Local History News

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AWARDS FOR LOCAL HISTORIANS

- *To encourage research and publication*
  One or more certificates may be awarded each year for 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 form available from our website at **www.balh.org.uk/awards**, where further details can also 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 2025

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Front cover

'Stitches in Time' – a colourful celebration of Hertfordshire local history through the medium of bunting – see page 13.

Local History News

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How to contribute

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

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

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The green heart of Spanish local history

Alan Crosby

Other people's local history is always of great interest. After over 40 years 'in the business', when visiting a new place or area I'm automatically looking at and assessing street names and street patterns, building styles and architecture, churches and marketplaces, fields and woods… a habit now so ingrained that I couldn't stop even if I wanted to (which of course I don't). To go to an unfamiliar place and read its landscape or townscape is an exciting and satisfying exercise.

In June we went with friends to Galicia, the 'green heart of Spain' as the tourist literature now proclaims. We immediately understood why it is so green – days of torrential rain, rushing streams, thick fog and low cloud, and heavy grey skies, with dripping trees in gloomy woodland. Certainly Spain, but not the Spain of sunbaked plains and the hot breezes of the south). But there were also sunny days and glorious history – five great medieval cathedrals, including Santiago de Compostela (our favourites were those at Leon and Lugo), and an eclectic selection of wonderful early Romanesque churches, tucked away in hill villages and green valleys.

Our friend Bill is perhaps Britain's foremost expert on church bells and bellringing, and there were plenty of opportunities for him to record them and assess their distinctive sounds and styles. Single bells rang out across the hillsides and forests, peals clamoured among the rooftops and narrow streets of ancient towns, and occasionally the unnaturally clean sounds of electronic bells flooded from new churches and town halls. Following the bell trail, therefore, we explored some of the back roads and remoter corners of the four provinces that make up Galicia: Lugo, Ourense, Pontevedra and A Coruña.

We approached the tiny village of Santalla de Bóveda de Mera, a few miles south-west of the provincial capital Lugo, along a maze of narrow lanes winding through the hummocky landscape, past rocky slopes clothed with trees and pockets of green pasture and small-



The church of Santa Eulalia de Bóveda (PePeEfe)

holdings edged with stone walls. Many of the latter are very distinctive, made up of huge vertical slabs of stone placed side by side and end on… provided that the slabs could be lifted and moved, these were much easier to build than conventional drystone walls where the stones are laid horizontally.

The little 18th-century church of Santalla (in Galician) or Santa Eulalia (in Spanish) has a single bell which hangs in a triangular gable, and it did not ring at all, but that did not matter because the place itself was fascinating. The church stands high on a mound above the lane through the village. Within the mound, and partly underneath the church itself, are the almost intact remains of a Roman temple or sanctuary of the third century AD, its walls decorated with wonderful frescoes showing birds and plants. The survival of this monument is astonishing, and it reflects the obscurity of the place. Anywhere more in the mainstream would have seen rebuilding on several occasions since the fall of Rome.

Just along the lane an open-sided roofed structure shelters a copious spring. This was the washing-place, similar in principle to those in thousands of towns and villages in the Mediterranean countries (though of course Galicia is an Atlantic region). There the women of the village washed their linen, and a set of flat slabs of granite, painstakingly carved with horizontal corrugations, served as the washboards. The houses are low and heavy roofed (to withstand the gales coming off the ocean) and the stables and byres are built integrally with them in time-honoured 'longhouse' fashion, although nowadays they seem mostly used for mechanical beasts rather than hoofed ones.

The ancient village has thus adapted to the modern world, but retains its historic character. And there's a bonus: some imaginative soul in the regional government commissioned explanatory signboards dotted around the village. They are not only excellent, but (unlike such features at many Spanish monuments) they have top-quality English translations. *Bastante ben creo*, as we say in Galicia.

AWARDS



Congratulations to BALH Outstanding Individual Contribution award winner Anne Balfour.

Bringing a society back to life

Anne Balfour



Strathblane Heritage Society is a 30-year-old local history society in this Stirlingshire village of 2,000 residents. Following the death of its founding member and the Covid lockdown it had declined and its future was in doubt.

In March 2022 Anne Balfour became chair of a small team to lead the resurrection of the society. Its fortunes have radically improved under Anne's leadership:

- An attractive series of talks was organised which has steadily boosted membership and attendance at the society's monthly meetings. Paid membership has more than doubled and now exceeds 100 for the first time. Recent meetings have attracted audiences averaging 90+, and the venue – Strathblane Village Club – is full to capacity.
- The society's first website, www.strathblaneheritage.org, was created and launched last September, its content largely written by Anne, who is both an experienced journalist and an Oxford history MA. It has attracted widespread acclaim for its depth and quality.
- The society's finances have improved substantially; a new project to establish a local heritage trail is now being investigated.

Local history is Anne's passion. Her extensive researches and writing have shed much new light on the remarkable, multi-faceted heritage of Strathblane.

Local studies library hero

David Cliffe

Congratulations to BALH Outstanding Individual Contribution award winner David Cliffe.



Following his Macclesfield childhood, a degree in English language and medieval literature with folklore and a diploma in librarianship led David to a career in Reading Libraries, becoming manager of its local history collection until he retired.

This he made accessible for research, scanning its large and historically important collection of glass negatives and photographs of people, places and subjects in Reading and its region, ensuring their correct identification and creating a freely accessible online catalogue.

David generously supports local history searchers with his encyclopaedic knowledge of the library's book, map and newspaper microfilm collection. His walking tours of the borough's former industrial and other sites are extremely popular.

As chairman of Berkshire Local History Association (since 2009) and the History of Reading Society (since 2011), he has worked or collaborated with other local historians, a Berkshire schools research group, and Oxfordshire Local History Society for joint day conferences. His publications include books about Reading's cinemas and public houses, and three substantial contributions to Macclesfield's local history.



Pictured here is Liz Woolley, editor of the Oxfordshire Local History Association's e-bulletin (among many other roles), which won this year's BALH Society Newsletter award (see LHN151), with Christopher Fance, chairman of OLHA. They are outside the entrance to the original Oxford Public Library, part of the Old Town Hall, St Aldates, Oxford, which now houses the Museum of Oxford.

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

RIP Kate Tiller 1949–2024



Alan Crosby

At the end of May we lost one of the most influential and eminent local and regional historians of our time. Dr Kate Tiller died on 30 May after a long illness courageously borne, and only a few weeks after the death of her beloved and inseparable husband Liam. Kate was born in 1949 and grew up near Leigh in south Lancashire. Her father was an Anglican priest and his family had been involved in the area's important engineering industry. She admitted that she lost her once-strong Lancashire accent (though to the discerning ear it was still detectable) but she remained proud of her north-western heritage. After the University of Birmingham, where she took her doctorate (on post-Chartist working-class politics), and marriage to Liam in 1969, they came to Oxfordshire, where Liam eventually became the county's chief planning officer.

In 1979 Kate took up a position at Rewley House, the Oxford University Department of Continuing Education. This was a five-year post with the remit of developing the Department's local and regional history programmes. At the conclusion of this she was appointed to the newly established university lectureship in Local History and in 1999 she became Reader in English Local History. During the 1990s, Kate masterminded the launch of master's and DPhil degrees in local history, and her vital role in continuing education was recognised when in 1997 she was Continuing Education's first female academic dean in 1997. Earlier, in 1990, she was the only woman among the 11 founding fellows of Kellogg College (where she later became senior tutor and vice-president). Her main research and teaching interests were British social and local history since 1750, especially English rural change, religion and community, and the academic practice of local history. She worked on 20th-century local histories, focusing on World War One remembrance and community; was research director for the project on Communities of Dissent (the significance of Nonconformist chapels and chapel life in English and Welsh communities) with the Family and Community History Research Society; and she edited the *Historical Atlas of Oxfordshire*.

Kate held many other appointments and positions, with *inter alia* the Centre of English Local History at Leicester; the University of Suffolk; the Victoria County History of Oxfordshire; the erstwhile Association of Local History Tutors; and the British Association for Local History. She published extensively, her invaluable and definitive textbook *English Local History: An Introduction* first appearing in 1987 and going into a third extensively revised edition in 2020. In 2019 she was appointed as OBE in the New Year's honours for services to local history.

There was yet more to Kate. She guided, nurtured and supported hundreds of students in their local history researches and writing; lectured and gave talks to dozens of local and county societies; and encouraged and oversaw numerous local history projects in individual communities – one of her favourite places was Hook Norton in the Oxfordshire Cotswolds south-west of Banbury, the focus of one such project. Kate also worked internationally, enjoying close and warm contacts with the American Association for State and Local History, as well as a range of European universities. In 2004 she was made a deputy lieutenant for the county of Oxfordshire, and three years before had achieved the singular honour of being the first woman to be elected as a committee member of the Oxford University Rugby Football Club (her extracurricular passion), subsequently serving as its chair.

In 2018 she told an interviewer that her career had been truly happy: 'a mix of welcoming, being stretched, expanding skills and understanding, the Oxford factor, the fun, and the continuing friendships and contacts'. We had lunch together a month before she died. Kate was desperately worried about Liam, who had just been admitted to a hospice, and she knew that her own illness would not give her much more time. But we sat in Dorchester Abbey and silently contemplated that wonderful building, and then discussed local history and the various projects that she still hoped to finish. Over lunch in the George Inn, she even talked enthusiastically about its social history and timber-framed structure. As we said our farewells she told me that talking about local history had lifted her spirits and helped her to forget her situation for a couple of hours.

A local history competition for Hampshire schools

Alistair Dougall

June 2024 saw the completion of the second year of a history competition that the Hampshire Archives Trust (HAT) first launched for schools in Hampshire in 2022.

The competition is designed to help students to develop their research, presentation and other transferable skills, and to encourage them to learn more about aspects of their local history and about the nature and value of all manner of archives.

Either working in groups or as individuals, students were invited to work on a history project relating to an aspect of history in Hampshire. HAT made a conscious decision not to stipulate what the nature of the projects should be other than that they had be related to the history of Hampshire in some way and that they needed to demonstrate the use of archives. HAT did not want to be prescriptive in terms of either the topic or the format of the entries, as the purpose of the competition was to engage young people in researching and valuing aspects of their local history whatever they might be, whether it was the history of their school, town or village, or aspects of their family history or a Hampshire building, personality or event.

As in the first year of the competition, there were group and individual prizes to be won in three categories: Years 7–9, Years 10–11 (GCSE level) and Sixth Form. Group winners could win £300 towards their school's resources plus a winner's trophy. Individual winners could win £100 and a winner's certificate, and Highly Commended certificates were awarded to other groups or individuals who produced a good project.

As with last year's competition, the judges were impressed with the calibre and range of this year's projects. Entries included an impressive mix of essays, films, posters, PowerPoints, the organisation of a local history walk and exhibition, and compiling an archive by recording memories of local elderly residents. There was also an interesting range of topics covered in the various projects. These included a project on the Roman villa near Sparsholt, various histories of the students' schools, a project on Hayling Island during World War Two that incorporated some wonderful photographs and the reminiscences of some elderly residents, and a fascinating project on the history of Wickham Fair that not only examined the history of the fair but also posed some challenging questions on the treatment of and impact on a marginalised group of local people. Other projects included one on Jane Austen's life in Hampshire, a brief history of a local 'Santa Run', the history of Chesapeake Mill, and a wonderful film exploring the history and ruins of Bishops Waltham Palace narrated by a Year 8 student who clearly has the makings of a budding Dan Snow!

Again this year, it was really good to see such an eclectic mix of interesting and well-presented topics and pleasing to see the effective and imaginative ways in which the students used a range of archival material, from letters, diary entries, maps and legal documents through to photographs and film footage.

This year's winner of the Years 7–9 group category was Wyvern College in Eastleigh who produced an exciting project on the history of Fair Oak, Eastleigh, which has involved Year 7 and 8 students in the school's history club researching the history of Fair Oak and, in particular, in talking to elderly Fair Oak residents to record their memories of life there in WW2 and subsequently. The project is called When You Were; it seeks to foster connections across different generations, to combat loneliness and to inspire the students to explore the history of their area. Although the project is ongoing, the students have already had several meetings with older residents, getting them to talk about their memories, recording them for posterity and mounting an exhibition. The group's winning entry won £300 for the school's history resources and the winning team were presented with their trophy on 6 June at a special event in the Fountain Café in Fair Oak, where the students met some elderly residents



Years 7 and 8 students at Wyvern College in Eastleigh celebrate their win.

there at a special exhibition to commemorate the anniversary of D-Day and the part played by local men and women. The judges were very impressed indeed by this project. The information was presented in a very clear and engaging way with interesting stories and key points. The interaction between the students and older local residents was lovely to see as was the fact that the students were learning about what life was like for them in years gone by and that they are preserving their stories and views for posterity.

There were joint winners this year in the Years 7–9 individual category: Mason Osborne from Perins School in Alresford and Ben Wasenczuk from Toynbee School. The panel decided that they were both equally worthy of winning and so decided to award each of them £100 and a winner's certificate. They were presented with their certificates at a special ceremony by the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, Nigel Atkinson, at his offices in Serle's House in Winchester attended by their families and teachers.

Mason's entry was a PowerPoint presentation on 'The Secret Life of Henry Perin'. His PowerPoint gave a lot of information about the life of Henry Perin, his work for the local town of Alresford and linked elements of Perins' life with the school named after him. The 'secret life' bit of the presentation explored how Henry Perin had made his wealth, and it did so through a good use of archives – from the Hampshire Record Office and The National Archives at Kew – and with some elements of witty humour. There was an excellent use of archives, which included Henry Perins' will and some of his letters together with portraits and old photographs.

Ben's entry was a PowerPoint presentation on the lives of his great-grandfathers that wove their stories together using an impressive range of family archives, with a particular focus on their experiences leading up to, during and in the immediate aftermath of WW2. These included family photographs and photographs of extracts from birth certificates, enlistment papers and other military records, marriage certificates, medals and medal citations, hospital records, discharge papers, letters and diaries.

As with last year's competition, we were not only impressed by the quality of many of the entries but were also particularly thrilled to get so much positive feedback from the schools that took part. Their teachers told us how much the students enjoyed researching and creating their projects and that they had embraced the whole exercise with enthusiasm. Several teachers commented on how the exercise had deepened the students' love of history and, importantly, had helped them to develop their research and presentational skills.

HAT will be launching the competition for 2024–25 in September at the start of the new academic year, with entries due in March 2025.

To find out more about the competition and this year's winners, visit the Education section of our website: https://hampshirearchivestrust.co.uk/education.

Dr Alistair Dougall is a trustee of Hampshire Archives Trust.

Telling our story: insights from a school biographer

Andrew K. Shenton

Writing the history of a school – or some particular aspect of its work – is a fascinating endeavour. In the course of it, you uncover much new information, rekindle memories of days gone by and challenge many long-standing misconceptions. Such a venture is not to be approached lightly, however. This article presents the lessons learnt by one member of staff at Whitley Bay High School (WBHS) who, in the last academic year, set about producing a historical narrative conveying the extent, nature and impact of research by adults in the school. The purpose of the project was to detail the investigative work WBHS had conducted during the 60 years in which the organisation had been based in the existing premises; at the beginning of 2023/24 the school would be moving to a new building and the next chapter in its story would begin.

It was envisaged that, as well as marking the end of an era, the eventual document would be shown to Ofsted during an inspection, thereby enabling the school to receive credit for much of the relevant work that had taken place over a prolonged period. Passages could be incorporated into the school website and prospectus as part of the overall effort to promote the organisation. Extracts may also be circulated to job applicants with a view to recruiting staff who were themselves research oriented and could contribute in a significant way to future investigation and innovation within the school.

Although the focus of my work related to the *research* history of WBHS, many of the issues that emerged from my experience are pertinent to studies of either the wider development of a school or other aspects of life within it. Historical research may concentrate, for example, on a certain long-standing club or society, sporting achievement or an annual event. Or, where the school offers a specialism in a particular area, research may be undertaken into how this has taken shape over time. If the study deals with the history of the school in all its facets, the product may itself be book length. In my own region of England – the north-east – Anita Atkinson's *A History of Wolsingham Grammar School* is such a work.

Broadly, each of the issues which arose in relation to my own project pertained to one of three areas of activity: collecting information, preparing the account or evaluating/reflecting on the outcome. They are presented below as lessons for the future that I learnt from the study and which may be borne in mind by other researchers.

Ideas to take forward

Use as wide a variety of documentary sources as possible in order to uncover a range of insights and perspectives. Although the guide *School Records: Their Management and Retention*, produced by the Society of Archivists in 1995, proved invaluable in enabling me to identify possible sources of information at the outset, I ultimately found the most helpful documentary materials to be internal papers, newsletters for parents, past copies of the school magazine, published pieces by staff and items by others acknowledging WBHS's involvement in research. Google Scholar and Access to Research were especially important tools for tracing relevant academic journal articles.

Explore the contents of external archives, record offices and the local studies collections of public libraries. Be alive also to what can be learnt from past teachers and ex-students who may meet for celebratory events and reunions.

Treat evidence presented by second-hand accounts with caution. Seek to corroborate their information elsewhere. Complications arise, however, when the documents consulted for verificational purposes may themselves draw on secondary sources and this goes unacknowledged. Consequently, establishing the true independence of different sources of evidence can be difficult. Researchers may feel uneasy about mentioning documents they have not seen themselves and, if the secondary referencing method is employed, we find ourselves relying on another party to give an accurate impression of what was said originally. The danger also



A block at Whitley Bay High School.

emerges that the citing author may concentrate on a specific part of the source and any sense of the whole picture presented in the referenced work is lost.

Although, given the availability of so many electronic finding tools these days, it may be easier to track down published papers than to locate an obscure item within an unindexed school archive, accept that seeing copies of even these can be problematic, especially if you have no access to a university library that offers you e-journals and interlibrary loan facilities for articles, reports and books. This was a particular issue in my project because the nature of the subject was such that published material was just as important as the school's internal records. In other studies, the balance between the two types of evidence may be different.

Appreciate that, while long-serving members of staff are great sources of information, their memories may be hazy, inaccurate or lack detail. Again, look for corroboration if a rich and reliable picture of school life in years long gone is to be painted.

Reference meticulously the sources you use in your narrative, so as to provide a route map for others who undertake related investigations in the future. Indicating the evidence on which the account is based will help the researchers of tomorrow know where further information can be found and will enable them to check your facts and interpretations by going back to the source material you consulted. Casual readers may feel references in the form of in-text numbers or author/date identifiers are intrusive but if the history is being prepared for senior leaders of the school who intend to use extracts as they see fit, the inclusion of references allows them to make their own decisions as to whether or not they should be retained in their outcome.

Share the draft and encourage comments and feedback from others; some information will stimulate recollections from staff who may have not hitherto realised the significance or relevance of their knowledge to the project. They may be able to provide separate corroboration of stated facts and interpretations.

Assess the limitations of your eventual document. It is probable that not all the information you originally desired has been found. I myself spent many fruitless hours attempting to access a 1984 report by a previous headteacher. Ultimately, I could track down only a bibliographic citation and brief summaries of its contents; the actual item eluded me. Drawing on the ideas of the former US secretary of defence, Donald Rumsfeld, we might say the full text was a 'known unknown' within the project. Moreover, I recognised that, despite my efforts to be as comprehensive as possible, there would be significant research projects that had taken place at Whitley Bay for which no documentation at all now existed and I was entirely oblivious to them. These effectively amounted to 'unknown unknowns'. In addition, because I could build my story only around the available information, I probably had a tendency to form generalisations from a limited number of instances. I might also report a particular initiative in some detail, thereby implying that it was of special importance when, at the time, it may have been merely one of several of similar prominence. The details of the others had not survived and were not recalled by any informants. This returns us to the problem of 'unknown unknowns'.

Understand that your account is bound to be chronologically uneven, especially when the temporal period involved is considerable – the further back in time you probe, the less material there is likely to be. Perhaps documents that would have been helpful were never created or have not been kept. At Whitley Bay, the school buildings were opened in 1962 and very few relevant papers from the first decade of the organisation's life remained. I noted that, as a result, the account I compiled gave the impression that little research had been undertaken in the early years. This may not have been the case. Any bias in the narrative was both unavoidable and unintentional. There is also the possibility that the precision with which one searches varies according to the period.

When examining a familiar era, the writer will be more aware of the organisational

context and the staff of the time and apply this knowledge – possibly subconsciously – when looking for information, thereby leading to a further unevenness in the research base that is unearthed.

Recognise that what you intend to be the final version of the account may need updating in the future. Old but hitherto undiscovered information may come to light and new material may emerge subsequently – even when the period under scrutiny belongs to the past. I ended my story at the point when the old school building was due for demolition. Yet the impact of past research conducted at WBHS was continuing to be felt. Specifically, new citations of a report relating to a major project completed by the school in 2018 were still appearing.

Final thoughts

The writing of the history of staff research at Whitley Bay High School was a huge learning experience for me, even though I was already a seasoned author. I was well used to comparable work, having conducted lots of interviews and analysed many documents in the past. My personal knowledge of the organisation was considerable. It had been accumulated in various contexts. I had been a student in the 1980s; I had served as a consultant and, at the time of my writing, was employed as a member of staff in multiple capacities. Yet there were still constant surprises. Readers who set about examining the history of an aspect of their own school will find themselves not only discovering the most effective ways of delivering sound research practice; they will also develop realistic attitudes as to what can be achieved in view of the limitations in the sources of information available. Shortcomings will inevitably arise in the work which is ultimately produced.

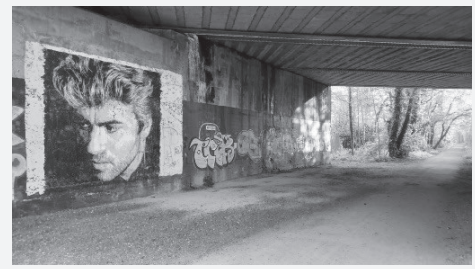
Dr Andrew K. Shenton is a specialist in information literacy and a former lecturer at Northumbria University, where he was the first person to receive four degrees from the institution. He is the author of more than 250 publications.

While out walking…

Heather Falvey

The Ebury Way, now a part of the SUSTRANS network (NCR 6/61), was established on the route of the railway built for Lord Ebury (1801–1893), which ran from Watford to Rickmansworth, near his home at Moor Park, and was operational from 1862 to 1952. The Metropolitan Line and the Chiltern Line pass over the Ebury Way via bridge MR78A. On the Watford side of the bridge, the Ebury Way runs alongside Croxley Common Moor, an SSSI of 40 hectares of historic grassland, on which cattle graze in the summer.

As there are four tracks, the bridge forms a short tunnel, providing a perfect space for graffiti artists. On Christmas Day 2020 (remember that dull, no family, Covid Christmas?) a new picture had appeared – instantly recognisable as George Michael, who had grown up in nearby Bushey. Three and a half years later, he is still there. George epitomises the immediate area's links with national history: not only the original Metropolitan



line that went from Baker Street to Verney Junction in Buckinghamshire, but also the Grand Junction Canal, which passed through but did not really serve West Hertfordshire; the superb late 14th-century barn at Croxley Hall Farm, built for the Abbot of St Albans, then owner of all the manors in SW Herts; the site of the manor of the More, occasional dwelling place of, among others, Archbishop George Neville, Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon. And all of this inside the M25 and close to HS2.

Stitches in Time: a community local history project

Sally Williams

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of many of today's local authorities under the Local Government Act 1972.

Three Rivers Museum based in Basing House, Rickmansworth had displayed at high level some colourful bunting for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. After this was removed and returned to the maker, the room seemed a little bare where the images had hung.

After some discussion and the fact that 2024 was the 50th anniversary of the setting-up of Three Rivers Council, we decided to create a project to enliven the vacated space at high level and tell the story of our local history in 50 pieces.

The museum directors met and decided which objects, events, people, places or activities should be on the new bunting relating to our local history.

We realised that we would need an expert to guide the project, although Pat Hamilton and Sally Williams decided the colour palette and provided designs for the images. Local textile artist and facilitator Sian Fenwick was asked to source materials and run the making sessions. Her expertise was invaluable.

We requested volunteers to help with the making and sewing in the locality. We were gratified that so many people, of all abilities and from across the community, responded enthusiastically.

The idea was to have three facilitated session of three weeks each producing the bunting, from January 2024. We were kindly loaned space by Rickmansworth Library and Three Rivers Council for our sessions.

There was early publicity in the local free press when the high sheriff of Hertfordshire unexpectedly visited the makers in the library.

The resultant 50 pieces *(some of which you can see on the front cover of this issue)* were skilfully done and beautiful beyond our expectations. The sociability of the sewing sessions was remarkable, and introducing our museum and episodes of our history to new people who were not familiar with it, was a bonus. We found that some had personal links to the stories too.

The experience is summed up by one of our crafters who said how she 'loved the idea of historical information contained in a handiwork that is itself an art form'.

A booklet to explain the images further is being created for future visitors to the museum, with text provided by museum members and the wider local history groups. The images for this have been taken by Jim Forder of Croxley Camera Club.

This has been an enjoyable, satisfying and artistic group endeavour with a lot of laughter on the way, proving once again how local history can be fun.

Sally Williams is a trustee of Three Rivers Museum.
With thanks to Fabian Hiscock.



Sian Fenwick (far left) with about half of the makers celebrating the completion of the bunting. (Les Mead)

‘Beer and bribery’: the dangers of a pioneering election

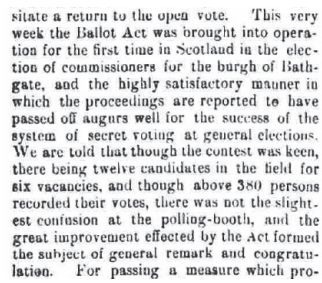
David W. Main

With the general election safely behind us, here are some local historical discoveries on a psephological theme.

What first drew me to look into this particular topic was an assertion made at the time that Peter McLagan, whose life I have been looking into for several years now (see ‘Peter McLagan: Scotland’s first black MP’, LHN151), was the alleged object of an assassination attempt at a meeting of his constituents at a hustings held in Kirkliston, Midlothian in 1868. Intrigued, I decided to try and find out if such violent acts were common in elections at this time. It did not take too long before I found the following reference which appeared in an issue of the *Illustrated London News* dated 21 November 1868:

‘There had been a good deal of strong language used, *and as was to be expected, at many of the elections*, and in some cases there have been *scenes of brutal violence, and even of murder*. At Blackburn [England] a man was *cruelly killed*; at Bristol, *much violence was committed; and at Newport, Monmouthshire, one or two persons were killed in a riot*...’ [my emphasis]

However, by August 1872, equally surprising, I read the following from *Oban Times and Argyllshire Advertiser* dated 10 August:


sitate a return to the open vote. This very week the Ballot Act was brought into operation for the first time in Scotland in the election of commissioners for the burgh of Bathgate, and the highly satisfactory manner in which the proceedings are reported to have passed off augurs well for the success of the system of secret voting at general elections. We are told that though the contest was keen, there being twelve candidates in the field for six vacancies, and though above 380 persons recorded their votes, there was not the slightest confusion at the polling-booth, and the great improvement effected by the Act formed the subject of general remark and congratulation. For passing a measure which pro-

The Oban Times *report from 1872 which caught David’s eye. (British Library Board)*

‘This very week the Ballot Act was brought into operation for the first time in Scotland with the election of commissioners for the burgh of Bathgate, and the highly satisfactory manner in which the proceedings are reported to have passed off augurs well for the success of the system of secret voting at general elections...’

That my home town of Bathgate was thus marked out for comment interested me even more and subsequently led me to explore what had transpired between 1868 and 1872 and why Bathgate had been singled out. The short answer to both was: a) the promulgation of the Ballot Act 1872 and b) that this Act had its first ‘outing’ on *5 August* that year – certainly in Scotland, if not the United Kingdom as a whole. (The entry on Wikipedia only gives the date – *15 August* – of the re-election of one Hugh Childers as a cabinet minister at an election held in Pontefract, and no mention is made of this earlier – municipal – election. Hence I would suggest that the election in Bathgate should be acknowledged as the first of its kind employing the reformed voting practices in the UK.)

The Act had been introduced by Parliament by the Liberal government under Gladstone. It had its origins way back in the 1840s as one of the core demands – the holding of secret ballots – of the Chartists. However, nothing more was done until 1872 when, with the increase in the numbers of voters and the subsequent rise in public disorder at elections, the government was compelled to take action. That Bathgate was the venue of the Act’s earliest enforcement was simply as a result of the death of the town clerk, Charles Sinclair, earlier that year.

I do not presume in this short article to go into too great detail on the workings of town councils in Scotland in the latter half of the 19th century. However, a little background information is required. Bathgate had been made a ‘burgh of barony’ by royal assent on 14 June 1824. This required the establishment of a town council chaired by a provost (‘praeses’ in Scots), three baillies, 12 councillors and a treasurer. The functions of the council at this stage were limited in scope.

However, over the 50 years as the council bedded in, the need for a town clerk had made itself felt. The duties – mainly administrative



The Corn Exchange in Bathgate, where the pioneering ballot took place. (Bennie Museum)

but, if suitably qualified, also legal – were discharged by the town clerk, who received an annual salary of £20 with a further disbursement of £8 to cover court costs. Accordingly, the post in a small town such as Bathgate, whose population in the 1870s was in the region of some 5,000 people (of whom only 550 were eligible to vote – men over 21 who owned or leased property at an annual rate of at least £10), was a desirable one.

Prior to the election of a new town clerk, half the council itself also had to stand for election. This resulted in 12 candidates putting themselves forward for the six vacancies. These split into two factions who supported the two contenders for the post – Mr Dodds (favoured by the Angus Party faction) and Mr Charles Allan (supported by the Wright and Sutherland Party); both men were lawyers. The social composition of the two groups did not differ much – masons, joiners, booksellers and other 'merchants' are to be found in both factions. What did divide the parties was trustworthiness. Was Mr Dodds, who was actually interim town clerk during this time, worthy of the ratepayers' continuing trust and confidence?

As can be seen from several newspaper reports, he was accused of overcharging the council when he represented them in court; his taking of council minutes was also heavily criticised since they lacked detail; finally, he was suspected of being a favourite of Mr Angus. All these accusations were conducted in the full glare of publicity – both in the local press, namely the *Falkirk Herald* and in open-air meetings. As polling day grew nearer, the town was placarded with posters urging voters to vote for one candidate or another. Insults flew back and forth between the two factions, one of which particularly stung Mr Sutherland, who was described as a 'shuttlecock', which he countered by alleging that important council decisions were taken over 'toddy [whisky] and cards'! Feelings were running high.

The town clerk and the provost were accordingly empowered to oversee and put into effect the provisions of the new Ballot Act, several of whose procedures are still with us today. Thus we still have the need for secure ballot boxes; the installation of separate booths – one per 150 voters – where one might record one's ballot; the stipulation that the ballot paper should only be marked with an X against the name of your chosen candidate, who should appear in alphabetical order by surname on the ballot paper, with any other mark rendering the ballot null and void; and presenting yourself before a council official with proof of ID.

However, there are differences – the ballot in Bathgate, for instance, was only open between 8am and 4pm, held in the Corn Exchange, and the entrance to the polling station was guarded by two police constables. I wonder how these changes were perceived by the electorate – 385 of whom actually voted, a figure which was marvelled at since previously only 250 at most had bothered! Perhaps then this is best summed up by the following comment, printed in the *Greenock Telegraph and Clyde Shipping Gazetteer* on 6 August:

'One old gentlemen, who was asked by one of the candidates what party he intended to support, replied, "I will please mysel' and winna tell ye a haet [damn all]." That seemed to be the feeling of a great many, who evidently felt proud of the privilege of being able to select their own favourites without pressure ('beer and bribery') and without being liable to be called to account for their conduct…'

The final outcome was that Charles Allen was elected town clerk – a post which he and then his son subsequently held for the next 50 years. The most popular councillor was a Lawrence Dougall of the Angus Party, an iron founder who was subsequently elected as Bathgate's provost from 1893 to 1899.

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.

Project North Star website showcases black history in the North-East

Geoffrey Carter

Project North Star was started in 2021 by a group of north-east teachers led by local history teacher Terry Graham. Its objective is to increase the presence of black history in the north-east of England. The project takes its name from the *North Star* anti-slavery newspaper founded by the renowned American abolitionist Frederick Douglass.

Over the past three years the project has grown by reaching out to a wide group of teachers, academics and organisations working with young people. BALH has offered support and encouragement during this period. The culmination of this work is the creation of a new website designed to equip teachers with projects that empower their pupils to tackle black history through academically rigorous and culturally sensitive approaches.

On Saturday 15 June 2024 the website was formally launched at an event hosted by the University of Sunderland's Hope Street Xchange. Some 30 people gathered to hear a programme of speakers covering a range of topics including the decolonisation of the history curriculum and the challenges of developing the teaching of black history in British universities, the stories of prominent black figures in north-east history and the role of archaeology in uncovering black history in the region. Central to the event was the story of the visit by Dr Martin Luther King to receive an honorary degree from the University of Newcastle in 1967. His acceptance speech was thought to have been lost. Professor Brian Ward of Northumbria University told of his work that has led to the recovery of the text of Dr King's speech and how his visit can open up opportunities for teachers and students to explore important aspects of British and north-east race relations.

The new website may be found here: www.projectnorthstar.co.uk

The site includes a timeline of black history in the north-east from the Romans on Hadrian's Wall to the present day and is designed to engage young learners through accessible language and activities, while the 'Know More' sections provide further detail and depth. There seems to a dearth of references to people of colour in the record from the departure of the Romans until the 18th century but, as always, absence of evidence is not evidence of absence and there may be stories which are yet to be found. By way of example, the project team is currently working with the Durham archives on a lead in 17th-century Sedgefield and a section on black Tudors is to be added in the coming months. The site offers teachers and students much useful guidance as to how such stories might be discovered and extracted from the surviving sources. For those living in the north-east there is a Sunderland Black History Walk which can also serve as an exemplar for those living in other areas. Being an online resource allows content to be added and adapted as further histories are uncovered. New material on time spent in Newcastle by the prominent 18th-century former slave and abolitionist Olaudah Equiano is also due to be published on the site in the near future.



Professor Angela Smith of the University of Sunderland spoke at the launch event about the decolonisation of education.

For further information the Project North Star team may be contacted at : projectNS46@gmail.com

Geoffrey Carter is a member of BALH's Outreach Committee.

WW2 chart makers remembered

Adrian Webb

Once in a lifetime the planets align and events coincide, which together make a local history research so much more significant. One such day, for me, occurred on 6 June 2024.

The local aspects were wartime activities mainly in Bath and Taunton, Somerset in the Admiralty's Hydrographic Department. These places had connections with Nottingham, Exeter, Liverpool, Armadale (West Lothian), Bradford, Cricklewood and numerous ports where Admiralty chart depots were located. It was Bath and Taunton that bore the lion's share of the work of providing Allied forces with an unprecedented number of charts and publications for navigation purposes.

In order to produce anywhere from five to seven million charts per year, instead of the normal figure of one million, the Department needed to expand. Thus premises in Exeter were requisitioned, while a new purpose-built chart-making factory was built at a top secret location in the country, namely Taunton. This unique factory designed in the art deco style down to the very last detail by Cyril Jowsey was fully operational by June 1941. It needed to be staffed, and hundreds of local people, printers from London and Scotland, and women from the Ealing School of Art, were recruited to work in this brand-new, top-secret facility.

The department's finest hour was undoubtedly the design, manufacturer and dispatch of over 450,000 charts for the D-Day landings. Sadly only 12 out of the 1,100 civilians in the department who undertook war work received any formal award for their outstanding efforts. When the war was over many of the staff were no longer required and had to find new jobs. Many had been pushed to breaking points through the requirements for D-Day. I was blissfully unaware of this and hundreds of other facts and stories when I started researching the history behind 'Churchill's secret chart makers' over 20 years ago.

In May this year, I self-published the story of the staff, buildings, events and much more, just in time for the 80th anniversary of D-Day. I decided to dedicate this book to all of those wartime staff who received no recognition for their tremendous efforts, and who provided charts for civilian and military purposes during the war. But the story does not end there.

Five men and women who worked in the Admiralty Chart Establishment at Taunton during the war were still, thankfully, with us on 6 June this year. Accompanied by Rear Admiral Tim Lowe CB, a retired chief executive of the department's successor organisation, the UK Hydrographic Office, I visited these lovely veterans with books and many words of appreciation.

One was Kath Holman, who among other things, undertook fire-watching duties on the roof of Creechbarrow House (the Admiralty Chart Establishment at Taunton). Nancy Berry kindly supplied many excellent memories of her wartime activities. She, along with other young women, worked in the Photographic Department. One of the top-secret projects she worked on involved producing images of the coast of Northern France and sticking them together. The work was so secret that she had no idea that these photos would be used a few months later to help guide over 6,000 ships to Normandy on D-Day. Doris Cox *[pictured on this issue's back cover]* joined the Department during the war as a young office clerk supporting the work of supplying charts to the Navy. Cyril Morse joined the Department as an apprentice in 1945 and worked alongside men in the Engraving Department who had worked around the clock and slept on their copper plates because demands were so great for the work they were producing.

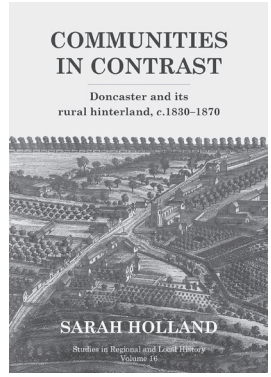
I am still researching the wartime activities in the Hydrographic Department. If any readers have any stories or photos of family members who worked for the Department, please get in touch via somersethistorian@gmail.com.

Dr Adrian Webb edits the Somerset section of Somerset & Dorset Notes & Queries. His book Churchill's Secret Chart Makers *is available via www.somersethistory.com*

Regional publisher seeks proposals

Jane Housham

If you're writing a local history book, why not submit it to University of Hertfordshire Press? An academic publisher specialising in local and regional history, we pride ourselves on offering a publishing model that not all publishers can, applying the high academic standards and specialist knowledge of a university press alongside the benefits of a 'boutique' publishing house: personalised editorial support and real attention to details. We maintain high-quality production values and we tailor our marketing to fit each individual publication.



At the same time, we keep our book prices down so that individual readers can afford them, not just university libraries. We want to reach a broad swathe of readers who'll find our books readable and interesting and we keep this front and centre at all stages of our editorial process, from the way we work with our authors on their texts, to the care we take to produce attractive covers and illustrations for every book.

To provide meaningful context for books about particular regions, we've developed three lists within our overall publishing activity: Hertfordshire Publications, Essex Publications and West Midlands Publications, each supported by locally based editorial panels with specialised knowledge of their region. We hope to develop more in the future.

For each regional list, the editorial panel considers proposals and develops those they want to support. All three share the values of UH Press itself, as outlined above, while looking for opportunities to explore their own long and complex regional histories. We publish monographs, multi-authored studies and conference proceedings. Subject matter can range widely, including social, economic, cultural, environmental, architectural and military history. We're keen to explore, as examples, aspects of both rural and urban history, agriculture and industry, studies of women, children, ethnic communities and social classes (for instance *Prostitution in Victorian Colchester* by Jane Pearson and Maria Rayner, from Essex Publications). Time periods covered can span from the prehistoric to the 21st century. We believe these publications will be of interest to local people but also engage with debates and themes that are relevant to the wider community of historians.

Geographically, the focus of a particular volume may be county or region wide or on specific places (such as our recent West Midlands volume on Victorian Moseley by Janet Berry). While it is relatively straightforward to define the geographical scope of both Essex and Hertfordshire Publications, for West Midlands Publications it broadly encompasses the Birmingham/Wolverhampton conurbation as well as the historic counties of Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Derbyshire.

We also have two more broad-ranging series, Studies in Regional and Local History (series editor Jane Whittle, professor of Economic and Social History at Exeter University – our latest book in that series is *Bricks of Victorian London* by Peter Hounsell), and the rather similarly titled Explorations in Local and Regional History (series editors Katrina Navickas, professor of History at University of Hertfordshire and Dr Angela Muir, director of the Centre for Regional and Local History at University of Leicester). The key difference is that Explorations publishes shorter texts of up to a maximum of 60,000 words in length. Finally, some books simply stand alone as UH Press titles.

So if you're keen to publish a book on an aspect of local or regional history, why not consider filling in our proposal form (www.herts.ac.uk/uhpress/for-authors), or email me first for a more informal discussion? We can also put you in touch with the editorial panel or series editor/s of the list that seems best suited to your topic. Ideas for any of our lists are always welcome.

Jane Housham is press manager at University of Hertfordshire Press (www.herts.ac.uk/uhpress). Contact her via j.j.housham@herts.ac.uk

Local History News

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Supplement

THE BALH DYMOND LECTURE 2024

***Online* • Thursday 5 December • 7–8pm**

Members free • Non-members £5

English merchant shipping and early modern maritime communities, c.1588–c.1765

How did England's merchant fleet develop over the course of two tumultuous centuries? Who sailed in these ships and what roles did they play in their local communities? What types of goods were imported and exported? And how did war, politics and regional differences affect English seaborne trade? This lecture will introduce the early findings of a three-year, AHRC-funded project that will help us to answer these – and many more – questions. By undertaking a systematic investigation of records relating to maritime commercial activity around the country, the project sheds new light on the development of merchant shipping, maritime communities and local networks of trade. In order to demonstrate the practical application of the project's findings, the remainder of the lecture will explore some of the merchant and maritime communities along England's south coast. Upon its completion, the project's freely accessible digital resources will allow historians to undertake the same fine-grained analysis for other parts of the country.

Since 2021, BALH has been running an annual lecture each winter, welcoming distinguished academics to share their research with us. This is becoming a highlight of our annual calendar for both members and the wider public to enjoy. We are delighted to announce that our 2024 lecture is being given by **Professor Craig Lambert and Professor John McAleer of the University of Southampton**.

We are incredibly excited to welcome members and the public to this fascinating talk. The lecture will be held via Zoom at 7pm on Thursday 5 December. The event will be free for BALH members with a small charge for non-members (reduced for members of our member societies). Full information of the talk, including booking information, can be found on the BALH website.

SEE **WWW.BALH.ORG.UK/DYMOND2024** FOR THE LATEST INFORMATION AND TO BOOK YOUR PLACE

A full-day conference organised jointly by the Society for Lincolnshire History & Archaeology (SLHA), the British Association for Local History (BALH) and the Lincoln Record Society (LRS)

Untold Stories

New research on the City, County and Historic Diocese of Lincoln

Saturday 21 September 2024

10.00am – 4.30pm • Deans Building, Lincoln College, Monks Road, Lincoln LN2 5HQ • Admission £32.00 including lunch
£25.00 for students and SLHA, BALH and LRS members

Documenting the medieval Diocese of Lincoln

- Editing the Kirkstead Abbey cartulary: the perspective of underexplored local sources – *Kathryn Dutton*
- Professor Joseph Goering – our debt to him for the future of the study of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln 1235–1253 – *Owain Gardner*
- Anglo-papal tensions: clerical appointments and patronage networks as depicted in the registers of Bishop Thomas Bek of Lincoln (1342–1347) – *Jessica Holt*

Regulating behaviour in the early modern Diocese of Lincoln

- 'To the fatherless chyldren at sanct kateryns wyth owt the barres off Lincoln, xxd': investigating testators' charitable giving in Lincolnshire fenland districts, 1520–40 – *Brian Hodgkinson*
- Ecclesiastical judges and the importance of emotion: Lincoln's Audience Court and further dismantling historiographical orthodoxies around institutional efforts to restrain illicit sexual conduct – *Martin Roberts*

Surveying people and property over space and time

- 'The Surveighe of the Mannour of Toynton': life on the fen edge in the early years of the seventeenth century – *Jenne Pape*
- Parliamentary surveys of the county and diocese of Lincoln, 1647–1660 – *Mike Rogers*
- Exploring social and cultural history through decorative architectural features. A case study of late-Victorian and Edwardian tiled entrances in Lincoln suburban houses – *Shirley Brook*

Life stories in early and later modern Lincolnshire

- Geography and poll books: the political distribution of voters during the Lincolnshire by-election of 1721 – *Thomas Brown-Warr*
- The early memoirs of William Smith Hesleden (1774–1854), solicitor and antiquarian of Barton-upon-Humber – *Martin Watkinson*
- Lincoln Diocesan Training College: untold stories from its early students – *Jack Rhoden et al*

The Conference will host bookstalls selling new and second-hand books and maps.

Book at Eventbrite via www.balh.org.uk/PNG193

The promo code for a student or members' discount is SLHASAVER24

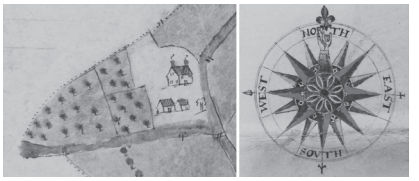
Closing date for bookings is 7 September 2024 • Refunds cannot be made after this date

BALH CONFERENCE

Maps and Buildings

Saturday 12 October 2024 10am–4pm
St Andrew's Church Hall, Kingston Road, Taunton, TA2 7SB
£20 (BALH members) £25 (non-members), including refreshments and lunch

The British Association for Local History is delighted to present this in-person, one-day conference on the complementary topics of maps and buildings in local history. Both topics offer a tangible and accessible route into the study of local history and enrich our understanding of the past.



The conference will include five presentations and lunch included in the ticket price. The speakers and topics are:

Joseph Rogers – Tithe barns and their imposters
Lucy Browne – A map and a manor: a window on a 17th-century Devon village
Jane Golding – Know your landscape: understanding buildings in their landscape context using local and national historic environment records and collections
John Chandler – Maps: the key to uncovering history
Julian Orbach – Strange and unusual buildings in Somerset

Joseph Rogers is the author of *Tithe Barns* and *Railway Enthusiasm in Twenty-first-century Britain*. His research on tithe barns saw him travel to 100+ historic barns across the UK, from East Lothian to Cornwall, Gwynedd to Kent and everywhere in between. He was inspired to learn more about the subject by the many examples found in Somerset.

Lucy Browne is a qualified genealogist based in north-west Devon, with a degree in History from the University of Wales (Lampeter) and a Diploma in Genealogy from the Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies (IHGS). She has worked professionally as a freelance genealogist and documentary researcher since 2015, and tutor for the IHGS since 2017, and is a council member of the Association of Genealogists and Researchers in Archives.

Jane Golding is a Trustee and Vice-Chair of the British Association for Local History. Her academic background is in landscape history, and she manages Historic England's Heritage Gateway.

John Chandler is a Trustee and Chair of the Publishing Committee of the BALH. After working as a librarian, his freelance career has included writing, editing, lecturing and historical research. He is a VCH editor and contributor in Gloucester and Wiltshire, a visiting research fellow at the University of the West of England, Bristol, and publishes West Country regional and social history as Hobnob Press.

Julian Orbach is an author and lecturer in architectural history. He was architectural adviser to the Victorian Society in 1975–7 and has contributed to five volumes of the Pevsner series: Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire/Ceredigion and Gwynedd in Wales, and most recently Somerset South and West, 2014, and Wiltshire, 2021. He has been president of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society.

BOOK HERE:
www.balh.org.uk/event-balh-balh-conference-maps-and-buildings-2024-10-12

Booking is open until Thursday 10 October at 10am

BALH Awards for Local Historians

OUTSTANDING INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The purpose of this award is to honour publicly local historians of all ages who have made outstanding and significant voluntary contributions to the subject in their own areas and more widely. Such contributions might include raising awareness of the subject or developing innovative ways of collecting and disseminating research into local history. It is intended that the awards should embrace as wide a spectrum of activity in local history as possible.

The most important thing the recipients have in common is their enthusiasm for local history and their ability and inclination to share this with others.

Nominations may be made by anyone who feels they recognise such a contribution, using the form on our website at **www.balh.org.uk/awards**. Nominations are considered by the Awards Panel made up of experienced local historians who are members of the Association's Board of Trustees or one of its advisory committees. Up to six awards are made annually. Awards certificates are normally presented at the BALH AGM in June.

The nominator is responsible for submitting the nomination form and for ensuring that the two referees each complete the reference form available on the website (if necessary, please ask for a paper copy). References each require 300–500 words in support of the nomination outlining how, in the experience of the referee, the nominated local historian deserves this recognition. If not submitting online, those three forms should arrive together by post to British Association for Local History Awards c/o Paul Dryburgh, The National Archives, Kew TW9 4DU or by email to admin@balh.org.uk between 1 July and 31 December. Please do not send any additional material.

If you have not received an acknowledgement within three weeks please contact the BALH Office admin@balh.org.uk

Please see inside front cover for further details of the
BALH Awards for Local Historians for Research & Publication
and for a Society Newsletter.

Readers who would like to suggest relevant events at which BALH might be represented, by a display table, sales stall or perhaps a talk on the programme, are invited to get in touch with Stephen Miller, BALH Outreach Coordinator, email outreach@balh.org.uk. Particularly welcome are proposals which include offers of local volunteers to help on the day. This is a very helpful way in which members can be actively involved in the work of BALH.

BALH
BRITISH ASSOCIATION
FOR LOCAL HISTORY

‘Operation Sock’, the Battle of the Ducks and the 1930s Tithe War

John Bulaitis

A story in an old Dover newspaper caught my eye. It described how in September 1934 around 100 farmers, farmhands and their friends had assembled in late evening at a local inn. They arrived with a password – ‘Operation Sock’. Soon they were travelling in a convoy of cars and trucks down the Dover Road:

> *The night was dark with patches of fog, and as the cars approached the lane to West Court Farm a couple of scouts were sent out to cut the telephone wire. The gate was locked so it was taken off its hinges. A cordon was immediately thrown around the farm buildings and cottages. A farm labourer, Arthur Lee, was woken by his wife and opened his door to the men. He gave a statement to the police: ‘One of them grabbed me by the neck and pulled me outside. They had a handkerchief tied across their faces.’ They asked if the farm was Ecclesiastical Commissioners: ‘We want the stuff which was brought here this afternoon, a Bull, a Sow and the ducks’.*

The story also featured prominently in the national press. ‘Ducks “in Custody”’, announced the *Daily Mirror*; ‘Ducks Seized in Tithe Distress’, reported the *Times*. ‘Tithe Battle of Ducks’ screamed the headline in the *London Evening Standard* over a report of ‘an astonishing story’ that ‘will go down in Tithe War history’. I simply had to know more.

The history of the tithe is a complex one. Its origins shrouded in the mists of time, most people know tithe as a medieval tax: ten per cent of produce paid to the Church. Yet most people are flabbergasted to learn that in England and Wales tithe was still collected, albeit in cash form, during the interwar years. As well as the Church, tithe was collected by Oxford and Cambridge colleges, public schools (Eton, Winchester, Bluecoat School, etc.), hospitals, insurance companies and aristocrats.

The ‘Tithe War’ of the 1930s began when farmers – organised by the National Tithepayers’ Association – launched a campaign of ‘passive resistance’ and refused to pay the charge. In response, tithe owners took out court orders to seize produce and household possessions, selling the goods at auction or by tender.



Suffolk novelist and campaigner Doreen Wallace held aloft during a Tithe War protest in 1939, during which British fascists became involved.

The ‘war’ became increasingly bitter. My book’s front cover has a photo of protesting farmers burning effigies of tithe owners. One of these was ‘The Arch of Cant’, a thinly disguised reference to the Archbishop of Canterbury. The ‘Battle of the Ducks’ was an attempt by farmers to seize back goods that had been forcibly removed by General Dealers Ltd, a shadowy company set up with subterfuge and at great expense by the Church in an attempt to break the farmers’ movement.

The Tithepayers’ Association left no official archive – though I found traces of its activities in local collections. As I shared my research at local history society events, people came forward with documentation from family collections. Some recounted stories. I learnt about George Cooper – known as the Smarden Martyr on account of being jailed for disrupting an auction – from his great-great grandson. The Church of England archives contained rich documentation, which among other things allowed me to piece together a

warts-and-all story of General Dealers Ltd.

The dramatis personae include the main political figures of the day. But pride of place goes to lesser-known personalities, many of them colourful characters, including:

- Canterbury Cathedral agent Frank Allen, who after collecting for the Church championed farmers as secretary of the National Tithepayers' Association
- the 'Fighting Parson', Rev Roderick Kedward, Methodist minister and former Liberal MP whose fiery oratory galvanised the movement
- Cambridge-educated novelist Doreen Wallace *(pictured on the previous page)*, who married a Suffolk farmer and found herself at the heart of the conflict
- former Labour MP and trade union official George Middleton, who as First Estates Commissioner masterminded the Church's response to the tithe war.

There is also the thorny question of the involvement of fascists in the farmers' campaign. Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists and Nazi sympathisers such as Viscount Lymington and George Pitt-Rivers all played a role.

This piece of local history turned into a major research project. I explored the Tithe War, how it was organised and the problems it caused for the Church, government, political parties, and leading farming and landowning associations. This tale also has a wider historical significance. As farmers across Europe join marches and protests today – often supported by forces from the extreme-right – the Tithe War is a story we all can learn from.

John Bulaitis is senior lecturer in Modern History at Canterbury Christ Church University. His book The Tithe War in England and Wales, 1881–1936: A Curious Rural Revolt *was recently published in the series Boydell Studies in Rural History. LHN readers can buy a copy for £35 (reduced from £75) direct from boydellandbrewer.com using the code BB006.*

A trail of crumbs…

Helen Palmer

All sorts of cunning ruses may be employed in tempting new people into an interest in local history. At Ceredigion Archives the team have utilised their interest, nay, fascination, with food to encourage new engagements with local and social history.

Exploring what was eaten by our ancestors, where it came from and how it was prepared can captivate people of all ages. One of the simplest but most satisfying learning events shared by Ceredigion Museum and Archives involved butter-making by children aged 9–11. The subject of the session was actually 'Witchcraft in Ceredigion' – but we didn't want to go down the 'eye of newt' path, preferring instead to look at the more common forms of rural bewitchment which often included the claim that butter failed to churn successfully. There are numerous accounts of such incidents from the villages and farms of the county.

We looked at the old butter churns that the museum has on display. We discussed how easy it is now just to go to a shop, and considered why our ancestors might not have had that option available. Children and adults started to imagine their way into the past.

'OK, so let's see how difficult it is to make butter.' The challenge was made, every child was equipped with a plastic bottle (for safety!) containing some full-fat milk, and after a moment's instruction they were all shaking their bottles with energetic enthusiasm. There was much laughter, some good-humoured teasing, more shaking, and eventually there was butter.

The children were fascinated by the simple alchemy – and much to our surprise, they wanted to try the butter they had created. After a quick check to make sure there were no dairy-intolerant folk in the room, a member of staff rushed out to buy loaves and the youngsters proceeded to feast. They ate all the bread, all the butter, and – like the tiger who came to tea – seemed insatiable. But no one was sick, everyone was happy and they had learned something valuable and practical about the history of life in a rural community.

I commend the idea to local history groups and societies – maybe at an outdoor event like a local fair, agricultural show or carnival?

News round-up

With thanks to Doug Cox, Heather Falvey, Trevor Fisher, Susan Moore, Richard Owen, Sue Peebles, Joe Saunders, Adrian Webb

The **Historical Association**'s quarterly magazine *The Historian* is redeveloping its local history offering and is soliciting contributions for two new regular items. It is seeking pieces for 'History Out and About' where the aim is to share your local history research. Also sought are pieces for 'Doing History', local or family history 'how-to' guides for different sources and approaches to undertaking studies. Both items should be around 1,500 words. If you are interested in contributing to *The Historian* please get in touch with Joe Saunders, joseph6.saunders@hotmail.com

This year's online **'All About That Place'** challenge takes place from Friday 27 September to Sunday 6 October – this is a virtual event broadcast over social media, consisting of very short (c.10 minutes) talks on a plethora of subjects and supported by an interactive workbook of tasks and activities. Organisations supporting the event include BALH, the Society for One-Place Studies and the Society of Genealogists. Look out for the hashtag #AATP24 on social media.

Anyone expecting action on the controversial arson attacks on the Leopard and Crooked House pubs (see LHN143, 147 and 149) may be disappointed. Trevor Fisher reports that the 'Savoy of the North' in Stoke's mother town of **Burslem** may be converted to housing – or so the council said on 24 May. Meanwhile the tidal wave of anger over the burning of the Crooked House in **Himley**, South Staffordshire, did lead the South Staffs Council to act… but on 1 May the Council reported the Planning Inspectorate had put back a public inquiry from 6 August to sometime in 2025.

Since the publication of *The Somerset Home Guard: A Pictorial Roll-Call* by Jeffrey Wilson in 2004, many more photographs, information and corrections have surfaced. A companion volume or supplement is being produced, with publication planned for early 2025. If you have any photographs or information that you would like to be considered for inclusion please contact Adrian Webb by email at somersethistorian@gmail.com



The latest (free) issue of **Historic England**'s *Research* journal on industrial heritage, No. 26, includes articles on the Soho Manufactory (pictured in 1789) and related buildings in Handsworth, Birmingham; steam-powered pumping stations in Victorian cities; the built environment in Lancashire's textile areas; and 500 years of oasts and hop kilns in England. Available via www.balh.org.uk/NAF190

Graham Titley is looking for copies of two issues of *The Local Historian* to complete a collection: vol 32(4) from 2002 and 36(1) from 2006 (he has digital copies but would like paper ones!). He has over 150 duplicate issues for sale on eBay if other readers are hunting for them – he can be contacted directly via grahamtitley@outlook.com

Cambois Hidden Depths is a six-month project to uncover the history of the Northumberland coastal village of **Cambois** though a mixture of archaeological investigation, art, photography, storytelling and even dance, all with the help of local primary school children. The focus is the village's former Victorian school. Findings and artistic interpretations will be showcased at an event running on 27 and 28 September – see www.novemberclub.org.uk/whatson/cambois-hidden-depths-1

The annual **Birmingham Heritage Week** festival, now in its tenth year, will run from 6 to 15 September with more than 100 events. Full details at birminghamheritageweek.co.uk

This year's **Heritage Open Days** will run from 6 to 15 September at thousands of sites across England – see www.heritageopendays.org.uk. London's **Open House Festival** will be 14–22 September (programme.openhouse.org.uk).

Oxfordshire historian Julie Ann Godson **is** researching families who lived in converted railway carriages after WW2. She says: 'Please ask older residents in your village or town for their recollections and, ideally, for any photographs, however wonky or blurry.' Contact her via julie.ann.godson@history.oxon.org

Buckinghamshire Council has given consent to the HS2 railway company's latest proposals for Grim's Ditch near Leather Lane, **Great Missenden**. Grim's Ditch is an ancient earthwork which stretches from Bradenham to Berkhamsted for approximately 18km and is thought to be Iron Age (other sections of a similar earthwork with the same name can be found across Oxfordshire). It was originally expected that the railway development would need to remove 150 metres of the ditch, but this will now be 75 m. Councillor Peter Martin said: 'Whilst we are pleased that less of Grim's Ditch will be impacted by the HS2 line passing through the area and that valuable archaeological information can be retrieved during the works, we bitterly regret that damage will be done to any part of this ancient monument.'

The rows over proposals for a two-mile tunnel at **Stonehenge** rumble on, and UNESCO's World Heritage Committee has now made a draft decision to add the site to its 'danger list'. A draft document noted that 'The proposed A303 Scheme remains a threat to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property' and the committee was expected to vote on whether the site should be declared at risk by the end of July.

Like many local landmarks across the country, **Haverfordwest**'s 1889 Temperance Hall has seen many incarnations, including cinema, wartime billet, tax office and Masonic lodge – now, thanks to Haverfordwest Heritage and the National Lottery Heritage Fund, it is now being rescued and restored having been empty and neglected since 2009. It will reopen as a Community Printworks in summer 2025.

The **North UK Mills** networking group is a body set up this year to bring together people wanting to share information and ideas about operating, preserving and exploring Britain's pre-industrial and industrial mill heritage. It is facilitated by the Heritage Trust Network and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings Scotland. Its next meeting will be in October – see www.balh.org.uk/DYH192

SOCIETIES



Following the success of the first Northleach History Exhibition last autumn, a second exhibition of local history is to be held at the Old Prison on the Fosseway (A429) in the Gloucestershire town from Friday 25 October to Monday 28 October. As last year, the Northleach with Eastington Town Council, the Northleach Town Trustees, the Sly Trust, the Friends of the Cotswolds and Northleach School have joined together with **Northleach Historical Society** to share their archives, and will provide volunteers to help as guides for all tables at the exhibition.

The exhibits will be managed by Lou Chandler-Mullins of the Friends of the Cotswolds Trust, which owns the Old Prison, and by the Sly Archivist Jessica Clark, who is also a senior archivist at the Gloucester Heritage Hub. The long-term aim remains a Northleach Museum and Archive.

The subjects of this year's exhibition will include the Northleach area in the Roman period; the coming of the Northleach Bypass in 1984; Westwoods Grammar School; the history of the local WI; Northleach Workhouse; the archive of the nearby village of Sherborne; and rural agriculture and industry in Northleach.

Cumbria Local History Federation's AGM and Annual Convention will be held on 12 October – keep an eye on /www.clhf.org.uk/events-diary for details.

Doug Cox of **Horley Local History Society** reports that in 1958 one of their earliest members, Elisabeth Lane, wrote a 38-page booklet called Early Days in Horley, Sidlow. An immense amount of work and research went into this booklet and, as part of the

Wincanton History Day



Following the success of last year's History Day, **Wincanton & District Museum & History Society** organised another History Day in March this year. There were a myriad of activities all through the town, ranging from a historic costume competition, a parade of historic vehicles through the town centre led by a tank, an antiques valuation room, metal detecting for children, a 1960s schoolroom with a competition to make something connected with the landing on the moon, a cake competition using World War Two recipes, a tea dance, a talk about 500 years of firearms, and an Ask the Experts room which featured local family history societies and BALH. In addition to these activities the local church was open with a display of historical artefacts, as was the Freemasons Lodge.

With a grant from the £10,000 Heritage Lottery Fund, the society's small committee, led by its very capable and enthusiastic chairman, can confirm that the day was not difficult to organise and could be replicated by any small society. That said, the chairman was heard to mutter 'never again' the day before. But all the last minute panics have been forgotten, and plans are already afoot for next year's event. *Susan Moore (pictured on the BALH stand)*

society's efforts to bring its archives online, it is now available to read on their website at www.horleyhistory.org.uk

Avon Local History & Archaeology's annual general meeting will be hosted by **Banwell Society for Archaeology** at Banwell Village Hall on 11 October. ALHA's latest *Newsletter* (June 2024) has a lively discussion about Professor Peter Singer's previous controversial assertion that museums do not deserve support through donations.

Historic Buildings & Places (aka the Ancient Monuments Society) is holding a weekend in Conwy and Llandudno on 7–8 September. There will be visits to local heritage sites and a series of short lectures on subjects such as Nonconformist chapels, north-west Wales's historic environment and local archaeology.

The **Victorian Society** has announced its 2024 list of its top 10 sites 'at risk'. The sites are: Kennington Boys' School, Lambeth; The Kursaal, Southend-on-Sea; Jesmond Dene Banqueting Hall, Newcastle upon Tyne; Bramcote Tennis Pavilion, Scarborough; St Luke's Chapel at Nottingham City Hospital; the former Roslyn Hoe, Ilfracombe; Chances Glassworks, Smethwick; St Agnes' Vicarage and Hall, Liverpool; the former Education Department offices, Derby; Cardiff Coal Exchange, Butetown, Glamorgan.

Church Stretton Local History Group has published the results of its research into the local union workhouse and its inmates in a new book, and showcased its findings in an exhibition. The workhouse site is now home to St Lawrence Primary School, and the pupils there have been closely involved with the investigations.

Staffordshire Archaeological & Historical Society's *Newsletter* reports that it is involved, along with **Derbyshire Archaeological Society**, in a community project to record graffiti in churches and other medieval buildings throughout the Trent Valley. (Details available from Dr Mark Knight, m.knight@staffs-wildlife.org.uk)

Varied aspects of Lancs local history

Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society held its annual conference at the Friends' Meeting House in Manchester on 11 May. President Mike Nevell opened the day by thanking all the speakers and for everyone coming along from the society plus friends from Manchester and Lancashire Family History Society.

The morning session focused on historical talks. It started off with Ian Mitchel and his talk on 'Mantles and Myths', about Browns of Chester c.1780–2021. Next came Helen Corlett and her fascinating talk on The Cooper at Old Bridge End discussing 'Finding a Place in Early 19th-century Manchester'. Finally, John Marsden and Hilary Hartigan discussed the research of Manchester and Lancashire Family History Society.

The afternoon session was devoted to archaeology. First was Norman Redhead on Castleshaw Roman Fort, Saddleworth, showing slides of various stages in the recent dig. Next came Neil Coldrick with his talk on 'Medieval Ironworking in Holcombe Valley', where evidence has been uncovered of ironworking in the 13th and 14th centuries. Finally, Kelly Griffiths' talk, 'Scuttled: Excavations on the Historic Canal Basin in Rochdale' (see picture). As an industrial archaeologist Kelly had been asked by her company to check out the site before work could start on building new houses. Boats that had been scuttled there were still in evidence. This project has aroused so much interest that an audio drama has been produced which will be narrated by Christopher Eccleston, a Salford lad. *Sue Peebles*



Huddersfield Local History Society's latest annual *Journal* is now out, and includes articles on the history of Standard Fireworks from being a drapery firm to becoming a global business and on the town's connections to both slavery and its abolition.

Somborne and District Society in Hampshire is celebrating its 45th anniversary with a local history day, 'Sombornes Revisited' on 23 September at King's Somborne Village Hall.

The **Friends of Medway Archives** journal *The Clock Tower* reports that Medway Council has given approval in principle for a statue of Isaac Newell on the waterfront at Strood, Kent. Isaac Newell was born in Strood and sailed to Argentina at the age of 16, where he pioneered the sport of football. There is a permanent exhibition about him at Strood Sports Centre.

Cleveland and Teesside Local History Society's May *Newsletter* contains an early sighting of a local history book generated by artificial intelligence: 'author' Marc Owens' *2,000 Years of North-East England: An AI-Guided Journey through the History of 12 Villages*. Draw your own conclusions!



The **Yorkshire Museum** in York now has an ongoing exhibition about Star Carr, the major Mesolithic archaeological site near Scarborough, which features the oldest complete hunting bow in the world and Europe's earliest evidence of carpentry. A related event running until 1 September features a replica of 'Britain's oldest house' from the site, in the museum gardens.

The **Museums Association**'s 2024 conference will take place 12–14 November at the Royal Armouries Museum, Leeds and online, on the theme 'The Joy of Museums'. Details: www.museumsassociation.org/events/conference-2024

The **Museum of Oxford** has a photographic exhibition titled 'A Way of Life: the people behind St Giles Fair' running until 28 September. The fair was first documented in 1625 but is believed to date back to the 13th century.

The **Faith Museum** in Bishop Auckland – Britain's first dedicated to the story of religious faith in Britain – opened last year and has now won one of RIBA's national architecture awards, along with new buildings at Auckland Castle.

The Welsh government has agreed £3.2m of funding will go towards important repairs at the **National Museum Cardiff** and the **National Library of Wales** in Aberystwyth. A further £500,000 will help improve storage facilities at other museums and archives across Wales. Meanwhile the Scottish government has allocated £500,00 to develop resilience in Scotland's museums – this will initially support 14 museums and galleries to increase energy efficiency, reduce running costs and streamline maintenance.



Sandwell Council in the West Midlands is exploring the idea of a new £20m archive building behind Smethwick's Council House – many of the archive's current holdings are at risk and more than £36,000 has already been spent cleaning and restoring records damaged by floods and mould, the *Birmingham Mail* reports.

Oxfordshire History Centre has completed its scanning of illustrations and advertisements in *Oxford (Shopper's) Monthly* published between

New chapter for Durham archives



County Durham's much-heralded new visitor attraction celebrating the past, present and future of the region is now open to the public. Located in the recently restored and extended Grade II-listed Mount Oswald manor house, **The Story** brings modern facilities into a Georgian setting, and provides a new home for the county archives. Although The Story was originally intended to open by the end of last year, delays due to the complexity of the project meant that it opened on 14 June (the official opening is pictured here).

Combining five important collections, The Story offers visitors access to ancient documents and archaeological finds, records of bravery, and stories of life-changing events. This includes six miles of archives charting 900 years of County Durham's history and the entire Durham Light Infantry (DLI) Collection, which has been reunited with the DLI Archive for the first time since 1998.

A free, interactive exhibition space lifts the lid on the stories within these collections, and a programme of activities will offer new ways for people to discover and learn more about the people and events that shaped the county. The Story is also the new home of the County Registration Service.

The Story has been made possible thanks to support from a number of organisations including the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the European Regional Development Fund, the Wolfson Foundation and the Banks Group, which gave Mount Oswald manor house to the council.

Online news

The **General Register Office** (www.gro.gov.uk) has increased its charges for civil birth, marriage and death registration records. Digital images have risen from £2.50 to £3; PDFs from £7 to £8; and printed certificates have gone from £11 to £12.50 (with an index reference) and £14 to £16 (without).

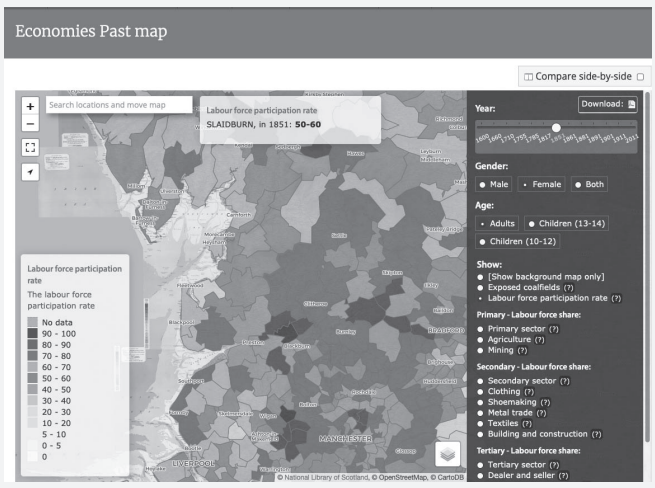
The **National Library of Scotland** has added more than 900 maps by commercial publishers of England and Wales (from the 1840s–1970s) at maps.nls.uk. They include specialised maps of railways and roads, economic maps showing geology and coalfields, educational maps for classroom use, planning maps, and maps for tourists. The NLS also has a new resource in collaboration with the University of Bristol exploring how places were presented in premodern Scottish poetry – see maps.nls.uk/projects/place-and-poetry. And the NLS has created a Virtual Reading Room Service where users can view collection items in real time through a live video call, using Zoom or Microsoft Teams. Details: www.nls.uk/using-the-library/reading-rooms/view-material- online

Further to our report on recent **copyright issues** over images (see 'New ruling over copyright', LHN150), open access and cultural heritage specialist Douglas McCarthy has a series of interesting blog posts on this subject and the challenges facing the heritage sector. See, for example, douglasmccarthy.com/2024/06/schrodingers-copyright/

Recent free open access digital books from **UCL Press** include *Between Design and Making: Architecture and Craftsmanship, 1630–1760* (www.uclpress.co.uk/products/238837) and *Methods and Methodologies in Heritage Studies* (www.uclpress.co.uk/products/210473).

'Their Finest Hour' is a project by the University of Oxford to create the largest publicly available online archive of World War Two memorabilia. More than 25,000 artefacts and stories are now showcased at its website, theirfinesthour.org, which can be searched by keywords such as place names.

Economies Past, www.economiespast.org, is the fruit of 20 years of research by historians at Cambridge and provides what is described as the most detailed quantitative picture of economic development over time ever assembled anywhere in the world. It showcases the distribution of men and women through different economic activities from the 17th century onwards, and has revealed that the key period for the shift from the primary economic sector (agriculture, forestry and fishing) to the secondary sector (mining, manufacturing and construction) was 1600–1700, not 1750–1850 as generally assumed. The site's data can be explored though an interactive map of England and Wales (pictured).



1923 and 1940. Browse the collection via www.balh.org.uk/FPA191

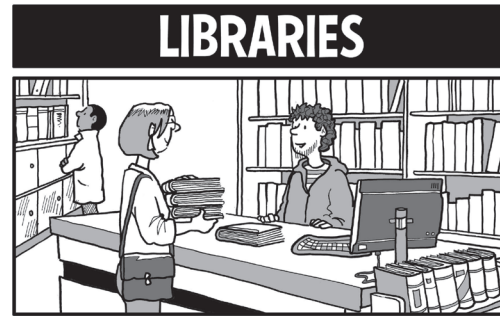


Cleaning surface dirt off the pages of a ledger of Tower Bridge staff. (City Bridge Foundation)

London Metropolitan Archives, which was closed for nearly three weeks this summer for building work at its Clerkenwell site, is planning to change its name to 'The London Archive'. A project is currently under way for the archive to take on all of the collections of the City Bridge Foundation, which oversees the maintenance of Tower, London, Southwark, Millennium and Blackfriars Bridges. There are more than 1,000 plans of Tower Bridge alone in the collection, and an exhibition is currently place at Guildhall Art Gallery (until 19 September) to mark the 130th anniversary of the bridge's opening.

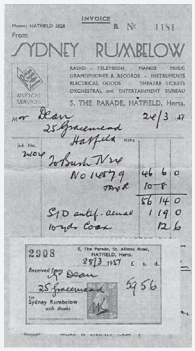
Suffolk Archives will close its Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft premises at the end of August, and the consolidation of records will necessitate the complete closure of the county archives and the John Blatchly Local Studies Library at The Hold in Ipswich for three months starting in October (the exhibition space and café will remain open). Improved services at The Hold are expected to be available from January.

East Riding Archives' research room remains closed for the £3.3m transformation of its Treasure House site in Beverley, which is still expected to reopen later this year with the updated name the Champney Treasure House, named after local early 20th-century textile magnate and benefactor John Champney. Latest details: www.eastridingculture.co.uk/champney-treasure-house-transformation



The **British Library** is still recovering from the major cyberattack which hit it last October. In a blog post in May, the Library reported that work was under way to restore access to its collections held at Boston Spa during July. Access to digital collections acquired through Non-Print Legal Deposit was expected to be restored during August, and web pages featuring digitised manuscripts in September. Chief executive Roly Keating said that the complex restoration work was 'dependent on the successful installation of a completely new computing infrastructure'.

Good ideas to borrow…



Hatfield Local History Society's June *Newsletter* contains a fascinating article about John Dean's late father Edward, who had collected receipts from goods he bought throughout his lifetime. He ws born in 1902 and the earliest receipt dated from 1929, for the purchase of a motorbike. Many other receipts yield interesting details of local and social history, such as the purchase of furniture for Edward and his wife's new home bought in the 1940s. Payments for John's mother's Home Help when giving birth are also detailed in the collection, and there is much more besides. Perhaps members of your own society could 'crowdsource' a collection of this kind from family members and findings in attics and explore what it reveals?

For another good idea, see page 20.

The BALH Small Grants Programme: applications welcome

Stephen Miller

The British Association for Local History Small Grants Programme has been designed to enable groups and organisations to deliver projects which support the study, enjoyment and dissemination of local history.

The BALH Trustees have allocated a total budget of £5,000 in the first year towards the Small Grants Programme, initially as a pilot to gauge interest and test the process. Applications for up to £500 are invited – this could be for the entire project or contribution towards a larger one. We encourage applications from a diverse range of groups.

The application form will be available at the BALH website and guidance notes are below. Any queries and completed applications can be emailed to outreach@balh.org.uk.

What we will fund

The aim of the fund is broad in terms of supporting the study, enjoyment and dissemination of local history. We are open to a wide range of methods and outputs to achieve this aim. These could include, but are not limited to:

- publications – printed and digital
- exhibitions
- school and other educational projects
- walks
- podcasts
- research
- training and development
- events.

Assessment

Each application will be assessed by a grant panel made up of BALH Trustees and committee members. We plan to meet every three months to review applications. Please be aware we have a limited fund available; once this is allocated we may have to close the programme down early to review.

Payment schedule

Typically grant payments will be made in instalments to be agreed with each successful applicant. A typical example would be 50 per cent upfront, 40 per cent part way through the project then the remaining 10 per cent on project completion and evaluation.



An archaeological investigation, a local history workshop, a guided walk… what could a small grant help your group with?

Communication

We expect all applicants to make use of and engage with our communication methods. This could be via our digital (social media, blogs, podcasts, online talks, etc) or printed (*The Local Historian* and *Local History News*) platforms.

Evaluation

All successful applicants will be required to provide an evaluation report of their project against the aims set out in their application. This will be shared publicly as a report on our website and *Local History News*.

Visit www.balh.org.uk or contact outreach@balh.org.uk for further details.

BALH: 2024 AGM report

This year's BALH AGM was held on Thursday 16 May. It was introduced by the current BALH Chair, Paul Dryburgh, and after confirmation of the previous year's minutes (available in the Supplement to LHN150), he reviewed the association's activities over the past year.

He highlighted the adaptation to online events due to the pandemic, which increased participation and outreach. Membership numbers had remained stable, with a slight increase in new members joining online events.

He also emphasised the success of the association's publications, including the journals and various local history-related books. Despite the knock-on effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, BALH had hosted several successful online lectures and workshops, receiving positive feedback from participants.

The Treasurer's report was given by outgoing Treasurer Iain Taylor. He demonstrated BALH's stable financial position, attributed this to careful budgeting and successful fundraising efforts. His report included detailed figures on income sources, such as membership fees, publication sales and donations (full details will be available in the minutes in due course). He said that the association had maintained healthy reserves, which will support future projects and contingencies.

Sophie Anstee de Mas was then introduced as the new Treasurer. She expressed her enthusiasm for taking on the role and thanked Iain for his service. She outlined her goals, including improving financial transparency and exploring new funding opportunities.

The meeting continued with the election of officers, most notably the introduction of Professor Jackie Eales as the incoming president, taking over from Professor Caroline Barron, who wished her successor well in the role. Paul thanked Caroline for her service and contributions.

The winners of the 2024 awards for Outstanding Individual Contribution (OIC), as well as the Long and Short Article and Newsletter Awards, were all announced in a separate video – a full list of winners is available in LHN151 and initial OIC profiles can be found in this issue on pages 5–6.

The event concluded with a guest lecture by John Chandler, 'Decoding Towns: How to Write the History of Unfashionable Towns' (see below).

The full recordings of the AGM and John's talk can be viewed online at www.balh.org.uk/GMB189

Decoding Towns: Swindon

John Chandler began with Swindon's David Murray John Tower, highlighting its significance and its namesake, the clerk of the borough council from 1838 to 1974 and who was instrumental in modernising Swindon. Swindon is a proud community with a strong cultural tradition and a skilled working-class ethos.

John also explored more broadly how the public form opinions about their towns, often based on derogatory stereotypes, and discussed the role of historians in engaging with and challenging these perceptions to present a more nuanced and accurate historical narrative.

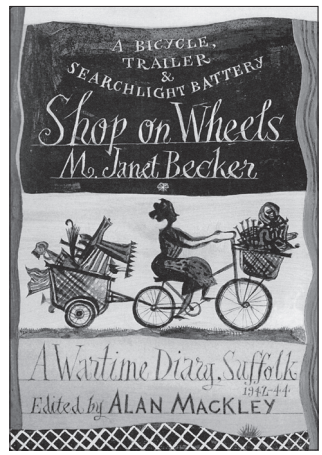
John then traced Swindon's history back to its mention in the Domesday Book and its development as a planted settlement in the 13th century. He highlighted early maps and the town's significant Roman and Saxon antecedents, before looking at Swindon's quarrying industry, which provided building stone for the rebuilding of London after the Great Fire of 1666, and argued that Swindon might more accurately be described as a canal town than its usual label as a railway town, although of course discussed its close association with the Great Western Railway too. John also used local anecdotes to show how to add depth to and humanise the broader historical narrative, offering useful advice on both the importance of studying modern urban landscapes alongside historic cores and on how to write engaging local history in general. Swindon has appeared in a warm new light!

Book reviews

Heather Falvey & Martin Speight

***Shop on Wheels: A Wartime Diary, Suffolk, 1942–44*, by M. Janet Becker edited by Alan Mackley (Blythburgh Books 2024 40pp ISBN: 9-781-912427-23-9) £5 + £2 p&p contact bburghbooks@btinternet.com or A. L. Mackley, 1 Angel Lane, Blythburgh, IP19 9LU**

Margaret Janet Becker (1903–1953), known as Janet, was the daughter of the artists Harry and Georgina Becker. Unusually she made a career of renovating and cleaning ancient tombs and church monuments and also lectured throughout the country on historical and conservation subjects. After her father's death in 1928 she lived with her mother at The Little Priory, Wangford (Suffolk). From late 1942 to 1944 she kept an occasional diary, which reveals that she operated 'a little mobile canteen' (her bicycle with a trailer attached) supporting a Royal Artillery searchlight unit in Henham Park. The Suffolk coast formed part of the front line of defence against enemy bombers, the searchlight at Henham being one of a network positioned about 10 km apart.



The diary opens on 30 December 1942, when, after enjoying a cup of tea and sharing 'still-hot buns' with the men, Janet stood in the icy wind selling them razor blades and Mars bars. Entries indicate that as well as supplying, among other things, Brylcreem, fruit and vegetables, and spray to kill 'mosquitos, flies, ants and all other pests', Janet organised a clothes-mending service. She relates conversations with the men – their remarks about their officers, their families, American troops, men moving on to service elsewhere – and sometimes the immediacy of war. On 15 March 1944 she recorded the crash of a bomber at Benacre and also finding a long black strip of 'paper' dropped by German aircraft to confuse radar systems. On 29 March two Liberators crashed into each other and fell into Henham Park, with shrapnel landing near the searchlight unit's cookhouse close to where she was standing.

The penultimate entry, a copy of a letter to Sergeant Podger on 13 September 1944, states that takings from her 'canteen', which she had been running for the WVS, had been steadily dropping, so she would be stopping her visits, although sock-darning would continue. She had 'been up 175 times'.

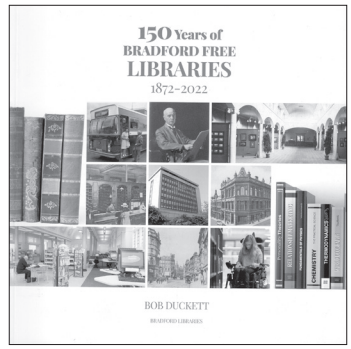
This is a delightful and informative source, although, echoing Janet's thoughts on 6 December 1943, I wish she 'had kept this diary more fully and more often'. Proceeds from sales of the book will be donated to Holy Trinity Church, Blythburgh, and a leukaemia charity. [HF]

***150 years of Bradford Free Libraries 1872–2022* by Bob Duckett (Bradford Libraries 2023 115pp ISBN: 978-1-7390826-0-4) £9.99**

Due to limitations and concerns over the 1850 Public Libraries Act, nationwide take-up of the Act was slow but in 1871 Bradford Council voted, by a majority, to establish a library. On 15 June 1872 the Public Reference Library and Reading Room were opened, and the Lending Library opened the next February. The Reference Library's nucleus was a private collection of 13,000 books plus another 5,000; the Lending Library began with 7,400 books with 4,500 added during the first year's working, and more followed. As a former Bradford Reference librarian, Bob Duckett is well placed to relate the 150-year (and more) history. Using many sources held in Bradford

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

Archives and Locals Studies Libraries, he demonstrates how the libraries developed and how they have (mostly) survived increases and decreases in demand and funding and changes in local society.



Initially 'free' simply meant free access to the building and to the newsroom where newspapers and periodicals were available to read: in 1930 a reader paid 1d to borrow books, and even in the 1940s/50s applications to join the lending library had to be left overnight so that the electoral roll could be checked as only the male householder could guarantee applications. Nevertheless, from the start the people of Bradford used the libraries. A list from 1874 reveals that registered borrowers included 582 warehousemen, 80 wool sorters and 4 cloggers. Indeed, such was the take-up that a new Central Library opened in May 1879, but the top floor housed the Art Gallery & Museum, causing cramped conditions and inhibiting growth.

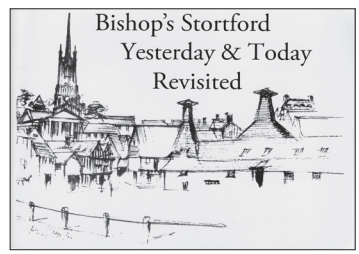
The careers of Bradford's early librarians, Charles Virgo (in post 1872–1884) and Bulter Wood (in post 1885–1914) are outlined. Virgo patented eight inventions relating to libraries, such as fittings in cabinets for books, and also devised the 'ticket-in-pocket' system for recording book issues. Wood introduced many innovations and enabled the production of an up-to-date paper catalogue. (Books were kept behind counters so readers needed to purchase a catalogue to determine what was available.) In 1913 the catalogue filled 390 pages; eventually printed catalogues were replaced by cheaper and more flexible card ones, and in 1974 these were replaced by computerised catalogues.

As well as the Central Library (in its various incarnations), branch libraries in the settlements covered by Bradford Council (in *its* various incarnations) are discussed. Numerous illustrations complement the text and demonstrate how well used the libraries were, such as photos of the crowded Reading Room at Keighley Library in c.1907 and the long, winding queues in Central Library, Darley Street, to exchange books from the lending library in c.1962. The promotional brochure for the new Central Library (opened in 1967) listed the various services available, including local history on the sixth floor. This much-needed new building was a huge success: in its first year 'home-reading issues' increased from 595,000 to 932,000 and registered borrowers from 12,000 to 28,000. Unsurprisingly this 1960s building has had to be replaced, but the final chapters are upbeat about the present and future, especially with Bradford's success in securing City of Culture status in 2025.

As well as shedding light on the beginnings of public libraries, this informative, well-produced book brings back memories of how libraries used to be, and affirms that they have a future. [HF]

Bishop's Stortford Yesterday & Today Revisited
compiled by Chris Connell, Rob Francis, Tim Howard-Smith, Margaret Hutt & Mike James (Bishop's Stortford History Society 2024 60pp ISBN: 978-1-7385289-0-5) £8.00 www.bishopsstortfordhistorysociety.org.uk

As its title indicates, this new booklet from **Bishop's Stortford History Society** revisits an earlier publication. That one had presented pictures of buildings in the town as they were in 1971 side by side with photographs, and occasionally drawings, of them in the past; this has new high-quality coloured photographs facing either the black-and-white photos from 1971 or the earlier depictions. Each pair has a brief but informative description of the building(s) on the old site and what is there today.



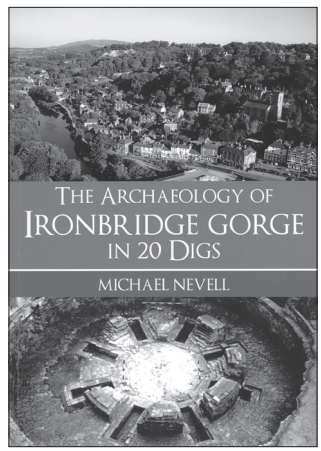
Some views are almost the same, such as the castle mound (the date of which is a matter of discussion for historians), the imposing Congregational church (now United Reformed), the George Hotel and The Chequers (now an estate agent). Others have significantly increased in size over time, such as Bishop's Stortford College (founded in

1868), beginning with 40 pupils, today with over 1,000. But some have gone forever: the 19th-century Bricklayers Arms, now the site of an apartment complex, and on the Cattle Market, which existed in the medieval period, only closing in 1982 (the 1971 photo shows many sheep and cattle awaiting sale), are flats, offices and a multi-storey car park. In many Hertfordshire commuter towns, historic buildings were destroyed in the 1960s and 70s to make way for 'modern' shopping centres and traffic schemes, but in Bishop's Stortford the mid-16th century Black Lion was retained and the Corn Exchange (drawn in about 1835), although altered, is still standing, thanks to the intervention of the secretary of state for the environment in 1971.

This charming booklet has a map showing where the various buildings pictured are (or were) and the sketch on the front, from the 1971 edition, evokes the town in the past, dominated then as now by St Michael's church. [HF]

***The Archaeology of Ironbridge Gorge in 20 Digs* by Michael Nevell (Amberley 2023 96pp ISBN 978-1-3981-1156-1) £15.99**

This is the latest volume in a new series in which the archaeology of a particular location is examined in a number of case studies. Unlike previous books in the series, the present work is entirely dedicated to the archaeology of the post-medieval period, and specifically to industrial remains.



Ironbridge Gorge has for many years marketed itself as 'the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution' and its transformation from post-industrial wasteland to UNESCO World Heritage Site is a major theme running through the book. The decline of heavy industry led to many of the sites becoming ruined and often buried under a considerable depth of spoil, so that excavation was initially necessary to expose archaeological features, and to clear the remains for viewing by the visiting public. Over the decades following the first excavations in the late 1950s, archaeological investigation became more focused on interpretation of the physical remains, while techniques of recording became more sophisticated.

The 20 sites are considered in largely chronological order, beginning with the Old Furnace, where Abraham Darby first smelted iron ore with coke in 1709 in a much older structure. The last site to be considered is the equally iconic Iron Bridge itself, and the extensive restoration which was undertaken between 1999 and 2018. However, while the Old Furnace was subject to several excavations, in the work on the Iron Bridge, as in the case of a number of other sites discussed, the digging element played a minor part. No doubt the author was constrained by the title of the series, for in this case 'archaeological investigations' might have been a more apt description of the content than 'digs', as in a number of cases archaeological techniques were applied to the interpretation of standing buildings rather than to remains beneath the ground.

A number of the actual excavations studied produced results of very great importance. One such was the unearthing of Sir Basil Brooke's steelworks of 1619, where the first mass-production of steel in Britain took place, and which had been concealed beneath an 18th-century malthouse. Another major excavation exposed the impressive remains of the Bedlam Furnace, featured in Philip de Lautherbourg's frequently reproduced oil painting 'Coalbrookdale by Night' (1801). Similarly, the excavation of the massive blast furnaces at Blists Hill revealed a great deal about the working of the complex, which had fallen into ruin after its closure in 1912.

The author, who is the industrial heritage support officer for England, based at the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, has written many books and articles on industrial archaeology. He has managed successfully to produce a book which will appeal both to the general reader who wishes to discover more about the development of the Gorge and its monuments, and those with a more specialist interest in industrial archaeology. For the latter, detailed references to a range of relevant reports and articles are included for each site. Amberley have produced the book to a high standard, and the colour illustrations are particularly good. [MS]

Nathaniel's story: nailed it

Alan Crosby

Sometimes, perhaps, we come across historical sources which are quite simply baffling. There seems no obvious explanation of their content, and we can't even think ourselves into the mindset of the person who wrote the document perhaps 300 or 400 years ago. Indeed, the chances are that even people then did not fully understand what was going on.

One such 'mystery in a document' I first came across almost 40 years ago, when I was going through the paper catalogues of the superb collection of quarter session records held at the Lancashire Archives. It is in principle a simple document – a petition to the magistrates for assistance, the sort of basic paperwork that is replicated in any archive with quarter sessions records (in this case from the beginning of the 18th century). The catalogue entry was eye catching – and the content of the petition is (I think) remarkable.



John Hulme was a labourer from Bolton, and his petition to the magistrates meeting at Manchester is dated 20 January 1703/4, on behalf of his son Nathaniel. The young man was clearly in a very bad state. As his father told the justices, his son was 'a very diseased person and hath Nails upon his fingers of prodigious greatness some of which hath beene halfe a quarter of a yard long And then distempers and swellings falling into his handes the said Nails have fallen off and Now ones of the like sort come again'.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given this affliction, Nathaniel was unable to work and needed poor relief. In a somewhat complicated explanation of the situation, John told the magistrates that the overseers of Bolton had allowed his son 4 shillings a month for his maintenance, but that Nathaniel considered this to be insufficient. The lad therefore – very unwisely in my opinion – borrowed on credit, could not pay it back, and was therefore in serious debt.

His solution to this further dilemma was equally ill considered. At Michaelmas (just over three months previously) he had gone 'to see some friends in the Countrey where hee hoped hee would get present relieffe'. This was a devious way of saying that Nathaniel was sponging off the aforesaid friends. Meanwhile, he fully expected, the overseers would continue payment, with 'his Monthly allowance running on and to receive it at his returne home'. He would then repay the debts using the accumulated allowance and thereafter live within his means.

It was, you will surely agree, a most ingenious yet logical and simple plan. The only weakness in the principle was that success depended on the co-operation of two external parties. The friends in the country (shades of Oscar Wilde's 'Bunburying'?) seem to have been happy with the arrangement. But unfortunately, and entirely predictably, the overseers of Bolton were not. They immediately stopped the allowance of 4 shillings per month.

John's petition to the magistrates prayed that they would order the overseers to continue the allowance, and also to pay the accumulated arrears. Alas! At the foot of the petition the clerk has scrawled a single word: 'Nothing'. We know the thinking of the overseers, even though it is nowhere written down. If Nathaniel could find support from his friends in the country, and if he was prepared to leave Bolton to obtain that support, he was no longer their responsibility.

And as for the magistrates, we can only guess as to the content of their discussions of this distinctly bizarre case. My feeling is that at

least one of them must have asked the obvious question: 'Why in the name of God does he not cut his fingernails!' But the poor young man was also afflicted with some sort of deeply unpleasant condition, perhaps one that made nail cutting an impossibility. We will never know… but for the record the nails, at 'half a quarter of a yard' in length, were 4½ inches long.

BALH Trustee profile

Julia Tubman

An archaeology graduate, I began my heritage career as an objects conservator, with posts at the University of Arizona, British Museum and the National Museum of Iceland. Returning to the UK I took up what was at the time a 6-month project assistant role at Gunnersbury Park Museum, the local history museum serving the London Boroughs of Ealing and Hounslow. Ten years on I've risen to Senior Curator and fallen in love with local history and the immediacy of working in a smaller organisation with residents to explore their heritage.



I've maintained old interests and found new in the collections I'm so lucky to manage; archives, lithics and deep-history, aviation and modern industrial heritage. With a great sense of grief but of course some excitement I will be moving to the Museum of Croydon in June, as the Heritage, Museum and Collections Manager - more 'my patch' having grown up in nearby Mitcham. BALH is my first trustee role, and I hope to bring a lot of passion for the subject and the potential of grassroots history, which is so often overlooked.

Letters to the editor

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

With reference to the May 2024 *Local History News*, you ask for experiences of others of councils withdrawing free online access to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (ODNB) etc.

I had been used to signing into ODNB with my own Gloucestershire Libraries card, until I was blocked last autumn. I asked Gloucester Library about this. Their response included this statement: 'We review the usage of resources regularly to ensure the best provision for available budgets and unfortunately some subscriptions haven't continued this year, including the Oxford Reference products.'

So a simple financial judgement in the face of relentless budget cuts. I personally wasn't much fussed by this. The Oxford Reference stuff is niche going on elitist. I started stockpiling my ODNB queries with the intention of paying £20 for a month's access. In the event, access arrived through the far-from-cheap package of Society of Antiquaries Fellowship.

Even that has had some problems with publisher server unavailability – without the help of foreign agents!

Chris Sullivan, treasurer, ***Forest of Dean Local History Society****.*

As a recent member of BALH and a recently constituted group (though running informally since 2018), we are interested in the process of listing a structure which was recently refused listing. Also, our local authority is now accepting heritage listing of important local sites. We wondered if you could provide an article to assist with the above or anyone can help further.

Caz Goodwill, chair, Cleckheaton District Local History Group.

[Editor's note: if anyone has this expertise and experience, please do write an article or share any advice you can offer, via editor.lhn@balh.org.uk]

Notes News Issues

The BALH team

BALH Outreach Team update
The BALH Outreach Team have been working on a range of activities so far during 2024. 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 was 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. 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.

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 'English merchant shipping and early modern maritime communities, c.1588–c.1765'. More details are in this issue's Supplement.

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. 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 is 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 – and of course article proposals are welcome for *Local History News*: editor.lhn@balh.org.uk. Readers can keep up to date with our activities via LHN, the BALH website and e-newsletter.

BALH is always looking to arrange talks and events but requires volunteer assistance to achieve this. If you would be interested in helping, please do get in touch: outreach@balh.org.uk.

BALH publications: your group can benefit
A reminder that we offer copies of BALH publications at a generous discount for resale by member societies, if ordered in multiples of five or more. We are keen that these should also be available for sale in archive offices and museums. Please contact John Chandler, chair of the Publications Committee, for further information: jh.chandler@hotmail.com.

Next copy deadline
The next issue of *Local History News* will be out around the end of November – please note the copy deadline for that issue (No. 153) is 1 October. If you wish to promote a society event here, it will need to take place not before late November – for earlier events, which we may be able to list at www.balh.org.uk/events, contact the BALH Digital Manager, digital manager@balh.org.uk

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 lives of nuns in Romsey Abbey in the 15th century and the impact of industrialist J.C. Hill on the development of Fletton in Peterborough.

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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)

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Above: Mason Osborne (holding certificate, left) and Ben Wasenczuk, winners of the Years 7–9 category in the Hampshire Archives Trust schools history competition, pictured with family members and teachers from Perins and Toynbee Schools – see page 8.

Below: Adrian Webb, Doris Cox and Rear Admiral Tim Lowe at Weston-super-Mare on the 80th anniversary of D-Day. Doris was one of 'Churchill's secret chart makers' in Somerset, researched by Adrian – see page 17.



Price £3.00 : free to members