); Deborah Thom, *Nice Girls and Rude Girls: Women Workers in World War 1* (London: I.B.Tauris: 2000); James F. McMillan, *Housewife or Harlot? The Place of Women in French Society 1870-1940* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1981). See also essays in Margaret Higonnet et al (eds.), *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars* (Yale University Press, 1987) and Richard Wall and Jay Winter (eds.), *The Upheaval of War: Family, Work and Welfare in Europe, 1914-1918* (Cambridge University Press, 1988).

5 Mary Louise Roberts, *Civilization without Sex: Reconstructing Gender in Post-War France, 1917-27* (University of Chicago Press, 1994); Susan Kent, *Making Peace: The Reconstruction of Gender in Interwar Britain* (Princeton University Press, 1993).

6 Kent, *Making Peace*, 6.

7 Adrian Bingham, 'An Era of Domesticity: Histories of Women and Gender in Interwar Britain', *Cultural and Social History* 1 (2004): 225-33.

8 Siân Reynolds, *France Between the Wars: Gender and Politics* (London: Routledge, 1996), chap. 7.

9 Susan R. Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Janet S. K. Watson, *Fighting Different Wars: Experience, Memory and the First World War in Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Nicoletta F. Gullace, *The Blood of Our Sons: Men, Women and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship during the First World War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

10 See for example Birgitte Søland, *Becoming Modern: Young Women and the Reconstruction of Womanhood in the 1920s* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000)

11 Alison Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism Between the Wars* (London: Routledge, 1991).

12 See for example D. Cesarani, 'An Embattled Minority: The Jews in Britain during the First World War', *Immigrants and Minorities* 8 (1989): 60-81; E. Machen, 'Soldiers of Faith Behind the Lines: Religious Women and Community Patriotism during the First World War in France', *Women's History Review*, 22 (2013): 31-50; Santanu Das, 'Indian Sisters!...Send your husbands, brothers and sons': India, Women and the First World War', in *The Women's Movement in Wartime: International Perspectives, 1914-19* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 18-38.

13 Laura Levine Frader, *Breadwinners and Citizens: Gender in the Making of the French Social Model* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); Susan Pederson, *Family, Dependence and the Origins of the Welfare State, Britain and France 1914-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Gisela Bock and Pat Thane, *Maternity and Gender Policies: Women and the Rise of European Welfare States 1880s-1950s* (London: Routledge, 1991).

Alison S. Fell is Professor of French Cultural History, University of Leeds, and Director of its Legacy of War Project.

*See also the front cover image of this issue.



Rear of King's Manor, University of York, seen from the ruins of St Mary's Abbey in Museum Gardens.

Photo (c) D S Pugh licensed for reuse under this Creative Commons Licence www.geograph.org.uk

See profile of Claire Cross p 9



Understanding the 13th century

Jane Howells

It was by good fortune that in 2015 a medievalist was on our list of local historians recognised by a Personal Achievement award. The 800th anniversary of Magna Carta and 750 years since the death of Simon de Montfort drew the period to public attention in the media on the national and international stage.

Iris Pinkstone originally trained as a book illustrator and graphic designer. Then having gained qualifications in Theology became a teacher of religious education and art. Taking early retirement, she returned to art, gained an MA in Art Education from Birmingham Polytechnic and set up her own studio where she taught adults. Wanting to do something for Evesham, she was inspired by a television programme by Alec Clifton Taylor who revealed the importance of Evesham's battlefield, and the neglect it was then suffering. So began another whole 'career'.

Iris was a founder member of the Simon de Montfort Society and is currently its chair. She has been responsible for leading the group in a multitude of ways to raise the profile of Simon de Montfort himself, the important develop-



Iris Pinkstone with Professor David Hey, President of BALH, Local History Day June 2015

ments that arose from his life, and the Battle of Evesham at which he died. The society seeks to protect and preserve the site of the battle, and other places associated with the man and his ideas. Lead by Iris, they run events, including a wreath-laying at the monument, near to 4

August every year, and a short service on the battlefield at the traditional Battlewell. They organise an annual day school on a medieval topic, as well as a regular lecture series, and undertake some archaeological research. They have made a battlefield trail, working with the Battlefields Trust, and created other resources to attract visitors. Every opportunity is taken to promote awareness; for example



*Iris's drawing for the Battlewell notice board:
'Simon, unhorsed, fights bravely on'*

Michael Wood's TV series 'Story of England' included a sequence on Simon de Montfort in which Iris appeared, speaking 'with her characteristic simplicity, clarity and insight'.

A particular objective of the society is to expand educational resources for students of all ages, to encourage interest in the 13th century. This has included developing links with local schools, working with a local re-enactor to tell the story of Simon's life, and running an art competition.

Iris Pinkstone is widely known for her skill with paint and pencil. Her images bring to life this relatively distant time, and are used in many places and publications. She found her artistic ability was a valuable educational tool, and her experience in book design and illustration has proved useful in the production of the society's newsletter *The Lion* which plays a vital role in keeping members and the wider world informed.



a battlefield walk in progress

The award gives recognition to Miss Pinkstone's 'dogged work and service to the cause of truly understanding the 13th century'.

With thanks to Iris Pinkstone, Jennifer Wood, Margaret Nilsson and Tim Porter.

www.simondemontfort.org

BALH TRUSTEE PROFILE

Much more by accident than by design for most of my life I seem to have been following in the footsteps of the godly Henry Hastings, third earl of Huntingdon. I first encountered the earl while still in the sixth form when, encouraged by an inspirational school mistress, Ruth Bird, (the author of *The Turbulent London of Richard II* and a contributor to the Leicester Victoria County History) I worked in the local record office on the sources for a history of the Leicester grammar school, which he had re-founded early in Elizabeth's reign.

Consequently, when I went on to research after taking my first degree, it seemed obvious to focus on a biography of Huntingdon, who spent the second part of his adult life in York as President of the Council in the North. Having completed my thesis, and been employed for nearly three years as county archivist for Cambridgeshire, I obtained a fellowship to study the only partially calendared Hastings family papers acquired after the first World War by the Henry E. Huntington Library in Pasadena, California. I returned from a year in America to a three year research fellowship at Reading University, which enabled me to turn my the-

sis into a book and edit the letters of Huntingdon's even more Protestant younger brother, Sir Francis Hastings.

The University of York was one the 'new' universities founded in the 1960s, and I was very fortunate in 1965 to be appointed a lecturer in the History Department then located at the King's Manor, once the house of the abbot of St Mary's Abbey and after the dissolution of the monasteries the headquarters of the Council in the North. Since the Borthwick Institute for Archives was a constituent part of the university, it has always been possible for interested History undergraduates to work on original manuscript sources for part of their degree. The wheel turned full circle when one such student, who had gone on to become an archivist in Shropshire, discovered in the Shrewsbury Record Office (and kindly allowed me to edit) a moving contemporary account of Huntingdon's last days. Having taught at York for virtually the whole of my academic career, when I retired in 2000 the University generously allotted me a little room in the King's Manor - and I write this within a stone's throw of the chamber in which Huntingdon died on 14 December 1595.

Claire Cross

Researching the history of the Women's Institute

Mavis Curtis

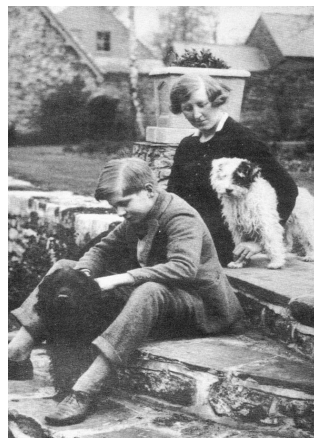
I'm sure eagle eyed readers of *LHN* will have noted, however subliminally, that 2015 saw the centenary of the founding of the Women's Institute. The WI? Oh yes. 'Jam and Jerusalem,' you may think. I found, however there was much more to it than that. The WI first came to my notice in the Oxfordshire History Centre when I read the minutes of Elsfield village's branch of the WI, which covered the years from 1920, when the branch was founded by Susan Buchan, wife of the author John Buchan, to 1963 when it was wound up.

Reading these notes of events in the village: excursions, speakers brought in, a library established, a drama group created, I realized what a profound change the newly formed WI had made to the lives of villagers. Their knitting and sewing skills were acknowledged, their vegetable-growing prowess applauded, so at the WI they found encouragement and self-belief. I realized that if this was happening in this tiny village, it must have been having the same effect throughout the country.

In the same archive was the Oxfordshire Federation's collection of letters sent to Helena Deneke, (*right*) a tutor in German at Lady Margaret Hall (LMH), a founder member of the Oxfordshire Federation (OFWI) and also a member of Elsfield WI. The letters detailed the difficulties and triumphs of jam-making during the Second World War: the jam that was wrongly labelled, the jam that went mouldy, the lady who forgot to make a note of her gas meter reading before embarking on the jam-making session. The details took away the glibness and presented the process as the mammoth task it was. Helena Deneke also wrote up the effect of that war on Elsfield

in a typescript, entitled *What Elsfield Remembers*, entered for a competition organized by the County Federation. In the archive at LMH there is also an unpublished autobiography in which she records that she tried unsuccessfully to find a publisher for an account, not yet

written, of a protracted government-funded visit to Germany in 1946 where she was looking at the possibility of setting up a democratic women's organization such as the WI.



Susan Buchan and her son Alastair (with dogs Spider and Black Douglas)

When I travelled further afield, to Hampshire Local History archive, I discovered the unpublished autobiography of Miss Phyllis Wickham

where she describes how she was recruited and trained as a Voluntary County Organiser (VCO) and the work she subsequently undertook, developing home-based businesses and travelling the county giving talks on a variety of subjects. Another fascinating diary written by a WI member covering the years of the second world war was *Mrs Milburn's Diaries*. This was published, but not till 1978, sixteen years after her death, and then only because a relative read them, found them fascinating and had a friend who was a jour-





(above) Forest Hill WI Committee 1930s
(below right) their village history

nalist. I think there may well be much more unpublished work by women of this period, who knew they were living through important times and wanted to record the changes which had occurred in their lives. Lack of contacts in the publishing world and a general lack of interest in what women did may perhaps account for this wealth of unpublished material.

The jam in 'Jam and Jerusalem' can be accounted for not only by the sterling work undertaken during the second world war, but also by the fact that the WI was formed in 1915 under the auspices of the Ministry for Agriculture, which was seriously concerned about the blockade of the country's food supplies. The WI, an idea imported from Canada by a formidable woman called Madge Watt, was seen as a possible answer. By 1916 a National Federation (NFWI) had been formed and, supporting that, the County Federations. And here we come to the 'Jerusalem' part of the equation. I was surprised to find that people who had been very active in the suffrage movement had now brought their intelligence and organizational skills to this new movement. Mrs Auerbach, for instance, treasurer of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) became treasurer of the National Federation, and Grace Hadow, an Oxford tutor who had marched from Oxford to London carrying the Oxford Women Students' Suffrage Society's magnificent banner, became vice-president. In 1918 the

National Federation held its first meeting, and appointed Lady Denman, a woman well known for her organizational skills, her clear thinking and perhaps even her money and generosity, to the post of President, a position she held for over twenty years. It was she who decided the WI should be independent of government funding so it could more plausibly act at arm's length from politics. 'Jerusalem' was adopted, to Parry's delight, by the Suffrage movement for a concert on March 13 1918. He made the rights over to the NUWSS and when this organization was wound up in 1928 the copyright was re-assigned to the WI.

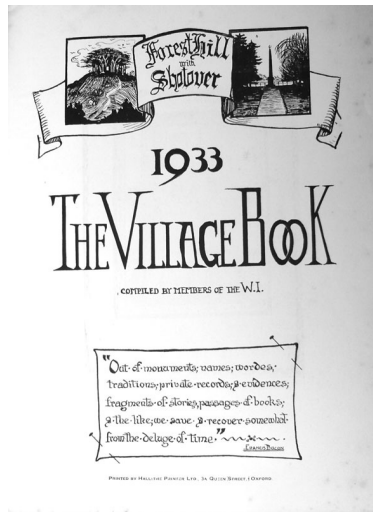
In the 1920 and 1930s the WI was concerned about improvements in maternity services, better housing, water and sewerage systems, electricity and radio and telephone services to rural communities. The establishment of the Welfare

State in the late 1940s provided many of these services and as the century progressed it became increasingly difficult for the WI to identify a role for itself. Towards the end of the century, in the 1980s and 90s, numbers declined and much of the energy of the NFWI was directed to finding a way of making itself attractive to younger women. They need not have worried. In 1999 the Calendar Girls revitalised the WI as public perceptions changed. Numbers shot up. New branches formed. The Shoreditch Sisters and the Disparate

Housewives and their like were on the road, or rather, in the local Memorial Hall or Community Centre. No longer a purely rural phenomenon, these new groups are town and city centred, running courses in bicycle repair alongside taekwondo, ukulele playing and more traditional skills such as knitting and crochet.

I think it is well worth looking at WI archives in County Record Offices not just for their relevance to the WI but for a wider perspective on society.

Mavis Curtis is the author of The WI: a Centenary History (2015).



The Isles of Scilly

Amanda Martin

Clustered at the approaches to the English Channel, the rocks of the tiny Scillonian archipelago are generally seen by the casual visitor in sunny, calm conditions when blue skies and a glinting sea frame the omnipresent granite. However, the Isles of Scilly lie some forty kilometres from Land's End amid some of the planet's most turbulent currents, a fact which is underlined by the considerable amount of wreck material on display at the local Museum.

Islanders are justly proud of their built heritage: Bronze Age entrance graves, Iron Age ramparts, Romano-British courtyard houses, Civil War castles, 18th century defences and fortifications galore jostle for pride of place on the ever-receding land. The expression 'multi-period site' is never so aptly used as in Scilly with its dense concentration of sites of archaeological and historical interest.

Local history in the Isles of Scilly is well served. The Isles of Scilly Museum, the Isles of Scilly Family History Group (IOSFHG) and the Isles of Scilly Community Archaeology Group (IOSCAG) are based on St. Mary's. Based beyond our shores, the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Maritime Archaeology Group (CISMAS) and the Cornwall Archaeological Unit (CAU) of Cornwall Council both include the islands within their remit.

Conscious of the need to protect the islands' history and traditions, islanders tried for years to establish a Museum but no venue and inadequate funding streams conspired to prevent this. Following the severe gales in the winter of 1962, Nornour (in the Eastern Isles) yielded up some remarkable Romano-British finds, causing some St Mary's residents to redouble their efforts to

create a permanent home for these artefacts and to stem the inexorable outward flow of Scillonian objects to mainland institutions such as the British Museum and the Royal Cornwall Museum amongst others.

Initially, the only viable 'museum' options were temporary displays in the Wesleyan Chapel in Hugh Town during the summer months. After much fundraising and thanks to huge volunteer enthusiasm, the present Museum was opened to the public on July 15th 1967 and received a visit from H.M. Queen Elizabeth II on August 8th 1967.

The Isles of Scilly Museum is situated in the centre of Hugh Town, the islands' 'capital' on St Mary's (the largest of the five inhabited islands). Its collections are extremely diverse, including material from many wrecks; prehistoric and Romano-British artefacts; natural and social history; local art and much more. In order to preserve links with the rich Scillonian past, the Museum has a comprehensive collection of oral history recordings featuring local residents.

Throughout the year Museum volunteers help answer questions on literally anything to do with the islands. Our help is given with great

Archaeologist George Bonsor at work on the island of Samson, c 1900



pleasure but we do appreciate donations towards Museum funds and we ask that a copy of all research findings be given to the Museum archives. In this way we can all contribute to safeguarding the islands' cultural legacy. Thanks to the generosity of local and mainland benefactors, we continue to receive many varied accessions for research and display purposes. We welcome any items of Scillonian provenance or directly relating to the islands.

As an independent charity, the Isles of Scilly Museum depends on ticket sales and donations. Approximately 11,000 visitors buy a ticket every year. We make every effort to keep entrance fees at a modest rate. Local children have free admission, as do all accompanying schoolteachers. Occasional donations and bequests make a huge difference to the continuation of our work and are used to purchase Scillonian artefacts or to improve Museum facilities, enabling us to keep as much as possible of the islands' heritage in the islands. We try to combine funding streams wherever possible. For instance, a very generous bequest, a large donation, plus a 'top-up' from the Museum itself, enabled us to attract a grant from the Local Action Group. The money funded a museum booklet, twenty-five information panels, leaflets in four languages, four sets of postcards, two computers and a data projector. Would that such largesse came our way more often!

The Isles of Scilly Family History Group holds weekly sessions (May to October) at the Museum for visiting researchers who come from as near as next door or as far away as Australia and New Zealand. Family history has long been one of the major reasons that researchers call on us at the Museum. Roger and Kathy Banfield are pleased to help with genealogical research, particularly with advance notice of names, dates, places, etc.

Katharine Sawyer and Charlie Johns have coordinated the Isles of Scilly Community Archaeology Group (*see back cover picture*) since it began in March 2014. Its description on its Facebook page reads as follows: *This Group is intended as an open forum for people to join and express ideas and news specifically about history and archaeology in Scilly and to publicise the Group events.* Working in partnership with the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust, members of the group meet most months (weather permitting) to clear archaeological sites around the islands.

The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Maritime Archaeology Society was formed in 2004 to promote maritime archaeology in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. The society currently has over 100 members, about three quarters of them divers. The first CISMAS project was a two year survey of the debris field around the wreck of the Colossus (1798) in the Isles of Scilly. More information can be found on its excellent website (www.cismas.org.uk).

Other projects undertaken in Scilly include:

- Surveying the wreck of the Firebrand (1707)
- Monitoring survey of the Colossus (1798)
- Excavation work on the Colossus in 2012 and 2015
- Excavation work in the Tresco Channel in 2013
- A survey of the prehistoric intertidal archaeology of the Samson Flats.

All the Scillonian organisations work with local and mainland partners to record and protect island heritage. The CAU and Historic England (HE) provide enthusiastic support in formal and informal ways. Allan Brodie and Mark Bowden collaborated on *Defending Scilly*, a very informative English Heritage publication about the history of fortifications in Scilly.

Several universities have based projects in Scilly over the years. Most recent of these has been the Neolithic Stepping Stones project (Universities of Liverpool, Southampton and Reading) which aimed to answer key questions about how and why the Neolithic arrived in and around Britain and Ireland at that time. The university archaeologists analysed all of the late Mesolithic and early Neolithic sites within the western seaways zone, carrying out computer modelling of the sea around that time and excavating Early Neolithic sites in Guernsey, the Outer Hebrides and the Isles of Scilly.

The very existence of the Isles of Scilly Museum, IOSFHG and the IOSCAG testify to the goodwill and enthusiasm of members of the local community. Our collective goals are to preserve the traditions and the spirit of the islands, to educate residents and visitors, and to enhance public understanding of Scillonian traditions and Scilly's place in history.

Amanda Martin is Curator/Manager, Isles of Scilly Museum

All history is a stage

Simon Fowler

I don't suppose it is a new idea, but our local history society has just put on a dramatised reading of my latest book on Richmond in the Second World War. It was a great success.

The idea came from a reading of wartime memories put on by a neighbouring society. This seemed a better way of presenting the subject than the traditional lecture.

So I sat down and turned sections of my book into a script. Having watched decades of history TV documentaries this proved rather easier than expected. There was also useful advice about writing radio programmes online.

Don't think you can include everything. The best documentaries just look at one or two aspects of a particular incident and have a clear narrative structure. The final script was almost exactly 40 minutes long – probably the right length.



Q2 Players with Simon Fowler (centre back row)

I chose to concentrate on the Blitz, as this was the most immediate part of the town's wartime story. There were some great memories that translated easily to the stage, including the diaries of Marie Lawrence, a young secretary, who wrote graphically about her experiences of the Blitz. She became one of five voices. The others were 'man', 'woman', 'child' each of

whom read out extracts from memoirs and oral history testament. Lastly there was 'journalist' for extracts from the local newspapers and the parish magazine.

It was clear that there had to be a narrator to explain to the audience what was going on and to provide links between the various sections. As the narration was rather long I split it into two parts, imagining the narrators to be BBC newscasters of the period.

The script included some lighter passages as well as the tragedy. I didn't think the audience could sit through forty minutes of gloom and doom. And humour can help bring out the real feelings of people at the time.

Our local amateur dramatic society – the Q2 Players – were delighted to be involved. Indeed without their enthusiastic participation the reading would not have been the success that it was. The cast members took everything very seriously.

I acted as director, which proved much harder than expected. At one point there was a long debate about what they should wear for the performance. 'Clothes' I rather tactlessly suggested. After twenty minutes we agreed to jackets for the men and monotone tops for the ladies.

In an attempt to recreate a wartime atmosphere I found some wartime photographs and a short clip of film showing the wartime damage to the town to act as a back drop. There were also recordings of an air raid warning and a V1 rocket's engines.

The performance proved a great success with lots of great comments from the audience. Twenty copies of my book were sold which was rather more than we might have done otherwise.

With so much material available the Second World War is a natural subject for events of this kind. But with imagination many other local history publications and, indeed, aspects of local history can be brought alive in this way.

For what it is worth here are some thoughts based on my experiences:

- Choose a popular subject or one with dramatic possibilities.

- You have to assume that your audience knows nothing, but there are ways of introducing basic facts without patronising them.

- Where possible use a variety of sources and voices in constructing the script. And manipulate them where necessary to enhance your story. You are not writing a thesis.

- Short and crisp works better than long sentences and wordy witness statements.

- Where possible ask actors to give the reading. They bring to it skills that you and your committee may not have.

Have you or your society done anything of this kind? What have been your experiences?

Simon Fowler's Richmond at War 1939-1945 is published by the Richmond Local History Society.

You can listen to a podcast of the reading and buy copies of the book at

www.richmondhistory.org.uk



a question from the floor during the conference

'Community, Family and Kin'

Leicester 7 November 2015

This conference, jointly organised by BALH, the Friends of the Centre for English Local History at the University of Leicester, and the Local Population Studies Society, offered contributions on a wide range of themes and deploying vastly different methodologies.

At one end of the spectrum, Leigh Shaw-Taylor of Cambridge University, proposed a new perspective on national economic history, taking a long view from the 14th to 19th century. Based on a massive quantitative analysis of occupational data from parish records and other sources, and funded by successive major research grants, the work of the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure was presented as a key resource for local and regional study.

In complete contrast were close studies of the role of kinship patterns in the workings of very local economies – the management of moorland farming on Bodmin Moor (Gary Crossley) and lead-mining in Victorian Swaledale (Phil Batman). Alongside these, Lyn Boothman's account of growing population stability in 19th century Suffolk (Long Melford) prompted some all-too-brief debate about the statistical validity of small-scale samplings of demographic data.

In different vein again were the qualitative reflections of Alison Light, author of the much-praised *Common People*, on the relationships between family, local and national history. And the day had opened with an overview by Brian Short of the Lloyd George 'new Domesday' survey of land ownership from 1909 and an account of its exploitation by local history volunteers in Gloucestershire (Anthea Jones).

Each of the 100 or so participants will have found their own highlights, but overall this was a very stimulating day, brimming with the diversity and vitality of 'local history', and Kate Tiller deserves our thanks for her key role as the BALH representative on the organising group.

David Griffiths

Relaunch of the Victoria County History of Shropshire

James Bowen

More than 200 people attended the relaunch of The Victoria County History (VCH) of Shropshire on Saturday 31 October 2015 at University Centre Shrewsbury. The VCH is written by local historians working in counties across the country. Famous for publishing its big red books, the VCH also now produces popular paperbacks and content is increasingly being digitised and made available on British History Online digital (www.british-history.ac.uk). Since 2002 the VCH has not been active in Shropshire. The first volume of a two-volume history of Shrewsbury was published in red book form in 2014, organised by VCH Central Office, and achieved largely through voluntary work by experienced local historians with the assistance of the Marc Fitch Fund. The interest created by this suggested that there was support for the re-establishment of VCH Shropshire.

In the week leading up to the launch the VCH Shropshire banner toured the county visiting notable historic sites (*see back cover picture*). The relaunch event featured a talk by Professor Richard Hoyle, Director and General Editor of the VCH, outlining 'VCH Shropshire: Past, Present and Future' and two further lectures: The first by Professor Keith Lilley from Queen's University Belfast, entitled 'The Forms & Formation of Medieval Towns of the Marches', explored the urban forms and landscapes of the frontier town of the Welsh Marches, drawing on published work as well as his own findings, with special attention being paid to Bridgnorth and Ludlow in Shropshire. The second was by well-known local historian and patron of VCH Shropshire, Dr Barrie Trinder, entitled 'Shropshire Market Towns since 1660'. He gave a useful overview of the potential for thematic studies of the market towns of Shropshire and his lecture was illustrated with photographs of historic buildings from throughout the county.

The aim is for VCH Shropshire to be a collaborative community project to research and write the histories of all parts of Shropshire, within

the framework and standards of the VCH series. It will foster public knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the history and heritage of the county. A new committee has been formed and is seeking funding from charitable trusts and sponsors to enable work to recommence and continue into the future. VCH Shropshire will play a leading role in the public dissemination of the county's history and heritage through the provision of substantial works of reference which will leave a legacy for future generations.

Plans are well advanced for the publication of a VCH short (a single place study) on the north Shropshire market town of Wem with work starting in early 2016, with the intention that it will be published in the spring of 2017. The next red book will be on Newport and the Weald Moors, work on which had begun prior to the last full time County Editor's retirement, and it is hoped to be able to produce a red book on Ludlow and its surrounding rural parishes.

Anyone interested in getting involved with the project is welcome to attend a forthcoming volunteering event on Saturday 27 February 2016 at Shropshire Archives and a study day is being organised with the Friends of Shropshire Archives for Sunday 26 June. Working in partnership with Shropshire Archives, VCH Shropshire will encourage a variety of volunteering initiatives, assisting and supporting research into the parishes of Shropshire. The project has roles for many more supporters as volunteers, researchers and fundraisers. For more information about the project please contact: VCH Shropshire c/o Shropshire Archives, Castle Gates, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY1 2AQ.

Email: info@victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk

Follow us on Twitter: @VCH_Shropshire

Website:
<http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/shropshire>

First World War Engagement Centres

John Beckett

As reported in *Local History News* 113 (Autumn 2014), the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) has established five First World War Engagement Centres as part of its ongoing Connected Communities programme. The remit of each of the Centres was also reported in *LHN* 113.

Over the past two years, the Centres have been active in pursuing the goals for which they were established, and progress has been good. The Centres are particularly committed to working with community groups which have funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for a World War One project. Any group working on the War with HLF financial support is encouraged to contact the Centres. The easiest way to find out what the Centres do, and to decide which one to approach, is through the website

<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/research/fundedthemes-andprogrammes/worldwaroneanditslegacy/worldwaroneengagementcentres>

The Centres work closely together and if any group contacts the 'wrong' one, they will be referred onwards. We should also point out that community groups which are not in receipt of HLF funding are also encouraged to contact the Centres, if they have a First World War project up and running.

Academic and community delegates debate the war at a seminar event organised by the five Engagement Centres at the Imperial War Museum North, September 2015

We are keen to help as wide a range of groups as possible, by offering (mainly) academic support. Each centre has an academic network, with around 100 academics and practitioners drawn from various disciplines and able to offer relevant knowledge and experience. The 'experts' have agreed to offer any help they can to community groups to share their interests and expertise on the war and on its continued legacy including the current commemorations, 2014-19.

Each of the Centres also has a range of cultural partners, and again can help to put community groups in touch with relevant experts, who may be able to advise them on their work.

The Centres have a wide broad range of interests, as reported in earlier editions of *LHN*. Many of these are to do with aspects of the home front. The Centres do not have a specific remit in relation to military action either on the Western Front or further afield, although Gateways to the First World War, based at the University of Kent, has the strongest commitment, at least partly because of its proximity to France.



In addition to offering support to community groups, the Centres promote networking events at different venues across the country, they highlight ongoing activity through the blogs on their websites, and they work with schools to enable pupils to learn more about the war. By introducing pupils to the Imperial War Museum's 'Lives of the First World War' project, the Centres are able to help many of them to recognise their own family links with the conflict.

During 2016 there will be a particular emphasis on the centenary of the Battle of the Somme, which began on 1 July 1916, and on the use of film. The silent movie, the Battle of the Somme, was released on 10 August 1916 as a documentary-cum-propaganda film. The film attracted large audiences in cinemas, and in many respects served to transform the way in which the war was presented in Britain.

Beyond 2016, the Centres will be looking at the final years of the war, 1916-18, and at the impact of the Armistice in November 1918, the 'official' conclusion of peace with the Treaty of Versailles on 28 June 1919 and the parades and other activities which took place at that time. They will also be looking at the processes of commemoration and memorialisation which followed the war. This work will be reported in *LHN* as it takes place.

To see more of the work supported so far, see *LHN* 113 (p. 7), 114 (p. 16), 115 (p. 14), 116 (pp. 14-15), 117 (pp. 12-13 – and the additional comments by BALH's Dick Hunter on p. 13).

John Beckett is Principal Investigator, AHRC Centre for Hidden Histories, based at the University of Nottingham.

World War 1 - related activity planned for 2016 was recently previewed at the Imperial War Museum (North):

notes by Dick Hunter follow (right)

The Government (DMSC) will focus on a Somme commemorative service at Manchester Cathedral, followed by a walk to Heaton Park with a variety of creative activity involving young people.

BBC landmarks are mainly battles - Verdun, Dublin (Easter Rising), Jutland and the Somme - together with Radio 4 Home Front programming. Note there is useful material on the BBC iWonder platform: www.bbc.co.uk/history. For example, if schools use the Battle of the Somme film (1916) they will find material here to explore themes such as the role of propaganda in war. The **Imperial War Museum** will promote showings of this film, including live orchestral showings with recently scored music.

Heritage Lottery Fund emphasises telling stories, especially hidden ones. And encourages exploring challenging stories: 'a story that makes some people feel proud might make others feel ashamed or angry. Think about how you can explore these stories from different perspectives'. HLF also advises on how to involve people in projects: www.hlf.org.uk/FirstWorldWar.

The National Archives themes include the FWW in the Middle East, in Africa, and on the Home Front, as well as continuing work on medicine, developing technology, and the world at war. <http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/first-world-war>.

Examples of planned regional activity include an exhibition *From Durham to the Western Front* (**Durham University with Durham County Council and DLI Trustees**) at Durham's Palace Green Library from 26 March to 2 October. Again, focus is on the Battle of the Somme, including its impact on the Home Front. The exhibition will blend contemporary archival sources, artworks and museum collections with a public engagement programme across the north-east.

Impressions Gallery, Bradford, plan an exciting exhibition: *No Man's Land: A Century of Women, War and Photography in the UK*. How do women use photography in times of war? This will not be available till 2017, and will tour. www.impressions-gallery.com

Consolidating a society's publishing achievements - how Wandsworth has tackled the task

Neil Robson

Founded more than six decades ago in that far-away Coronation summer of 1953 the Wandsworth Historical Society in south-west London has built up a notable reputation for its successes in the local-publishing field. After a period of many years during which it printed short studies and reports in its two-monthly newsletter, the first issue of a new journal, the *Wandsworth Historian*, made its appearance in 1971. In September 2015 the *Historian*, which comes out twice a year, reached its one hundredth issue, celebrating the event with a special number that included a dip into the archives to capture the spirit of the district at the point when three south-London newspapers arrived at the same milestone themselves in 1866, 1886 and 1909.

But this moment of celebration for the Society was also a time for taking stock. It was in 1955 that the first article to be published under the WHS imprint went out to its members, a matter-of-fact description of a seventeenth-century mounting-block in the west of the Borough. Since then a steady flow of serious commentaries, lighter notes, and an impressive series of longer Wandsworth Papers has continued without a break.

It was therefore fitting to update the record of the WHS's sixty years of publishing by revising its cumulative Index, and the new edition of that document now appears on-line at: www.wandsworthhistory.org.uk/historian/index_1955_2015.pdf.

This takes the form of a PDF of twenty-four pages, fully searchable and readily accessible to enthusiasts right across the world. A dry list

of data for some, undeniably: for others an enthralling starting-point to further exploration.

This in turn highlighted another imperative - the need to update the digital archive of the Society's journal. First launched in 2011 to coincide with the *Wandsworth Historian's* fortieth anniversary, this archive in DVD format now consists of all one hundred issues of the title, plus a number of supplements and, of course, the new Index. Naturally, the more recent numbers are already available electronically, but the earlier issues were painstakingly scanned and the images carefully enhanced to create an attractive and rich store of information within a collection of documents that cannot otherwise be easily consulted. The OCR software struggled at times with those early hand-typed and Gestetner-ed pages, something which regular users of digital archives will know is often the case with poorly inked source-documents set in defective type. For all that, the digital archive is almost entirely searchable, and that indisputably is a revolution compared with the way researchers had to pore over a mass of printed data as recently as only a few years ago. The disc is priced at a

mere £5, a policy-decision made to ensure that it would be affordable to as many history-enthusiasts as possible.

The project team was ever alert to the sensitivities of copyright. It has always been agreed by the WHS that the copyright for any of its published material should be held jointly between the Society itself and the originating author. In

Wandsworth Historian

The Journal of the Wandsworth Historical Society



I The Old One Hundredth I The Putney Builder, W R Williams I The Location of Gibbefeld I John Burns's Birthplace I Miscellany I Print Gallery I

Number 100 : Autumn 2015

£3.00

practice, as is the case with many similar societies in other fields, a substantial proportion of the content was produced by relatively few contributors and, wherever feasible, these individuals were contacted and briefed on the nature of the digitisation project. As for the rest, the Society took comfort from the US Court of Appeals 2007 decision in *Greenberg v. National Geographic*, even though this was, of course, a foreign judgment. In giving its verdict the Court held that issuing an archive on DVD could not be deemed a breach of a contributor's copyright protection, but rather an acceptable form of reproduction since the finished product maintained the context in which the works were originally published.

For all societies spreading the results of local research through their journals is a vital enterprise. Making earlier issues of periodicals readily available trumpets the achievements of the past, and encourages history-lovers in the present to set down what they have discovered, reassured by the possibility that their precious work may actually become available to a wider reading public. The market for printed newspapers is undoubtedly shrinking, yet print-publishing in the hobbies and intellectual-interest fields is still extraordinarily alive; a quick glance along the racks of 'niche' magazines in WHSmith's shows just how vibrant that scene remains. Will producing local-history journals in print format still be viable in another twenty years' time? Many of us hope that it will.

Neil Robson is the editor of the *Wandsworth Historian* and has been in that position since 2002. Information about the activities and publications of the Wandsworth Historical Society are available at

www.wandsworthhistory.org.uk/

Speakers are P. D. A. Harvey, Alan Crosby, Angus Winchester, Hilary Hinds, Meg Twycross, Brian Barber and John Chandler.

Further information and booking details will be found at

<http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/users/rhc/> or by requesting a booking form from Mrs Christine Wilkinson, Regional Heritage Centre, Department of History, Lancaster University, Lancaster LA1 4YT. Tel: 01524-5936770; email: christine.wilkinson@lancaster.ac.uk

Creating the Raw Materials of History:

a Day Conference on
Record Publishing

Lancaster University 26 April 2016

Many local history groups and societies, as well as the more specialist societies devoted to editing historical records, publish transcripts or editions of archive sources, to make them more readily available to a wider public. Traditionally this has been carried out through conventional printing but electronic publication is increasingly common. Good editions add greatly to the value of the original manuscript as historical evidence, by providing notes on the text, an index and perhaps a glossary, for example. In a very real sense, such activity creates the raw materials from which historians, both amateur and professional, write history.

The Surtees Society, founded in 1834 and the oldest record publishing society in England, has teamed up with the Regional Heritage Centre in the History Department at Lancaster University to mount a day conference at Lancaster on 23 April 2016, which will explore the principles and practice of publishing scholarly editions of original historical records. The day is for individual local historians as well as members of record publishing societies and local historical groups. It aims to take stock of the current state of record publishing and the challenges it faces; to encourage good practice; and to consider the pros and cons of electronic publishing. The day has been arranged as a tribute to Constance Fraser, who died in 2013 and was one of the leading record scholars in the north of England, well-known in her role as editor of the Wakefield Court Rolls Series for Yorkshire Archaeological Society.

The programme includes sessions on why, what and how to publish, considers the potential and pitfalls of electronic publication, and looks ahead to the challenges faced by record publishing in a rapidly changing world of publishing. It also includes a session on Constance Fraser and the Wakefield Court Rolls Series.

(cont'd left)

Country houses and their owners: new resources

Margaret O'Sullivan

Country houses, their owners and their staff, are popular topics for research. Organisations such as the National Trust and the Historic Houses Association encourage investigation of archival sources by volunteers and there are groups, national and local, exploring different aspects of architectural history and genealogy, some following in the path of such writers as Mark Girouard whose prize-winning and highly accessible *Life in the English Country House* has been a steady seller since its first publication in 1978. His *Victorian Country House* followed in 1979, stimulating renewed interest in the many substantial buildings surviving from this era. On television the Channel 4 series 'Country House Rescue' focuses on offering practical help with owners' problems. Recent academic initiatives include the Thames Valley Country Houses Partnership, established in October 2013 and based at TORCH (The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities), together with similar projects in Yorkshire, Ireland, Wales, and Scotland. At Leicester University, the Centre for the Study of the Country House draws on resources at Lamport Hall in Northamptonshire and since February 2015 it has been possible to undertake a MA in the subject by distance learning.

So the time is opportune for a (relatively) new blog and, if you are interested in landed families in your area and the houses in which they lived, it is well worth consulting <http://landed-families.blogspot.co.uk>. Currently this has entries for over two hundred families and their homes in the United Kingdom and Ireland. It's especially useful for lesser known or less well documented country houses and a particular strength of the blog is the way in which you can trace kinship networks. You can search by family name, house name or county with the result that you can readily link owners to houses and houses to places. It's also exceptionally well-illustrated with maps, topographical drawings and photographs.

What is a country house? In this context it's a substantial residence (not a farm, for instance) which has been continuously lived in by the same family for more than fifty years and by more than one generation. Each post in the blog follows a common pattern. The first element is a narrative account of the family, its gentry origins and its history, including decline and extinction, change in status or position today. Estate holdings increase and decrease over time and these aspects are also covered. Next come descriptions of the houses, usually in the order in which they were acquired by the family. Events before acquisition and after sale are also noted, as is the sequence of owners. Because of inter-relationships, houses may be connected with more than one family and so appear in more than one post. The final elements in each article are summary biographical and genealogical details of the actual owners of the estate. Where known, these include for each individual

- Parentage, date, place of birth and/or baptism
- Education, including travels on the Grand Tour
- Career - employment, official appointments, offices held, honours
- Personality, where illuminated by memoirs or other evidence, and significant friendships
- Marriage(s) - date, place, name and parentage of spouse(s)
- Children - for each, their dates and places of birth, marriage and death, names and parentage of spouse(s), number and sex of children; occupation, rank and honours
- Key property transactions during the lifetime of the owner
- Date and place of death and burial; date and place of probate of will, and value of estate; and similar details for their spouse.

This site is very much a work in progress and details are noted of families expected to be added. For instance, under 'A', you can expect in future to see information about the following:

Ashburnham of Ashburnham House (Sussex) and Ampthill (Beds), Earls of Ashburnham; Ashburnham of Broomham and Icklesham (Sussex), baronets; Ashby of Breakspears, Harefield (Middx), baronets; Ashby of Naseby Hall (Northants) and Quenby Hall (Leics); Ashe of Ashfield (Meath), Freshford (Somerset), Heytesbury (Wilts), Langley Burrell (Wilts) and Cambridge Park, Twickenham (Middx); Ashenhurst of Ashenhurst Hall (Staffs); Ashfield of Chesham Bury (Bucks); Ashfield of Stow Hall, Stowlangtoft (Suffolk); Ashhurst of Waterstock (Oxon), baronets; Ashley (later Ashley-Cooper) of Wimborne St. Giles (Dorset), Earls of Shaftesbury and Baron Mount Temple.

Comprising a lifetime's research by Nick Kingsley, recently retired as Head of Archive Service Development at The National Archives and a respected architectural historian, this blog attracts over 30,000 readers a month. Comments, corrections and additions are actively sought and further information from local historians would enhance its coverage and help to realise the ambition to cover 'all landed families in the British Isles'.

<http://landedfamilies.blogspot.co.uk>



Continuing through the letter 'A', one of the landed families already well documented on this site are the Arundells, of Wardour and elsewhere. This is 'Arundells', in Salisbury Cathedral Close; named for James Everard Arundell, son of the 6th Lord Arundell who was tenant in the second half of the 18th century. More recently it was the home of former Prime Minister Edward Heath.

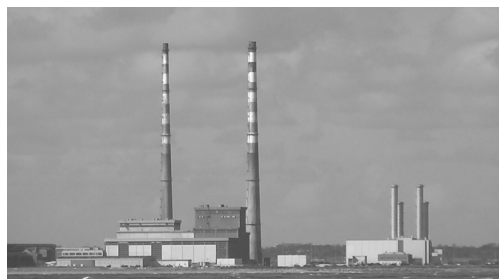
The news from Ireland

Alan Crosby writes ... We have not had any Irish news for a while, not because there was nothing to report but because our Irish correspondent, James Scannell, has been busy with other projects (including embarking upon retirement – many congratulations, James!). He tells me that he can't imagine how he ever found time to go to work, as retirement is so full of local history activities ... a familiar tale I think? But there's been a lot going on in the Republic and here are some of the highlights.

At the moment many local history events in the Irish Republic are centred on the build-up to the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising. For example, in mid-April last year there was a historical re-enactment entitled 'The Easter Rising: Irish Volunteer Drills' at the Museum of Decorative Arts and History in Clarke Square, Collins Barracks, Dublin. The re-enactors practiced drills as the Irish Volunteers did between 1913 and 1916, wearing uniforms and carrying weapons used at that time. In early September a very interesting conference was held at Trinity College Dublin entitled 'Towards a new military history of Ireland'. The great strength of the programme was its very wide-ranging scope, placing individual military actions and periods in a broad context. Papers considered, for example, 'The Protestant Volunteering Tradition in Ireland since 1600', 'Mapping the military establishment in 18th century Ireland: the case of the army barracks', 'Youth military culture in Ireland, 1888-1914', and 'Irish identity and integration within the British Armed Forces, 1939-45'.

An important tri-centenary was commemorated in April 2015 – the 300th anniversary of the founding of the Dublin Port and Docks Board (privatised in the 1990s and now the Dublin Port Company). A one-day conference, hosted by the company and opened by Paschal Donohue TD, Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, discussed many aspects of the history of Dublin Bay, including its archaeology and maritime cultural heritage; historic maps and the built heritage of Dublin Bay; sailing trawlers; coastal change and the future of the Bay; and its rich and varied ecology and biodi-

versity. For passengers on vessels entering the port and sailing up the Liffey, as well as for residents of Greater Dublin, the twin red and white striped 207-metre tall chimneys of the riverside Poolbeg generating station are a dramatic and iconic landmark (*see below*). Among the tallest structures in Ireland, they have been disused since 2010, but the decision has been made to preserve these outstanding industrial monuments, and earlier this year the Irish Electricity Supply Board committed itself to carrying out the essential maintenance which will ensure their future.



James himself gave a lecture in Bray, County Wicklow, on 7 May 2015, hosted by the County Library Service. It considered the life and career of local man Junior Third Officer Albert A. Bestic, who served on the *Lusitania*, sunk by a German torpedo off Kinsale, County Cork, exactly 100 years before. This centenary of that terrible maritime tragedy has been marked by many events in Ireland. James told how Bestic survived the sinking and went on to have a long and distinguished career with the Commissioners of Irish Lights until his retirement in 1949, after which he wrote many articles on maritime affairs for Irish newspapers until his death in 1961. Ralph Mercedy from Bray also survived the sinking and then enjoyed a distinguished medical career in New Zealand before coming to England where he died in 1967. The lecture was organized by the Bray Cualann Historical Society, the local history society for Bray and North Wicklow.

Kinsale was the location for this year's AGM of the Federation of Local History Societies, the umbrella group for local history societies in the Republic of Ireland which equates with BALH. The event was opened on 9 May by Councillor Alan Coleman, Mayor of Cork County, and included a *Lusitania* seminar involving Greg Bemis, current owner of the wreck, film maker David Gore, and historian and diver Paddy O'Sullivan. This was followed by a visit to the

Old Head Signal Tower and, on the following day, a walking tour of historic Kinsale town.

Another historic walking tour has been published recently. Greystones Archaeological and Historical Society (County Wicklow) has produced 'Trails of Greystones: Its Buildings and History', a guide to a walking tour which begins and ends close to Greystones DART [railway] station. It covers topics such as Greystones's links with the events of 1916 and its part in the women's suffrage campaign, as well as many literary and artistic connections and maritime associations going back to the days when it was just a tiny fishing village.

In August the Museum of Archaeology, Kildare Street, Dublin, held a day of hands-on activities, talks and demonstrations to mark the 125th anniversary of its opening to the public and to celebrate its collections. Events included a workshop with the amusing title, derived from a visitor's comment: 'Where do they get this stuff from? 125 years of collecting'. Meanwhile the National Museum of Ireland 1916 Public Engagement Programme will run during this year, both in Dublin and at the Museum of Country Life in County Mayo. The programme will reach out to a wide range of audiences, using the arts to explore the many themes and issues that relate to this crucial period in Irish history. The public engagement programme aims to be ambitious and provocative, enabling people to reflect on, explore and challenge the well-worn narratives of 1916 and to interrogate, one hundred years on, these extraordinary events in terms of their legacy for and significance to contemporary Irish society. There will be an online learning resource based on key objects from 'Proclaiming the Republic: The 1916 Rising' exhibition. Literature and design projects will be paralleled by more overtly historical approaches, including consideration of the life of Roger Casement, one of the most important humanitarians involved in the fight for Ireland's independence, and a monthly series of talks at the Museum of Archaeology reviewing findings from recent archaeological research in Ireland and Europe relating to the Easter 1916 Rising, the War of Independence, the Civil War and the First World War. The Museum of Country Life, Turlough Park, Mayo, plans a multi-dimensional programme looking at how the lives of people throughout rural Ireland were affected by the 1916 Rising, its aftermath and World War 1.

SOCIETIES



Amongst the many anniversaries of 2015, *Oxfordshire Local History News* reports on researching a less widely publicised one – the 75th anniversary of Oxford Citizens' Advice. Citizens Advice Bureaux were set up in 1939 by the National Council of Social Services, as an emergency measure funded by the Department of Health to help people in the chaos expected at the outbreak of war. www.ohla.org.uk



In Cheshire **Backford, Mollington & District Local History Society** have recently published their second volume of essays under the title 'Beneath the Surface'. The society is in a rural area near Chester; they discovered the truth of the saying 'every square inch of the country has history to tell'. The society has a full programme of lectures, outings and a quiz night, and is widening its appeal by creating a website and sending regular newsletters to advertise its lending library and growing archive. Contact Hess81@btinternet.com

Somerset Archaeological & Natural History Society has been preserving and promoting Somerset's heritage since 1849. Their website and book shop contain titles of interest to local historians. Many books are reduced in price as they are facing storage constraints and need to cut the amount of stock held. <http://www.freeweb-store.org/SANHS> www.sanhs.org

Bridport History Society has been celebrating its 20th anniversary. They held a meeting last Autumn to discuss what research is currently being done in the Bridport and Beaminster areas. And a very impressive survey it was. 25 people reported, individuals and representatives from local societies, museums, and the Dorset History Centre. Their Chairman for the last 20 years, Cecil Amor, is now retiring; he and other founder members cut the birthday cake. Editor william633@btinternet.com

It is hard to miss the vast project that is Crossrail – it has been given considerable media attention, even if you have not come across its physical presence in London. Construction on that scale has inevitably met archaeological challenges. **Hendon & District Archaeological Society** (now 50 years old) will be having a lecture in March on 'The Crossrail Archaeology Project'. The Bedlam burial ground was in use from 1569 to at least 1738. Volunteers have been searching parish records to create a database of names and backgrounds of people buried there, to link with the excavations of plague victims.

<http://www.crossrail.co.uk/sustainability/archaeology/liverpool-street/> www.hadas.org.uk/

Chadwell Heath Historical Society reminds us that, although women did not get a Parliamentary vote until 1918 – as shown in the film *Suffragette* – a number did qualify for a local government vote considerably earlier. These women had to be rate payers, therefore property owners, so most were spinsters or widows. Registers of Electors up to 1932 have recently become available on the Find My Past website. The society's newsletter publishes an article that identifies the local women who had a county and parochial vote in 1914, and found 57, including Esther Hart whose husband Benjamin had died on the Titanic. chadwell-heathhs@hotmail.com

The **Historical Association's** magazine *The Historian* is running a series 'Aspects of War', and in the Autumn 2015 issue the topic is the 1918 flu pandemic. This was a worldwide phenomenon, like the war itself, and left few families and communities untouched. Some 10m people in Britain were affected by the outbreak, and nearly a quarter of a million of them died. Unusually, the highest mortality was among those aged 20 – 40, and as much among the wealthy as the poor. thehistorian@history.org.uk

Researching 20th century local government can reveal some serious arguments. Formby developed rapidly in the first half of the century, and there was a heated debate in the newly established Formby Council as to whether or not to become an Urban District. More investigation will reveal the interests and influences concerned. This comes from the History Group of **Formby Civic Society**, contributed by Dr Reginald Yorke. Reg Yorke has recently stood down as Chairman and Hon Sec of the Society, but will continue on the committee as secretary of the History Group.

www.formbycivicsociety.org.uk

Southwark & Lambeth Archaeological Society have celebrated their 50th anniversary, including the receipt of a Lifetime Achievement Award from the London Borough of Southwark. That was accepted by their President Brian Bloice who sadly died later in the year. He was a founder member of SLAS, and in effect the society's 'manager' ever since. The Society's Local History section is beginning a study of Mr Bloice's considerable archive, including many slides of the area. *Sec RichardJ[Buchanan@aol.com]*

A recent addition to the website of **Meldreth Local History Group** in Cambridgeshire is 'Meldreth Fruit Grower refuses to pay Education Rate and is sent to Prison'. This is a valuable local case of a national issue. Following the 1902 Education Act nonconformists around the country objected to having to contribute to the support of Church of England schools. By 1906 over 170 had gone to prison for refusing to pay their education taxes – Bertram Palmer from Meldreth among them. Fruit growing was a major industry in the area; the Palmer family had planted many of the orchards in Meldreth and Melbourn. www.meldrethhistory.org.uk



Leonard Cheshire Disability has been awarded a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £242,250 to use their archives to raise awareness about the history of disabled people. More information about the project at: <http://www.leonardcheshire.org/what-we-do/latest-news/news-and-blogs/disability-history-be-captured-through-new-heritage-lottery>. The archive can be followed on Twitter @LCDArchive and material from the archive can be viewed at

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/lcdarchive>

The new **Herefordshire Archives and Records Centre** (HARC) was officially opened by HRH Duke of Kent KG on 1 October 2015. For full details see <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/local-history-and-heritage/herefordshire-archives-and-records-centre/>

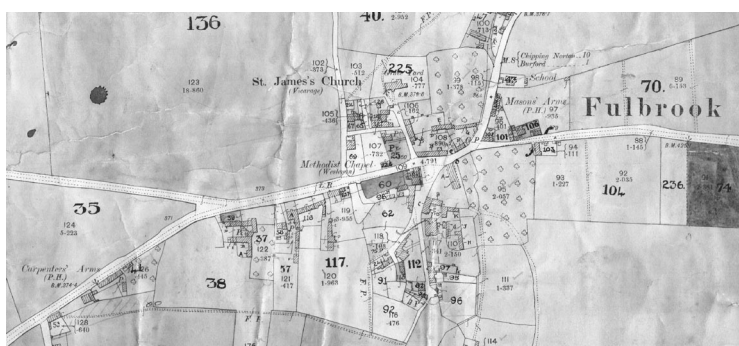
Details of more than 1,300 suffragette arrests – including that of Emmeline Pankhurst – are available to view online. 'The Suffragettes Arrested 1906-1914' collection shows where and how many times activists were arrested in their fight to obtain equal voting rights in the early 20th century. The list has been digitised from original records held at **The National Archives**. <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/oct/12/details-suffragette-arrests-available-online-emmeline-pankhurst>

Chris Mullin, author and former MP for Sunderland South, delivered a public lecture 'The Changing Face of Sunderland' in November 2015, at St Peter's Church, Monkwearmouth, giving an assessment of the dramatic changes that overtook Sunderland during his years (1987-2010) as an MP for the City. It was followed by the formal launch of the latest **Victoria County History** volume to be published in **County Durham**. For more information, please contact r.i.higgins@durham.ac.uk

Oxfordshire History Centre's collection of District Valuation maps and books for the historic county of Oxfordshire are now freely available to search and browse online at: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/district-valuation-maps-and-books. The District Valuation survey was carried out between 1910-1915 and is a vital source of information for people studying property history and family history, as the records reveal the owners and occupiers of individual properties. The records available are valuation books and valuation maps, based on the 1:2500 second edition Ordnance Survey maps. You need to use both sources together to fully understand the information they contain – the maps show in colour the boundaries of different parcels of land and buildings, each marked with a plot number, while the valuation books are arranged by plot number and provide the details of the owner / occupier and the rates payable. The survey was based on Oxfordshire parishes, but the search engine can still identify many smaller villages and hamlets – for example, Cote (in Aston and Cote parish).

Talks at **West Sussex Record Office** in Chichester this year include: 23 February on the project to open up the archives of the Chichester Festival Theatre; and an illustrated talk on 29 March entitled 'Chichester in the 1950s'. On 26 April, guest speaker Emma White will talk about the British use of dogs during the First World War. And, on 28 June, retired County Archivist Alan Readman will return to give a talk on 'West Sussex and the Battle of the Somme' to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the infamous battle on the Western Front in 1916. Booking is essential. www.westsussex.gov.uk/ro

There will be a 'Storage & Packaging Workshop' on 17 March at **Surrey History Centre**, 130 Goldsworth Road, Woking GU21 6ND, aimed at people wishing to learn more about caring for their archive collection. Basic solutions and techniques will be introduced which anyone will be able to tailor to their own collection. www.surreycc.gov.uk/heritageevents 01483 518737



During Spring 2016 there will be events at **The National Archives (TNA)** designed to appeal to many tastes and interests:

- The First World War programme continues with several initiatives including a 'Hands on History' session on 18 February examining campaigns in Africa and a webinar on 15 on wartime experiences in the Middle East.

Bedfordshire Archives is launching a community art project 'Weaving Narratives' in 2016. Participants will be given special access to the collections at a series of workshops to inspire then to create textile based art. The results will be seen in a touring exhibition around the county. achive@bedford.gov.uk

- One of the major projects of the year is a partnership with Kings College London to create an exhibition at Somerset House in central London, from February to May to tell the story of Shakespeare's life in the capital through the paper trail he left behind. You can book tickets at: bymewilliamshakespeare.org.

- March is Women's History Month and a wide range of events will explore how the status and roles of women have changed from the 17th century Jacobite risings through the women's movements of the 20th century, and their various roles in wartime.

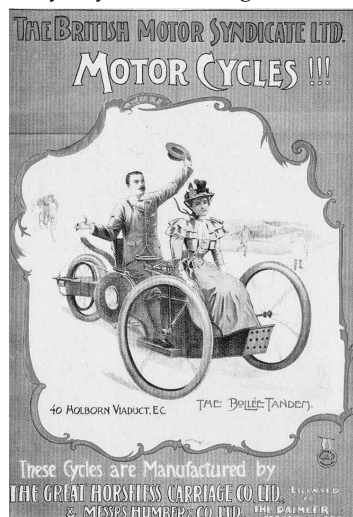


BTNeg3899/3 lace making class at Amptill 1949

•On Thursday 31 March you can attend a 'Hands on History' session on 'The Peterloo Massacre: Protest and Democracy in Regency England'. The session will be complemented by a display of original documents.

Most events are free and further information is available from the TNA website: nationalarchives.gov.uk/whatson.

Magna is the magazine of the **Friends of The National Archives**. A regular feature is 'Treasures from the Archives'. In the November 2015 issue there is a selection of photographs and advertisements from the early days of motoring.



1896

COPY
1/130(i)
(296)

Alfred Oscroft spent most of his career working for the Ordnance Survey until his retirement in 1927. He wrote a 1,000-page manuscript in the 1920s and 1930s, *Place-Names of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight*. Alfred died in 1939; his manuscript miraculously survived the Southampton Blitz and was passed down to his grandson, Jim Wilkes, who has edited, checked, and typeset to create a hard-cover book of 624 pages, containing about 200 illustrations, and 64 pages of maps. Jim and his wife, Mary Ann, keen supporters of the new **Victoria County History of Hampshire** project, have paid the entire production cost, and donated 150 copies of the book to **Hampshire Archives Trust** (among several other organisations) to sell to boost their funds. The books are available for sale, at a price of £20 each, in aid of Hampshire Archives Trust, at Hampshire Record Office or via the Hampshire County Council online shop:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/shop/product.php?productid=18913&cat=309&page=1>



The overall winner of the first Public History Prize is 'For King & Country', **Bankfield Museum**, Halifax. Given by the Royal Historical Society and the Public History Seminar at the Institute of Historical Research, the prize is intended to recognise work that enhances public understanding of the place of the past in today's social, political and cultural life. In addition to Museums & Exhibitions, other categories were Broadcasting, Film, and Web & Digital. www.royalhistsoc.org/prizes/public-history-prize

The Heritage Lottery Fund has given the **St Albans Museum and Gallery** project a £2.5 million grant, combined with a previous £300,000 award, to help transform the city's landmark, grade II-listed Georgian town hall into a gallery and exhibition space, while at the same time retaining the existing features of the building, such as prison cells and pre-Victorian courtroom. As well as permanent displays, there will be a changing exhibition programme that will showcase the global significance of St Albans through its unique 2,000-year history and heritage, and the fact that it was once the most important city outside of London. www.renaissancetalbans.org.uk

Chertsey Museum, celebrating its 50th anniversary, has a new fashion display '50 Years of Fashion' that runs until 3 September 2016. The Trustees of the Olive Matthews Collection have made important additions to the collection from key designers of the second half of the 20th century. Film clips, evocative perfumes, and a dressing-up area add to the visitors' experience of this special exhibition. www.chertseymuseum.org

A project to restore **60-62 Nelson Street, Manchester** was given a great start at a charity premiere of the film *Suffragette*. The house was

the home of Emmeline Pankhurst where she held a meeting in 1903 that led to a radical change in direction for the women's suffrage movement. It is planned to complete the project by 2018, the centenary of women over 30 getting the parliamentary vote. www.aim-museums.co.uk

A highlight of **Welsh History Month** was a feature on the pioneer Welsh photographer John Dillwyn Llewelyn. His collection at Amgueddfa Cymru – **National Museum Wales** – contains some of the earliest images ever taken in Wales and comprises approximately 850 photographic prints (mainly salted paper), 230 Calotype paper negatives and 160 Collodion glass negatives. As well as negatives and prints taken by the Llewelyn family, the collection also contains many prints by other photographers such as Calvert Richard Jones and Roger Fenton.

<http://www.walesonline.co.uk/lifestyle/nostalgia/welsh-history-month-john-dillwyn-10344383>

Events at **Weald & Downland Museum** include a weekend 'Understanding Agincourt' (19-20 February), Historic Clothing Exhibition (2 -8 April) and 'Shepherding & Shepherd's Huts' (9 – 10 April). Don't forget Museums at Night weekend is 13 – 14 May 2016. The Museum's extensive programme of courses in building conservation, traditional rural trades, and crafts continues through the year. www.wealddown.co.uk



a Sussex trug making workshop

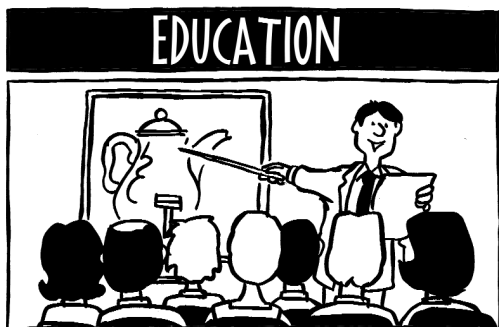


The move has now been completed of the **British Newspaper Library** – part of the British Library – from Colindale in north London to its new location in the National Newspaper Building at Boston Spa, Yorkshire. For reader information, see <http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/inr-rooms/bspa/bostonspa.html>

The **National Library of Scotland** is wishing to enhance its interest in local history by including occasional local history themed talks in its events programme, and adding as much local material as possible to its national collections. The **Scottish Local History Forum** is collaborating with NLS on this, asking its members to suggest events and to remember to donate their publications to the NLS. *Clish Clash*, e-newsletter of the SLHF, January 2016. www.slhf.org

Libraries in Sheffield are running 'Sporting Memories Groups' for over 50s who love talking about sport. Whether it is cricket, rugby, football, boxing, snooker or athletics, people are invited to share sporting memories with others sports fans over old photographs, newspaper articles and memorabilia. Informal, friendly and free! To find out which libraries, the days and times, and to volunteer if you would like to help run a group, contact: Darrell.porter@sheffield.gov.uk

'**Inspire Libraries**' is a scheme providing information about the use of libraries (including academic and specialist libraries) by non-members. The conditions vary widely, and anyone interested should read the details very carefully, and it is recommended that you use the links to the libraries' own websites for the latest versions. Institutions are listed regionally. www.inspire-libraries.org.uk



University of London, School of Advanced Study, Institute of English Studies will be running the London Rare Books School from 20 – 24 June and 27 June -1 July 2016; five-day intensive courses on a variety of book-related subjects. Titles include 'The Book in Early Modern England', 'A History Maps & Mapping', 'Communicating with the Public in WWII: the Ministry of information 1939-1946', 'European Bookbinding 1450-1820'.

<http://www.ies.sas.ac.uk/london-rare-books-school>

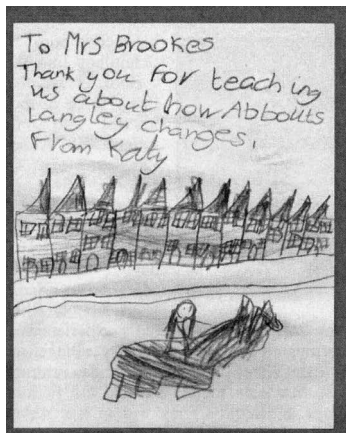
The London International Palaeography Summer School will run from 13 – 17 June 2016. The programme contains one and two-day units on a vast range of subjects. <http://www.ies.sas.ac.uk/london-palaeography-summer-school>

Flag Fen Archaeology Park in Cambridgeshire provides exceptional opportunities for teachers to meet the demands of the national curriculum for prehistory. Their main audience is KS2 (ages 7 – 11) and the most popular session 'Exploring Prehistoric Life'. Children handle real and replica artefacts, make a clay thumb-pot and experience story-telling in the Roundhouse.

<http://www.vivacity-peterborough.com/museums-and-heritage/flag-fen/>
British Archaeology Jan/Feb 2016



Abbots Langley Local History Society report an example of a successful event linking the society and their local primary school. The society was approached by one of the teachers; a member volunteered. Preparatory meetings were held to determine what would be covered, and old photographs of the village were uploaded to the classroom computer in advance. The Year 2 classes clearly enjoyed the experience hugely, discussing changes in the high street, shopping and holidays. www.allhs.org.uk



Research has found that History really matters when it comes to the national identity of the UK. More than three quarters (78%) of the 2186 people interviewed in an online survey said history was important, above other items such as language (65%), literature (46%), the arts (33%) and cuisine (31%). The results were published for an event called 'Rethinking the Nation' held on 25 November, hosted by the **University of Huddersfield** and the **Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)** at Imperial War Museum North, Manchester, part of the AHRC's tenth anniversary activities. Questions were developed by Ideate Research in discussion with the AHRC, University of Huddersfield and YouGov, and yielded fascinating results about identity in Britain. This was one of ten anniversary debates being held

2015-6 around the country; other activities include an essay competition and festivals. <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/documents/publications/the-way-we-live-now-the-ahrc-10th-anniversary-debates-2015-2016/>

Lancaster University: 'The Raw Materials of History: publishing historical records' see p 20

Local History

Day 4 June 2016

We look forward to welcoming members to Local History Day in London next June. The new venue we are visiting is particularly striking and memorable. **St Andrew Holborn** is the largest parish church built by Sir Christopher Wren in the later 17th century. The medieval church was saved from the Great Fire of 1666 at



© Richard Croft, licensed for reuse under Creative Commons Licence. www.geograph.org.uk

the last minute by a change in the wind direction but it was already in a bad state of repair. Excavations have revealed Roman remains on the site, but the earliest mention of a church there is in a charter of AD951; that wooden church was replaced by a medieval stone one in the 15th century, of which evidence remains inside the tower. Further details of its fascinating history in 19th and 20th centuries can be found at www.standrewholborn.org.uk. We are hoping to be able to offer tours of the church during the day on 4 June.

The morning session will examine an important class of records not always exploited to their full by local historians: **Business Archives**. In his talk Alex Ritchie (Business Archives Advice Manager at The National Archives) will look at the current state of business records: what is held by national, special and local repositories, as well as what is kept by businesses themselves. There will also be a consideration of the crisis management team at TNA, which monitors business failures in order to rescue historic business records. Then Richard Wiltshire (Senior Archivist for Business Archives at London Metropolitan Archives) will tell us about working in partnership with London-based businesses to acces-

sion, catalogue and make available their archives at LMA. Many such businesses operated in other parts of the country, and beyond, so these examples will be relevant to local historians everywhere.

This will be followed as usual by BALH's AGM, lunch, and the presentation of BALH Awards for local history. We are delighted to give public recognition to the achievements of local historians from across the country.

Lancelot Brown and the Capability Men: the landscape revolution of 18th century England

The annual lecture will be given by Tom Williamson, Professor of Landscape History at the University of East Anglia. His books on garden history include *Polite Landscapes: gardens and society in eighteenth-century England* and *The Archaeology of the Landscape Park*. He has just completed, with David Brown, a book on Brown to be published this year by Reaktion: *Lancelot Brown and the Capability Men: landscape revolution in eighteenth-century England*.

As the garden history world prepares to celebrate the tercentenary of England's greatest landscape designer, a number of questions become increasingly important. Was Brown a pioneering innovator, whose style was widely copied? Or was he in reality one of many designers working in a shared style – the style of the times? Why was the 'naturalistic' style of the landscape park so popular, and where did it come from? Professor Williamson will examine some answers.

Erasmus Darwin House, Lichfield

Visit 17 March 2016

Join Dr Trevor James for a special tour of Erasmus Darwin House on the morning of 17 March. The house itself is a Grade 1 listed Palladian building on the edge of the cathedral close in Lichfield, where Dr Darwin lived for 26 years from 1758. The visit will include areas of the house not normally open to the public. Contact Dr James on 01543 253968. www.erasmusdarwin.org.

Further details of the visit will be available on our website www.balh.org.uk/events

Book Reviews

Hidden Lives: Leek's Extraordinary Embroiderers.

Cathryn Walton. Privately published (2014)
ISBN 978-0-9928879-1-9. £19.95. 256 pages

What is known of the women who produced some of the most exquisite needlework of the late Victorian period? While some attention has been paid to the needlework of the Leek Embroidery Society (one of their pieces recently featured in the BBC's *A History of the World in 100 Objects*), *Hidden Lives* is a book about the women who stitched them. Cathryn Walton's careful and detailed investigation presents a prosopography of the women involved with the Leek Embroidery Society in Leek, Staffordshire, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. While *Hidden Lives* is primarily about recovering the details of individual women's lives, Walton also highlights the international reach of the Leek Embroidery Society through its members' intriguing links with churches in Port Elizabeth, South Africa and Khartoum, Sudan. It is striking how in many of the women's stories there is a rapid swing in fortunes. As one embroiderer, Mrs. Anne Lowe, remarked in her diary, 'the George Wardles have gone up and I have gone down'. These fluctuations in social rank described in *Hidden Lives* attest to the impact of the manufacturing-driven Victorian economy on local communities, and may be especially of interest for other local historians of industrialised regions.

Walton also reveals how many of the embroiderers were women of independent means and spinsters, and which adds new insight about the role of embroidery in the lives of such women. Walton's objective to shine light onto the embroiderer's lives, as a way of understanding their work, is especially insightful for the production of the Bayeux Tapestry Facsimile. This study of the women involved stands in contrast to the medieval Bayeux Tapestry where little is known about the embroiderers, and is valuable resource for understanding the facsimile as a collective enterprise.

Walton's *Hidden Lives* presents rigorous research using a range of primary sources including genealogical records, newspapers, family papers, and personal correspondence. The high-quality images are especially good, and they provide a commendable visual portrait of women's lives in addition to the written chronologies. Several family trees and an index of all the embroiderers discussed are also provided. However, missing was a map of the general area, which would have been helpful for non-locals, as well as for drawing attention to the geographic connections and movement between counties.



The thematic structure, while highlighting the materials women made, works less well for constructing women's lives since their chronologies can become jumbled. For instance, a key figure, Elizabeth Wardle, whom Walton acknowledges as the brains behind the society, is not discussed in full until the penultimate chapter. It is difficult to appreciate

the development of the Society without understanding this compelling figure. Also, more should be made of why the Pelican Frontal is presented in the first chapter. Surely, the Bayeux Facsimile, the most famous production, and its embroiderers could have been highlighted better. Projects like the Khartoum Frontal, which illustrate the embroiderers' international ties, are less well described, but this is perhaps due to their lack of survival.

Overall, Walton's *Hidden Lives* is an excellent portrait of Victorian middling/genteel femininity that offers great contextualisation of the needlework produced by the Leek Embroidery Society.

Amanda Pullan, Lancaster University

Dr. Pullan recently completed a PhD at Lancaster University, which examined British women's seventeenth-century needlework and interpreted the significance of four popular subjects from biblical and classical texts.

DEVON'S TORRE ABBEY: Faith, Politics and Grand Designs

Michael Rhodes (The History Press 2015 ISBN 978 0 7509 6267 4) £16.99, 160 pages

The best preserved medieval abbey in Devon and Cornwall, Torre Abbey has been the site of Catholic worship for eight hundred years. The history of Catholicism in England is reflected in the story of this fascinating, Grade I listed building, which can be traced back to 25 March 1196 when an abbot and six Premonstratensian cannons arrived at Torre at the invitation of local landowner and crusader, William Brewer. Closed in 1539, Torre Abbey was converted into a private house in the early sixteenth century. It was held by the Cary family for 300 years before being purchased by the local council in 1930s. Since that time it has been an art gallery containing works of national importance, including several by Holman Hunt and Burne-Jones. The long and significant history of the abbey has been thoroughly researched and recounted here by its former curator, Dr Michael Rhodes. That history is unveiled across twenty-seven chronological chapters, the first eight of which focus on monastic life, lands and income, as well as a discussion of the medieval architecture which draws upon an as yet unpublished architectural assessment for English Heritage. The cannons clearly arranged the buildings to suit Torre's coastal position above Tor Bay. The church was positioned at the higher north side to help protect the cloister from the elements, while water from its roof was used to flush the drains, which were still in use 500 years later.

The central chapters of the book chart the post-Reformation history of the house,

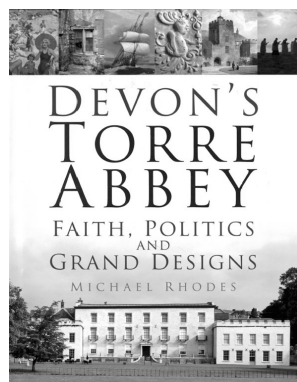


'Spanish Barn' at Torre Abbey

through the penal laws to Catholic emancipation, in which we find Torre Abbey being closely connected with events of national importance. This includes the Prayer Book Rebellion of 1549, when four tons of lead were taken

from the abbey roof and turned into shot. The surviving thirteenth-century 'Spanish Barn' was used to hold captured crew from the Spanish Armada, while among the abbey's collections is a relic of Cuthbert Mayne, the first missionary priest to be martyred in 1577. After the abbey was bought by the Roman Catholic Cary family in 1662, a secret chapel was built in the attic. This remained in use until 1776, when the Carys felt confident enough of their position to build a chapel on the ground floor. By this time, Torre was home to the largest Catholic household in Devon, while the chapel had a recorded congregation of 85 persons in 1778. The congregation remained at Torre Abbey until the Roman Catholic church in Abbey Road was built in 1854. Having re-developed Torre into a fashionable Georgian mansion that hosted British naval officers during the Napoleonic wars, the Carys also made their mark by influencing the development of Torquay.

The story told here is very comprehensive, with the later chapters bringing us right up to the present day by charting the extensive restoration work and developments that have helped turn the abbey into a major visitor attraction. This book was written to promote the abbey, which it does well by focusing on a single theme throughout. Accompanying the text are 147 full-colour images and illustrations, which makes this hard-backed volume very attractive and good value. While the book is aimed at the general reader, there are ample references and a full index which have been deliberately incorporated to encourage further research into this significant building and the people who lived there.



Sarah Rose

Gone Chopin

Alan Crosby

Discerning students of landscape and history, we visited the northern side of Mallorca, shunning the haunts of young people and instead driving along twisting roads, on giddy clifftops and mountain precipices, from monastery to medieval village. Our progress was threaded together by the image of a man of whom, I confess, I had no knowledge at all but who is now familiar. Archduke Ludwig Salvator of Austria (1847-1915) popped up wherever we went – an unusual figure (for a start, a likeable Hapsburg is always a novelty) who was fascinated by scientific, ethnographic and natural history research and is remembered in Mallorca, though long forgotten elsewhere, because he

was one of its earliest and greatest historian-travellers. Visiting for the first time in 1867, he was seduced by its magic and promptly escaped from the claustrophobic protocol-deranged Viennese court.

We went to Son Marroig, a great house on the edge of a high cliff where Ludwig Salvator had lived. Its damp rooms, perfumed throughout by the cigars which the elderly custodian puffed down in the entrance hall, had tall windows which looked out on the infinite windswept sea and contained cases of faded books and dusty memorabilia associated with the archduke. Outside, an overgrown garden,



View from the terrace of the room occupied by Chopin and Georges Sand. Photo Alan Crosby

once beautiful, gave spectacular views along the high rocky coast. It was as far removed as possible from the kitsch bourgeois comfort and the stiffly dysfunctional imperial regime of fin de siècle Vienna. No wonder Ludwig loved it.

Later, at Valldemossa, we encountered more of this remarkable man, inspecting a large room devoted to his memory in the great Real Cartuja, the Carthusian monastic complex which dominates the little town. But at Cartuja the real attraction for any student of self-imposed exile is that Fredryk Chopin stayed there in the cold wet winter of 1838-9 with his lover, the splendidly outrageous Georges Sand. There are three rooms – the very rooms which were occupied by the doomed romantic and the much more robust Georges – filled with Chopinalia, ranging from dog-eared photocopies of his manuscripts to original letters, portraits of the pair, albums, jewels and miscellaneous personal effects.

As is so often the way of these things in the Mediterranean, it was a spectacularly chaotic museum, with hopeless labelling or no labelling at all, no apparent order of ideas, and several lady custodians who veered from hawk-like vigilance one minute to sitting

around smoking, laughing and drinking tea the next. I loved it – especially the delightful terrace garden where the notorious lovers, fleeing publicity but also longing for it, could gaze across a valley of orange trees, limestone crags and intricate terraces, through a cleft in the mountains and down to the wide flat plain towards Palma.

They are proud of Fredryk and Georges at Valldemossa, and it's easy to see why ... though the pair were pretty miserable and they came at the wrong time of the year. So proud of them, indeed, that in the corridor of the monastery the romantic couple have been immortalised as gigantic 13-foot high figures, Fredryk with the green pallor of the consumptive, Georges with her ample bosom scarcely concealed by her daringly low-cut dress. His white hands have sensitive but 18-inch long fingers, her complexion is brown and her ringlets look like bunches of sausages hanging down beside her ears. What did Dr Crosby do? Naturally, he became a mere tourist, a vulgar tripper rather than a student of Franco-Polish musical and literary culture, and had his photograph taken holding their hands, and doing a little dance with Georges. Disgraceful but fun!



Notes News Issues

Jane Howells

Changes

As mentioned in the last issue of *Local History News*, the membership and financial services aspects of BALH have now been re-located. The new procedures were in place to operate the October mailing and we hope everything has gone smoothly from you, the members, point of view for the renewal of subscriptions for 2016. Prompt renewal helps the Association run smoothly, as that is our source of income. Please could everyone note the change of address and phone number below. In particular would societies please alter their mailing lists for sending us copies of their newsletters and journals (on which I depend for 'news' and Sarah depends for listings in *The Local Historian*). I hope all societies have also updated the links on their website to ours to **www.balh.org.uk**. Thank you.

Local History Day

Please see page 30, for further details of Local History Day on 4 June 2016. We will be at a really stunning and memorable venue - do join us! There is a flyer enclosed with this mailing - could you put it somewhere or give it to someone who might not know about BALH? If your society would like a table/stand at this event please get in touch. There is plenty of space and it is a good opportunity to share ideas by showing other members what you are doing.

Contact Gill Draper by emailing
development.balh@btinternet.com

Trustees

On page 9 you will find the last in the current round of 'Trustee profiles' which have introduced the members of BALH Council to our readers. We hope you have found them of interest. Thanks to everyone for responding so willingly to my request to 'write about yourself'. When new people are elected as Trustees we will, of course, continue the series.

The Local Historian

A major project is underway to make back copies of *The Local Historian* available on our website. All issues that originated electronically have now been uploaded. To go further back we have to scan from paper copies. Our printers Salisbury Printing Co have a splendid machine that does this in seconds - once the spine of each copy has been sliced off to give loose pages.

As part of the administrative changes at BALH a thorough stock-take has been done. Nigel Tringham and Margaret O'Sullivan have given up their spare time for this and, in the process, to make a set of *TLH* for scanning, and to create a second master archive set. Then an adequate stock to meet orders for back copies will be stored, and any surplus recycled. A few issues must have been very popular over the years, so are in short supply, so if anyone has any of the following they would be happy to donate, please do get in touch : No. 26.1, No 30.3-4, No 31.1, No 32.3, No 33.2-3, No.34.1, 34.4, No 35.1, No 38.2-4, No 39.3, No 42.2, No.43.3.

BALH Head Office

Chester House, 68 Chestergate, Macclesfield SK11 6DY

01625 664524

www.balh.org.uk

BALH Officers and Committees

President: Professor David Hey

Vice Presidents: Professor Norman McCord, Mr Phillip Snell, Dr Kate Thompson,
Dr Christopher Charlton, Dr David Dymond, Professor Claire Cross

Council 2015-16:

Prof Claire Cross*
Ms Jacquelené Fillmore* (Vice-chair)
Mr David Griffiths
Mr R Hunter
Dr Tim Lomas*(Chair)
Dr Jo Mattingly
Dr Margaret O'Sullivan*
Dr Ruth Paley*
Dr Winifred Stokes
Dr Kate Tiller*
Dr Nigel Tringham*

**members of Management Committee*

Advisory Committees:

Publishing: Dr N Tringham (Chair), Dr P Carter, Dr A Crosby, Prof C Cross,
Dr D Dixon, Dr D Dymond, Ms Jacquelené Fillmore, Dr J Howells, Mr P Jackson, Dr S Rose,
Dr M O'Sullivan, Dr W Stokes, Dr K Thompson, Ms I Watson

Education: Dr K Tiller (Chair), Dr N Barratt, Dr H Falvey, Ms J Golding, Mr C Haydon,
Mr R Hughes, Mr R Hunter, Dr T Lomas, Dr J Mattingly,
Dr R Paley, Prof E Royle, Prof G Timmins

Events: Mrs J Shephard (Chair), Dr G Draper (*ex officio*), Dr M Escott, Mr M Farrar,
Mr G Gascoyne, Mr D Griffiths, Dr T James, Mrs P Merrick, Mr W R Moss, Mrs J Stanley,

Conferences: Ms J Golding (Chair), Dr A Crosby, Dr G Draper (*ex officio*),
Dr M Escott, Mrs J Shephard

Representatives:

Prof C Cross (Royal Historical Society), Dr T Lomas (Historical Association)
Dr N Tringham (VCH), Dr P Carter (The National Archives),
Dr C Haydon (British Records Association), Dr D Dixon (CILIP), Mrs B Evans (FFHS)

Treasurer: Dr Ruth Paley

Editors: Dr Alan Crosby (*The Local Historian*) Dr Sarah Rose (BALH Reviews Editor),
Ms Jacque Fillmore (E-newsletter) Dr Jane Howells (*Local History News*)

Web Manager: Paul A Carter

Events & Development Officer: Dr Gill Draper

BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR LOCAL HISTORY

REGISTERED CHARITY 285467

www.balh.org.uk

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

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

To achieve this the Association

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

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

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

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

**BALH HEAD OFFICE, CHESTER HOUSE, 68 CHESTERGATE,
MACCLESFIELD SK11 6DY**

01625 664524 admin@balh.org.uk



The Isles of Scilly Community Archaeology Group visit to Middle Arthur, 19 July 2015. See article page 12



VCH Shropshire banner at Wroxeter Roman City 'Viroconium', Shropshire. See article page 16



Local History News

NUMBER 118 WINTER 2016

www.balh.org.uk

Supplement

Events 2016

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 17 March | Guided Visit – Lichfield Erasmus Darwin Museum (see p 30) |
| 7-9 April | Birmingham – Who Do You Think You Are? Live BALH will be at the NEC |
| 8-10 April | Conference – Ipswich , Suffolk ‘Growing Local History’ (see insert) |
| 4 June | London – Local History Day (see p 30 and flyer with this mailing) |
| 17 September | London – County Societies Symposium ‘Responding to 21st century challenges’ |

Possible Guided Visits for 2016

Chelsea Hospital and National Army Museum,
Society of Antiquaries, and others, still at an early stage of planning.

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

*Guided Visits are designed for small groups to visit less accessible places and collections; booking forms for these, and all other events, with full details and prices are available on our website or from
BALH(V) Chester House, 68 Chestergate, Macclesfield SK11 6DY*

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

BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR LOCAL HISTORY

TRUSTEES' REPORT 2015

The Association is an unincorporated charity governed by an elected Council. Its purpose is to encourage and assist the study of local history throughout Great Britain as an academic discipline and as a rewarding leisure pursuit for both individuals and groups. The elected members of Council are the trustees of the Charity. Trustees are listed elsewhere in this report with Officers of the Association and members of the advisory committees. Council met in London in March and October and there were also meetings of other Committees in London during the year. Council meetings were accompanied by committees and open meetings with relevant inputs from prominent speakers.

This proved an active year with changes in key personnel. We were delighted to appoint Paul A Carter as website manager and his arrival has seen continued development of the website. This has included use of social media, digitization of our publications, and Kindle publications. The criteria for placing content on the open and closed parts of the website have been widely debated, recognizing that there is a need for enough on the closed part to make membership attractive.

After many years of dedicated service, Annmarie Jones and Terry Clarke submitted their resignations during the year. The Trustees looked at various options for replacing the Business Manager and Finance Officer and decided to seek a company to provide financial and membership services. Following competitive bids, a contract was awarded to Kingston Smith (KSAM) a company with considerable experience in providing financial services to charities such as ours. The early days of this partnership seem most encouraging with the opportunity to tighten up the efficiency of some processes and systems.

Membership continued at approximately 2000. Attracting and retaining members remains the number one priority in the 2015 development plan. Methods adopted to achieve this include raising the Association's profile particularly at conferences and through contact with societies. Finding a trustee with experience in marketing remains a major objective. BALH has drafted a skills/interest audit to tap in better to expertise, and developed an induction programme to improve support for new trustees.

Contact with current and potential members has been given high priority with a continued move towards more joint conferences and liaison including in Scotland and the USA. BALH have been co-sponsors in various successful events. The e-newsletter has also been sent to a growing number of societies this year. BALH, within the limits of its resources especially the events and development officer, continues to attend various events including key ones such as Who Do You Think You Are?

Local History Day ran this year in Birmingham at the hospitable Priory Centre on 6 June 2015 and attracted a good attendance. This included the Annual General Meeting of the Association. The keynote lecture was delivered by Professor Angus Winchester of Lancaster University on the theme of the history of common land.

Presentations to winners under the Awards Scheme were made by the President, Dr David Hey, as part of Local History Day, as follows:

In recognition of personal achievement:

Brian Boulter, Berkshire
Richard Brockington, Cumbria
Anne Johnstone, Stirlingshire
Iris Pinkstone, Worcestershire

For research and publication:

Margaret Bird, 'Supplying the beer: life on the road in late 18th century Norfolk' (winner, long articles)

Peter Gutteridge, 'Shipbuilding in Selby in the 19th century'

John K Little, 'Merchants, mariners and yeomen: what does the Hearth Tax tell us about early modern Stockton-on-Tees?'

Edmund Lyon, 'An avalanche of wrathful violence: physical opposition to the Salvation Army, 1881-1883'

James H Thomas, 'County, commerce and contacts: Hampshire and the East India Company in the 18th century' (winner, short articles)

Geoffrey Ball, 'The War Ag in Saffron Walden district during the Second World War'

Anne C Brook, 'The communal history of Jews in Huddersfield'

E J T Collins, 'The Great War in the Berkshire Countryside'

For a society newsletter:

Forest of Dean Local History Society

The Local Historian, the Association's flagship journal, appeared four times in 2015 (Vol 54). *Local History News* with a variety of short articles and news items also appeared quarterly in 2015 (Nos 114-117). The e-newsletter was also sent four times to subscribing members. The war memorials publication continues to sell well and a new publication on local history in schools is being prepared for Kindle publication. A new version of the directory of internet sites is planned.

The advisory and management committees have had another busy year. The conference committee has been temporarily suspended owing to key personnel non-availability, with its functions largely shared between other committees. Nevertheless conferences have taken place during the year including a very successful one in Leicester. BALH has also been involved with projects that were completed during the year including the 'England's Immigrants 1330-1550' and 'Pauper Prisons, Pauper Palaces' (Midlands) initiatives. The Publishing Committee has been closely involved with its key journals as well as the website, and the Education Committee has been active in monitoring changes to the teaching of local history in schools as well as conferences and resources. The Events Committee has continued to plan a number of visits with a greater emphasis on joint visits with local societies, which seems to increase take-up.

The Management Committee has also met regularly to co-ordinate and monitor the health of the Association as well as organizing representation on bodies, working groups and events. It has been particularly pre-occupied with the transfer of key roles in finance, membership services and the website. It has also taken the opportunity this year to strengthen some procedures and systems, such as financial monitoring. It has been responsible for updating the development plan, co-ordinating the Committees, monitoring projects and conferences, and keeping a watching brief on developments and legislation affecting aspects of local history. It has also co-ordinated the Association's archive and book stock, and placed these on a more professional footing including making further archive depositions with the London Metropolitan Archive.

Overall the Trustees believe that the Association continues to run effectively and according to its constitution and the rules of its charitable status. They are grateful to all those on paid contracts and the many on committees and other volunteers for their support, knowledge and dedication.

BALH Annual General Meeting

**To be held at 12.30 pm on Saturday 4 June 2016
at St Andrew Holborn, London EC4A 3AB**

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 6 June 2015 (see below) and matters arising
3. To consider the Annual Report and Accounts for 2015 (see Trustees' Report overleaf)
4. To elect Officers and members of the Council (Trustees of the Association)
5. To consider membership subscriptions
6. Any other business notified by 30 April 2016

Please note that the full Minutes (item 2 above), Annual Report and Accounts (item 3 above) will be available from 30 April 2016. Copies will also be available at the AGM. Nomination forms (item 4 above) are available now, or online at www.balh.org.uk. Completed nomination forms should be returned no later than 30 April 2016. Matters of Any Other Business (item 6) must be received in writing by post or email by the date given.

For all the above items please write to BALH Head Office, Chester House, 68 Chestergate, Macclesfield SK11 6DY or email admin@balh.org.uk

MINUTES (abridged) of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING held at The Priory Rooms, Quaker meeting House, 40 Bull Street, Birmingham B4 6AF on Saturday 6 June 2015

Professor David Hey, President of BALH, welcomed members to the meeting. The Chair, Vice-Chair and 87 members were present.

1. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 7 June 2014 were agreed.

2. Annual Report and Accounts for 2014

The President advised members that 2014 had been a year of considerable achievement culminating in a new website which was launched in November with an open accessible part and a closed section for members only. The Association had also carried out a survey into the views of societies. The 2013 development plan had resulted in achievements in 2014 in all the identified priorities; many of these would be ongoing with further developments anticipated in the 2014 plan including strategies to increase membership through subscription offers, increased sales through commercial outlets, developing closer links with societies and enhancing the new website.

The advisory committees had also had a busy year with the Publishing Committee heavily involved in the journals, the e-newsletter, the website and other publications such as a new directory of internet sites and the sale of the highly regarded war memorials booklet. The Education Committee had been active with developing educational resources and monitoring curriculum developments affecting local history. The Events Committee had organised a range of visits, especially in London and has worked on a number of jointly-badged visits with other societies as a way of increasing take-up. The Conference Committee had also achieved considerable success participating in some key conferences such as the First World War Conference with the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, the Society for One-Place Studies, the County Societies Symposium, and the Anglo-American Conference. The last has resulted in the first formal link with the national body in the USA, the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH).

The Management Committee had also met regularly to co-ordinate and monitor the health of the Association as well as organising representation on bodies and working groups such as the TNA, Waterloo 200 and Magna Carta 800. It had also kept a watching brief on developments affecting aspects of local history such as archives, heritage and education responding as appropriate to consultations.

Overall the Trustees believe that the Association continues to run effectively and are grateful to all those on paid contracts and the many on committees and other volunteers for their commitment, knowledge, dedication and enthusiasm. The Annual Report and Accounts for 2014 were noted.

3. Officers and members of Council.

The President thanked all members of Council and Committees for their valuable contributions during the year. The following elections to Council were agreed: Dr T Lomas (Chairman), Mrs Jacqueline Fillmore (Vice Chair), Prof M C Cross, Mr D Griffiths, Mr R Hunter, Dr J Mattingly, Dr M O'Sullivan, Dr R Paley, Dr W Stokes, Dr K Tiller and Dr N Tringham. It was agreed that Mrs Annmarie Jones, Business Manager would continue as Minuting Secretary at the Annual General Meeting