Local History News

Number 151 May 2024 *www.balh.org.uk*



Magazine of the British Association for Local History

ISSN 0969-3521

AWARDS FOR LOCAL HISTORIANS

- *To encourage research and publication*
  One or more certificates may be awarded each year for a published **article** 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 Heather Falvey the Reviews Editor for review or listing. All relevant material sent to the Reviews Editor is automatically considered, and a shortlist prepared for the Awards Panel.

- *To recognise outstanding individual contributions*
  Up to six awards may be made each year to publicly honour local historians of all ages who have made outstanding and significant voluntary contributions to the subject. The awards will embrace as wide a spectrum of activity as possible. Nominations and references must be submitted between 1 July and 31 December on the forms available in the July issue of *Local History News* or on our website at **www.balh.org.uk/awards** where further details can be found.

- *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.

The next awards will be presented at the BALH AGM in 2024

BALH Reviews Editor
Dr Heather Falvey
119 Winton Drive
Croxley Green
Rickmansworth WD3 3QS

British Association for Local History Awards
c/o Paul Dryburgh
The National Archives
Kew
Richmond TW9 4DU

Front cover

The cover image from David S. Johnson's book
Drystone Walls in a Westmorland Landscape – see page 8.

Local History News

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR LOCAL HISTORY

BALH
BRITISH ASSOCIATION
FOR LOCAL HISTORY

ISSN 0969-3521

Edited by Andrew Chapman

Published by the British Association for Local History
BALH Registered Office, c/o Moore Insight, St James House, Vicar Lane, Sheffield S1 2EX
admin@balh.org.uk www.balh.org.uk

Printed by Salisbury Printing Company Ltd., Greencroft Street, Salisbury SP1 1JF
www.salisburyprinting.co.uk

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 at www.balh.org.uk/thelocalhistorian-contributors.

Local History News relies on material – articles, news, pictures, advice, questions etc – from local societies and individual local historians. We also welcome your newsletters and other 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 – we can also list larger events such as conferences at the BALH website and in the BALH e-newsletter. *Local History News* is normally mailed at the end of February, May, August and November, with these copy deadlines respectively: 3 January, 1 April, 1 July, 1 October.

The BALH Reviews Editor is Dr Heather Falvey; if you have a newly published work, either as an individual or a society, please send a copy for listing and possible review to her at the address given below. Be sure to include all relevant details such as price and where to purchase.

Important contacts

News and article proposals: editor.lhn@balh.org.uk

Newsletters/regular publications: please send digitally if possible, to editor.lhn@balh.org.uk *and* to reviews.editor@balh.org.uk, otherwise by post to Dr Heather Falvey, 119 Winton Drive, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth WD3 3QS.

Proposals for *The Local Historian*: dralancrosby@gmail.com, Dr Alan Crosby, 77 Wellington St, Preston PR1 8TQ

Books for review: Dr Heather Falvey, 119 Winton Drive, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth WD3 3QS

All other enquiries: email admin@balh.org.uk, write to BALH Registered Office, c/o Moore Insight, St James House, Vicar Lane, Sheffield S1 2EX, or call 01625 664524

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

Contents and design © BALH and the authors

Local History News

Number 151 May 2024

A flood of memories – Alan Crosby wades through the Midlands 4

BALH Awards for Local Historians – latest winners listed 5

A word from BALH's new President – by Professor Jackie Eales 7

Drystone walls in a Westmorland landscape – by Carol Dougherty 8

BALH Outreach Team news 9

Peter McLagan: Scotland's first black MP – by David W. Main 10

Hertfordshire Association for Local History – celebrating 75 years – by Elaine Saunders 12

Must tell, should tell, could tell: leading guided walks – by Cheryl Butler 14

All About That Place 2024 – family/local history collaboration seeks contributors 15

Making good use of Twitter/X – by Sharon O'Connor 16

Derbyshire uprising inspires musicians' album – by Kevin Quinlan 17

A trip down memory lane: scanning a society's journal archive – by Val Harrison 18

Creating an index for local history publications – by Andrew Chapman 19

BALH responds to government wills consultation 21

Letters to the editor – send yours to editor.lhn@balh.org.uk 22

News round-up:

	General	23
	Societies	24
	Archives	26
	Museums	27
	Websites	28
	Education/libraries	29

BALH events report – recent partner events with the Historic Towns Trust 30

Book reviews – Heather Falvey 31

A Torrington torrent of abuse? – Alan Crosby discusses a pioneer of customer reviews 33

BALH Trustee profile – Lisbet Sherlock 34

Notes News Issues 35

BALH Officers and Committees 36

Centre pages

BALH events and insurance • BALH publications • The BALH Dymond Lecture 2024

Membership matters Inside back cover

A flood of memories

Alan Crosby

During the wet season of 2024 (to be precise, in early April) I went on a personal Grand Tour of the Welsh Marches and South Midlands, visiting various friends. One of my calling points was in Shropshire, near Wenlock Edge, an area which never ceases to delight for its beautiful scenery and rich history. My friends live in the middle of the fields, in the shadow of the Edge, up an extremely narrow lane – the sort where even if you are accustomed to driving on single-track roads (which I am) you have unspoken fears of meeting somebody coming the other way.

This lane is a 'no through road' turning off an only slightly wider lane, which passes through a small hamlet and then comes down a gentle slope to a brook. There is only a footbridge, and all vehicles must use the ancient ford. I've previously done this without any hesitation, splashing (with childish glee) through rushing waters about six inches deep. But this was the wet season, and the fields I'd passed in Staffordshire and North Shropshire were saturated, with sheets of standing water, even though the day itself was dry. So today the small brook was a raging torrent… abandon hope all ye who enter therein!

Fortunately, I had been forewarned by my friends. I was to leave the car on the side of the lane where it widened on the approach to the ford, cross the footbridge, and they would pick me up on the other side of the brook – for indeed, 'The water is wide, I can't cross o'er, and neither do I have wings to fly.' While I was waiting, a woman came by walking a dog. 'I hope you aren't planning to drive through that,' she said. 'My son-in-law wrecked his car doing that not long ago.' I noticed the depth marker beside the footbridge – it was heading for the three-foot level, while the water was at least twice as wide as usual, and churning and foaming in fast flood.

Vehicle fords are pretty rare now, of course, certainly on public roads. When I was a child, aeons ago, there were many more. We went a couple of times a year from Surrey to Manchester, to see my grandparents. My father had a very eccentric route which we always followed, and which I can still follow in my head 60 years later. He hated busy main roads, so his route was basically a straight line between Woking and Openshaw, regardless of the size, condition or speed of the road. A very exciting landmark roughly halfway through the journey was Kenilworth Castle, around which the old road to Stonebridge Roundabout curved.

But for me, the boy Alan, even more exciting was the ford on the main road immediately downstream from the castle. Going northwards the road descended the hill, the ford as yet hidden, and there was The Great Question: 'How deep will it be?'. We first had a Ford Popular and later a Ford Anglia. Neither was suited to amphibious activity. A splash and a cheer, and we sped up the hill, past the half-timbered cottages (the end one being shored up with great beams of wood) and into the yonder.

Sometime in the mid-1960s Warwickshire County Council did the inevitable dirty deed. The brook at Kenilworth was culverted, the ford vanished and our remaining journeys were diminished in excitement.

On my Midland Grand Tour in April, for old times' sake, I retraced that stage of the journey. There were some of the familiar landmarks, while others remained but with their setting dramatically altered – high streets with coffee shops and tanning salons rather than butchers' shops and haberdasheries; what had been country lanes now urban roads through housing estates – but the curving hill down to the brook beside the castle seemed just the same… though with only the faint and ghostly echo of a splash and a cheer. And the last cottage, crumbling 60 years ago, had long since been demolished and replaced by a neat square of grass. My memories are history.



BALH Awards for Local Historians 2023–4

FOR OUTSTANDING INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTION

Anne Balfour: for her work in leading the revival of **Strathblane Heritage Society**, through community engagement, talks, films and a new website, into one of Scotland's most vibrant local history groups.

David Cliffe: for his skills in promoting the history of Reading through his work in the Local Studies Library, his support of others in the field of local history, and his walking tours of the area.

Brian Green: for his tireless and innovative work in bringing the history of Dulwich to the wider community, through his many publications and his leadership role in local history projects.

Lawrence Gregory: for his long-standing commitment and expertise in bringing the history of Catholicism in Lancashire and beyond to the wider community, and for his kindly support of others in this continuing task.

FOR RESEARCH & PUBLICATION

SHORT ARTICLES

Emma Yeo, 'Living and dying with the plague in Civil War Durham', *Durham County Local History Society Journal*, no. 87 (December 2022) pp. 5–13.

Pam Aucott, '300 years at Number 1 High Street', *The Harborough Historian*, no. 40 (October 2023) pp. 5–8.

John Sheridan, 'The origins of the Wandsworth Technical Institute', *The Wandsworth Historian*, no. 116 (autumn 2023) pp. 14–18.

Martyn Everett, 'The navvy and the evangelist', *Saffron Walden Historical Journal*, no. 45 (Spring 2023) pp. 29–33.

LONG ARTICLES

Martin Watkinson, 'Reflections on "closed parishes"', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, vol. 53 (for 2019, published in 2023) pp. 75–94.

Ray Goulder, 'Lost ponds in Yorkshire Wolds villages', *East Yorkshire Historian*, vol. 24 (2023) pp. 48–58.

Louise Keil, 'Henry Lane & Son of Berkhamsted (179–-1945)', *The Chronicle, Journal of the Berkhamsted Local History and Museum Society*, vol. 20 (March 2023) pp. 19–28.

David Elder, 'Naunton Park: Cheltenham's "Garden of Eden"', *Cheltenham Local History Society Journal*, no. 39 (2023) pp. 3–13.

FOR A SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Oxfordshire Local History Association e-bulletin (see profile, page 6).

To nominate someone for next year's BALH Outstanding Individual Contributions awards, visit www.balh.org.uk/resources-balh-annual-awards (deadline 31 December).

Society newsletter award

Winner: Oxfordshire Local History Association e-bulletin

Winner of BALH's 2024 Newsletter award is the monthly e-bulletin of **Oxfordshire Local History Association** (OHLA).

OLHA is for everyone interested in the history of the county. It fosters and promotes the study and publication of local history and acts as an umbrella organisation for its (more than 80) local history groups. As well as publishing an annual journal with articles on various subjects, it sends out a very informative (and colourful) monthly e-bulletin to anyone anywhere who wishes to subscribe.

Below a colourful picture of somewhere in the county (perhaps a medieval building or flowers in a college garden), the bulletin is packed with information about forthcoming events, walks and talks and news from societies and museums all over the county. The November 2023 issue, for example, drew attention to a new exhibition on 30 years of Cuttle Brook Nature Reserve, the Bodleian Library's Local Views index and a new Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone that has been erected in Witney's Tower Hill cemetery.

Drawing together new museum exhibitions is particularly useful as it saves readers having to trawl various websites – and links are given to those websites for further details. Indeed, wherever a particular group is mentioned a link to their website is provided. Each issue includes a book review (if available) and an interview with a local historian with titles of talks that they offer. The final section has a selection of talks being given that month (with a full listing on OLHA's website) – again with links – and talks are available almost every day.

This excellent e-bulletin is edited by the indefatigable Liz Woolley, who is also not only the OLHA's website manager but also its treasurer and membership secretary. The society's website is olha.org.uk.

Dr Heather Falvey, Reviews Editor



Snakeshead fritillaries at Magdalen College, Oxford. The snakeshead fritillary is Oxfordshire's county flower, and features on OLHA's new logo (see below).

All members of local history societies and groups that are members of OLHA are themselves members of OLHA automatically, and this e-bulletin is for everyone. Hence, if you are on the committee of a local history group or society, please make sure that this e-bulletin is forwarded to all your members by sending them this url. Thank you.

Not a member of OLHA yet? Join now! It costs less than £1 a month!

The **Museum of Oxford** launches this year's series of **city walks led by local historians** with a guided tour of ***River, Meadow and Ford*** with **Mark Davies** on **Wednesday 3 April** at 2pm.

Walks will continue on Wednesdays at 2pm throughout the summer and into September, with Maurice East, Liz Woolley, Mark Davies (above), and Jess Worth as your guides.

Further information and booking here.

£100 Reward.
PARDON.
WHEREAS it hath been represented to His Majesty's Government that the Laws have been violated by maliciously disposed Persons committing together, and riotously and tumultuously assembling by Night and rasing the Timers and destroying the Buildings in
OTMOOR,
whereby serious injury has been done to the Property, and the Peace of the Neighbourhood has been disturbed; Now, in order to discover and bring to justice the Offenders,
A REWARD OF
One Hundred Pounds
is hereby offered to any Person who shall give such information as may of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the County of Oxford as shall lead to the conviction of any Person or Persons upon any Indictment that may be preferred against him or them for having actually committed any of the crimes of
Felony, Riot, or Conspiracy.
upon the Moor, or for having instigated or assisted in the commission of any of those Crimes either by Words, or by giving Money or Beer.
And as a further encouragement, HIS MAJESTY'S
FREE PARDON
is hereby granted to any Person giving such information.
By order of His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Home Department.
Whitehall, March 2, 1830.

OLHA's AGM and spring study day will be on **Saturday 18 May** in **Chipping Norton**, on the subject of ***Oxfordshire protests!***

Contributors to the day will explore how, from the Prayer Book Rebellion of 1549, via the Otmoor Riots, to demonstrations following a death in police custody, the people of Oxfordshire have never been slow to protest against change or injustice.

Further information and booking here.

Members of the **Littlemore Local History Society** invite you to join them on a **guided walk** on **Saturday 6 April**, starting at 1:30pm from outside SS Mary & Nicholas Church (above). The tour will visit historic Heyford Hill Lane, Simon's Field Nature Reserve, and the remaining buildings of the Victorian sewage pumping station.

Free and open to all; no need to book. Further information from Julia Brocklesby.

The Oxford Welsh Male Voice Choir, founded in 1928.

Oxford local historian **Mark Davies** will explore the impact of Welsh immigrants

The latest addition to the VCH Oxfordshire website is a draft history of **Chastleton** on the Gloucestershire border.

The parish is best known for its early 17th-century manor house (above), built for the lawyer Walter Jones c.1607-12 and now owned by the National Trust. The house's predecessor was owned by Robert Catesby, a leader of the Gunpowder Plot. The parish also contains the shrunken settlement of Brookhampton, its former house plots marked by surviving earthworks.

Draft histories of Cornwell, Enstone, and Sarsden are also available on the website, and will form part of VCH Oxfordshire Volume XXII in a few years' time.

A word from BALH's new President

Jackie Eales

I am delighted to take over as President of BALH from Caroline Barron, who has served with great dedication in the role for eight years since 2016. I first met Caroline when I was studying History at London University and she is not only a distinguished historian, but she is also hugely supportive of both her students and her colleagues. She has been a very visible presence for BALH and I hope to emulate her example.

My own interest in history was sparked when my mother bought me a series of booklets from Woolworths containing 'the story' of British history 'told in pictures' by C.W. Airne. This was my introduction to the Middle Ages, Tudors and Stuarts, and the Hanoverians. The pictures were black and white line drawings, so I could colour them in, and I was particularly entranced by Elizabeth I's farthingales, her palaces and playhouses, which explains why I am now an early modernist. Trips to Hampton Court with my mother and to the Museum of London with my teachers from Wix's Lane Primary School, in Battersea, reinforced my love of history and I had no hesitation about what to study at secondary school and university.

The research for my PhD and later book on the 17th-century Harley family of Herefordshire has given me a sound understanding of both county history and the regional history of the Welsh marcher counties on the borders of England and Wales. The Harleys were Puritans and also the only major gentry family in the county to support Parliament against Charles I. Their resistance to the Crown was led at Brampton Bryan Castle by the family matriarch, Brilliana Harley, who felt increasingly isolated as her home was besieged by the Royalists in 1643. She died of a respiratory illness a few weeks after the siege was lifted, but her letters contain a magnificent insight into the decisions made in local communities about allegiance and loyalty in the early stages of a civil war.

Living in Canterbury and lecturing at Canterbury Christ Church University for nearly 30 years has also enriched my knowledge of local history in the South-East, and I have published a number of articles on Canterbury and Kent during the Civil Wars. I have a particular interest in how the clergy used their pulpits to influence the allegiance of their parishioners, sometimes with unpredictable results! I retired in 2020, but I am actively involved with a number of research projects including an Historical Atlas of Canterbury to be published by the Historic Towns Trust in 2025.

I am strongly aware of the importance of local history societies in encouraging the study of history, as I have served as President of the Historical Association. The HA has over 50 local branches and during my term of office I visited 38 of them and gave 36 branch talks. It is an honour to be invited to be President of BALH and I will look forward to meeting many of the members and learning more about all of your local initiatives and research projects, which contribute so much to our knowledge of the past.



Jackie Eales is Professor Emerita of Early Modern History at Canterbury Christ Church University, where she taught for 27 years. She was President of the Historical Association from 2011 to 2014 and has a particular interest in Tudor and Stuart women, Puritanism and the regional conflicts of the British Civil Wars. She has published extensively in these fields and her publications include *Puritans and Roundheads: The Harleys of Brampton Bryan and the Outbreak of the English Civil War* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), *Women in Early Modern England, 1500–1700* (UCL Press, 1998) and *Community and Disunity: Kent and the English Civil Wars, 1640–1649: Four Local History Lectures* (Keith Dickson Books, 2001). She is the editor with B. Tjengeren of *The Social Life of the Early Modern Protestant Clergy*, Journal of Religious History, Literature and Culture 6, no. 2 (2020) and is a contributor to the forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of Puritanism.*

Drystone walls in a Westmorland landscape

Carol Dougherty

During 2022 a survey of drystone walls in Asby parish in the Westmorland Dales area of Cumbria was undertaken by a team of enthusiastic volunteers led by Dr David Johnson, a landscape archaeologist based in North Yorkshire. Walls chosen for survey were selected to cover those constructed across different periods, especially in four enclosure award areas. This detailed study is one of the first of its kind to endeavour to place them in their landscape context, to compare the findings with other regional wall surveys and to understand the pattern of the field walls with relevance to enclosure and events in earlier years. While the study area lies within the Westmorland Dales it should not be regarded in isolation as the resultant findings are important for, and have relevance to, a much wider area. The community project was organised by the Westmorland Dales Landscape Partnership Scheme and was grant funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Volunteers received training in various thorough field survey techniques to develop their understanding of drystone walls. Volunteers were given a list of 'age identifiers' – basically a crib sheet to help all volunteers to realise what they should be looking for in the first instance. Team members got to grips with this quickly and it was a hugely valuable and useful tool for beginning a more detailed analysis of each wall. Sinuosity and unusual wall features were recorded, a ten-figure national grid reference from a hand-held GPS was logged for each location, each site photographed and a scale plan drawn. Under David Johnson's excellent guidance, volunteers soon became proficient in accurately recording their findings and observations.

A specially designed frame was used to plot the cross profile of most walls on a proforma graph – see picture – and the resulting diagrams offered an immediate visual image of the wall profile. For some walls the results were surprising in that the bowing or curvature was much more marked than first appeared. It is interesting to compare results from the Asby survey with those which show a selection of walls from a survey of the deserted settlement of Thorns near Ribblehead Viaduct in the Yorkshire Dales, which was surveyed in 2019.

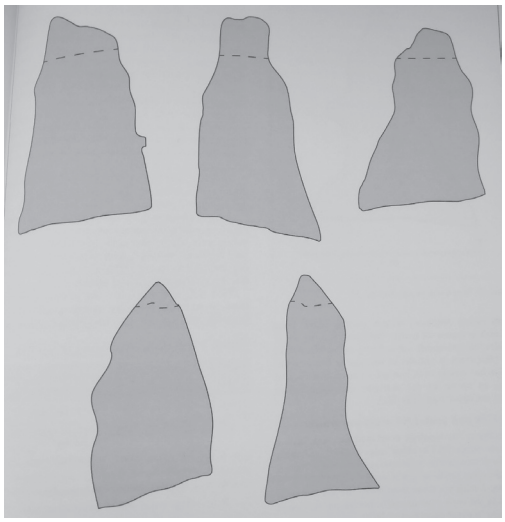


Team members using the specially designed frame.

There is a wealth of relevant archival material for the study area so volunteers also received training in how to access and interpret documentary material and how to conduct map regression analysis as a means of illuminating the development of a given landscape. Taken together these two very comprehensive and thorough training elements enabled the group to carry out a Level 2 survey of the walls, defined by Historic England as a survey which provides a basic description and interpretive record of an archaeological monument of landscape as a result of field investigation.

David Johnson has put together the survey findings in a very readable and informative publication. The introductory chapter includes sections on the origins and functions of drystone walls together with a discussion of distinct regional styles from Galloway, Dartmoor, Pembrokeshire and other locations.

An impressive 37 walls were included in the survey and a wealth of detail amassed for each one. Thirty-six of them fall into one of four 'types' and a single wall was classified as a 'hybrid', all with explanatory notes. The



Examples of cross profiles from Thorns near Ribblehead.

book of the survey findings reveals clearly the differing diagnostic features of the walls and how a probable date for construction was ascribed to each, and the final chapter looks at Asby's walls in relation to those from elsewhere and how they show both similarities and differences. We hope that these walls of considerable age and aesthetic value, which are such an iconic emblem in Britain's upland areas, continue to be valued as historical and archaeological monuments.

Carol Dougherty was a member of the survey team. She lives in the fells not far from the study area and is surrounded by drystone walls. She wrote about David Johnson's similar survey of millstones in LHN149. Drystone Walls in a Westmorland Landscape *by David S Johnson is published by Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, www.cumbriapast.com*

BALH Outreach Team news

Over the Spring the BALH Outreach Team have been working on a range of activities.

We held our rescheduled 2023 Dymond Lecture by Professor Fiona Edmonds of Lancaster University on 7 March via Zoom. This was an excellent event entitled *Northumbrian institutions reconsidered: three upland communities in medieval Britain.*

Our 2024 Dymond Lecture, also online, will be held on 5 December 2024 at 7pm. Professors John McAleer and Craig Lambert will be presenting on their 'Maritime Communities' project. See more in this issue's Supplement.

In February and March BALH ran a third series of talks in collaboration with the Historic Towns Trust, including excellent views into the histories of Ipswich and Cambridge. BALH were once again incredibly pleased to have delivered these to members and our wider audience. Our hope is to work with the Trust to organise more talks in 2025.

On Thursday 16 May we held our AGM, open to both members and non-members. Here we announced our Outstanding Achievement and Publication award winners for 2024 (see page 5). The AGM was followed by a talk by Publications Chair and Trustee John Chandler, who discussed his research into Swindon, recently republished, and offered some useful thoughts on researching the histories of places often seen as comparatively less appealing for study.

BALH attends as many events as we are able but we can only do so if we are aware of them. Please get in touch with our Outreach Coordinator Stephen Miller if you are running an event and would like us to attend: outreach@balh.org.uk. We also have a stock of fliers and pencils which can be sent out. If you are interested in receiving some of these to give away then please also get in touch with Stephen. With your help we can grow awareness of the Association.

The BALH blog continues to draw in excellent research as does our popular series of online 'Ten-Minute Talks'. BALH are always looking for new blogs and videos so please get in touch if you would like to share your local history research with a wide audience. In 2024 we are especially looking to share ideas on 'doing' local history from researching to running a society. Get in touch with the Digital Team with your idea: digitalteam@balh.org.uk

Keep up to date with our activities via *Local History News*, the BALH website and e-newsletter. The BALH Outreach Team, which promotes the Association and local history generally, is looking for new members help with our initiatives. Please contact outreach@balh.org.uk if you can help. We thank new members who have joined us in 2023-4 who are providing fresh insights and experience. *Joe Saunders*

Peter McLagan: Scotland's first black MP

David W. Main

When the great Victorian novelist George Eliot has her heroine in *Middlemarch*, Dorothea, talk of those 'who rest in unvisited tombs' it brought to my mind the fate that has befallen Peter McLagan, Scotland's first ever black MP, who was the constituency MP for Linlithgowshire (now Bathgate and Linlithgow) between 1865 and 1893. This man, the son of a free black woman and a plantation owner, also Peter McLagan (1775–1860), was born in Demarara in British Guyana (now Guyana) on 1 January 1823. He had at least one elder brother, Henry, who was six years older than Peter. Their father owned two plantations – one of which grew coffee – which he jointly owned with one Samuel Sandbach.

Unfortunately, we have no more details relating to Peter's mother – we don't even know her name. All we do know at present is that his father had retired from the business in 1821 and was still living in Demarara in 1825 but by 1827 had moved back to Scotland. He and his two sons moved around – staying in Tillicoultry and Peebles before settling down in Edinburgh at 77 Great King Street, where both sons attended the University of Edinburgh. Henry graduated in medicine in 1836 and went back to one of the two hospitals situated in Demarara, where he died in 1851. Peter stayed on at the university between 1838 and 1844 but as was fairly common at the time did not graduate. Of his time at Edinburgh, the only notable fact that is recorded is that he was 'interested in the science class' – and the university archive mentions that he had signed up for the agriculture class in his first year.

As a result of receiving £21,000 in 'compensation' for the freeing of 400 enslaved people owing to the decision by the UK parliament to outlaw chattel slavery in the British Empire by 1833, Peter's father eventually bought the estates of Calder Bank and Pumpherston (some ten miles to the west of Edinburgh in 1842) of some 400 acres. The 1851 census return for 'Pumpherston Farm' reveals that Peter senior employed 30 'labourers' and six masons as



Peter McLagan MP (1823–1900)

well as retaining a cook, housemaid and groom – and his son Peter is listed as resident there. His aforementioned interest in agriculture led to him writing several scientific papers which were duly published. Furthermore, along with several other colleagues Peter founded the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture in 1864, the first of its kind in the world; later on in the same year he was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh – where his birthplace is listed as 'Demarara' in the Society's register of members. (Is he then the first person of colour to have been elected to that august body?). The stage was set for his entry into politics.

Space does not permit me to go into detail about his political career but the fact that he was elected as the constituency MP – with

the Liberal Party – over 28 years as well as numerous press reports saying that he was 'popular', 'well liked' and 'needed no further introduction' suggest his high local reputation, even allowing that the *Falkirk Herald* and the *West Lothian Courier* were staunchly Liberal in their outlook. Again from newspaper accounts we can say that the highlight of his career came in 1885 when he gained over 3,500 votes in comparison with the then Tory candidate, Lord Hope, who came in with some 1,600. (It should be borne in mind that property qualifications still determined who would be allowed to vote.)

From various newspaper reports we glean that he was an advocate of, inter alia, temperance, the establishment of some sort of mechanism of mediation between employers and workers, home rule for Ireland, women's suffrage, rural schooling, female doctors, more Scottish MPs, establishment of the Scottish Office and a salary to be paid to MPs to enable less well off members to stand for Parliament.

Some of his positions were more popular than others with his local electorate – for instance, the stance he took on the continuance of flogging in the British Army in the contest for his seat in 1868 was very unpopular when he noted that those likely to join the army would be 'riff-raff' and would not know any better. His views on temperance were also unpopular with a certain section of his constituents but he sincerely believed as did many others of his generation that abstinence would help reduce the levels of destitution to be found in society.

Indeed, as further proof of this conviction, which he shared with his wife, her gift of a drinking fountain – still known as the McLagan Fountain – was placed opposite a local pub in Bathgate! This was later relocated and is now to be found – recently repainted by West Lothian Council – in the town square in Bathgate, locally known as The Steelyard. Not far from there, an information panel was erected several years ago which briefly details the facts of his existence and his importance in our national life – believed to be the first public monument to do so anywhere in the UK. Recently, again in Bathgate, this time at the local Working Men's Club and Institute in Mid Street, a plaque has been installed in recognition of the fact that he partially financed the rebuilding of it in 1875/6.

Owing to bad business advice, he was declared bankrupt and subsequently resigned his parliamentary seat in May 1893. With his resignation he all but disappears from public life but not completely from the public consciousness – his obituary notice when he died on 31 August 1900 was carried in some of the leading newspapers of the day, as well as the local press. On the day of the funeral, one of the other pallbearers was Lord Torphichen. The shops in Peter's local village of Mid Calder were closed in respect and local schoolchildren given the day off to allow them to pay their respects. He is buried alongside his wife in the churchyard at Mid Calder but with only a very simple plaque in commemoration, in marked contrast with that of his wife, which is a rather ornate affair and unusually gives us an idea of what she actually looked like since at the top of her gravestone there is a carving of her face.

The principal sources for his life are numerous references to be found in several newspapers, local and national, via the British Newspaper Archive. Because he was a MP, Hansard usefully gives a record of his speeches – he is cited over 240 times, whereas his predecessor, Major Walter Ferrier Hamilton, is cited but once. Finally, his time at Edinburgh University is noted but this area might be more profitably explored as well as his scientific output. In short, he still awaits his biographer!

David W. Main was a professional librarian in several public and academic libraries. He took early retirement in 2019. He is an honorary member of the board of Bennie Museum in Bathgate. He is currently preparing an index to the local newspaper, the West Lothian Courier.



A cartoon of Peter McLagan and his 1868 general election rival John Pender – the Falkirk Herald *described the contest as 'the bitterest contest that has taken place in Scotland in connection with the present appeal to the country'.*

Hertfordshire Association for Local History – celebrating 75 years

Elaine Saunders

There can be no better way for a history association to celebrate its 75th anniversary than to enquire into its own past. For **Hertfordshire Association for Local History**'s current trustees, this task was made easier by a legacy from one of its former stalwarts, Lionel Munby, who not only distinguished himself through teaching and fostering a love of local history, but also possessed great foresight. Among HALH's old newsletters and committee minutes at Hertfordshire Archives lies a typescript by Munby entitled *A Chronological Narrative.* This brings to life the association's activities during its first three decades so the 'time of any future researcher may be saved'.

HALH
75 years of
local history
1949-2024

Three Hertfordshire representatives attended the inaugural meeting of the Standing Conference for Local History in 1948, and subsequently proposed a county history association to promote research into local history. A public meeting at St Albans Town Hall in October 1949 unanimously resolved to form the Hertfordshire Local History Council (HLHC), the 15th such created in England. Local historian, teacher and author Vicars Bell became chairman and William Branch Johnson was appointed honorary secretary. Dorien Williams, the BBC's 'voice of showjumping' and owner of Pendley Manor, joined them as treasurer the following year.

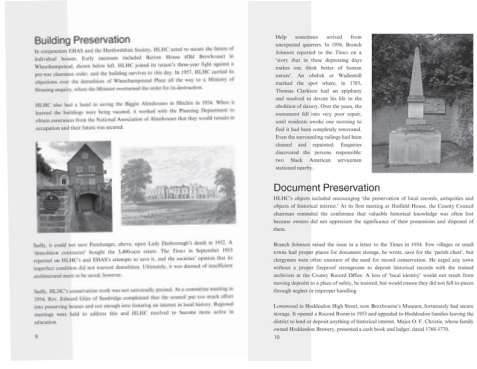
HLHC's first conference at Hatfield House in May 1950 attracted a 200-strong audience. Vicars Bell warned that the council should prepare for 'tremendous demand' from the many thousands who longed to know more about their heritage but had no idea how to set about researching it.

Requests for help flooded in, as Bell had predicted. At Letchworth Museum later that year, he said the demand had been so high the committee had assembled a panel of expert speakers who would receive a suggested fee of one guinea (£1.05), plus expenses.

HLHC also offered advice and printed guidance notes for several towns and parishes establishing their own local history groups, including Royston, Bishop's Stortford, Hitchin and Berkhamsted.

For a five-shilling subscription, members received a twice-yearly, typed and duplicated *News Sheet* containing short articles, book reviews and reports on HLHC's activities. By 1960, this had become a 40-page scholarly journal, *Hertfordshire Past & Present*, which remains at the heart of HALH's output today.

On paper, the founding principles of HLHC differed little from the current association's objects; namely, to promote local history and disseminate information. As well as advising individuals and local history societies, Munby wrote research guides for schools and colleges, and the council organised well-attended courses at Pendley Manor and elsewhere. County librarians began compiling a bibliography of published works on Hertfordshire and the committee appealed for documents and photographs to be delivered to archivists for safekeeping, rather than disposed of.



Building Preservation

In conjunction EHAS and the Hertfordshire Society, HLHC acted to secure the future of individual houses. Early successes included Barton House (Old Brewhouse) in Wheathampstead, shown below left. HLHC joined its tenant's three-year fight against a pre-war clearance order, and the building survives to this day. In 1957, HLHC carried its objections over the demolition of Wheathampstead Place all the way to a Ministry of Housing enquiry, where the Minister overturned the order for its destruction.

HLHC also had a hand in saving the Biggin Almshouses in Hitchin in 1956. When it learned the buildings were being vacated, it worked with the Planning Department to obtain assurances from the National Association of Almshouses that they would remain in occupation and their future was secured.

Sadly, it could not save Pansbanger, above, upon Lady Desborough's death in 1952. A 'demolition contractor' bought the 3,400-acre estate. The Times in September 1953 reported on HLHC's and EHAS's attempts to save it, and the societies' opinion that its imperfect condition did not warrant demolition. Ultimately, it was deemed of insufficient architectural merit to be saved, however.

Sadly, HLHC's conservation work was not universally praised. At a committee meeting in 1954, Rev. Edward Giles of Sandridge complained that the assured put too much effort into preserving houses and not enough into fostering an interest in local history. Regional meetings were held to address this and HLHC resolved to become more active in education.

9

Help sometimes arrived from unexpected quarters. In 1956, Branch Johnson reported to the *Times* on a 'story that in these depressing days makes one think better of human nature'. An obelisk at Wadesmill marked the spot where, in 1765, Thomas Clarkson had an epiphany and resolved to devote his life to the abolition of slavery. Over the years, the monument fell into very poor repair, until residents awoke one morning to find it had been completely renovated. From the surrounding railings had been cleaned and repainted. Enquiries discovered the persons responsible: two black American servicemen stationed nearby.

Document Preservation

HLHC's objects included encouraging 'the preservation of local records, antiquities and objects of historical interest.' At its first meeting at Hatfield House, the County Council chairman reminded the conference that valuable historical knowledge was often lost because owners did not appreciate the significance of their possessions and disposed of them.

Branch Johnson raised the issue in a letter to the Times in 1954. Few villages or small towns had proper places for document storage, he wrote, save for the 'parish chest', but clergymen were often unaware of the need for record conservation. He urged any town without a proper fireproof strongroom to deposit historical records with the trained archivists at the County Record Office. A loss of 'local identity' would not result from moving deposits to a place of safety, he insisted, but would ensure they did not fall to pieces through neglect or improper handling.

Lowestoed in Hoddesdon High Street, now Broxbourne's Museum, fortunately had secure storage. It opened a Record Room in 1953 and appealed to Hoddesdon families leaving the district to lend or deposit anything of historical interest. Major G. F. Christie, whose family owned Hoddesdon Brewery, presented a cash book and ledger, dated 1768-1773.

10

Pages from Dr Elaine Saunders' comprehensive history of HALH's early years, From Foundation to Flying Squad

Unlike today, HLHC also concerned itself with preserving historic buildings threatened by what Branch Johnson called 'the mania for demolition sweeping not only Hertfordshire but the whole of the country'. From its inception, HLHC had had a local planning officer on its executive committee, who drew its attention to local buildings at risk. In return, HLHC rallied its members to become active in building preservation and found volunteers to complete schedules of properties of architectural or historic interest for inclusion in the government's new listed buildings scheme.

In some cases, HLHC took more direct action to save countless important buildings. For example, it supported the tenant of the Old Brewhouse in Wheathampstead in his successful three-year fight against a pre-war clearance order, and persuaded the minister to overturn an order for the destruction of Wheathampstead Place.

Continued collaboration with county planners led to the creation of the Hertford County Buildings Trust, a limited company formed to safeguard buildings at risk, by buying and restoring them, then leasing them out. Its work continues today as the Hertfordshire Buildings Preservation Trust.

The committee also held 'long and friendly negotiations' with breweries to allow the photographing and survey of historic inns marked for closure or renovation. By 1964, Barbara Hutton had taken over as HLHC's secretary and taught many, including school students, how to record the county's industrial archaeology, following an initiative of the Standing Conference for Local History.

At that year's AGM, Mrs Hutton further galvanised efforts to record old buildings and said she welcomed calls from the public about any threatened with demolition. Under the sensationalist headline 'Historians have county flying squad', the local press reported that seven amateur historians were primed and ready to race and draw plans of buildings at risk! Indeed, it had already carried out a practice run on a local farm with Tudor features. Mrs Hutton later became secretary of the Vernacular Architecture Group and the flying squad fell into abeyance, to the present committee's relief!

Agricultural historian Dr Joan Thirsk's paper at the 1964 AGM encouraged members to also investigate land use. Barbara Hutton convened a meeting and 'cooked up a plan' to conduct research and draw detailed maps of land use at the time of the Tithe and Survey Award in the 1830s. In his *Chronological Narrative*, Lionel Munby deemed the Land Use Committee 'the most important activity sponsored by the Council'.

Branch Johnson feared his retirement from HLHC in 1969 would send it into decline, but new committee members brought fresh enthusiasm and focus during the 1970s. It held its first symposium in 1980 and the event is still an important, enjoyable day in HALH's calendar.

Lionel Munby's *Chronological Narrative* closes in 1982. A decade later, HLHC itself came to an end of sorts by changing its name to the Hertfordshire Association for Local History.

While the world of local history has changed immeasurably since 1949, HALH is still committed to promoting historical study and has embraced technology to do so. Its free winter Zoom lectures, established during lockdown, have garnered a worldwide audience and it is exploring ways to attract new, younger members through social media. Its latest initiative sees it liaising with local and national archives to ensure the preservation of online and digital resources alongside paper records.

HLHC's first AGM in 1949 considered what could be done to encourage a wider awareness of Hertfordshire's history and how to help those wishing to study it. Seventy-five years on, that quest is far from over.

Dr Elaine Saunders is HALH's membership secretary – www.halh.org.uk. Lionel Munby's Dates and Time: A handbook for local historians *is available from www.balh.org.uk/shop/shop-local-history-books*



HALH's 2023 Symposium

Must tell, should tell, could tell: leading guided walks

Cheryl Butler

The **Southampton Tourist Guides Association** is a great supporter of BALH and of local history and has been a member for several years.

To become a qualified tourist guide takes a great deal of commitment. The STGA has guides at white, green and blue badge levels. A white badge is for a fixed route tour, usually around a historic building or site; a green badge enables you to lead a range of walking tours around a town or city; and the blue badge is a regional qualification covering a large geographical area and with added skills in coach guiding. Most guides at level one and two are volunteer guides and are driven by a desire to tell the history of their home town or local heritage site. For blue badge guides, this is generally their career.

The STGA was founded back in 1976 and is one of the earliest tourist guiding associations in the country to be trained in what was then a new national qualification. To train at green badge level takes around a year of study and practical training, after having a successful interview to join the course. The STGA has been fortunate over the years to have successfully attracted sponsorship to cover training which otherwise can cost around £1,000 per person for a green badge. The association also oversees the process of getting courses accredited by the Institute of Tourist Guiding, which assesses guides' training and gives out the badges.

The first few months of training are in the classroom with weekly lectures on the history of Southampton, plus specialist talks on architecture and on key themes such as literature, religion, monuments etc. There is a lot of private study, reading and learning how to undertake research, plus visits to museums, archives and libraries. There are quizzes and homework, which also helps prepare for upcoming exams.

The course then moves on to communications skills, how to be effective speakers, planning, structure and timing of commentaries, developing a personal style – as well as enjoying oneself. The students think about body language, tone of voice and content. Learning information is often the easy bit, deciding how to use it the hard part, knowing how much visitors need to be told – distinguishing between must tell, should tell and could tell.



Jo Wren leading a group of tourists at Southampton's West Gate.

After practice in the classroom, it is time to go out on the route and to put things into action with the added logistics to be considered: never walk while talking; pay attention to the welfare of everyone in your group; position yourself to be heard; keep it short and simple but not underestimating your audience's intelligence or overestimating their previous knowledge; think about how to relate a person to a period and a date to a relevant event; and how to deal with questions. After that it's practice, practice, practice.

Then it is exam time, firstly a written exam of hundred or so questions with short answers and three questions requiring longer answers. This is followed by a practical exam. Finally, students have to produce a project, researching a new walk linked to one of three themes. Students have to successfully complete all three strands to achieve the coveted green badge. After qualifying, guides will lead a variety of walks. Most towns will have key 'bread and butter' walks but in any given year there will also be special interest walks, linked to special events, anniversaries or festivals.

So, if you are going on a visit do look out for guides with the blue and green badges and if there are local history events happening in your area, reach out to your local guide association to see how they can contribute. Guides often do talks as well as walks, and some will have blue badges and can take coach tours. If you volunteer at local heritage site, church or similar institution, trainers are always happy to do workshops for staff and volunteers to improve communication skills – and you can get a national qualification as a bonus.

Cheryl Butler is a Southampton tourist guide, a founder member of The Sarah Siddons Fan Club Theatre Company (see LHN150) and is a BALH Outreach Team member. She read History & Drama at Winchester before going on to complete a PhD in history and is an associate of the New Era Academy.

All About That Place 2024

Are you passionate about the importance of family and local history? Can you help others to 'put their ancestors in their place', so that they can better investigate and understand lives in the past?

All About That Place (AATP) is back, and once again the organisers are calling on speakers to help them deliver a ground-breaking, unique event by providing ten-minute talks on a wide variety of subjects.

Last year the Society of Genealogists piloted a free virtual challenge event celebrating one-place studies. Delivered in collaboration with the British Association for Local History, the Society for One-Place Studies and Genealogy Stories, it combined bite-sized talks with an electronic workbook packed with tasks and activities. At its core was an ethos of collaboration, interaction, and participant engagement.

Running for 10 days across Facebook and YouTube, the previous event encompassed 93 speakers and 130 ten-minute talks. It garnered large audiences, gaining 28,900 video views on YouTube alone.

The organisers have absorbed invaluable feedback from speakers, sponsors and participants and are now looking for



contributions for the 2024 event – which will run online from 27 September to 6 October. This year they are able to offer speakers a £30 payment per talk (available upon request).

For more information on the event, including the daily themes and how to submit your talk ideas please express your interest here: www.subscribepage.com/speakers

The AATP team is also looking for sponsors. Is your organisation passionate about the importance of family and local history? Are you looking to grow your audience, and engage with potential new customers? Do you want to share and celebrate your commitment to helping others engage and explore the past?

A PDF sponsorship information pack is available via www.balh.org.uk/QRG186

Making good use of Twitter/X

Sharon O'Connor

Social media gets a lot of criticism, much of it justified, but it can also be a tool for good: a way for like-minded people to connect and share common interests. That's why we started a local history Twitter account for the Dulwich Society local history group, even though we knew little about social media at the time. (Twitter has since changed its name to X.)

The easy part is setting up an account. Go to twitter.com/signup and click the 'Create account' button. You'll be guided through the steps and prompted to enter your name and phone number or email address. Then you choose a 'handle' (that's your username): we are @DulwichHistory. That's it! The harder part is deciding what to tweet and how to interact with other Twitter users. A BALH workshop on social media was invaluable here – it really did tell us everything we needed to know but here is what we found useful.

Choose a photo of your area to put in your profile and add a link to your website if you have one. We learnt that it's a good idea to start following similar accounts straight away (search for the name of organisations you know). Hopefully they will follow you back and then people will start 'seeing' you. We already knew about hashtags – the way you put # in front of a keyword to make it easier for like-minded people to find you – but we found it's a good idea to only use two or three as too many are off-putting. We use #Dulwich of course but also #LocalHistory.

It's really easy to tweet: there's a box at the top of your account that says 'What is happening?'. Start typing in there – introduce your group – and press return and you've made your first tweet. As you would expect, we post facts about our local history, anything from a Dulwich anniversary, then-and-now images of a road, to a clip from an old film that used a Dulwich location. We also publicise our local history events. Images are helpful and on Twitter they don't have to be high quality (as they do on Instagram for example) so your old postcards and so on are perfect. It's easy to forget that most people in your area won't have seen the old images that you as a local history buff take for granted, or know what was in your area in the past. During lockdown we found that younger people were especially interested to learn about the place where they were now spending so much time, and that has persisted as many people work from home at least part of the time.



Most of our followers are happy to simply read a tweet, others contribute further information or ask us questions. For example, a photo of a Dulwich boundary stone prompted questions about the location of other markers and led to us learning about more and making a map of surviving ones. Tweets about the history of a local factory, now a business centre, led to them hanging vintage photos in their offices and cafe.

We now have around 3,700 followers and receive up to 100,000 'impressions' per month. This does not mean 100,000 people are interacting with us but it is a measure of our reach. In turn, we follow local accounts such as schools and other amenity groups and we retweet if they have things of interest to our followers. We also regularly direct people to our website where they can find articles, historical maps etc. It's a good symbiotic relationship and means we reach people beyond our membership, spreading the #LocalHistory word!

Our Twitter feed of local history snippets connects people with widely disparate interests: the man in Texas who is interested in WW2 and is a fan of our WW2 plaques commemorating Dulwich's civilian deaths; the woman whose family emigrated to Australia but who is still interested in the corner of East Dulwich where she was born; and the tram enthusiast who has helped us date local photos due to his encyclopaedic knowledge of trams. Come and join the conversation: @DulwichHistory

Sharon has been a member of the Dulwich Society local history group (www.dulwichsociety.com/local-history) since 2004. Now retired, she was assistant archivist at Dulwich College. BALH is on Twitter/X: @BALHNews

Derbyshire uprising inspires musicians' album

Kevin Quinlan

On Friday 7 November 1817 three men stood on the scaffold outside Derby Gaol. They had been convicted of high treason and sentenced to be hanged, drawn and quartered and then beheaded (the quartering was remitted as an act of mercy by the Prince Regent). The drop fell at quarter to one. After half an hour the bodies were taken down and the heads cut off and shown to the strangely silent crowd.

The three men were Jeremiah Brandreth, Isaac Ludlum and William Turner. Their crime was to have led an armed rebellion against the government.

The revolt began on 9 June 1817 when a band of around 300 men from Pentrich and other Derbyshire villages set out to march to Nottingham. They had been tricked by a government spy into believing they were taking part in a national uprising against a government that was doing nothing to help relieve the widespread poverty in the country. Before the marchers reached Nottingham they were met by a troop of dragoons who put them to flight and the 'revolution' was over in just one night.

The uprising was the last armed rebellion against the government to take place in this country. It had no chance of success and was easily suppressed. However, the government was aware of serious unrest in the country and decided to make an example of the marchers. As well as the three men executed, 14 men were transported to Australia and others received various terms of imprisonment.



The background to the unrest was the extensive and increasing poverty resulting from spiralling unemployment with workers being replaced by machinery. Soldiers and sailors returning from the Napoleonic Wars added to the unemployment crisis. The Tambora volcanic eruption in 1815 caused dramatic global climate changes resulting in failed harvests for two years in England (1816 was known as 'the year without a summer'). The high cost of food was made worse for the poorest in society as the Corn Laws kept the price of bread artificially high.

Ordinary people had no political representation in parliament and political meetings and protests were severely constrained by law. There was genuine concern about the possibility of insurrection, which led to the employment of spies by the government. At a time when there no police forces to deal with public unrest, the military were deployed to deal with potential disturbances.

Two hundred years on, The Amber Band, a folk group from Derbyshire, came across the story of the revolution while exploring the county's history for tales that might be put into song. They found the website of the Pentrich and South Wingfield Revolution Group (PSWRG) maintained by a group of local historians. The website has a detailed account of the uprising including copies of many original documents; see pentrichrevolution.org.uk. The PSWRG Facebook page also has lots of useful information. England's Last Revolution: Pentrich 1817 by John Stevens (Moorland Publishing, 1977) was an excellent source of information too.

The band were surprised to find that the uprising appears to have been largely forgotten, even in Derbyshire. They felt it was important to tell the story of the unfortunate men involved as the rebellion is a significant piece of Derbyshire's history and deserved to be remembered.

It was clear that the story of the revolution could only be properly covered in a complete album of songs. The characters involved in the tragic tale paint a poignant picture of the impact of the uprising on their lives. Their stories are covered in 11 songs on The Amber Band's recently released album, *The Pentrich Revolution*. The album is available on all major streaming channels and proceeds will be donated to the PSWRG to help fund their ongoing research. theamberband.co.uk

A trip down memory lane: scanning a society's journal archive

Val Harrison

I've been a committee member of the **Cleveland and Teesside Local History Society** for over 15 years, and was editor of our journal, *Cleveland History*, for around a decade. The subject of making all editions of *Cleveland History* available to our members in an electronic format came up occasionally, but there always seemed to be obstacles in the way – no one with any time, no equipment and no one with the expertise.

However, our stars aligned last September when my granny day care commitments dropped from three days down to two, and I was determined not to waste my spare day. Also, Matt, our technical wizard, was willing to pitch in and do the complicated stuff at his end.

So for around three months last autumn you would find me on a Tuesday morning at Teesside Archives, scanning 55 years' worth of local history publications. Once I'd worked out some of the technical details, it was a very pleasurable experience, sitting in a warm, friendly county archive search room, using their brilliant book scanner.

Our society was set up in 1968, when I was six years old, and as I scanned, I would come across editions that were printed in the years of landmarks in my life – the years I was married, when I had my children etc.

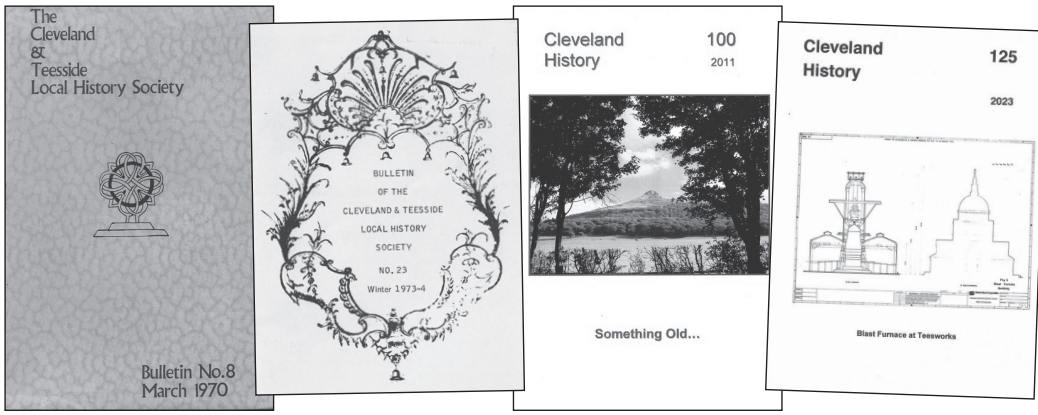
When I reached 1973 I thought, 'This is when I started secondary school and met my history teacher for the first time.' That may seem a bit random, but that history teacher was one of the people who fostered my love of local history back then – and who has been involved with our society since its formation, and is now our chairman.

As I scanned, I came across names of people I'd met, partly through the society, but others too. For example, my best friend's father who always seemed – to the teenaged me – to be bit of a mad professor, but turned out to be a much loved and respected amateur archaeologist! Come to think of it, I do remember being taken around the Yorkshire countryside in the 1970s and being shown quern stones and cruck-built houses…

But all that personal stuff aside, it's been an incredibly gratifying job to do. I scanned each page (for the earlier foolscap format) or double-page spread (for the newer A5 size),

Good/bad ideas to borrow…?

As well as *Cleveland History*, Cleveland and Teesside LHS also publishes a regular *Newsletter*. The February 2024 edition includes 'The good things and bad things challenge'. The *Newsletter* reports that in 1930, barrister and MP Sir Alfred Hopkinson published a memoir, *Penultima*, in which he opined about things that had changed in his lifetime, under the three headings of 'New and good things', 'New and bad things' and 'Bad things that have disappeared' (his great-great-granddaughter shared this with the Society). His first list included items such as electric lighting, improved sanitation, the National Trust and, er, short skirts; the second, 'four shillings income tax', Cubists, Oxford bags and 'ugly new roads'; the last, bed curtains, black kid gloves for men and 'materialistic dogmatism' (that last one might be back with us…). The CTLHS team have come up with some of their own such entries for today: in the first list, for example, the Internet Archive and the Head of Steam museum in Darlington; in the second, Redcar's Vertical Pier and 'refusing to accept cheques'; in the third, 'the brown haze over Teesside'. Dare you invite your own local history society members to try a similar endeavour?



and at the simple click of a mouse saved it as a PDF and continued scanning until I had completed one booklet, then saved it under the number and year of the edition. I then sent it via email drop box to Matt and he uploaded it to our society's website (ctlhs.co.uk).

Matt told me that the difficulty he had was restricting the content to our paid-up members – however, there are options available as part of our software (Wordpress) which has enabled him to do that. Each of our members has been given a login name and a password, and this password will change each year – after all, we need to keep getting our subs in if we are to continue producing a hard copy of *Cleveland History* for our members.

Currently, the contents list can be searched via the member's own computer's search function – once they have found the article they want to look at they can search within it, again using the same method. However, Matt's intention is to have the whole of the content searchable in due course.

It's a start – and it was a privilege to look through an absolute wealth of resources, written by some amazing writers.

Val Harrison is the editor of Cleveland History – ctlhs.co.uk

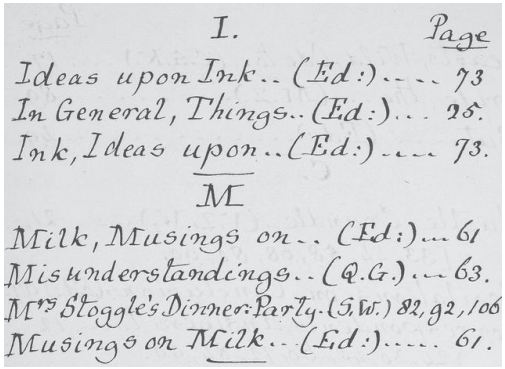
Creating an index for local history publications

Andrew Chapman

A common gripe among BALH's team of book reviewers is the lack of an index at the back of a publication – this applies to well-established publishers as much as (if not more than) small local groups. An index is a key component of any scholarly reference work, and can be invaluable for future local historians seeking information on a particular theme, place or individual. Of course, we all know that local history societies often face the challenge of producing informative and well-organised publications with limited resources. Also, compiling an index might be daunting, especially for those without expertise in current software tools.

There are different types of index, too. A full semantic index involves compiling a detailed list that covers all major elements and themes in the text, including concepts, names, places and specific events. Subsets of this are also possible: an index of proper nouns such as people's names and places (individual settlements, perhaps, or street names for a town) can still be useful, or there might be other kinds of selective index that are still useful or appropriate, whether listing research resources or something as specific as series numbers from The National Archives. Deciding on the type of index depends on the scope of the publication and the expected use by the readers, as well as the time (and perhaps money) available for compiling it.

The gold standard is manual indexing, which allows for nuanced understanding of context



I. Page

Ideas upon Ink.. (Ed:)..... 73
In General, Things.. (Ed:)... 25.
Ink, Ideas upon..(Ed:)..... 73.

M

Milk, Musings on.. (Ed:)... 61
Misunderstandings..(Q.G.)... 63.
Mrs Stoggle's Dinner-Party.(S.W.) 82, 92, 106
Musings on Milk..(Ed:)..... 61.

A whimsical index created by Lewis Carroll for his family's The Rectory Magazine when he was still a teenager

and gives more control over the entries, ensuring that they are relevant and not overly populated with incidental mentions. The downside is that it is time consuming and labour intensive, requiring meticulous attention to detail and a good understanding of the content. There are professionals available to help with this, via the Society of Indexers (www.indexers.org.uk) – from personal experience, their work is typically excellent and they generally suggest useful entries that the author or publisher might not even have considered (it is possible to provide them with a suggested starting point of key terms of 'seed' words too). But this will also be the most expensive option for a shoestring project – it can cost several hundred pounds, at least for a full-length book.

Automated indexing tools can significantly reduce the time and effort required to create an index. Several software solutions, such as CINDEX (Windows and Mac, www.scribendi.ai/cindex), Sky Index (Windows only, www.sky-software.com) and Macrex (Windows only, www.macrex.com), are tailored to handle complex indexing tasks and some of these are free. Tools of this kind can be fast and useful for handling large volumes of text, but may have a learning curve and lack any sensitivity to context (e.g. distinguishing between major and passing references to a topic).

For many local history societies, using the built-in tools in Microsoft Word might be sufficient. You can use the 'Mark Entry' feature on the References tab in the ribbon to manually select index entries as you go through your document. This method is straightforward but requires manual input. A sidebar will pop up, allowing you to edit the entry. You can specify whether the page number should appear as a range or a specific page. In the Mark Index Entry dialogue box, you can also add subentries under a main entry or create cross-references, such as 'See also' for related topics. Once all entries are marked, place your cursor where you want the index to appear, usually at the end of the document. Go back to the References tab and select Insert Index. You can then choose the format and layout of your index.

Professional publications are often produced with Adobe InDesign (which requires a monthly subscription). This too offers manual and automated index tagging that can handle complex document layouts and is ideal for final publication stages. There are many helpful YouTube videos and online tutorials for using Word or InDesign to create your index.

Regardless of the system used to produce your publication, most processes will result in a PDF which is either distributed digitally or sent to a printer – another software tool, PDF Index Generator (Mac/Windows/Linux, pdfindexgenerator.com) can helpfully compile an index from an existing PDF. Remember, of course, that if you want your index to be included in the final publication, your publishing workflow will need to allow for extra pages to accommodate it, suitable formatting and then proofreading (or at least spot checking) the output.

Indexing becomes complex when dealing with variations in names or terms that refer to the same concept or person. For example, 'Shovell', 'Cloudesley Shovell', 'Sir Cloudesley' and 'Admiral Shovell' might all refer to the same individual. The key to resolving these issues is to establish a standard form for names and terms and consistently refer back to it. Cross-references can also be employed to guide readers from used variations to the standard form in the index.

The decision between a manual and automated or semi-automated approach will depend on your society's resources, the complexity of the work and the desired quality of the index. Regardless of the method chosen, the goal remains the same: to enhance the reader's experience and the usefulness of the publication.

For an entertaining survey of indexing through history, see Dennis Duncan's Index, A History of the: A Bookish Adventure from Medieval Manuscripts to the Digital Age *(W.W. Norton, 2022) and some of his research material can be explored at https://indexhistory.wordpress.com*

BALH responds to government wills consultation

In LHN150 we reported on the Ministry of Justice's consultation on the storage and retention of original wills from 1858 onwards – the government is proposing to move these records of the Principle Probate Registry to becoming digital only, saving an estimated £4.5m a year.

The Trustees of BALH issued a formal response to the consultation in February, extracts of which are given in the box below.

At the time of writing, a petition against the proposals (open at https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/654081 until 9 July) had gained more than 15,000 signatures. The government issued a first response to this on 1 March, stating: 'Possible reforms to the storage and preservation of wills are being consulted on, no decisions have been taken as yet, and a response will be published later this year.'

Other interested parties have been quick to express their concerns and objections, too. The Association of Genealogists and Researchers in Archives (AGRA) said: 'If the originals are destroyed, that data is lost forever. While AGRA welcomes digitisation as an alternative means of access, it is not a replacement for original documents.' AGRA went on to describe the proposals as 'equivalent to an act of cultural vandalism'.

The Family History Federation urged its members to respond to the consultation (now closed) on the grounds that 'members of the public interested in family, local and social history' were being neglected by the consultation process. Concerns, and support for retaining original wills, were also voiced by the Archives & Records Association.

In essence, BALH finds this proposal to be very much against not only the interests of historians but also the wider, historically interested, public. We understand this consultation document to be primarily aimed at the legal profession and concerned with short-term access relating to the contestation of wills, with the requirements of the public, historians and other interested parties an apparent afterthought. From our experience of working with original documents specifically, and of digitised documents generally, we believe these proposed changes are unlikely to deliver safe and efficient long-term storage, or reduced costs, and may compromise access in the medium to long term. The proposal is ill-informed, lacks substance to support its arguments and is, at points, misleading. To take three examples. Firstly, there are numerous other instances of the mass preservation of documents, most strikingly pre-1858 wills, with which there is not an informed comparison. Secondly, the desired economic benefit, cited as the main reason for this change, is not properly explored in the document, which also lacks proper costing. And, thirdly, while the executive summary notes a possible environmental benefit, the main body of the proposal has no mention of environmental concerns around digitisation and digital preservation, while there is in fact a net environmental cost to digitisation and storage.

We ask the Ministry of Justice, as temporary custodians of these documents, to consider the enduring benefit of preserving the originals to ensure legal accountability and access for the public and historians of all levels of interest and experience long into the future. The principle of mass digitisation (and, therefore, of creating digital surrogates for access in order to reduce handling of original paper records) is one we firmly support, but emphasise that this must be alongside long-term, professional archival preservation and the opportunity to consult the original documents. Digital copies are not directly equitable substitutes and also carry a risk of loss. For the wider present-day public, this proposed cost-saving exercise in the interests of taxpayers is not clearly evidenced in the consultation, but in our view there is minimal likely benefit. We question whether the proposed changes, and the process to enact them, would be the best use of government time and resources. It would also compromise the capacity of individuals and communities to experience the power of original records and the intellectual, sensory and emotional impacts that can have.

Letters to the editor

Send your letters to: editor.lhn@balh.org.uk

*We are grateful for various responses to the enquiry from **Cottingley Village History Society** in 'Ask BALH' (LHN150) about funding society publications. Here is an edited selection.*

I read with interest the article about Cottingley Village History Society funding the printing of a book on the history of the village. I don't know much about the village other than it being on the outskirts of Bingley. Does it have a parish council?

For our local village walks and history leaflets we have received financial support from our parish council, together with district and county councils. Our local district council also has a heritage and arts officer.

If they intend to sell the booklet, would not a couple of members consider making a pump priming loan to the society and be paid back from book sales?

*Mike Howkins, treasurer, **Cosby Heritage Society***

I've done a quick Google search for 'Cottingley community grant' and it's returned a few options you may wish to follow especially Bingley Town Council (bingleytowncouncil.gov.uk/information-on-grants-for-voluntary-and-community-groups/).

In 2018, **Pensford Local History Group** (PLHG) received a full grant from our local Pensford Publow and the Stantons Community Trust (PPSCT) to produce three different walk booklets. Later that same year, we produced what we call a flood book (official title is *We Remember It Well: Stories of the Great Flood of 1968 from Pensford, Publow and Woollard*) and again, this was supported by the PPSCT but, this time, we requested a loan to cover the cost of printing. The agreement was to repay the loan within 12 months but we actually repaid it in full six weeks after launch as our sales did so well. The PPSCT had never previously 'loaned' money before and it's set a great precedent not just for the PLHG but for consideration for other organisations seeking funding.

We are midway through another book and our plan is again to request a loan but, because of the subject of the book, we may get a grant to match an amount we raise via fundraising; otherwise it'll be a loan again. We have made enquiries for a print-on-demand service but they charge hundreds of pounds before you even start! They offer proofreading, layout, etc, but we are confident in our own ability to do this ourselves and therefore feel we can save a lot of money. Also, approach a local printer as the PLHG has done as they generally can offer a good price for keeping things in the community.

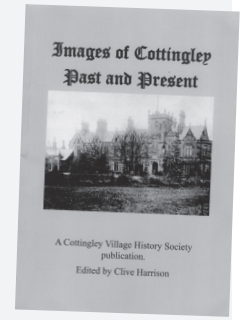
Lyndsay Cooper

***Editor's note:** the 'print-on-demand service' Lyndsay refers to here would be a full publishing services company, which is distinct from using a DIY print-on-demand platform like those mentioned in the original 'Ask BALH' item – these typically have zero or very low upfront costs. By all means email editor.lhn@balh.org.uk if you need advice.*

Another option is to invite upfront payment from 'subscribers', who will then have their name listed and receive a copy on publication. According to circumstances, the advance price can be set at the cover price, at a higher figure if there is a core group of members keen to support the project or at a lower figure as an incentive. Advance subscriptions can also help to judge the print run and the cover price – given printing economics, there's usually a virtuous circle between a larger run and a lower unit cost.

*David Griffiths, publications secretary, **Huddersfield Local History Society***

It appears some of the Cottingley group's challenges have been resolved – we are grateful to have received a copy of this new publication:



***Images of Cottingley Past and Present* edited by Clive Harrison (Cottingley Village History Society 2024 56pp no ISBN) £5 + p&p from martinholdsworth2@googlemail.com**

News round-up

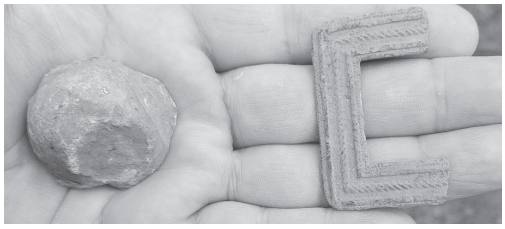
With thanks to Nell Darby, Fabian Hiscock, Mary McKenzie, Gary Monger, Nigel Tringham, Mark Wigmore

BALH Publishing Committee member Nigel Tringham reports his concern that his county council, Staffordshire, has cancelled its subscription to the Oxford Reference collection of online resources provided by Oxford University Press – meaning that library users no longer have free access to resources such as the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* and the *OED*. Access was apparently cancelled due to security concerns, although other councils and organisations such as the Society of Antiquaries and the London Library still offer access. Has your local council stopped access to Oxford online resources? Please let us know, via editor.lhn@balh.org.uk

A variety of heritage organisations in **Dumfries & Galloway** are in the midst of a five-month celebration of the 750th anniversary of the birth of Robert the Bruce. A breakdown of events, which run until mid-July, can be found via brucetrust.co.uk/750

Gahan and Long Archaeological Services from Belfast has discovered the bones of 146 people close to the site of the 14th-century Woodburn Abbey, a Premonstratensian institution in **County Antrim**. Analysis is under way.

A significant moat has been excavated from the Norman-era site of Cowfield Farm near **Tewkesbury**, two miles from the town's abbey. Finds include a pilgrim badge and the clasp from a medieval leather-bound book. Details of the site will be stored at Tewkesbury Museum.



The National Trust for Scotland has found a shoe buckle at the site of the Battle of Culloden, and has suggested that it may have belonged to clan chief Donald Cameron of Lochiel. Grapeshot was found at the same spot, which tallies with the known cause of his death.



*A post-medieval township site has been discovered in Glen Brittle Forest on **Skye** during environmental surveys. Archaeologists have identified traces of 28 agricultural and domestic buildings; 19th-century maps suggest this was the 17th/18th-century settlement of Brunell. Picture: Forestry and Land Scotland.*

A new 'purple plaque' has been unveiled in **Fishguard** to commemorate the bravery of cobbler Jemima Nicholas, who confronted the small invading force at the 'Battle of Fishguard' in 1797.

Archaeology South-East has found traces of the Saxon town of Lundenwic beneath the Sainsbury Wing of the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square, suggesting **Saxon London** extended further westward than previously thought.

The Lord Mayor of Leeds, Al Garthwaite, has unveiled a series of information boards forming a heritage trail in Cross Flatts Park, **Beeston**. The trail showcases local history, including the story of local hotelier and benefactor Thomas Watson.

The Welsh national folk arts body, Trac Cymru, is running a three-year music project, 'Cân y Cymoedd – When Valleys Sing', to help connect communities in **Rhondda Cynon Taf and Neath Port Talbot** with their local history, in this case through song. The project has begun with weekly community sessions at Ynysboeth in the Cynon Valley.

SOCIETIES



The first West London Local History Conference since 2019 was held in Richmond in April, on the theme 'By Hand and Eye, looking at the Arts and Crafts Movement. The event was organised by 10 local and family history societies, with speakers from **Hounslow & District History Society**, **Richmond Local History Society** and **Brentford & Chiswick LHS**.

Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society held its annual conference at the Friends Meeting House in Manchester on 11 May, highlighting new research in local history, family history and archaeology in the north-west of England. Topics for talks included business families in Chester and Manchester and medieval ironworking in Holcombe Valley.

The **West of England and South Wales Women's History Network** will hold its 31st annual conference on 'Women and Fashion: A Historical Perspective' on 12 October at Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution. They keynote speaker will be Dr Serena Dyer from De Montfort University. Proposals for papers of up to 20 minutes in length are invited by 24 May (weswwomenshistorynetwork.co.uk).

Ardingly History Society in West Sussex is celebrating its 25th anniversary – it was formed in 1999 by a keen local group, building on previous research by Mary Holgate and others dating back to the 1920s. A substantial archive of documents has been accumulated over the years, which is being made public gradually via the society's new website (ardinglyhistory.org.uk).

The **London and Middlesex Archaeological Society** (LAMAS) Local History Conference this year will take place on Saturday 16 November at the Museum of London Docklands on the theme 'Fashion, Clothing and Textiles in London History'. The closing date for proposals (to j.price@gold.ac.uk) is 31 May.

A short analysis of burial registers by Steve Dewhirst in **Broseley Local History Society**'s *Newsletter* reveals that over half the burials in 1865 were of under 10s, 22 of whom did not reach their first birthday. Average life expectancy was 23 including infant mortality, but 55 for those who reached the age of 20.

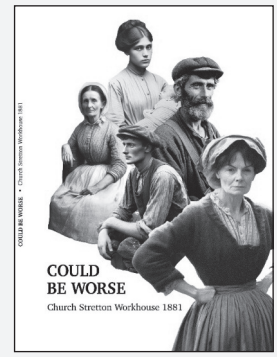
John Sheaf (see LHN148/149) reports in the **Borough of Twickenham LHS** *Newsletter* on an amusing exchange between local councillors in 1899, reported in the Richmond Herald, over what to call a new street. After considering Duke Street, Queen Street, King Street, King William IV Street (and, jokingly, Bill Street) among others, York Street eventually won.

Rutland Local History & Record Society's *Newsletter* reports on the Rutland Parish Boundary Project, an ambitious scheme to physically investigate every parish boundary in the county, recording its state using photographs, maps and written reports and comparing with historical evidence, including parish boundary remarks books held at The National Archives. Great progress has been made for a dozen parishes, with five already

Good ideas to borrow…

Cheltenham Local History Society has returned to its pre-Covid custom of holding a members' research event, most recently in April. The group is keen to use these to 'encourage members to contribute ad share their knowledge and interests more widely' – it has also been suggested that a few minutes could be devoted at the start of each meeting for similar sharing of requests and interesting discoveries. The society has also taken on the Cheltenham South Town project on local trading history – see www.cheltenhamsouthtown.org.

A Shropshire workhouse studied



In LHN143 (Spring 2022), **Church Stretton Area Local History Group** (CSALHG) explained the origin of its Workhouse Research Project. This project has now come to fruition with the publication of a book and the production of an exhibition.

On 3 April 1881, 86 people were recorded in the census at Church Stretton Workhouse. They included 71 residents, aged between one month and 85 years; 12 vagrants lodging for the night; and three members of staff. The book examines the lives of all these people. The group wanted to shed light on these forgotten individuals. Who were they? Why were they there? What happened to them afterwards?

The lives examined include William Cox – aka Billy The Sweep – who claimed to have swept every chimney from Bishop's Castle to Church Stretton; the young boy taken out of the workhouse by the benevolent employer of his sister, who took them both with his own family for a new life in Australia; and the story of Charlotte Yapp, who spent 80 years in the workhouse until she died aged 91.

CSALHG took an innovative approach by using artificial intelligence software to generate illustrations of the people they researched, given that no actual photographs of them appear to have survived.

Details of all the research which resulted in the book will be deposited at Shropshire Archives in Shrewsbury, and are available at www.churchstrettonhistory.com, along with information on exhibition venues. The book, priced at £5, plus £3 for UK postage and packing, is available by contacting strettonworkhouse@gmail.com, or phone 07721 865895.

completed. Most boundaries have so far been found to be well preserved, although modern developments pose new threats.



*The Winter 2024 Newsletter of **The History of Reading Society** carries an interesting piece by Jo Alexander-Jones delving into the history of the town's first steam laundry, in Liverpool Road. By 1905 the laundry had established a network of four 'receiving offices', with careful records taken to keep track of customers' smalls.*

Bristol Record Society has created a new section on its website, called 'Stories… from the Archives'. This will feature short articles about the city's history based on archival finds in order to show how historians make discoveries and to highlight the important of records and archives to historical research. These stories will be in a less formal style than traditional academic articles and will concentrate more on the investigative process. The first story is about Bewell's Cross, a lost boundary marker that once stood at the top of St Michael's Hill at the site of Bristol's gallows until 1820.

Cumbria Local History Federation's AGM and Annual Convention will be held on Saturday 12 October – see www.clhf.org.uk/events-diary for more details in due course.

Oxfordshire Architectural & Historical Society's annual Oxfordshire Past event will be held at the John Paul II Centre in Bicester on Saturday 15 June in partnership with Bicester Local History Society (BLHS). Details: oahs.org.uk/oxpast.php

Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society is celebrating its 175th anniversary this year. Its e-bulletin reports that 350 people attended the inaugural meeting at Taunton on 26 September 1849. The anniversary was marked at the AGM in May.

The **Family History Federation** celebrated its 50th anniversary at Wesley's Chapel in London on 11 May, with speakers including Janet Few and Nick Barratt and a guided tour of Bunhill Fields burial ground.

ARCHIVES



Local history workshops this summer and autumn at **Wirral Archives Service** include a three-part History of the Wirral (4 Jul, 5 Sep and 7 Nov); other talks will cover Birkenhead Park (8 Aug), Port Sunlight between the Wars (3 Oct) and canal boat families (5 Dec). Bookings via archives@wirral.gov.uk

Lambeth Archives, formerly based at the Minet Library, is now at a new site in Brixton Hill, benefiting from space for exhibitions as well as a search room and meeting spaces. Southwark and Lambeth Archaeological Society reports that two of its former presidents, John Newman and Len Reilly, helped to organise the move.



*The Story, the long-awaited new facility for **County Durham**'s archives, has now been scheduled to reopen from Friday 14 June. The Story will be housed in the recently restored Grade II-listed Mount Oswald manor house, which has been extended to incorporate a purpose-built archive facility and bring together five different historic collections for the first time. More than 15,000 items covering 900 years of local history have been moved to the new building.*

West Sussex Record Office in Chichester has revised its search room opening hours to Tue–Fri, 9.15am to 4.45pm after a review process. Its annual conference (details tbc) will take place on 28 September.

The **Community Archives and Heritage Group** (CAHG) is expanding its map of community archives within the UK and Ireland (www.communityarchives.org.uk/interactive-map), and is looking for more organisations to be included. Registration is free and an online form can be used to add your organisation.

The **Centre for Midlands History and Cultures** (CMHC) is holding its annual conference at Winterbourne House at the University of Birmingham on Saturday 20 July. The theme is 'Landscape and green spaces in the Midlands: new directions in garden history' and the keynote speaker will be Dr Clare Hickman from Newcastle University. Details via www.balh.org.uk/WQG188

As a reminder that history is always being made, **East Riding Archives** has an online exhibition called 'Collecting Covid-19', presenting local experiences of the pandemic, including the challenges faced by the archive itself: www.eastridingarchives.co.uk/archives-online/collecting-covid-19/

Farming 'Domesday' survey

The National Archives is digitising 300,000 records from the 1941 National Farm Survey of England and Wales (MAF 32 and 73), one of its most requested collections. TNA says this project, funded by £2.1m from Lund Trust, 'will not only make the survey permanently and freely available, but will also improve its accessibility and searchability'. The project is expected to be completed in March 2027 but the first images will be released later this year. TNA has also announced its new chief executive and 'keeper', Saul Nassé, who will take up the post at the end of July.



Detail of a 'Lend a hand on the land' poster from the Ministry of Agriculture from World War Two. (TNA)



The independent **Museum of Carpet** in Kidderminster reports that it is in serious need of long-term sustainable funding due to rising energy prices. Its collections include more than 30,000 designs, patterns and objects.

The Friends of **Wisbech & Fenland Museum** have published the last two volumes in their series *Wisbech Inns, Taverns and Beer-Houses: Past and Present*, with author Andy Ketley receiving a silver award from the British Guild of Beer Writers. The group is also hosting the British Association of Friends of Museums 2024 Annual Conference in October on the theme of how friends groups can support museums faced by financial challenges. As a result of the withdrawal of grants by local councils, Wisbech & Fenland Museum has imposed a £5 annual adult season ticket.

This year sees the 50th anniversary of the establishment of many of today's local authorities under the Local Government Act 1972. **Three Rivers Museum** in Rickmansworth is working on a project to mark this by telling the thousand-year story of Three Rivers district in 50 pieces of bunting. Each is being sewn by a museum volunteer, and will be interpreted by an entry in a booklet.

With key **Welsh heritage bodies**, including the National Library of Wales, Amgueddfa Cymru (the seven national museums) and the Royal Commission, facing budget cuts of between 10 and 22 per cent, a petition has been launched to call for increased funding. Over 12,000 people have signed (petitions.senedd.wales/petitions/246088, open until August), meaning it will be considered for debate in the Senedd.

The **Scottish Crannog Centre** in Perthshire, a museum of the Iron Age showcasing Pictish culture, has reopened, three years after its replica roundhouses were destroyed by fire. The site features seven buildings built using traditional skills.

The National Lottery's **Heritage Fund** has earmarked £14.8m for projects relating to the history of innovation, transport and industry. They include a redevelopment of the National Slate Museum in Wales (Amgueddfa Lechi Cymru), Glasgow's Pipe Factory and Scilly's Old Town Hall.

A new exhibition at **Lydiard House Museum** near Swindon explores the contribution of black people to the world wars in Wiltshire. Many African American troops were stationed at Lydiard Park during WW2.

The **People's Palace** in Glasgow, showcasing the city's social history, closed on 14 April for a major refurbishment of the museum and the Winter Gardens glasshouse. A 'last chance to see' exhibition is now on; the work is expected to take 16 months.

Britain's only museum dedicated to the hat-making industry, the **Hat Works Museum** in Stockport, has reopened after a four-year redevelopment project. Working Victorian machinery can be seen, along with more than 1000 new objects.

Blackpool's first museum has now opened – **Showtown** celebrates the town's rich history as a seaside resort, with six galleries exploring its social history and more than a century of popular entertainment.

Haverfordwest Town Museum has opened a pop-up museum in the town centre while the castle premises is closed for redevelopment. The temporary site, in the Riverside Shopping Centre, is likely to run until 2027, featuring regular and changing displays.

A map survey by the **National Trust** has revealed that of 912,000 place and street names studied across England and Wales, 6 per cent are associated with orchards, fruit, woods and blossom – compared to only 3 per cent of names in 1900. In the same period, there has been a loss of 56 per cent of orchards alone. 'Fifty-two per cent of current place names with the word "orchard" in them are within 500 metres of an orchard that has been lost since 1900,' said Professor Matthew Heard.

The **Museum of London** reports that its team is now halfway through moving its collection of more than 10,000 objects to its new premises in Smithfield. The new London Museum is due to open in 2026.

An exhibition at **St Fagans National Museum of History** in Cardiff tells the story of the Women's Peace Petition from 1924 (see LHN150), and the wider history of women's activism. It runs until 15 September

Website news

TheGazette.co.uk is looking for members of genealogy and other history societies to write articles relating to research or 'significant historical moments' with relevance to notices in *The Gazette*. Contact david.saunders@williamslea.com for more information.

Findmypast.co.uk has added an archive of *Country Life* magazine dating from 1897 to 2009 to its collections (subscription required). Articles can be searched by name, location and keywords. The site has also added Women's Land Army Service Cards 1939–50 plus Poor Law lists and mental health institution registers from Scotland.

TheGenealogist.co.uk has connected its 1861 census records to the Map Explorer tool, added more than 120,000 Worcestershire parish records and released more than 10 million new trade directory listings from the early 20th century.

Ancestry.co.uk has added parish maps for London 1860–80, Imperial Gazetteer maps 1890 and headstone indexes for Northern Ireland, 1658–2028.

The National Library of Scotland (maps.nls.uk) has added hand-coloured 1960s maps showing land use in Scotland and updated its LIDAR images for Wales.

What happens in an archaeology finds room? Find out (in the room at Lindisfarne) through a short online film at https://digventures.com/watch/explore-an-archaeology-finds-room-short-tour/ – the **DigVentures** site has many other short films explaining how archaeology is practised.

Ensuring a future for Weston's 'other' pier

Many visitors to Weston-super-Mare in Somerset are drawn to the town's Grand Pier, with its bright lights and arcade games. Fewer, though, head out of town to its other pier – **Birnbeck Pier**, which dates back, in its original incarnation, to the 1860s. In the Edwardian era, it was a popular place to go, home to a water chute, roller-skating rink, Bioscope theatre and other attractions.

Could it become a popular attraction again? North Somerset Council (NSC) issued a compulsory purchase order for the derelict pier back in 2020, and was able to take back ownership of it three years later. Now, the Birnbeck Regeneration Trust is working with NSC to develop the site, which was used by the RNLI until 2014. The Trust aims to manage the site as a working charity, generating funds to maintain the buildings for the benefit of future generations. It is hoped that in the future, life-saving operations from the island could also be restored.

An information centre is now located at the end of the path that leads to the pier, staffed by volunteers from the Birnbeck Regeneration Trust. There are information boards here detailing the history of the pier, and what the Trust hopes its future will be, along with books and other merchandise to help raise funds. It's well worth a visit, to learn more about how the pier site will be restored and regenerated. More information can also be found at www.birnbeckregenerationtrust.org.uk. *Nell Darby*

EDUCATION



The annual W.G. Hoskins lecture will take place on Saturday 1 June at the University of Leicester from 12 to 4pm. The keynote speaker will be Corinne Fowler, Professor of Colonialism and Heritage at the university, on the theme 'Landscape history after Hoskins: Country walks through colonial Britain'. Colin Hyde from the East Midlands Oral History Archive will speak on 'Walking through the past', looking at early 19th-century guided walking trails and Pam Fisher, county editor for the Victoria County History, will discuss 'Blue dogs, basketry, board games and bells: The VCH in the 21st century'. There will also be tours of special collections and the local history section of the David Wilson Library. Bookings via www.balh.org.uk/JKZ187

Leeds City Council and the University of Leeds, with support from the Paul Mellon Foundation, are organising an interdisciplinary conference on the theme 'Public houses: what makes civic custodianship of historic house museums in Britain different and where next?'. It will be held at Temple Newsam, Leeds on 9–10 October. The conference aims to bring together practitioners, scholars and policy makers to explore what it means to be a publicly owned and managed historic house museum in the 21st century, and what the future might hold.

A one-day symposium on 'Preserving local media – who cares?' will be held by the Media, Communication and Cultural Studies Association at Coventry University on Friday 7 June. It will bring together academics, publishers, archival practitioners and community representatives to explore the issues and possible solutions in relation to preserving local media archives.

BALH events report

BALH events this year have got off to a great start. Early March saw Professor Fiona Edmonds' rescheduled Dymond lecture on upland Northumbrian communities in medieval Britain – please look out for a paper based on the text of her talk in an edition of *The Local Historian* next year.

In the meantime, our third annual series of lectures in collaboration with the Historic Towns Trust (see LHN150) has been very successful.

On 28 March, James Winterbotham and Keith Wade provided an update on a forthcoming HTT map for Ipswich, which was one of England's wealthiest medieval towns. After James had set the scene for the project and how it has worked, Keith, an archaeologist with extensive experience in Ipswich, offered a detailed historical overview of the town, starting from its origins in the 7th century as a trading port and Frankish merchant settlement, expanding rapidly in the centuries that followed. It declined in the Norman era, although some remnants, including town defences, survive; the next major boom was in Victorian times after a wet dock was installed and the railway came, both in the 1840s.

The lecture featured many old maps, excavation plans and engravings to illustrate Ipswich's rich heritage that will be captured in the new map. Questions from the audience covered topics including materials used in old buildings, the Jewish community, the railway and potential additional areas to include on the map.

On 17 April, Dr Emily Robinson, reader in British Studies at the University of Sussex and an elected councillor of the Royal Historical Society, told the intriguing story of the island settlement of Ravenser Odd, which will be the subject of her next book. Ravenser Odd was a medieval town on a newly formed island in the 13th century at the mouth of the Humber, but it was soon destroyed by floods in the 1350s. Despite this brief existence, it flourished as a royal borough, a naval powerhouse, and a wealthy and ruthless commercial port. No physical evidence of the settlement remains, so its precise location has remained elusive, but scattered administrative documents and a single narrative account have helped researchers from the 19th century onwards to piece together its history. Emily also discussed how the town's lost history has fuelled contemporary creative engagement through novels, games, art and local folklore. A fascinated audience asked questions about the town's historical context, its connections with other medieval towns and the technical aspects of maritime archaeology that might explain more about its trade activities and sudden demise.

The final lecture in this series this year, on 23 April, turned to a very different subject: 'Mapping female-perpetrated murder in medieval towns'. This was aided by the HTT's celebrated online Medieval Murder Maps of 14th-century London, York and Oxford (medievalmurdermap.co.uk). Historian of crime and justice Dr Stephanie Brown showed how the maps' filters can be used to find the gendered differences in the presentation of medieval homicide. Discoveries from her research include that the most common tools of homicide were everyday items rather than weapons per se, and that historical perceptions of gender roles meant that women were often portrayed in accomplice roles rather than as primary perpetrators: women were almost twice as likely to be listed as co-suspects rather than sole perpetrators. Male violence tended to peak on Sundays, but this was not true where women were the criminals, carrying possible implications for their working and social patterns. Questions and comments from the audience considered the ages of victims, use of other record sources and potential changes in female criminality over time.

We look forward to future fruitful collaborations between BALH and HTT – keep an eye on updates here in *Local History News* and at www.balh.org.uk.



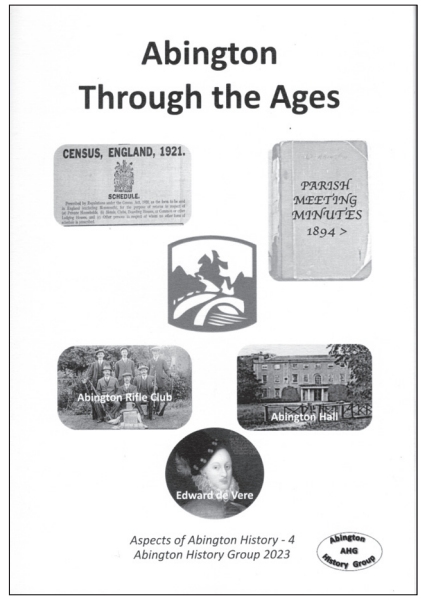
A scene from Anglo-Saxon Ipswich? One of Keith Wade's slides about the town's early history

Book reviews

Heather Falvey

Abington through the Ages **by the Abington History Group (Aspects of Abington History no. 4 2024 116pp no ISBN) £6 contact abingtonhistorygroup@gmail.com**

'Abington' comprises the villages of Great and Little Abington in south Cambridgeshire. The first two books on 'Aspects of Abington History', published in 2013 and 2015, comprised 19 chapters on various topics, ranging in time from Domesday to 1943, but mostly from the 19th and early 20th centuries. Number 3, published in 2017, was subtitled *Great and Little Abington 1900 to 1930 – A Time of Change*. Number 4, *Abington through the Ages*, is a collection of various papers and short articles that **Abington History Group** started working on during lockdown. It has three threads.



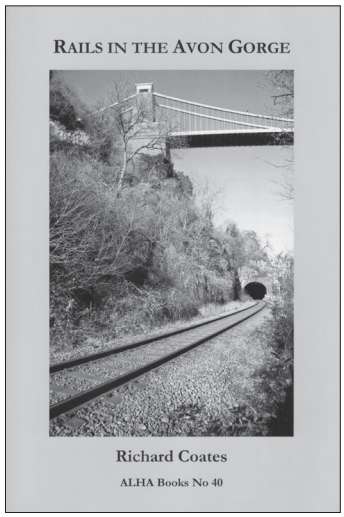
'Constructing the Abington history timeline' includes a discussion of the Anglo-Saxon presence in the Abingtons, using architectural evidence in Little Abington church and burials at Great Abington. Having listed in a timeline the various owners of the Abington estate from 1066 to 1800, those from 1578 to 1799 are then discussed and depicted. The evolution of Abington Hall is outlined from Saxon to medieval to today's house, which has recently been converted for use by technology and life science companies. The current Hall is depicted in various stages of its existence. I was particularly interested to learn that Humphry Repton had provided designs for the parklands.

'Abington people and places' includes work on the 1921 census, covering not only change over time, but also surname persistence from eight or more censuses, age distribution of males and females, occupations, and in- and out-migration. Another article describes the background of the decision taken, in the 1990s, to reinstate of the ford over the river Granta, which forms the boundary between the two parishes.

'Abington village life and community' includes haymaking in June and July 1877, based on the haymaking account from Abington Lodge, which records the identities of the haymakers and their payments for the number of days they worked. The ale account gives the daily cost of the ale that they drank – obviously thirsty work. The article on Victorian health and medical services in the area also covers the report of the inspector of nuisances in 1892 and the various trades and crafts carried out in the 76 workshops registered in 1904. Perhaps some of those needing the services of the various medical practitioners were members of the Abington and District Rifle Club (1906–2000), the archive of which has been donated to the AHG and includes pictures of some rather scary-looking men brandishing rifles. Other archives discussed are Great Abington primary school's admissions register (1891–1927) and Little Abington parish's books and papers (1894–1992).

The objective of the AHG is to 'conduct non-commercial research into the history of our villages and record it so that it can be shared'. Their published booklets indicate that they are succeeding.

Books for review should be sent to: Dr Heather Falvey, 119 Winton Drive, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth WD3 3QS – or contact her via reviews.editor@balh.org.uk



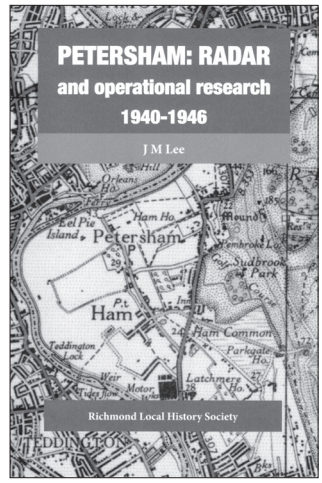
***Rails in the Avon Gorge* by Richard Coates (Avon Local History & Archaeology no. 40 2023 44pp ISBN: 978-1-911592-40-2) £3.50**

Richard Coates opens by quoting a 'preliminary understatement': 'The Avon Gorge at Bristol is spectacular in many respects and is by no means lacking in railway interest either'. Indeed, his booklet tells the story of 17 tramways and railways that have run in the Avon Gorge, the first commencing in the 1830s, and three of which are working today. They are discussed in roughly chronological order, in varying levels of detail according to length of use and surviving documentation. A useful map indicates the location of the various tracks. Numbers 3 to 6 served limestone quarries and 15 to 17 were constructed as stormwater or foul water interceptors, their tunnels once containing a tramway during the excavation work. Others were railways carrying passengers, such as the Bristol Port Railway & Pier Company (BPR&PC) (officially closed in July 1922), the Portishead Branch (closed 1962) and the Clifton Extension railway (still open). The Clifton Rocks Railway – a funicular – opened in 1893, lasting until 1934. During the Second World War some of the disused tunnels were used as shelters but were overcrowded and unhealthy. A more positive use of the BPR&PC's Hotwells Tunnel no.1 was from 1939 to about 1980 when it served as a 'Bomb Proof Records Room' for the city archives and museum exhibits. This booklet is one for railway enthusiasts.

***Petersham: Radar and operational research 1940-1946* by J M Lee (Richmond Local History Society 2nd edition 2024 50pp ISBN: 978-1-912314-04-1) £8 + p&p**

This is an updated version of Michael Lee's 2011 booklet, which describes the transformation of the small Surrey village of Petersham when in September 1940 Anti-Aircraft Command (A-AC) requisitioned the village hall and institute, the vicarage, All Saints' church and Elm Lodge, and then set up radar transmitters on the golf course. The Air Defence Research Group also relocated to Petersham, perhaps because research scientists were thereby close to the gun batteries in action in Richmond Park. A-AC set up a radio school to train officers who could then be sent to advise gun batteries across the whole country. Thus Petersham became a 'radar university' with research and training in close proximity.

Chapter 3 discusses the value of civilian scientists and chapter 4 the development of anti-aircraft radar – 'radar' being 'radio detection and ranging' – a system using radio waves to detect the presence and location of distant and moving objects'. The production of a radar screen to fit into a plane's cockpit was the first step in planning for the identification of the enemy in the air and for ground-controlled interception. The latter linked several radar stations to a command centre that guided fighter planes onto their targets. Another use of radar was developed for gun laying, with radio direction finding sets. A number of American and Canadians were involved in the 'university'. Appendix 1 lists the principal scientists working in Petersham in 1940–46; the new Appendix 2 briefly outlines the history of Petersham as a birthplace of radio astronomy.



This booklet is for anyone interested in technological developments during, and as a result of, the Second World War.

A Torrington torrent of abuse?

Alan Crosby

Among my treasures is a four-volume complete set, in very good condition, of *The Torrington Diaries*, edited by C. Bruyn Andrews and originally published in 1934–6. Mine is the 1970 reprint by Barnes & Noble of New York, which explains why I could buy the set at a remarkably reasonable price.

The Torrington Diaries ought to be better known. They were the work of the Hon. John Byng, who was born in 1743, the younger son of the 3rd Viscount Torrington. The Byngs were a naval and military family. One uncle was the Admiral John Byng, who in 1757 was executed by firing squad after the fiasco of the siege of Minorca. Voltaire satirised this, one of his characters being told that in England they shot an admiral from time to time *'pour encourager les autres'*. John the diarist was a career soldier until retirement in 1780, after which he had nothing to do except indulge his passion for travel. His wife Bridget was otherwise occupied (they had 14 children between 1768 and 1794). In mid-December 1812 his childless older brother died, and John became the 5th Viscount Torrington. He enjoyed that new status and title for a mere three weeks, dying in early January 1813.



Beginning in 1781, John went on a series of summer tours of England and Wales, 15 being recorded in his diaries although it is known that there were others of which no record survives. He had tremendous energy and a keen eye for the world around him, including the people he encountered on his travels. He was also opinionated, temperamental, inquisitive and frequently condemnatory – what more could we wish for in a diarist!

In 1792 he came to the north of England, heading up the Great North Road into Yorkshire, and then through Wensleydale and Swaledale to Barnard Castle (not for an eye test!). He then turned southwards, crossing Ribblehead, down to Ingleton and Skipton, and over into Lancashire. His route took him via Rochdale, Manchester and Macclesfield and into the Midlands, to Birmingham, Stratford, Oxford and back to London.

I often use his descriptions of places and people when I'm teaching or giving talks. He is often fantastically rude (and deservedly so) about the food at inns and lodgings. At Manchester the dinner at the Bull's Head (salmon, lamb chops and peas) was vile: 'the salmon, serv'd to me, was too stale to be eaten, and the thick, raw, fry'd chops, swam in butter! God sends meat, but the devil sends cooks. I could not eat. I try'd to drink of the port wine, but could not. The bread was intolerable and the cheese was in remnants. I said "Take away, I cannot eat".' Two days earlier, at Haslingden between Accrington and Rochdale, he was very hungry and hastened to an inn: 'the worst in the world! Mutton chops, not eatable, upon a dirty cloth (I should fancy that my landlord came from some dirty country, and dropped the Mc on the way) and as for the port wine, the pint – that I pour'd on the ashes'. He loathed the Scots, as you see!

Determined to find somewhere better, he rode on down to Rochdale, where the Roebuck Inn held promise. Alas! He was bitterly disappointed. Dinner was a 'black fowl – with bad bread', and the 'Wapping landlady, discoursing with me, with her great back against the table. Nothing clean should enter this mansion, for nothing clean can go out of it'.

Several days later he was in Newcastle-under-Lyme, and knew he would fare well, as

this was a large town on a main road. But of course, 'twas not to be, for the Roebuck (again – perhaps it was a fated name) was 'one of the most savage, dirty alehouses I ever enter'd (Traveller, beware the Roe Buck in Newcastle)'.

This man is one of my heroes – a master of the 'quotable quote', a great storyteller, and with the gift of writing lyrical and detailed descriptions of scenery, buildings and places of interest. But as I was re-reading some sections recently, I had a curious feeling of familiarity. Yes, I had read them before, but it was not that exactly. There was an echo of something else… and then it came to me. Of course, Byng (aka Torrington) had invented an early form of TripAdvisor.

Cartoon by Ian West

BALH Trustee profile

Lisbet Sherlock

Following a successful business career in corporate communications in the high-tech sector, I now dedicate my time to environmental, cultural and history projects. History has always been an important part of my life and was my degree subject, so I have now returned to my first love. Though I will read more or less any history book and visit any monument, I am especially drawn to the Victorian and Edwardian eras and am particularly interested in women's history.

I am currently working on two projects, both of which have a strong focus on their local area.

The first one is the story of two little-known militant suffragettes whose protests, imprisonments and punishments were centred on Manchester and whose contribution has been almost entirely forgotten. Traces of their lives are found in archives around the country from London to St Andrews and of course Lancashire, and they have an impressive digital presence.

The second is a project I am doing is for the Soil Association Land Trust. This involves researching and writing the history of Woodoaks Farm in Hertfordshire over the past century. The story is told through the lens of the Findlay family who first came to Woodoaks in 1922. During that time, the



farm has witnessed the industrialisation of agriculture and the impact that has had on the environment. Now it is making its journey back to sustainable practices and renewing its connection with the local community it aims to serve.

I am also a trustee at Dorset Wildlife Trust where I chair the marketing committee. The charity works to conserve the distinctive wildlife and natural spaces across the county and its coastline.

On the BALH website…

As well as articles here in *LHN* and in *The Local Historian*, BALH publishes a wide variety of fascinating articles at its blog, www.balh.org.uk/blog – and don't forget to watch the latest ten-minute talks at www.balh.org.uk/ten-minute-talks, where recent subjects include the Sussex parish of Yapton and the impact of the railways on parish life.

Notes News Issues

David Cant, Andrew Chapman, Terry Graham & Joe Saunders

E.P. Thompson 100th anniversary event

The historian E.P. Thompson, author of *The Making of the English Working Class,* lived with his wife Dorothy in Halifax for 17 years between 1948 and 1965. A commemorative blue plaque was put up on their home at Holly Bank, Siddal, in 2013. To celebrate what would have been Thompson's 100th birthday, a day conference was organised in Halifax on 3 February. BALH Outreach Team member David Cant attended the event on behalf of BALH.

Speakers included Julian Harber, Hugo Radice, Judy Cox, Gawain Little, Colin Waugh, Jane Mayes, Penelope Corfield, Tariq Ali and Katrina Navickas. Topics included personal reflections of Thompson, the development of Warwick University where he lectured in the late 1960s, a rebuttal of the criticism that Thompson had ignored women in his writing, his relationship with the trades unions, independent working class education and CND.

Particularly of interest to local historians were discussions about the value of community projects and how local history connects people with their locality, including the appeal to younger people. Examples noted included the Newport Rising Festival, Black Country Museum, Tolpuddle Martyrs and community history work around Killamarsh (Rotherham). Also noted was the value of oral history in recording and preserving people's ideas and the work of Working Class Movement Library (Manchester). Katrina Navickas and Matthew Roberts are trying to develop networks to promote local historical events.

Helping local historians

BALH aims to advise and inspire local historians. To do this we share excellent research from which you can take encouragement, we inform you of events and new books and offer support in the process of doing your local history through our website, publications and events. It is in this vein that we are asking readers to help us help others with their local history. You possess a wealth of knowledge about the practicalities of local history, whether this is researching, writing, giving talks, publishing, teaching, running societies and more. Please do get in touch if you feel you can share some of your knowledge with us in either a short, written piece for *Local History News* (please send your proposal to Andrew Chapman, editor.lhn@balh.org.uk), our blog and/or a recorded ten-minute talk (contact Joe Saunders, joseph6.saunders@hotmail.com).

Project North Star

Project North Star is working to increase awareness of black history in the north-east of England. The project has previously been featured in *Local History News* (see LHN146) and obtained a letter of support from BALH.

The project is going to launch with a live event aimed at educators of all stages on 15 June showcasing their website and historic walk. Speakers include Dr Beverley Prevatt Goldstein, Dr Brian Ward and Dr Liam Liburd. In addition, PhD students, archivists and teachers will be sharing their research and ideas. Get in touch: projectns46@gmail.com

15 June 2024, 10am–2pm. The Hope, Street Exchange, Sunderland. Tickets are only £5/ donation with money raised going to Success4All in Newcastle. www.balh.org.uk/FRW185

Corrections

In the supplement to LHN150 the date of the BALH Annual General Meeting was given as 11 June – this should have been 16 May. Apologies for any inconvenience caused. Also, the back cover of LHN150 had a picture of The Amber Band, whose article was withheld until this issue (p. 17).

Upcoming copy deadlines

The next issue of *Local History News* will be out around the end of August – please note the copy deadline for that issue (No. 152) is 1 July. If you wish to promote a society event here, it will need to take place not before late August – for earlier events, which we may be able to list at www.balh.org.uk/events, contact the BALH Digital Manager, digitalmanager@balh.org.uk

***Local History News* welcomes your news, articles and queries – editor.lhn@balh.org.uk**

BALH Officers and Committees

***President*:** Professor Caroline Barron

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

Board of Trustees 2024:

Sophie Anstee de Mas
John Chandler
Paul Dryburgh *(Chair)*
Jane Golding *(Vice Chair)*
Daniella Gonzalez
Tim Hamilton
David Killingray
Tim Lomas
Joe Saunders *(Vice Chair)*
Lisbet Sherlock
Jack Southern
Iain Taylor *(Treasurer)*
Julia Tubman
Adrian Webb
Laura Yeoman

Advisory Committees:

Outreach: Joe Saunders *(Chair)*, Sophie Anstee de Mas, Cheryl Butler, David Cant, Geoffrey Carter, Chris Denley, Jane Golding, Daniella Gonzalez, Tim Hamilton, Tim Lomas, Jonathan Mackman, Susan Moore, Helen Palmer, Jude Rhodes, Lisbet Sherlock, Jack Southern, Iain Taylor, Julia Tubman
ex officio: Paul Carter (Digital Manager), Stephen Miller (Outreach Coordinator) Megan Kelleher (Digital Strategy Coordinator), Catherine Warr (Digital Content Coordinator)

Publishing: John Chandler (*Chair*), Claire Cross, Paul Dryburgh, David Killingray, Roger Ottewill, Winifred Stokes, Kate Thompson, Nigel Tringham, Laura Yeoman
ex officio: Andrew Chapman (Editor *Local History News*), Alan Crosby (Editor *The Local Historian*), Heather Falvey (Reviews Editor),

Editor, *The Local Historian*: Alan Crosby
Reviews Editor: Heather Falvey
Editor, *Local History News*: Andrew Chapman

Digital Manager: Paul Carter
Digital Strategy Coordinator: Megan Kelleher
Digital Content Coordinator: Catherine Warr

Outreach Coordinator: Stephen Miller

Membership and Financial Services: Moore Insight

BALH

BRITISH ASSOCIATION
FOR LOCAL HISTORY

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 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 Board of Trustees, with two advisory committees dealing with publishing and outreach. 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	£36
Digital (NEW) – journals as PDFs	£30
Student on a full- or part-time course in local history	£25
Local society or group	£90
Institutions	£45
Overseas	£51

Note: these are the new rates from 1 January 2024.

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

BALH OFFICE, c/o MOORE INSIGHT,
ST JAMES HOUSE, VICAR LANE, SHEFFIELD S1 2EX
01625 664524 admin@balh.org.uk

REGISTERED CHARITY 285467



Above: Cheryl Butler guiding a tour group in one of Southampton's High Street vaults – see page 14

Below: Could Birnbeck Pier in Weston-super-Mare have a new future? – see page 29 (Photo: Nell Darby)

