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

BALH Reviews Editor	British Association for Local History Awards
Dr Heather Falvey	c/o Paul Dryburgh
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Front cover

Lincoln Cathedral, Exchequer Gate and Castle Square (1904), by William Logsdail (1859–1844). Logsdail was born in the Cathedral Close. See page 26 for a detailed report on BALH's one-day conference in Lincoln. (Photo: Andrew Chapman)

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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.

Important contacts

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The golden Polish autumn

Alan Crosby

Kazimierz is the former Jewish quarter of Kraków, in Poland. Founded as a separate new town in the 1330s by King Kazimierz III, who modestly named it after himself, it was amalgamated with Kraków in 1791, by which time it was home to one of the largest Jewish communities in Europe (the largest being in Warsaw). The 'town within a city' thrived, a crowded self-contained world of large families and many small children, small houses, small businesses, small shops and stalls, workshops, large schools and seminaries, large synagogues, muddy lanes and paved streets. Between September 1939 and March 1941 this tightly knit ancient community was steadily destroyed, the final stage being the deportation of all remaining Jewish inhabitants across the River Wisła [Vistula] to a concentration camp at Płaszów in the suburb of Podgórze, whence most were despatched to their deaths at Auschwitz or Belzec the following year.

I have been to Kazimierz many times during the past quarter of a century, and have watched as it has changed almost beyond recognition. The major landmarks are unchanged, but the atmosphere has been transformed. This is the local history of a place which has undergone a truly traumatic experience. When I first went, I visited the Rem'uh Synagogue, which dates from 1553 and is probably the oldest to survive in Europe. The custodian, a shabby old man wearing a *yarmulke*, was – as he proudly told all who would listen – one of the names on Oskar Schindler's list (or at least, had been among those saved by Schindler). For me, that was a strange and moving element of the local history which I was exploring.

My second visit, in 2001, was on a cold and misty day in March. In those days, some of the properties in Kazimierz were empty and ruinous, weed-grown and roofless. Many others were in poor repair, decaying and unkempt. On that day the area was almost deserted, its streets chilly and silent. After 1945 the resident population was a fraction of its pre-1939 level, for obvious reasons. Commercial activity was at a low ebb, stray cats slunk through the weeds, and I found myself haunted by the melancholy of the place and its heartbreaking recent history.

Then change began, stimulated among other factors by the passing of a new property law. Under the communist government, most of Kazimierz had been de facto or de jure owned by the state. After 1989, ownership was ambiguous and uncertain. The new law, however, allowed the heirs of the pre-1939 owners to claim property, with the result that significant numbers of American Jews of Kazimierz descent were able to do so. At the



Kazimierz in 1916, by Józef Rapacki.

same time, Kraków itself was emerging as a major international tourist destination, and Kazimierz was flagged up (rightly so) as a key part of the city's rich historic heritage. Houses were renovated, toothless gaps in the streets filled in with new buildings, restaurants and wine bars proliferated, explanatory plans and information boards appeared, and boutique hotels opened.

I was in Kazimierz in late September this year, in what is known as *złota polska jesień*, the golden Polish autumn. The warm sun shone on the bright-coloured, freshly painted facades of buildings old or restored, the pavement cafes were doing a roaring trade, Orthodox Jews prayed in the deeply moving cemetery of the Rem'uh Synagogue, and restaurants advertised Jewish specialities on their menus. Processions of German and Polish teenagers on school visits listened with scant attention to the earnest discourse of their teachers, while surreptitiously vaping or openly looking at their phones, and an unending stream of glorified electric golf carts laden with tourists drove up, paused in the main square, and then whirred on again, their loudspeakers giving a commentary in a babel of languages. In short, here was an international tourist honeypot.

It bore scant resemblance to the grey, semi-abandoned, ghostly and haunted Kazimierz of March 2001. Part of me feels that these changes are all to the good, the usual arguments about prosperity, employment and conservation of heritage being quite valid. But, perhaps illogically, I am glad that I saw Kazimierz before all this took place. An entirely new chapter in the local history of Kazimierz has been written, but to me the emptiness and chill of that March day accorded with the harrowing history of 70 years before.

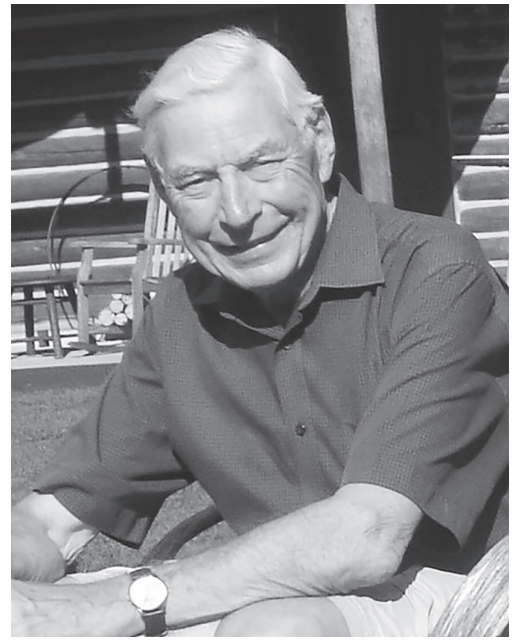
AWARDS



Congratulations to BALH Outstanding Individual Contribution award winners Brian Greene and Lawrence Gregory (see page 6).

Fount of Dulwich knowledge

Brian Greene



Brian Greene is described as a local historian par excellence, an enthusiast, full of knowledge, and happy to share it with everyone.

Brian has been a Dulwich resident since the age of four. As far back as 1967 he was one of the organisers of the celebrations for 1,000 years of Dulwich as a settlement. He has written several well-researched and popular books on the Dulwich area as well as the histories of local schools, almshouses and the church. In addition to his books, he has written many local history articles for the **Dulwich Society**'s quarterly magazine – and was its editor for 20 years, until 2023.

Brian has given regular talks to local societies and schools since the 1980s, and still does so today – and is a regular contributor to the Society's post-Covid online local history

talks. He has always led local history walks, particularly for the Dulwich Festival, and has appeared on radio and television promoting Dulwich's long history.

As well as his writing, he was a founder member of the Society's Local History group and was the impetus behind the campaign to install a statue of Edward Alleyn to mark the 400th anniversary of the Dulwich Estate. As part of the Society's 50th anniversary he also organised the installation of 12 bombsite memorial plaques to mark those killed in Dulwich in WW2.

Expert in Catholic heritage

Lawrence Gregory

Since his teenage years, Lawrence Gregory has given his time, skills, knowledge and resources towards furthering access to local Catholic history in Lancashire.

Lawrence first began volunteering as assistant archivist to the Diocese of Salford when he was just 17 years old; this was an unpaid voluntary post in which he remained for 15 years. There he helped to establish and run the Catholic Heritage Centre in Manchester, organising other volunteers in a variety of tasks, while developing and heading up a record digitisation and online publishing programme.

Following the closure of those archives in 2017 he has continued the work, providing ongoing research assistance through a social media group, Catholic Lancashire, Past & Present.

In addition, he has acted as volunteer historian and archivist at St Bede's College, Manchester for more than 20 years. He is also a trustee of the **Lancashire & Cheshire Antiquarian Society** and the Catholic Family History Society (CFHS), and works with the Catholic Archives Society, the Manchester & Lancashire Family History Society, and the Lancashire Online Parish Clerks – all as a volunteer.

Over more than two decades now, through his work and efforts, he has helped hundreds of people with their research, and has led the way in breaking down barriers, to make local Catholic archives in Lancashire freely available to all.



To nominate someone for next year's BALH Outstanding Individual Contributions awards, see further details in the supplement inside this issue and visit www.balh.org.uk/resources-balh-annual-awards (deadline 31 December).

Creating the Centre for Fenland Studies

Michael Gilbert & Sue Hughes

The centre

Spalding Gentlemen's Society with Ayscoughfee Hall Museum opened the Centre for Fenland Studies in June 2024 in South Lincolnshire. The Centre provides a research hub based in and for the region providing a resource for local historians, local history groups, heritage organisations and academic institutions with an interest in the Fenland region across all periods It has a number of specific aims.

It will provide a focus for research into all aspects of Fenland life and will make that research available to academics and local historians via the Fenland Heritage Network and Spalding Gentlemen's Society websites. Working with its partners it will support engagement in academic research in order to promote an appreciation and understanding of the history and heritage of the region. It will also run locally based projects, outlined below, to help to develop a better understanding of the Fenlands in a national context.

South Holland District Council have been able to provide a research room based on the first floor of Ayscoughfee Hall Museum (Churchgate, Spalding, Lincs PE11 2RA). It will include a reading room for visiting researchers that will hold the Spalding Gentlemen's Society local history book collection as well as a local and national map collection. It will be augmented by a collection of local prints and articles as well as access to online source material. By arrangement there will also be access to other material, such as the Society's extensive pamphlet collection and archive, held in accessible storage offsite.



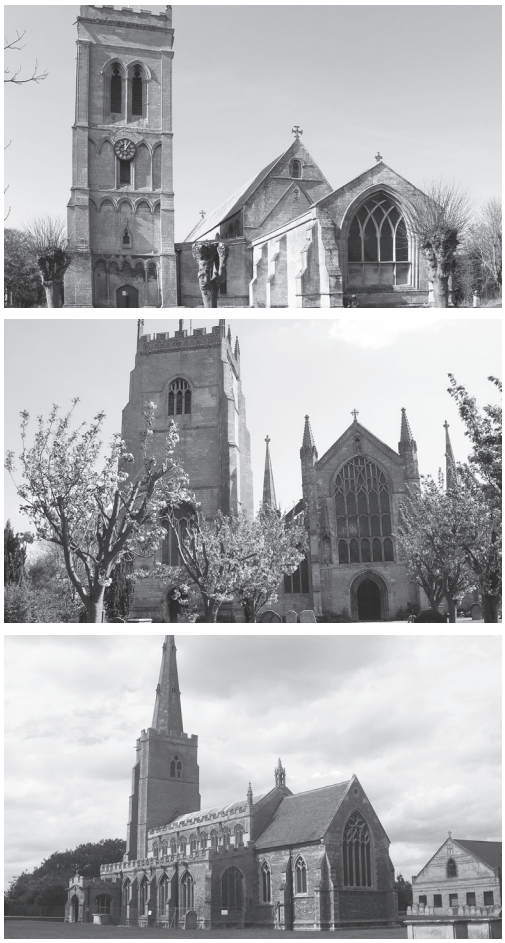
The Centre for Fenland Studies.



Ayscoughfee Hall, Spalding. (Photo: Reading Tom)

The Society is one of the earliest 'earned societies' in England having been founded by Maurice Johnson and William Stukeley in 1710. It is a membership-based organisation (currently with 340 members) but with free access to it museum and archive. The Centre it supported by the Society and will operate under its wing. The Society has a unique original book collection dating back to the 13th century having been donated by its early members including Sir Isaac Newton and Sir Joseph Banks. From October 2024 the Society's Museum and archive in the town will be closing to enable urgent building works to be carried out. However, it will continue to operate with much of the collection being moved to Ayscoughfee Hall Museum along with the Centre for Fenland Studies.

Initially individuals and groups will be able to visit the Centre (to December 2024) and access the research material by emailing fenland@scsoc.org to arrange a visit. The details will also be on the Spalding Gentlemen's Society and the Fenland Heritage Network websites. From 2025 the intention will be for the facility to be available during Ayscoughfee Hall's normal



Fenland churches: (top to bottom) St Mary's, Waplode; St Clements, Terrington St Clements and St Wendreda's, March. (Photos: J. Hannen-Briggs, Thirteene, Ben Keating)

opening hours (Wednesday to Sunday between 10:30 and 15:30) when Stewards will be able to assist with accessing material. However, if you require access to specific documents held in storage it will still be necessary to contact the Society in advance to make sure they can be made available. As noted earlier, the purpose of the Centre is to promote the study of the region and to improve the understanding of all aspects of Fenland life. Although based in Lincolnshire the collection contains material relating to all three counties of the region. It is available to anybody (academic and non-academic) with an interest in researching any aspect of Fenland life and heritage ranging from landscape and settlement to social and economic history.

The projects

It addition to facilitating individual research the Centre will be running a number of projects from Ayscoughfee Hall. The first will be the preparation of two 'short' Victoria County History (VCH) volumes on the history of the town covering the period pre and post 1710. Originally, Lincolnshire was planning to produce three VCH volumes but only published Volume II in 1906, focusing primarily on religious houses, and then ran out of funds. Efforts have periodically been made to restart VCH in the county but without success, until now. We are fortunate to have the support of the University of Lincoln, Lincoln Records Society and the Institute of Historical Research with the project but the real strength is the number of local volunteers prepared to carry out the research and write up. The Centre is also particularly grateful for the guidance and support of the Leicestershire VCH in developing the project. It is hoped that this project will provide a template for other groups in the county.

The VCH volumes are obviously focused on Lincolnshire with the aim of providing a long required definitive history of the town of Spalding. To actively engage with the other counties across the Fenlands we will also be running a 'churches' project. This will look at the history and social significance of some of the wealthy medieval churches across the region. These will include important examples such as St Mary's in Whaplode (Lincolnshire), the cathedral like St Clement's in Terrington St Clement (Norfolk) and St Wendreda's in March (Cambridgeshire) with its magnificent angel roof. The project will not only look at their modern development but how they were build, how were they funded, who were the builders and what was their changing role in the medieval and early modern Fenland communities.

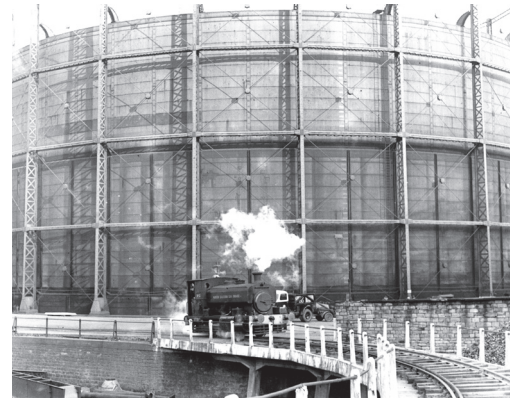
To support the projects we will be running a programme of history and heritage workshops from the Centre covering a wide range of topics. These will be led by experts in their fields and will include studies of the history of the region and its landscape, society and economy. There will also be sessions on how to locate and interpret primary source material. If you would like to learn more about the work of the Centre, to be involved in any of these projects or to use the facility contact us on the email address above.

For more information on Spalding Gentlemen's Society visit the website at www.sgsoc.org.

Huddersfield gasworks – a final glimpse

David Griffiths

At 127 feet tall, Huddersfield's Gas Holder No. 4 has reared above the townscape since 1916. When Northern Gas Networks (NGN) announced that it would be demolished this winter, the last in a programme of 47 such demolitions across their region, **Huddersfield Local History Society** wanted to mark its passing. We were able to negotiate a day's access to the site during Heritage Open Days with NGN and the demolition contractor, Erith. Given the gasholder's landmark status, it was no surprise that four tours, with a total capacity of 50, were booked up within 24 hours. A presentation by NGN and a walk round the gasometer were complemented by a brief history of the site provided by the Society.



The gasworks – a picture in the Huddersfield Exposed Collection (photographer unknown).

Gas production in the town began in 1821 on an adjacent site. Initially it was solely for street lighting and the works occupied only one sixth of an acre. As municipal, industrial and domestic demand grew rapidly throughout the 19th century, successive enlargements brought the site to 13 acres, with five gasholders, by the 1890s. By that time the enterprise, a private company for its first 50 years, had been acquired by Huddersfield Corporation in 1872. It cost them £130,000, no mean sum at the time, but for 75 years thereafter, until post-war nationalisation, it was a successful municipal enterprise generating profits to subsidise other council services. From 1830 onwards the gasworks' by-products were also exploited to found the town's successful chemicals industry: the business founded then by 21-year-old Read Holliday became one of the major tributaries of ICI in the 20th century.

The raw material for 'town gas' was of course coal, initially supplied by barge to the canal-side site and, from 1919, by rail. The track to the site from a nearby goods yard ran down a public street and across a major road, and the 'Beaumont Street flyer', like the gasholder itself, is affectionately remembered. With the advent of natural gas in the 1970s, onsite production ceased but railway tracks and the engine shed are, apart from the holder, the major surviving features of the site.

HLHS sees the annual Heritage Open Days as a significant opportunity to reach new audiences and join the dots between local history, heritage landmarks and popular memories – those who booked this year's tours were by no means all the 'usual suspects'. As well as contributing our own annual event, for several years we have also led a partnership of Kirklees local history and civic societies to coordinate a borough-wide programme – now running at about 100 events across the ten-day festival. Each year the national theme provides a useful recruitment tool for new events (though its adoption locally is entirely optional). This year's theme, 'Routes, Networks & Connections', brought forth events on Roman and medieval roads, milestones and waymarkers, lost railways, rivers and canals, vintage vehicle manufacturers and even a play, 'A Batley Woman Walks to War for Love'. Many other societies no doubt see Heritage Open Days as an opportunity – but for any that don't, it is well worth building into the annual round of activities.

Celebrating Hampshire's historians – what next?

Roger Ottewill & Barry Shurlock

Hampshire has just completed the main part of a project that celebrates its historians and paves the way for other counties to follow suit. Since 2021 a small group from the **Hampshire Field Club & Archaeological Society** (HFC) have written biographies and compiled bibliographies for more than 200 of those who over the centuries have contributed to its story.

To make the project manageable – and avoid personal issues – a deadline (literally) of 'dead by 2000' has been imposed. After more than 50 meetings – almost all on Zoom – Dave Allen, Roger Ottewill, Dick Selwood and Barry Shurlock have trawled all manner of sources to create a corpus of information, which can be found at www.hantsfieldclub.org/ihr100/index.html

The Celebrating Hampshire's Historians (CHH) project was a response to a call from the Institute for Historical Research (IHR) for ideas to mark its centenary. A proposal by one of the team, Barry Shurlock, was quickly adopted by the HFC Council, which called it 'a feather in its cap', and it was subsequently accepted by the IHR. This article updates an earlier one in *Local History News* (No 146, Winter 2023) and a BALH blog (www.balh.org.uk/WKA194).

The main aim of the project was to honour those who, with resources that by modern standards were minimal, produced antecedents for almost all aspects of local history. In so doing, it has contributed to the historiography of local history, demonstrating how people from various backgrounds – generally later in life – took an interest in their locality and captured information that might otherwise have been lost, thereby providing insights into the mindset of the time. As the project progressed, several themes emerged, leading to a series of articles in the local newspaper, the *Hampshire Chronicle,* with further papers to be submitted to journals such as *The Local Historian*, *Hampshire Studies* and *Southern History*.

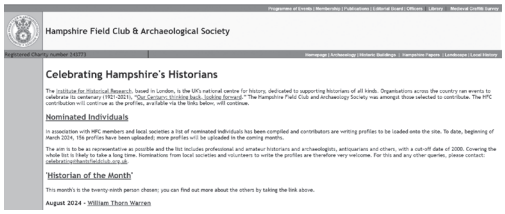
Mirroring the history of the HFC itself, CHH has demonstrated the divisions and relationships between 'archive-dominated' historians and 'dig-focused' archaeologists. Clearly the boundary between the two disciplines is fluid, giving rise to important questions about the way archaeology informs history and vice versa. Archaeologists profiled include such 'giants' as Osbert Guy Stanhope Crawford (1886–1957), Dr John Peere Williams-Freeman (1858–1943), Dorothy Liddell (1890–1938) and Christopher Hawkes (1905–1992). Not only were they all key figures in their field, but they also played important roles in sustaining the HFC.

Unexpectedly, many of those profiled were Anglican clergymen, often with links to Winchester Cathedral. Not surprisingly their principal focus was the history of the diocese and its mother church, though their reach extended to almost all corners of the county. The prime motivator for getting the Cathedral records in shape was probably Dean George Kitchin (1827–1912), assisted by others, including the 'freelance' Catholic historian and artist Francis Baigent (1830–1918).

Historians who might be described as the 'Winchester College set' have also contributed to the county's history, albeit through a narrower lens. Although the school has always had a peripheral association with its city – and more widely the county – its pupils have been influential almost everywhere. Most who passed through its doors are recorded in a variety of sources compiled by College archivists, notably Thomas Kirby (1836–1910) and Herbert Chitty (1863–1949).

Another key group are academic historians, whose involvement raises intriguing questions concerning the changing status of local history within academia. In Hampshire, most worked at the University of Southampton, mainly, but not exclusively, in the History Department. Arguably the most influential was Temple Patterson (1902–1983), who wrote important works on the history of the county's two main cities, Southampton and Portsmouth.

Several of those profiled had municipal roles



– their aim was probably not purely historical, but also sought to promote their communities. These include John Trussell (c.1575–1648), John S. Furley (1855–1949) and Barbara Carpenter Turner (1915–1997).

As well as 'the usual suspects', CHH has profiled those from cognate fields including cartography, genealogy, geography, publishing, photography and indeed folklore, as well as archivists, book collectors, antiquarians and others who were motivated to explore topics with which they had close connections. A good example of the latter group is Chaloner William Chute (1838–1892), who inherited the Vyne Estate, north of Basingstoke, now a National Trust property, and wrote its history.

Interestingly, many of the historians were not born and bred in Hampshire, leading to the strong suspicion that being an incomer was a powerful reason for wanting to learn more about their adopted home.

Regarding the content of their publications, a broad distinction can be made between historians who adopted a county-wide approach and others who focused a particular locality. A theme relating to the former concerns attempts made to produce a history of Hampshire before the Victoria County History came on the scene in the early years of the 20th century. For example, in 1892, Thomas Shore (1840–1905), a leading figure in the founding of the HFC, published a single volume, *History of Hampshire, including the Isle of Wight* (still available in reprints), though acknowledging that he was attempting the impossible!

For some historians putting primary sources into the public domain was often an underlying motivation. Here record societies, especially that in Southampton, performed an important role, locating and utilising source material hidden away in town halls, business premises, parish chests and even attics, before the advent of record offices.

With some historians writing for fellow aficionados, others deliberately appealed to a wider audience through the local press, for example, Edgar Mitchell (1877–1939), writing under the pen-name 'Townsman', while the Women's Institute and local history societies sought to 'democratise' research and publication. A WI trailblazer in the county was Winifred Beddington (1878–1952).

As might be expected, Hampshire had its share of oddballs and eccentrics. A good example is Sir William Cope (1811–1892), who bequeathed his entire collection of publications about Hampshire, consisting of 1,427 books, 50 bound volumes of pamphlets, seven massive albums of engravings and a further collection of individual prints, to the Hartley Institute, the forerunner of the University of Southampton. Added to ever since, the Cope Collection is a key resource within the University Library. Others focused on local museums, including George Willis of Basingstoke (1877–1970) and Herbert Druitt (1876–1943), whose frenzied collecting of artefacts eventually led to the founding of the Red House Museum in Lymington. The library and antiquarian interests of gentleman of leisure William Möens (1833–1904) also enriched the county, but he is best known for being captured by Sicilian brigands and making a fortune from the book that transpired.

Not overlooked in the CHH project are memoirs and novels. For obvious reasons, fiction is rarely used as 'evidence' by historians, but in the process of researching the historians of Hampshire – famed as the home county of Jane Austen – it became apparent that there are memoirs and works of fiction (or 'faction') that bear consideration in historical research. Among 'unknown' memorialists identified were Dorothy Escombe (1876–1938), inspired by the de-gentrification of Bishopstoke when Eastleigh railway works moved nearby; Kathleen Innes (1883–1967), author of *St Mary Bourne Records: Notes on Events 1896-1946* (see page 12 overleaf); and artist Diana Stanley (1909–1975), whose *Within Living Memory* contributes to an understanding of the transformation of Basingstoke from a country town with some industry into a major centre for London's overspill population.

CHH and the thematic papers generated will hopefully illustrate the richness and diversity of the study of history in the county from its medieval roots to the second half of the 20th century. The exercise has been so fruitful that its authors can only encourage other counties to celebrate their own historians.

For a case study from the CHH project, see overleaf.

Awaiting another great local historian – a case study from Hampshire

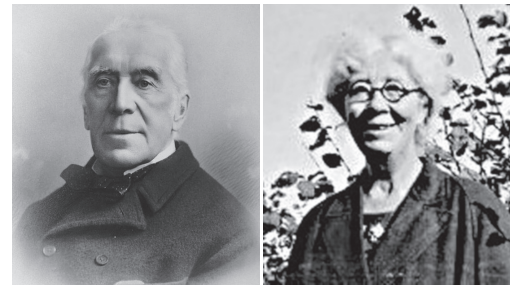
Barry Shurlock

As BALH members know well, there is enormous variety in the known histories of places, while the existence of local groups, thriving or otherwise, is hit and miss. This situation has been highlighted by Celebrating Hampshire Historians (CHH), a project of the **Hampshire Field Club** (HFC), which has been compiling biobibliographies of the 200 or so individuals who over the years have been involved in recording its history (see pages 10–11). Analysis of the material is now underway, including studies of the way local history has developed in different places.

The county's oldest group is the **Milford-on-Sea Historical Record Society**, founded in 1909 and still thriving, but a study of local history can be traced back nearly 150 years, to the foundation of the HFC in 1885 and separately the publications of the Hampshire Record Society in the 1890s. Several individual histories had been published earlier, notably John Milner's two-volume work on Winchester at the turn of the 18th century and a number of attempts at what was eventually achieved in the Victoria County History for Hampshire in 1900–12. However, circa 1880 can reasonably be regarded as 'the year of birth' of local history in the county.

At about this time substantial local histories of several places in the county were published: on Lymington in 1879, Colmer and Priors Dean 1880, Southampton 1883, Basingstoke 1889. The tiny village of St Mary Bourne and the even smaller Hurstbourne Priors had their turn in 1888, with *A Parochial History* by Joseph Stevens. It followed much earlier and less comprehensive works published by him in the 1860s, listed in *Bibliotheca Hantoniensis* (Gilbert and Godwin, 2nd ed., 1891).

As its name implies, St Mary Bourne straddles a tiny 'winterbourne', an intermittent tributary of the river Test in north Hampshire, a few miles south of the 'Hampshire Highlands', which rise 975 ft above sea level on Walbury Hill. It is sandwiched between Hurstbourne Tarrant to the north and Hurstbourne Priors to the south, recorded in Cobbett's *Rural Rides* as Uphusband and Downhusband. The manorial history of St Mary Bourne is allied with Hurstbourne Priors, for which it is a chapelry.



Local history pioneers: Joseph Stevens (photo: Reading Museum) and Kathleen Innes.

On the face of it, St Mary Bourne is a place where little happened over the centuries, but it had the good fortune in 1844 to get a local doctor who 'was remarkable not only for the improvements in the health of his patients', according to the Hampshire Paper *Dr Joseph Stevens of St Mary Bourne* by John Isherwood (HFC, 2015), but also found ample time to study its past. Among his many talents, he was a self-taught palaeographer, geologist, botanist and photographer. His *A Parochial History of St Mary Bourne with an Account of the Manor of Hurstbourne Priors*, based on more than 30 years of study and running to nearly 400 pages, was published after he had retired and moved to Reading, where he became the first honorary curator of its museum. Now available as a reprint on Amazon, and accessible online at Google Books, it deserves to be recognised as one of the great early works on local history, matching, on a different subject, Gilbert White's *Natural History of Selborne*.

After the second edition of *A Parochial History* in 1895, nothing seems to have been published on the village until 1911, in Volume 4 of the VCH. As well as a variety of standard sources, it cites Stevens eight times. The next stage had to wait until the 1940s, when Kathleen Innes (née Royds: 1883–1967), an internationally known pacifist, co-chair of the Women's International

League for Peace and Freedom, retired with her husband to the village. For her it was a 'return home', as she had lived there from the age of 12.

Kathleen was very bright: she studied at Cambridge and later at the University of London, and wrote a string of books on literary history and other subjects. As her father had been the village doctor, and the family occupied the same house (now demolished) as Stevens – whom he had met – she was immensely aware of the legacy of *A Parochial History*. She therefore restarted local studies, which led to several books and pamphlets, including *Village Story* 'for lovers of the village who have not time or opportunity to read [Stevens]' and *St Mary Bourne Records*. It has to be said that these were modest by comparison with Stevens' work, but it was a start: what she called, in *Hampshire Review* in 1950, 'an experiment'.

After Kathleen's death, local studies lapsed until the turn of the century, when Margaret Wedge, from a family long resident in the village, wrote the wittily entitled *Bourne Yesterday*. Family historians then took up the baton, with Kevin Holdway (also Holdaway) tracing his roots and repackaging much of Stevens and Innes with other material in www.stmarybournerevisited.co.uk. To mark the centenary of WW1, local resident Laura Sykes created www.stmarybournegoestowar.net and ran an informal local history group until she moved away. One of the contributors was former IT professional Julie Muirhead from Andover, who soon started a Facebook group, now with nearly 800 members.

The next stage in the process also started by Julie was membership of the Society for One-Place Studies (SOPS), an international organisation founded in 2013, with a UK office in Southsea, Hampshire. It objective, pioneered in Austria in 1920 (and unfortunately used by the Nazis in search of Aryan roots), involves 'reconstituting' family data from various genealogical sources. To date, 11 places in the county have registered, including towns such as Aldershot and even one-road locations.

Julie is building a new website, stmarybourneops.wordpress.com, which will be linked on the SOPS site. Its initial quest is focusing on 1821–41 to determine what was happening before and after the Swing Riots that erupted in the area and elsewhere in 1830. To date, the best researched account of these events is by Martin Coppen, vicar of St Mary Bourne 1988–2013. In his *The Trials of William Easton* he tells the harrowing story of a predecessor who was vilified for taking a reward for giving evidence against five men from the village, all sentenced to hang for rioting, later commuted to transportation. The Swing Riots are now the subject of a county-wide project preparing for the 200th anniversary in 2030. As for Stevens, in his 1895 edition he relegated the subject to a note, 'Mobbing in Hampshire', where he recalls meeting one of the rioters 'old Sims' – actually William Sims – who had returned to the village, the only one of seven local men to do so.

This tale of local history in a small village is one of what is likely to be a host of widely differing stories. St Mary Bourne was extremely lucky – or unlucky, depending on the point of view – that the start of its journey involved a truly outstanding local historian, who justified an obituary in the *Times*, yet one who expressed humility. He accepted that his book was not *the* history of the place, but an assemblage of 'materials for *a* history' and it provided only 'adjuncts to similar [archaeological] discoveries to come'.

Even after nearly 140 years St Mary Bourne is still awaiting a successor to Joseph Stevens. Whether the 'materials' of SOPS and other digital systems – perhaps magnified by AI – will deliver a successor to a hard-working, scholarly, country doctor with an enquiring mind has yet to be seen.

This article draws upon CHH profiles of Joseph Stevens and Kathleen Innes by John Isherwood and Dave Allen respectively.



Julie Muirhead with her copy of Stevens's A Parochial History. *(Photo: Barry Shurlock)*

Keep talking history: the work of Cumbria Local History Federation

Leslie R. Gilpin

Local history is a popular area of study for many people throughout Cumbria. Others enjoy hearing of people's research and the history of their village or town and join a local history society or visit the local museums. Often people do their studying alone and the local history groups and museums may have no idea what each other are doing.

This was the prospect identified by a group of like-minded individuals and organisations back in 1992. They were keen to provide a focus in the county for local historians and local societies. The result was the **Cumbria Local History Federation**.

The Federation is run by a keen elected committee funded by its member organisations and individuals. It is also a registered charity.

The role of the Federation is primarily in communication and information, promoting its member societies and their work, providing a means of cooperation and the exchange of ideas, and connecting its members with relevant resources and information. Where appropriate, it provides publications and organises events.

The Federation's *Bulletin* is published three times each year and contains a lively mix of news, events, reports from members, new publications and future programmes. Each member group and individual member receives a printed copy by post. An electronic version is also supplied for circulation around members of individual groups. Additionally, a weekly newsletter is circulated by email on a weekly basis. This is open for members to advertise their activities such as talks and upcoming visits.

Many local and county-wide groups are members of the Federation. The Federation's website, 'Talking History', provides a directory and contacts for those groups, including local history, heritage, family history, museums and specialist county societies. The website also includes the CLHF Directory of Speakers. This contains an up-to-date listing of speakers



who may be engaged to talk on local history-related topics at a range of levels, plus guides for historical tours of various locations and members who will assist others with historical research on various topics.

Our cluster meetings offer groups the opportunity to discuss their issues both with the Federation committee members and with other groups local to them.

The CLHF Annual Convention is now a well-established and highly valued autumn opportunity for the local historians of Cumbria to get together. It combines our short annual general meeting with exhibitions of projects by member groups and includes a themed conference focusing on aspects of local history. Members get priority bookings for the annual conference together with visits and training days.

The latest achievement by the Cumbria Local History Federation is our archive system. The Federation has launched an online archiving catalogue which is available

to member organisations. Here they can choose to put a catalogue of their archives into the database and make it available both to their members and, should they wish, open to interested researchers and those with a general interest in their local history. It also offers the ability to store and make available digital copies of catalogued documents. Organisations using the archive system are able to present it as if their own, without reference to the Federation.

Obviously there are some issues faced in such a federation over a county the size of Cumbria. For one, the county covers 6,768 square kilometres! The distance between groups may be 90 miles by car. We are not helped by having a large mountainous area, popular with motorists all year round, and around which we often have to travel around and only occasionally travel through. Our 71 member groups are spread across the county plus we have individual members both county and country wide.

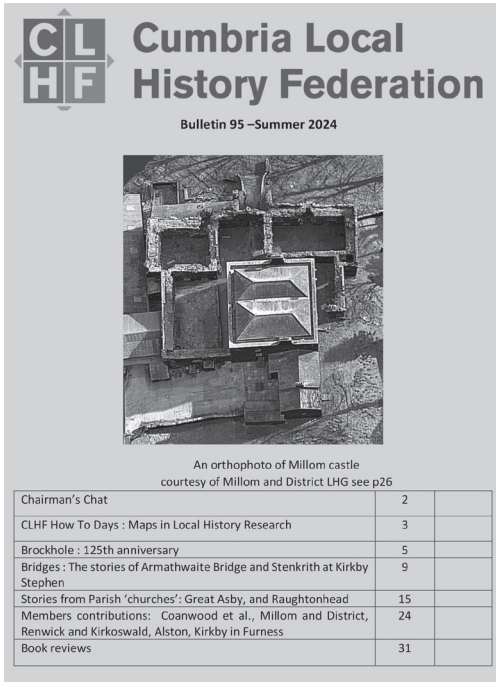
With such travel challenges, the cluster meetings and training days are often organised at a regional level, allowing groups to get together on a more local basis to share ideas with their neighbouring organisations and receive guidance on various aspects of researching local history. The annual conference too moves from place to place each year.

Local history groups are flourishing across Cumbria but unfortunately one or two have been struggling to survive. In part this is due to the post-pandemic reluctance of people to return to attending in-person meetings. Zoom and Teams were marvellous for keeping our local history communities together through the pandemic. However, attendances at some group meetings has dwindled subsequently. The other reason for folding has been when key committee members decide to retire and can find no one to fill the vacancies. The Federation has found that advertising meetings in our weekly newsletter as well as letting members know of need for new committee members has had the desired effect and several groups have been saved from folding.

One word of advice in setting up a newsletter of events. Make sure it is owned by a team! It can be a cottage industry and overwhelming if left to one person.

The Cumbria Local History Federation is certainly living up to the aims of its founders and continues to develop new ways in which it can keep the people of Cumbria talking history.

Leslie R. Gilpin is chair of the CHLF. For more information visit www.clhf.org.uk.



CLHF

Cumbria Local History Federation

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2025: big anniversaries and local events

2025 is a year of big anniversaries: the world's first steam passenger railway (1825), the end of the Second World War (1945), the start of the American Revolutionary War (1775) and tehe birth of Jane Austen (1775), to name just four. Of course such events are international, national and local too. If you know of (or are involved in) a project local to you to mark an anniversary of this kind then please share it with us all in these pages – contact editor.lhn@balh.org.uk

Perth Museum and the much-travelled Stone of Destiny

Nigel Tringham

Surviving plans first to demolish it to make way for an open space, and then to be converted into yet another retail centre, Perth's City Hall – opened as a social venue in 1911 and closed in 2005 – is now (2024) the home of Perth Museum with Scotland's 'Stone of Destiny' as its star attraction.

Used as part of the inauguration of Scottish (and perhaps earlier Pictish) kings at nearby Scone until 1292 (although the first documentary evidence for such use dates only from 1249), the Stone was taken by the English king Edward I in 1296 as part of his plan to eradicate an independent Scottish kingdom, and placed within a specially designed wooden coronation chair at Westminster Abbey. Temporarily brought back to Scotland in a hair-raising escapade in 1950, it was officially returned in 1996, perhaps to counter the growing popularity of the SNP in advance of the general election that was called in 1997. The decision was apparently totally unexpected by Scottish politicians and church leaders, with no thought yet given what to do with it. Inevitably, it was put on display in Edinburgh Castle, but when funding was made available for Perth Museum it was obvious that the Stone should be kept there, only a few miles from its original home at Scone. (Last year it was once more at Westminster for the coronation of Charles III.)

But is it the original Stone? One of the books on sale in the Museum argues that Edward I (unwittingly) carried off a replacement, hastily substituted by the monks of Scone who (of course) hid the original somewhere still to be discovered. Such is the argument of *The Stone of Destiny and The Scots. The Stone's Journey to Perth Museum* (Tippermuir Books Ltd, Perth), written in an engaging style (that is, without footnotes) by John Hulbert, a retired GP and former provost of Perth, and published earlier this year to mark its return 'home'. With a fondness for Nigel Tranter's novels about the Stone, Hulbert in particular wonders why the one now on display is so plain and roughly-made – surely the original would have been much more elaborately carved? But this and other matters of dispute are convincingly dealt with in Nick Aitchison's *Scotland's Stone of Destiny* (History Press, 2000; paperback edition 2009), a more scholarly account (with excellent illustrations), and also on sale in the museum shop. The latter also cites *The Stone of Destiny: Artefact and Icon*, edited by R. Welander and others (Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 2003), published following detailed investigation after its return to Scotland in 1996, but now out of print.

Aitchison stresses the ritual significance of the Stone, and how it has accrued layers of symbolism, not least with religious associations. Indeed, when the political decision was made in 1996 to send the Stone back to Scotland, the dean and chapter of Westminster Abbey hoped that it would not be regarded as 'a secular museum piece', which is precisely what it is now.

But although the star attraction – indeed, physically placed in the centre of the ground floor, within in its own enclosure with controlled access (so adding to the 'experience'), the Stone is not the only reason to visit this splendid Museum: one could easily spend an entire day, if not two, looking at the other items – a Bronze Age boat, an eighth-century Pictish cross slab, a fascinating range of items from medieval Perth (including wooden plates and leather shoes), Maori and Polynesian artefacts brought back by Perthshire collectors in the 19th century, a replica of the heaviest salmon (64 lbs) caught by rod (by Georgina Ballantine in 1922), and much more.



The Stone of Destiny in pride of place at Perth Museum. (Photo: Perth Museum)

How the BALH Teacher Fellowship has brought value to all members

Tim Lomas

Over the last couple of years, BALH has sponsored a successful local history programme with six primary and six secondary schools (see LHN 147). They were chosen via a competitive process and the aim was not just to provide a training and development course for the schools but to produce a detailed set of resources that could form a guide to all schools looking to improve local history in their schools.

The success of the project meant a wide range of teaching ideas and resources became available. The initiative was a joint one involving BALH and the Historical Association. Part of the agreement was that the full set of resources would be put on the websites of both associations. The full set now therefore now resides on BALH's website: www.balh.org.uk/education-teacher-fellowship-in-local-history

It might be easily assumed that the value rests solely with teachers in primary and secondary schools. Nothing could be further from the truth. While a key outcome has always been with broadening ideas among teachers about the scope, range and interest of local history, it was always intended that the reach be much greater.

Local history societies often ask how they might develop their links with the local community especially schools. There is good practice in this aspect but it is sporadic and many local history groups have few or no members with school experience beyond their own and family's experience. For example, it is easy to assume that their expertise might lie in specific facts about the locality's past. In reality, schools doing local history are rarely covering the main events and people associated with their locality.

The local materials on the website from this sponsored programme reveal the type of history that is covered and help point the way to how individuals and local societies can support schools. Among the main ways are:



- Schools rarely seek the whole gamut of their local history. They are looking for a manageable and interesting aspect such as a single person, key event, development or specific area like a street.
- Many schools like to frame their work in the form of an enquiry – such as what was the impact of the Second World War in the area? What was education like in the area in the 19th century? How significant was the X family? How did Y street develop over time? How diverse was the community in the past? How should we interpret the local unrest in the 18th century?
- There is usually a limited time for an enquiry – perhaps one or two hours a week over six weeks.
- Pupils will be expected to use a range of sources. They will be encouraged to interrogate and evaluate them as well as simply extract information. It is helpful if pupils can see a wide range of types – written, website, oral, pictorial, archaeological, the built environment. They might need help with longer sources but it is always good when they can at least see what the original source looks like.
- Many teachers, especially in primary schools, do not have a graduate qualification in the subject so often welcome guidance on any key (and manageable) background information including the wider context – how typical was their local community? Over time schools sometimes want to change their local enquiry so they may well welcome guidance on other interesting and feasible themes.

- A sizeable number of schools try to link their local history to other national topics they are studying so its worth finding out what themes are being covered in their history curriculum – although other schools deliberately choose a contrast.
- Many schools give considerable thought to how their enquiry will conclude – what sort of presentation? It could be a display, production, brochure, audio visual as well as a written product.

Using the resources and activities on the BALH website can give a flavour to the range of local history work in schools. It shows both the enormous potential for working with schools and also the quite sophisticated work that even young pupils are capable of. Perhaps not surprising adults looking at the site have said how much they have learnt themselves. Some of the activities and sources are of much wider interest.

Working closely with local schools is often something that schools themselves welcome. Community links are important to them including intergenerational links. BALH also recognises its importance. You are probably aware of the Small Grants Fund that BALH are trialling (see LHN 152). Grants of up to £500 are available. An activity involving a local society and a local educational institution falls well within the remit of the Small Grants initiative. It was always intended that the BALH/HA Teacher Fellowship programme had a useful legacy.

Not as lost as they seem…

Joe Saunders

It can be tempting as historians to compare historical subjects to the present day – comparison between the modern-day digital information revolution and the printing revolution as one example. Sometimes these are useful as researchers to our own understanding and as writers to convey understanding to others.

We ought to be wary of overstating continuity or difference though, as two recent examples show.

Charlie Taverner's *Street Food: Hawkers and the History of London* (Oxford University Press, 2023) is an excellent insight into the social, economic and cultural history of food hawking in London. Taverner admirably succeeds in reconstructing the working lives of poor men and women who sold all manner of sustenance to the people of the metropolis between the late 16th and early 20th centuries.

Towards the end of the book, Taverner's thorough historical research falls away to uneasy comparisons with the present day where he skips a century of history and ignores the many continuities. The cries of street sellers are described as if they are lost, though they can still be heard in Greater London and beyond from market traders and street vendors. The epilogue notes the continued operation of street sellers outside Europe and north America, while describing the 'return' of street food in London since 2007 where consumers are driving forward a billion-pound revolution in gentrified street dining. However, the enduring street staples of burger van, ice-cream truck and market stalls are conspicuously absent.

Giving an inaccurate sense of loss is misleading history, which can obscure real continuity and change: the nuance to which the local historian considering a long period of time is expert in.

Another example can be found in a 2023 blog post for the Wellcome Collection by doctoral candidate Claire Cock-Starkey, 'Why we no longer keep our dead at home'. This is a fascinating discussion of the shift from the practice of keeping a dead person at home before the funeral started a gradual trend for outsourcing the preparation and storage of a body in the 19th and 20th centuries. However true this generalisation is, it also ignores the fact that laying out is still practised by some in rural Britain.

Both reads are recommended to local historians looking to explore these subjects. However, we must be wary of the accuracy of such sweeping past–present comparisons when reading the works of others and when we write ourselves.

Local History News

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Supplement

THE BALH DYMOND LECTURE 2024



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.



UPCOMING BALH EVENTS IN 2025

Breaking the Mold: Alberta Sturges, the Redefining of an American Heiress in the Gilded Age

This presentation by Julie Montagu, Viscountess Hinchingbrooke, explores the extraordinary life of Alberta Sturges, ninth Countess of Sandwich, an American heiress during the Gilded Age who defied the typical societal roles expected of women like her.

Tuesday 21 January 2025 7:00pm - 8:30pm • Virtual event

BALH/Historic Towns Trust evening lectures 2025

Finding Historic Perth, with David Bowler: Tuesday 28 January

Bradford, with Ian Roberts: Tuesday 25 February

Ripon, with Mick Stanley: Tuesday 25 March

A City of Flows? Chester 400–1500, with Tom Pickles and Katherine Wilson: Tuesday 29 April



The BALH is delighted to present this conference as part of the Jane Austen 250 programme and Local and Community History Month. Featuring:

Jane Austen & Southampton: inspiration for Northanger Abbey & Sanditon? by Dr Cheryl Butler

Locating Pemberley: the Importance of Place in Jane Austen's Fiction by Dr Gillian Dow

Muddy Petticoats and Parasols: uncovering Jane Austen's experience of walking by Nicola Pritchard-Pink

The Nighttime Economy: the French Street Theatre & The Fitzhughs by Dr Cheryl Butler

Dramatizing Jane: Sarah Siddons, Austen's Favourite Actress by Jo Willet

Jane Austen & Character: an Actor's View by Angela Barlow

The MAD letter, the Austen Household Book, and the Royal Engagements Pocket Diary by Dr Cheryl Butler

Keeping Ladies Pocket Diaries in the age of Austen by Holly Day

Southampton and the wider world: the travels of William Ridding by Dr John McAleer

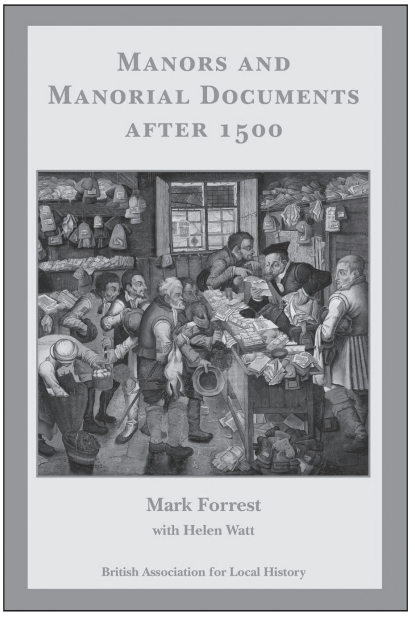
Saturday 3 May • 9:45am - 4:45pm, MAST Mayflower Studios, Southampton

BALH Annual General Meeting 2025

Thursday 22 May • 7:00pm–8:30pm, Virtual

Further details and all bookings via www.balh.org.uk/events

LATEST TITLE FROM BALH



Manors and Manorial Documents after 1500

Mark Forrest, with Helen Watt

Manorial documents are an under-used source for local history. They offer a wealth of information about farming practices, village customs, inheritance, crime and local government, essential to understanding past communities. This comprehensive 95-page guide to post-medieval manors details how they were managed and presents illustrated examples of administrative documents – custumals, accounts, surveys and maps – as well as the court rolls and books that record the court in session. It includes case studies of how they may be used, a bibliography and a glossary.

£8 to BALH members, £10 to non-members.
March 2022 ISBN: 978-0-948140-06-8

ORDER THROUGH OUR WEBSITE
www.balh.org.uk/shop/shop-local-history-books

WOULD YOUR ORGANISATION BE INTERESTED IN SELLING BALH PUBLICATIONS?

One of the core aims of BALH has always been to assist its members by publishing handbooks and other useful information on local history topics. We currently have in print books about internet sites, handwriting, dates and times, manorial records and teaching local history, and these are available for anyone to purchase through our website. We are keen that these should also be available for sale in archive offices, museums, and through member societies, and we are prepared to offer copies, if ordered in multiples of five or more, at a generous discount for resale. If your organisation would be interested in selling BALH publications please contact John Chandler, chair of the Publications Committee, for further information: jh.chandler@hotmail.com.

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

News round-up

With thanks Claire Cross, Heather Falvey, Chris Hills, Dick Hunter, Joe Saunders, Rachel Snape, Geoff Thornton, Nigel Tringham, Emily Vine

The S&DR200 is a nine-month festival taking place across County Durham and Tees Valley in 2025 to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the first journey on the **Stockton and Darlington Railway** (S&DR). This 26-mile journey on the S&DR between Shildon and Stockton via Darlington on 27 September 1825 transformed how the world traded, travelled and communicated. The S&DR200 Festival will present a series of free large-scale outdoor spectacles, events, exhibitions and new art commissions in the public spaces, libraries and world-class museums of County Durham and Tees Valley from March to November 2025. More information at sdr200.co.uk

John Isaac was one of the untold number of children born into chattel slavery, their lives purposefully uncounted until enslavers sought compensation, under the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833. A new memorial plaque recently unveiled at **Bristol Cathedral** marks the culmination of nearly five years of persistent advocacy by John Isaac's descendants and their friends, The memorial has been placed beneath the Rose Window in the west of the cathedral, a site currently commemorating Thomas Daniel and his wife, Augusta Louisa Daniel née Bridges, along with many other memorials to the Daniel family, who profited from the transatlantic enslavement economy for more than 200 years. The cathedral itself houses over 200 additional memorials to enslavers and their beneficiaries. This memorial is a significant step toward rectifying historical injustices and ensuring that the narratives of those who endured unimaginable terror are acknowledged and remembered. (For more information on 'corrective historical plaques', visit tteachplaques.org/)

All Hallows church in **Woolsery, Devon** has launched a new interactive digital trail for visitors, accessed through a QR code at an information point. The trail includes oral history recordings from village residents.

A rare medieval longhouse has been uncovered during archaeological investigation of a Roman settlement at **Wrexham**. The team from the University of Chester is expected to release a documentary about the dig, which developed initial trenches made by **Holt Local History Society** between 2013 and 2017.

Call for will transcribers

A research project based at the University of Exeter and The National Archives (see https://sites.exeter.ac.uk/materialcultureofwills) is looking for participants to help them transcribe a sample of 25,000 English wills that were made between 1540 and 1790. Using the online Zooniverse platform, the **Material Culture of Wills** project, supported by the Leverhulme Trust, aims to reveal how ownership of, and attitudes towards, objects changed in a period of profound economic transformation. By helping them transcribe these wills, you'll make a vital archive of English history more accessible and lay foundations for future initiatives to widen access to TNA's manuscripts.

The group has automatically transcribed the contents of wills from five periods across the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, 1538–52, 1604–08, 1664–6, 1725–6 and 1785-6, totalling 25,000 wills in total. You will be contributing by checking these transcriptions and suggesting corrections where needed. You'll have the opportunity to improve your reading of early modern handwriting – training is provided. You are welcome to contribute as much or as little as you would like as the 'bite-size' transcription checking tasks are designed to fit around other commitments To find out more, visit https://www.zooniverse.org/projects/hjsmith/the-material-culture-of-wills-england-1540-1790

The New Jerusalem project

In 1945 a New Towns Committee was appointed under the chairmanship of Lord Reith, and its report resulted in the New Towns Act 1946. The Act allowed the minister of town and country planning, after consultation with the local authorities concerned, to designate sites for new towns, and appoint and finance a development corporation for each town. The corporations were to acquire, manage and dispose of land and develop services and housing in the designated areas.

The Act proposed building several new towns across the country to which people from London would be able to move. The first town to be designated was Stevenage in 1946, followed by Crawley in 1947. The New Town movement sought to provide residents with all essential amenities in easy reach: green spaces; modern and comfortable homes; excellent schools; plentiful employment; and state-of-the-art healthcare.

Once the towns had been established in the 1950s, the development corporations were shut down. Their records were boxed up and most were hastily deposited in the relevant county archives. Since then, they have languished there, mostly uncatalogued. The New Jerusalems project is making accessible the archives from 11 of the post-war New Towns in England, Wales and the Republic of Ireland, through the support of the Wellcome Trust, which has awarded a £420,000 grant. The project's purpose is to catalogue these documents and secure their future through conservation and preservation work. The New Towns included in the project are: Basildon, Bracknell, Crawley, Cwmbran, Newton Aycliffe, Peterlee, Redditch, Runcorn, Shannon, Stevenage and Warrington. The New Jerusalems website – www.newjerusalems.info – has links to each town's project.

These records are significant new resources both for those interested in the connections between housing, urban design and public health, and for local historians of 20th-century life.
Heather Falvey

A note of warning from the editor of **Tamworth Heritage Magazine**, Chris Hills, who recently received an email from 'Adelaide Nelson' of 'eleadspro', offering a database of BALH members and event registrants for an unspecified price. There are many such scams offering contact lists from many different sectors, and of course we advise readers to move any email of this kind into the 'spam' folder of their email software.

Recent research by members of the Centre for Christianity and Culture at the University of York has shown that within a generation of the Clifford's Tower massacre of 1190 Jews returned to York and there seems to have been a thriving community in the city, apparently accepted by their Christian neighbours, until the expulsion of Jews from England in 1290. **York Civic Trust** has now put up a blue plaque to mark the site of the Jewish synagogue in Coney Street, which would have been the chief street in medieval York. The plaque was unveiled by Rabbi Dr Elisheva Salamo, York's first resident Rabbi in 800 years. An online trail showcasing York's Jewish heritage can be found at https://streetlifeyork.uk/explore/trails/298



Historic Buildings & Places, the Victorian Society and Save Britain's Heritage have all expressed concern over the proposed demolition of the historic **Bradley Lane Mills** (pictured) in Newton Abbot, Devon. The current buildings date from 1883 and milling has taken place on the site since the 13th century. Teignbridge Council says the demolition of the site, now emptied of commercial tenants, would save it a million pounds over four years.

Hook Norton Brewery in Oxfordshire is celebrating its 175th anniversary this year, and the site recently hosted the launch of the new **Victoria County History** volume for Chipping Norton – a 25 per cent discount on the volume can be obtained using the code BB03 at www.boydellandbrewer.com before the end of January. The volume also covers Over Norton, the Rollrights, Salford, Swerford and Showell.

Heritage groups in **Edinburgh** have expressed concern over 'selfie tourism', particularly in the light of a proposal by Netflix to erect a plaque in the city's medieval Vennel alleyway in honour of the TV company's adaption of David Nicholl's novel *One Day*. Is this the start of a new trend?

Researchers from the **University of Nottingham** have put together an exhibition about the history of Nottingham's caves and the people who lived in them over the past millennium. 'Tales from the Caves: Exploring Nottingham's Underground Stories' runs until 9 March 2025 at Lakeside Arts Weston Gallery: www.lakesidearts.org.uk/exhibition/tales-from-the-caves/

Leicester City Council has celebrated the landmark of installing its 350th heritage panel in the city, at Belgrave Flyover. The panels collectively cover two thousand years of local history. A full list if available via www.balh.org.uk/CYK199

Online news

The publication of official public record, ***The Gazette***, is launching a new mobile-responsive website and is looking for users to join a research group to help test this and other projects in the future. For further information on the group, visit www.thegazette.co.uk/all-notices/content/104267

Working Class History is a podcast from the International History Below Network of 'independent radical history activists and practitioners' (https://radical.history-from-below.net) – the podcast maintains a map of the many stories it has told across the world, large numbers of them from different parts of the UK: www.workingclasshistory.com

The **National Library of Scotland** has added LIDAR landscape maps (often used to identify archaeological sites) for England and Wales to its collections at maps.nls.uk. Newly out-of-copyright Ordnance Survey maps at various scales and covering the 1944–1973 period have also been added.

TheGenealogist.co.uk has released historic landowner records online, including feet of fines documents, an index of sasines from Scotland and the Scotland Record Office Index to the Register of Deeds; the site has now also georeferenced records in the 1841 census in its Map Explorer tool.

Ancestry.co.uk has added more than six million parish records for Sheffield and Rotherham to its collections, with baptisms up to 1923, marriages to 1948 and burials to 1998. Ancestry has also added records of Barnsley Magistrates' Court from 1841 to 1923 and Barnsley parish records, in conjunction with Barnsley Archives.

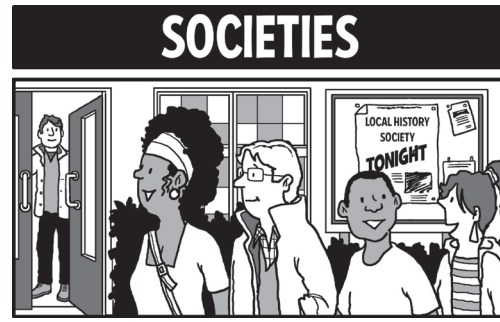
The **Tyne Theatre & Opera House**, with help from an army of local volunteers and academics from Newcastle and Northumbria Universities, has built a calendar of every known performance at the Tyne Theatre & Opera House between September 1867 and March 1919. Over 20,000 performances are documented and can be searched via the Theatre's website at https://www.tynetheatreandoperahouse.uk/about/performance-calendar-database/ The calendar was built entirely by local volunteers using over 20,000 newspaper advertisements, programmes and posters held by Newcastle City Library and Tyne & Wear Archives.



The **National Burial Grounds Survey** is a project to map every churchyard and burial ground in England and Wales, launched by the Church of England in 2021 in partnership with Historic England, burial ground conservation charity Caring for God's Acre and mapping firm Atlantic Geomatics, using laser scanning technology. The aim is to help parishes manage their sites and visitors to find where people are buried. The overall map of around 19,000 sites was completed this summer and the next phase is ongoing, starting with the dioceses of Carlisle and Truro, and linking details of individual memorials and burial ground ecology to the Church Heritage Record. There is more information at https://agintl.org/nbgs-survey/ and a pilot project can be viewed at https://kirkburton.burialgrounds.co.uk

Sussex choir Coro Nuovo are holding their Christmas concert at St Mary's Balcombe on Saturday 7 December, with the theme **'A Sussex Christmas'**. The group will be singing music which has an historic connection with the county as well as some readings from *A Hundred Years of a Sussex Farming Family* – stories of how Christmas was at the turn of the century with all its traditions associated with Sussex. www.coronuovo.org.uk

Archaeologists in **Oxford** have discovered the city's eastern defensive boundary from Saxon times, finally confirming Victorian theories that a wall found near the Bodleian library was the corner of a square boundary of the city. The defensive line was found at Oriel College.





Barwick-in-Elmet Historical Society chair Geoff Thornton is pictured cutting the anniversary cake (photo: Margaret Thornton).

In September **Barwick-in-Elmet Historical Society** marked its 40 year with a celebration cake, wine and presentations given by several members. The Society was formed on 11 September 1984 by four enthusiastic members who wanted to preserve the history of this attractive village in West Yorkshire. Membership soon increased and today now stands at around 50. The group started publishing their journal *The Barwicker* in 1986 and have now produced 138 editions as well as several books about the parish. In 2002 they opened their Resource Centre, in the local community centre where they meet. This small extension to house their archives was funded with a grant from The Heritage Lottery Fund.

Good ideas to borrow…

Meldreth Local History Group in Cambridgeshire enterprisingly produces a set of Christmas cards and notelets each year, each card showing four local scenes and helping to raise funds. The group reports that its Meldreth History website (www.meldreth history.org.uk) now has an impressive 718 pages and it is now gunning for 1000 followers on Facebook, having reached more than 960 in September. Could your group produce similar cards, using either contemporary photos or archival images?



The **Historic Towns Trust and History of Bath Research Group** have now published their *Historical Map of Bath* (ISBN 9781838071967, £11.99), aided by a £1,000 grant from regional umbrella group Avon Local History & Archaeology (ALHA). ALHA also reports that Bristol & Avon Family History Society has recatalogued its collection of more than 100 historic maps.

Volume 173 of the *Transactions* of the **Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire** is now available. It is a special issue commemorating the 170th anniversary of the Preston strike and lock-out of 1853–1854 and explains the significance of one of the most famous industrial disputes of the 19th century. The articles examine women's impact on the dispute and its impact on them, the role of Irish workers, the question of intimidation and conflict between workers, cultural and literary expressions of the dispute, its significance and legacy, and one creative interpretation of it, using animation. It is available via www.balh.org.uk/NUY197

The **History of Reading Society**'s summer newsletter has an interesting report on a visit to the John Lewis Heritage Centre – the retailer holds a 'unique archive of patterns and wall papers from the mid-1800s' and in the early days of its renowned partnership scheme, the firm provided medical services and leisure facilities for its staff.

Bedfordshire Local History Association has launched four new local history awards this year, open to heritage groups across the county and covering best newsletter/journal, best website/blog, best book and best project. Entry is now closed but the umbrella group hopes to add more categories in 2025. www.bedfordshire-lha.org.uk/blha-awards

Llangwm Local History Society in Pembrokeshire is celebrating its 20th anniversary with the launch of its website, www.llangwmlocalhistorysociety.org.uk, which showcases the groups research, lists events and includes a film about the history of the River Cleddau.



Volunteers from **North Lincolnshire Archaeology and History Society** have found hundreds of artefacts in two trenches in Bethlehem Street in Grimsby town centre, including glass, pottery (such as part of a Cistercian drinking vessel), bones and more than 200 oyster shells. A report on the dig can be found at www.balh.org.uk/JDZ200

ARCHIVES



Cheshire Archives is now closed while new premises in both Chester and Crewe are under development. Research access is not expected to resume until the new centres are open, intended to be in the first half of 2026. In the meantime, the archives team will continue to answer enquiries and offer limited search services. Details: www.cheshirearchives.org.uk/about-us

Online talks in early 2025 from **Surrey History Centre in Woking** include 'Oliver House: The story of a 16th-century cottage' on 15 January, by house historian and AGRA vice chair Sarah Pettyfer, who has traced this house in Cranleigh through three centuries; and 'Finding Ivy: A life worthy of life' on 29 January, telling the story of British-born victims of the Nazi war on disabled people and tied to an exhibition at the centre throughout January.

Wirral Archives is hosting a workshop on 'The Lives of Families who Lived and Worked on Narrow Boats on the Canals in the 20th Century' by Cath Turpin of the Waterways Archive in Ellesmere Port on 5 December. Book via archives@wirral.gov.uk

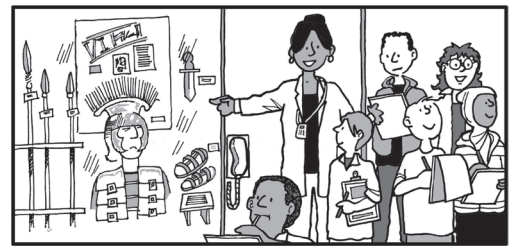
The National Archives runs occasional 'Introduction to Archival Research' training days, aimed at those new to researching in archives and with a focus on academic research in particular. The next one takes place on 1 April. Details via www.balh.org.uk/YPD196

The **Archives and Records Association UK & Ireland** (ARA) has awarded two grants of £10,000 to projects investigating AI (and other emerging technologies) and their application within the record-keeping sector. The grants have been awarded to:

- Dr Lise Jaillant (Loughborough University, UK) and Dr Giovanni Colavizza (Odoma LLC and University of Copenhagen, Denmark) with main partner The National Library of Wales and with support from The National Archives, for a project entitled: FLAME (AI For Libraries, Archives and Museums)
- Dr Alexandrina Buchanan and Dr Victoria Stobo of Liverpool University Centre for Archive Studies in collaboration with the Liverpool University Digital Innovation Facility for a project entitled AI and ML for Catalogue Conversion. In making these grants the ARA acknowledges both the potential benefits and the potential risks associated with using AI in the sector. More information: www.balh.org.uk/DBT198

The ARA has also announced the winners of its 2024 Excellence Awards. Highland Archive Service was awarded Record Keeping Service of the Year.

MUSEUMS



Oxfordshire Museums Service is looking for volunteers to help run Swalcliffe Barn near Banbury, a cruck barn built in 1401. Contact: swalcliffe.society@gmail.com

Lancashire Museums has been celebrating 50 years of the county council museum service through a 'Lancashire in 50 Objects' project. These objects exploring local people, places and traditions are explored at www.lancashire.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/museums/50-objects

The People's Story social history museum on Edinburgh's Royal Mile is under threat – the museum has already been closed until at least April next year in the context of the city council having a projected £26m overspend this year. Changing Queensferry Museum to appointments only has also been proposed, but these combined closures would only save one per cent of the expected deficit. Further debate over the future of the museums is expected to take place in December, and the council has said it hopes to find a way to reopen the People's Story.

EDUCATION



Professor Steve King of **Nottingham Trent University** is running a series of online seminars on 'Workhouse Lives' with Paul Carter at The National Archives. The current series (the fifth) focuses on violence, racial violence, sex and child abuse, sex and violent resistance in the English and Welsh workhouse 1750–1939. Details of the monthly events, running until July 2025, can be found via www.balh.org.uk/HFN195

LIBRARIES



Westmorland and Furness Libraries has launched the Memory Lane project to gather and preserve the memories of local residents, particularly shipyard workers. The project has been given funded by BAE Systems and will preserve local stories in both audio and written form, including large print. If you can contribute, contact library@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk or call 01229 407370.

Letters to the editor

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

I was very interested to read Andrew Shenton's article ('Telling our story: insights from a school biographer', LHN 152) and would enthusiastically endorse his opening comments.

There are many ways of approaching the history of a school. My experience is of researching and writing two studies that are very different from each other and from Dr Shenton's project. They raise many of the same issues and all confirm the importance of a school to its pupils, staff and community. Schools are a vital part of 'local history'.

Depending on the type of institution, the location and the time period, many resources are widely available. There should be log books, inspection reports, council education committee minutes and planning applications for buildings. Material for church schools would be in diocesan records.

Some surviving independent schools have professional standard archives; others lack the resources to take more than basic care. I found meetings of the School Archivists Group helpful, members always being willing to share knowledge and suggestions.

Private 'venture' schools provided classes, particularly for girls, in the 19th century but were often short lived, lasting no longer than the active life of their owner and seldom leaving any documentary records. But for some there will be entries in trade directories, newspaper advertisements and lists of staff and students in CEBs.

Memories can be valuable and enlightening but should indeed be used with caution. Today, social media groups are a way of finding former staff and pupils.

Dr Shenton's advice 'reference meticulously the sources you use' is vital. A reader or future researcher must be able to trace your information. Although there are no notes or bibliography in my centenary history, a fully referenced copy is deposited in the school archives.

The whole process is challenging, personally rewarding and much appreciated by the community to which it relates. I would recommend it to anyone looking for a worthwhile individual or group project.

Dr Jane Howells, author of Leehurst Swan School: A centenary history *(Shire, 2013) and 'Schools at East and West Harnham' in* Harnham Historical Miscellany *(*Sarum Studies *4, 2013)*

Untold Stories: new research on the city, county and diocese of Lincoln

Paul Dryburgh

Lincolnshire is one of England's largest counties. It has around 750 parishes, though rather fewer urban centres, chief of which, of course, is the county town on the River Witham. The medieval diocese of Lincoln was even larger, stretching over nine historic counties from the mouth of the Humber to the banks of the River Thames in Buckinghamshire.

The history of these vast areas is underpinned by an even greater wealth of archival material relating to all areas of public and private life. The county has a rich historiographical tradition and a vibrant local history scene, though to some extent (and I say this as a Yellerbelly) the city, county and diocese remain ripe for much more extensive research. After all, there remains only one volume of the Victoria County History for Lincolnshire, published over a century ago (though, as reported by Michael Gilbert – see page 7 – moves are afoot to revive this most valuable of local history publication projects); and the Manorial Documents Register for the county was only completed during lockdown, meaning glittering treasures lie waiting to be discovered.

It was with this in mind that the Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology (SLHA), now in its golden jubilee year, the Lincoln Record Society (LRS), now approaching 120 years in existence, and BALH collaborated on a one-day research conference on 21 September to explore some of those 'Untold Stories'. Over 60 delegates gathered at Lincoln College in the shadow of Lincoln Cathedral to enjoy ten papers covering a wide range of topics, periods and source material.

Medieval ecclesiastical and monastic life has perhaps garnered most attention over the past century and a half. The diocese boasts an enviable catalogue of cartularies (complex records of land and property tenure compiled by the enclosed religious or prominent lay families) and an internationally recognised diocesan archive, at the pinnacle of which sit the registers of the bishops. Marshalling many of the new perspectives in cartulary studies, **Dr**



Lincoln: layered with history. (Photo: Andrew Chapman)

Katy Dutton (University of Leeds) introduced her approach to editing the cartulary of the Cistercian abbey of Kirkstead on the fenland edge for the LRS. She perfectly wove the cartulary, a 216-folio manuscript begun c. 1200 with additions to 1310, into its wider context of surviving single-sheet charters and a mass of material produced prior to the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the 1530s relating to the Tattershall, Willoughby and Bertie families. Her central message is of real importance for local historians: that we should not typologise cartularies but examine them in their wider context on an individual basis.

Jessica Holt (University of Lincoln) introduced her PhD research into appointments of clerks and their patronage networks in the register of Bishop Thomas Bek (1341–7). Her focus was on the controversy over papal appointments of foreigners to benefices and the loss of local authority for lay patrons: a petition to Parliament in 1343 complained 'only with great difficulty will any clerk, be he a son of a great lord or other, find a benefice in this realm in which to be advanced'. However, this new research in one of those key sources for medieval local history, which demands levels

of skill and experience rarely taught, demonstrated that in Lincoln diocese at least virtually all institutions to benefices were carried out by lay and monastic patrons and granted to Englishmen, even where the papacy occasionally reserved a benefice for a monastic patron.

The spiritual dimension to premodern life formed a strong thread in Untold Stories. In two papers sparkling with personal detail, **Dr Brian Hodgkinson** (University of Nottingham) and **Dr Martin Roberts** (University of Lincoln) investigated, respectively, charitable giving in fenland districts prior to the Dissolution and the Church's attempts to manage sexual misconduct through its courts. Brian posed a question that he himself has yet to answer satisfactorily and called for assistance – perhaps readers might have answers. Through a detailed analysis of that classic resource for local historians, probate registers for testamentary bequests, he showed that large numbers of fenland testators left money for orphans housed at the Hospital of the Holy Sepulchre attached to the Gilbertine monastery of St Katherine in Lincoln. Why was this? Were orphans sent to learn or to escape the fenland miasmas?

Martin, conversely, introduced a more complex, difficult source – the notebooks of the diocesan Court of Audience. These allow him to reconstruct and reimagine the phenomena of shame and penitence in ordinary life in late-medieval England. The notebooks record formal process against defendants accused of moral and sexual crimes. Couched in heavily abbreviated Latin, they reveal a small number of guilty verdicts but many, over half of the five dozen or so sampled, where ritual penance was imposed. This involved public procession as a spur to improved orthodox behaviour within the community, reminding everyone of their sins and responsibilities. Martin argued that judges took a flexible, nuanced approach and imposed penalties commensurate with the crime and the defendant's status and wealth. Access to these records is restricted to those with the necessary skills but readers can find useful editions among the publications of county record societies, in this case notably the LRS for whom Martin is preparing a new edition.



Attendees at Untold Stories. (Photo: Paul Dryburgh)

'Land and God': the county motto for Lincolnshire. We've dealt with God. Now let's deal with land. In a richly illustrated talk, **Jenne Pape** introduced delegates to *The Surveighe of the Mannour of Toynton*. Commissioned in 1614 by Robert Bertie, Lord Willoughby d'Eresby, this manuscript comprises 110 folios and 14 wonderfully drawn and remarkably accurate survey maps by the otherwise unknown Henry Valentine. Land surveys can be terrifically informative about past and present features in the landscape: the inquisition examined such rights as mills, turf, peat, timber and enclosure. The accompanying maps carefully recorded the spatial relationships outlined in the written survey with incredible accuracy. Jenne showed that the sheets can be digitally stitched back together and could be used to walk around the village today. This reinforced the value of bringing visual and textual material together.

As **Dr Mike Rogers** (The National Archives) showed, the primacy of the Commons exerted during and after the English Civil War created another local history windfall in terms of Parliamentary Surveys. Now housed mainly at TNA, as well as at Lambeth Palace Library, the Parliamentary Archives and some local record offices, these voluminous records, all written in English, record the value and extent of church lands, royal lands and the estates of 'delinquents', those individuals forfeited to the Commonwealth for treason, in order that Parliament could sell or lease those properties at higher rates. A rich and valuable source, access is encumbered by a lack of editions; Lincolnshire itself is poorly served. The Surveys offer detailed descriptions of tenantries and plots, which makes them a fantastic source for field names. They also survey buildings to varying extents and qualities: Lincoln's Bishop's Palace is the most famous surveyed.

Building and wider architectural history is another wonderful way of inspiring local historians and local communities. There can have been few better examples of this than the talk presented by **Dr Shirley Brook**. In a truly innovative piece of research, Shirley examined

Victorian and Edwardian tiled entrances of properties in the West Park Estate in Lincoln's West End. Her aim was to investigate social and cultural history in turn-of-the-century suburbia, at the dawn of a new age, to prove the thesis that 'The house is the domestic image of a culture'. Paring architectural analysis to reveal the use of Art Nouveau features in wall tiling and stained glass apertures to doorways, fancy letterboxes and door handles – who knew that brass was used because it doesn't transmit infection? – with research in the census and trade directories, she painted a riveting picture of aspiring young men, many of whom were owner-occupiers and were moving into houses befitting and demonstrating their station and who wished to project their status. By scouring Lincoln city building applications and newspapers, she also explored the designers and builders of these radical new properties. This was a real reminder that material culture – the everyday all around us – is a great source for local history.

The final strand examined life stories from the early modern to the modern. Bishop Grosseteste University (Lincoln) PhD student **Thomas Browne-Warr** took us back to the era of Blackadder III's Dunney-on-the-Wold by-election, examining voter distribution in the 1721 Lincolnshire by-election. He showed the value of poll books for local history research. These were created when a constituency was contested by more candidates than the seats available. Thomas explored these records, revealing much social detail, including the oral nature of the election – voters' names were often misheard or misunderstood due to strong local dialects or the drunkenness of voters, the ignorance of voters on local geography and the preponderance of similar place names across the county: Baston v Boston, Somerby v Somersby etc. Poll books are also a vital source for the impact of road networks in such a large rural county, the changing nature of the terrain from marsh to wold and, in terms of voter distribution, the extent of freeholders and urban settlement – towns voted predominantly Tory!

Moving on a century, **Martin Watkinson**, winner of the 2024 BALH *The Local Historian* prize for the Best Long Essay in Local History, 'Reflections on "closed parishes"' (see picture, back cover), explored life in north Lincolnshire as depicted in the remarkable memoir of the solicitor and antiquarian William Smith Hasleden (1774–1854). Hasleden's early life to 1803 is documented in a 700-leaf unpublished manuscript intended to be 'a family relic'. Now in Duke University in the USA, having disappeared until auctioned off in 1997, this manuscript gives us rich personal detail and lays out turn-of-the-century Barton upon Humber's social hierarchy. The memoir also has much to tell us about national life, reflecting on the 1798 French invasion scares and terrible harvests before 1800; Hasleden headed a fundraising drive locally to serve nearly 700 inhabitants, a third of the population of the town, in soup kitchens. Although much of the original research is now lost, Hasleden's history of Barton was posthumously published in 1856, a vital work of local history in the far north of the county and diocese.

Lastly, the conference moved into the 20th century and introduced a pioneering digital humanities project. **Dr Jack Rhoden** and **Elaine Johnson** (BGU) presented their study of female graduates from Lincoln Diocesan Training College, founded as a women's teacher training college in 1862. Within the archives of BGU, its successor institution, there is a large card index of graduates with details of backgrounds, study and destination. Using internal funding to employ students to research the index, various lockdown dissertations and undergraduate case studies have been delivered – it is noticeable, for example, that many graduates worked across the empire as missionaries and teachers. In 2022, the Nigel Burn Memorial Research grant scheme of the Lincoln Record Society (lincoln-record-society.org.uk/grants/) awarded funding to Dr Rhoden to digitise the materials and conduct research into the first part of the history of the College. The aim is to create a biographical register of the earliest students, 1862–1918 (c.1,800 women), with a bottom-up focus on the trainees and their future career paths. This will be published by the LRS and the digitised cards and biographical entries will be presented on a free-to-access interactive website. So keep an eye out for further information and get in touch with the project team if you have any female teachers in your family history.

Untold Stories demonstrated the vibrancy of research, the wealth of archives still ripe for plunder and the pressing need to preserve and enhance access to original sources within the city, county and diocese of Lincoln. At a time when the future of archive services, especially in Lincolnshire, is in doubt, the organisers should be congratulated for showcasing the very best of current scholarship.

BALH Regional Conference: Maps and Buildings

Jane Golding

Following the highly successful 2022 regional conference 'Unexpected Sources for Local History,' BALH returned to Taunton on Saturday 12 October 2024 for a second time.

Maps and buildings offer a tangible and accessible route into the study of local history and the programme indeed delivered its promise to provide interesting perspectives on both. Within this common thread were woven references, concepts and sources that complement content across presentations and served to link the day into a well-crafted whole. Although examples were largely taken from the south-west, the sources, tools and methodologies shared can be equally applied to other regions.

Joseph Rogers gave the first of the five talks enjoyed throughout the day. Joe has visited over 100 tithe barns while researching material for his recent book on the subject, *Tithe Barns*. Beginning with an introduction to the purpose, construction and use of tithe barns since the medieval period, he went on to demonstrate instances when a 'tithe barn' might not be a tithe barn! Some medieval barns later given the title are now known not to have been intended for the purpose of storing corn gathered as tithe payment in kind. More correctly, they are grange barns that served the farming needs of the abbey. Joe went on to show how imposter tithe barns continue to appear in the landscape, such as the 'tithe barn' constructed in 2008 near Crewkerne, Somerset as a wedding venue.

Interested in the survival and reuse of tithe barns, Joe has created a map representing their distribution across England. Drawing on notable Somerset examples, including barns at Dunster, Glastonbury and Pilton, he explained how these barns often owe their continued survival to conversion and reuse as visitor attractions, museums, wedding venues, restaurants and family homes.

Next, Devon-based genealogist and tutor **Lucy Browne** demonstrated how close examination of a 17th-century map can provide a fascinating window into the history of a village – in this case, a record of land belonging to the manor of Nymet Tracey alias Bow, Devon c.1640. The map in question (the original held by Kent Archives) exists as three separate sections, thereby making the task even more challenging.

The tripartite map records plot acreages and the names of owners and occupiers. Buildings are depicted in relief and, although unlikely to be accurate representations, those with chimneys can be more confidently judged as residential buildings. However, before this information can be made useful to local history, Lucy had to determine how the three map sections fit together and how they relate to the modern landscape. Confusingly, the map is orientated along an east-west axis so that west is at the top and east is at the bottom. To solve this puzzle, Lucy compared the three sections with a large-scale Ordnance Survey map of 1888 and was able to identify field shapes that were common to both. Having overcome issues of scale, the treatment of isolated pieces of land presented a further complication: where are they located on the ground? Understanding why a map was drawn up and its purpose can help explain the relative importance of what was included and what was left out. When reset on its east-west axis it becomes clear that the centre of the map focuses on the church, and likely the manorial heart. With a better understanding of the map established, Lucy went on to suggest how a study of neighbouring parishes might help determine manorial boundaries, and that an examination of wills belonging to the recorded owners and occupiers might help to identify their properties.

BALH Vice-Chair **Jane Golding**, who manages Historic England's Heritage Gateway, highlighted changes to the way heritage information is managed and by whom. The historic environment is a rich resource to understanding the past. An inquisitive approach that places a building within its landscape context can reveal much about that building's development, its history, and indeed decline and eventual disappearance. However, gaining access can be confusing to the records of extensive research

and as the result of many decades of investigation into the historic environment. Jane looked at current changes designed to improve and simplify access to national, local and community layers of information.

Revisiting her 2004 case study of Steventon, Oxfordshire, written for *The Local Historian*, Jane brought it up to date by showing many of the sources described are now available online. These include photographs from Historic England's architectural Red Box collection (more than one million records from the Historic England Archive can now be searched online), over 400,000 digitised vertical and oblique views via Aerial Photo Explorer, and information on the National Heritage List for England including community knowledge contributed as the Missing Pieces Project.

Jane drew on Wiltshire case studies (Winterslow and the Rodbourne area of Swindon) to build up layers of information from national, local and community sources. She highlighted the Heritage Gateway (a single point of online access to the national network of local Historic Environment Records) and Know Your Place West of England. Maps of all kinds can be useful tools to help to understand and show the existence of distinct patterns, presence and absence, concentrations and scatters of features in the landscape. When building layers of information, they are a convenient platform for the sharing of community knowledge and memories.

BALH Trustee and VCH editor/contributor for Gloucester and Wiltshire **John Chandler** began his highly informative exploration into how maps can be the key to uncovering history by investigating the very space where the audience was sitting. Aided by map images available online from the National Library of Scotland, John took everyone through an exercise in map regression. Starting with modern Ordnance Survey mapping and working backwards through time, changes to St Andrew's Church Hall and the surrounding buildings began to unfold, and on reaching the Ordnance Survey Large Scale Plan (1:500) from 1888, the site was revealed as an open area opposite St Andrew's Church. The web resource, Know Your Place, mentioned earlier in the day, was also examined as a source of online mapping.

John highlighted less common sources to consider, including shopping centre plans, railway company plans, navigation charts of coastal areas, road maps, sale catalogues and the 1910 Valuation Office Survey, in addition to the more well-known sources for estate, tithe and enclosure mapping. To round up, John suggested looking out for the following map features particularly helpful to local historians: field names and minor place names; exemptions, such as tithe-free land; acreages; annotations; and land parcel numbers.

Architectural history author and Pevsner contributor **Julian Orbach**, in the final talk of the day, presented a glorious selection of Somerset buildings that merit mention as being special to the county or are unusual in some way. He included fine examples of different building types and architectural styles, plus some oddities!

Naturally, ecclesiastical buildings featured highly in Julian's list. Other cathedrals may have scissor arches but at Wells they are a stunning central feature, making up three sides of the crossing. The late medieval church towers at Taunton and Evercreech are noted for their height combined with an extraordinary sense of portion and design. The church screen at Norton Fitzwarren stands with the best in the country, while the magnificent carved timber roofs at both Martock and Westonzoyland ensure that these churches are renowned. Good examples of 'show' aisles financed by families rich on wool can be found at Bicknoller and Crowcombe.

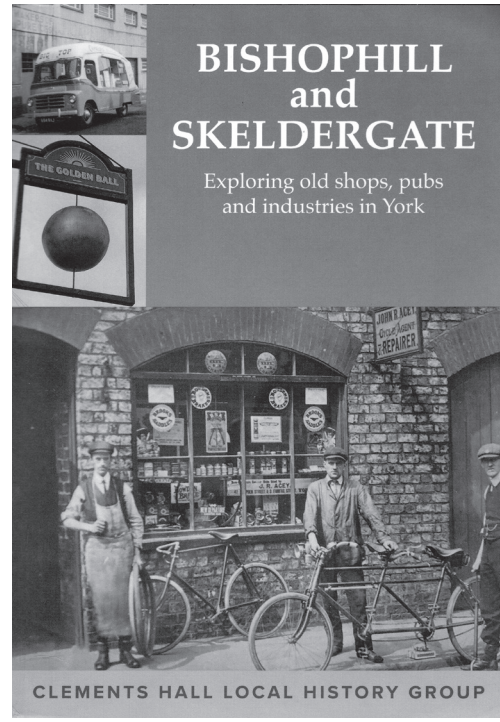
Julian went on to illustrate a range of noteworthy features in Somerset domestic houses, including plasterwork, staircases and over-mantel paintings. Then followed a wide range of building types, grand and small: Quaker meeting houses, follies, garden buildings (for example, the 'Turkish Tent' summerhouse at Inwood House, Henstridge) and cemetery chapels (an intriguing example is the combined Nonconformist and Anglican Mortuary Chapel at North Petherton which features a narrow gap to separate the dividing walls, felt necessary at the time to ensure that no contact could be made between the two denominations). To conclude, Julian brought his informative and illuminating tour into the present by looking at several uniquely constructed modern buildings, such as those serving the shoe manufacturing company of the Clark family at Street.

Congratulations to everyone who made the day possible – the organisers, speakers, local societies with their stands, helpers and caterers. Gathering with people in person to share ideas, inspire, learn new information and enjoy being together surely demonstrates the pursuit of local history at its best!

Book reviews

Heather Falvey

***Bishophill and Skeldergate: Exploring old shops, pubs and industries in York* by the Clements Hall Local History Group (Clements Hall Local History Group 2024 iv+136pp ISBN: 978-1-999-665-54-8) £10**



The Bishophill and Skeldergate area of York, which is clearly defined by the city's medieval wall, the River Ouse, Micklegate and Bridge Street, literally has an ancient history: Bishophill was the site of a Roman civil settlement and Skeldergate is a Viking name. Its riverside setting meant that initially the area was heavily involved with transport and trade, but in the late 19th century and first half of the 20th it was a centre of industrial and commercial activity.

Local industries included T. Cooke & Sons, who made, among other instruments, large telescopes and Capaldi's Ice Cream Factory. With the industrial buildings becoming obsolete, its character has changed again: now it is largely residential, with some older streets and houses, but also conversions and new builds. Although many of the numerous corner shops, which were important features of local life, have now gone, there are intriguing shapes in the brickwork hinting at former use, like a doorway cutting across the right angle so that shoppers from either street had easy access.

As well as text describing the streets, there are excellent photographs, old and new. The former convey how close together the various buildings were. What a busy, crowded place it was. Indeed, the York cholera epidemic of 1832 started in Skeldergate, due to the foul conditions and housing there, and in 1901 Seebohm Rowntree noted that the area was more densely populated than parts of inner London.

Snippets of oral history recall such features as betting shops in 1960s, the tailor who sat in his shop window and waved at passers-by, and Red Rhino Records operating out of a coach house in Fetter Lane. Little gems are tucked away in the text: in Kyme Street in the 1950s some of the houses still had 'Duckett tipper toilets', with a tipping tank inside the toilet instead of a cistern, using waste water from the kitchen or scullery sink.

On my most recent visit to York, I walked around Bishophill and Skeldergate, using this book as a guide. I am drawn to churches. Priory Street is breathtaking: the massive former Presbyterian church built in 1879; a few steps away, York Baptist Church, built in 1868, with accommodation for 700, the first Gothic style non-conformist chapel in York; almost opposite the wonderful former Wesleyan Chapel, built in 1856 to a classical design to seat 1,500; adjacent to Holy Trinity Church, which incorporates part of the 12th-century nave of the former priory of that name.

The CHLHG has peopled the shops, pubs, businesses and streets using census returns, trade directories, maps, newspaper and church magazines, bringing Bishophill and Skeldergate's past to life. This is their fifth such publication and more are planned.

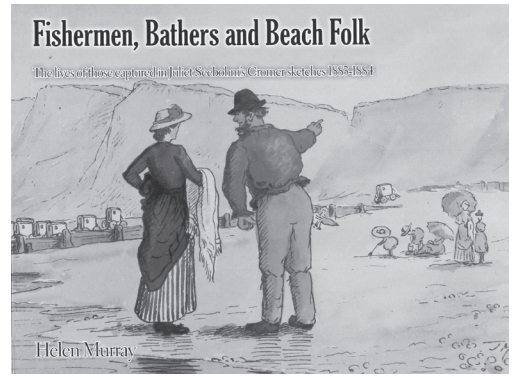
Fishermen, Bathers and Beach Folk. The lives of those captured in Juliet Seebohm's Cromer sketches 1883–1884 **by Helen Murray (Poppyland Publishing 2024 140pp ISBN: 978-1-869831-41-7) £11.95 + £4.00 p&p**

Juliet Seebohm (b.1859), who had four sisters and one brother, was the eldest daughter Frederic Seebohm and his wife Mary (née Exton) of Hitchin (Herts). Frederic was a Quaker of German ancestry. Mary came from an established Quaker banking family in Hitchin and her elder sister Margaret married the Quaker banker, Joseph Gurney Barclay.

In August 1883, while their parents and four younger siblings travelled to Europe, Juliet and her sister Esther (b.1861) went to stay with their Barclay cousins, Henry Albert (Bertie), his wife Marion and his sister, Daisy, at The Warren in Cromer (Norfolk). There they joined 'a complex web of family and friends who had been established in the area for almost a century'. Helen Murray outlines those family connections and describes Cromer at that time. In 1883 *Daily Telegraph* travel writer Clement Scott also visited Cromer, where, unlike Great Yarmouth, there was 'not a whisper of a music hall song', but more likely 'a whole army of intelligent young ladies' with sketchbooks and easels. Murray's book provides evidence of Juliet's artistic skill in capturing Cromer scenes and people in 1883 and in 1884, when she again visited her cousins at The Warren, this time with her sisters Winnie and Hilda, to be met later by their parents and other siblings. In1883 Frederic published *The English*



Cromer fisherman 'Old Clubfoot' Billy Mayes and a detail of his depiction by Juliet Seebohm.



Village Community Examined and in 1884 the family were joined in Cromer by 29-year-old Russian academic Paul Vinogradoff.

Murray has used Juliet's diaries, commencing in 1884, newspapers, census returns and other documents to recreate the background to her sketches and finished paintings. Several show the young ladies bathing. They could not simply walk into the sea in bathing costumes, but were expected to change in a rented bathing machine. Thus, the picture entitled 'Patience' shows Juliet and others waiting with Lucy Miller, owner of the bathing machines, for one to become vacant. Her brother Gilbert Rook, a local fisherman, sometimes assisted her. Juliet's picture 'Hope' shows Gilbert talking to one of the Seebohm sisters, with a caption of their discussion. Fishermen brothers James and William Mayes offered swimming lessons to young ladies. 'Paradise' shows the sisters and friends swimming, with a fifth girl about to dive from the Mayes' boat. Another Cromer character was 'Old' Billy Mayes (no relation). Photographs of him show that he suffered from clubfoot and Juliet's picture of him accurately depicts his specially fitted boots. He also taught visitors swimming, offered trips in his boat and goat or donkey rides.

Juliet's paintings have been beautifully reproduced and are complemented by photographs of people discussed in the text and by pictures of Cromer. This book provides a detailed description of its late 19th-century atmosphere and the characters to be found there. Although changes have occurred since then, Cromer has retained its charm.

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

Alighting on some luminaries

Alan Crosby

Back in 2012 our Irish correspondent, James Scannell, sent me the journal of the Bray Cualann Historical Society, issue no. 6. This was a special publication to mark the birth centenary of Cearbhall Ó Dálaigh (Carroll O'Daly), the fifth president of Ireland (1974–6). The president was born in Main Street, Bray, County Wicklow in 1911. His incumbency was abruptly truncated when he resigned in 1976 because of a political controversy, but as a son of Bray he was quite rightly commemorated by the Society. He died in 1978.

There was a special event to launch the journal, and what I noted particularly as I read the account of the evening was that the guest of honour of the Bray Society was no less a person than Cearbhall Ó Dálaigh's then successor, Ireland's eighth president, Dr Mary McAleese. That, I thought, was a sign of a really classy act. To get the head of state, the president of the Republic (who was at the end of her 14-year term), to attend a local history society meeting was pretty impressive by anybody's measure, and she was even photographed with the committee. So well done, Bray!

Founded in 1973, the **Lancashire Local History Federation** is, like most county associations, an umbrella organisation. We have a membership of 85 societies and 65 individuals, and I have the honour of being its chair. Each year the Federation holds an 'At Home' day, hosted by a member society. It's a great opportunity to showcase the history of a community, and often those places which are less overtly historic have the greatest impact. Finding out about a village or small town which is overlooked in the popular perception can be very rewarding. This year the event was on 13 July and the host society was the **Chorley Heritage Centre Group**, with an excellent programme which included talks on Myles Standish, the *Mayflower* and his Chorley links (he was probably born there), and on the pit-brow women of the Lancashire coalfield.

The day began in the Town Hall. The Group's chair welcomed us to Chorley and then introduced Helen Bingley, the high sheriff of Lancashire, who talked to us about her work, and the origins and development of the shrievalty (which is one of those words you rarely get to use in everyday conversation). This was very interesting, and I thought that the Chorley Group had done well to arrange for Helen to speak. Then the chair made another introduction. She announced that the president of the society would also welcome us. At this point, a familiar figure appeared at the front of the hall, a commanding presence known to us all from our television screens. Sir Lindsay Hoyle, speaker of the House of Commons, has also been the MP for the Chorley constituency since 1997. A passionate enthusiast for all things Chorleian, and with his broad and instantly recognisable Chorley accent. There was a clearly audible group exclamation from the assembled company.

My goodness, he was entertaining… genuinely very interested in the local history and heritage of the town where he was born,

The Local History Group's AGM no longer has the cut and thrust of heated debate with the new Chair's constant 'Order, order' every few minutes



and of course a highly experienced public speaker. He extolled the many virtues of the town of Chorley, and its rich and varied history, and commended us all for visiting – all delivered in that robust vernacular way. But the biggest laugh was when he revealed that every time he met Nancy Pelosi at gatherings of G7 legislature speakers, they talked about (what else?) the history and heritage of Chorley. She would always ask Lindsay 'How is it going in Chorley?' as a conversational opening.

So, the Bray Cualann Society has met its match in Chorley, just down the road from me. A head of state as guest of honour perhaps still outranks a speaker of the House of Commons, but it's pretty good all the same. And may I envisage a future role for Sir Lindsay, after he retires from parliament and is chair of the Chorley Heritage Centre Group? You know how unruly those local history society AGMs can be, as people quarrel over coach seating on the summer excursion, or the price of a day school.

I see it clearly. A gavel banging and a booming voice repeating: ORDER! ORDER!

BALH Outreach Team news

Joe Saunders

There is lots going on with BALH Outreach Team in 2024, with plans for more next year

In the autumn we have held online talks on our new arrangement with the Bibliography of British and Irish History in a special deal for members to access this resource (see www.balh.org.uk/members), as well as lectures from Professor Corinne Fowler on local country walks through colonial Britain and Paul Carter from The National Archives on the Victorian Poor Law Project.

Our 2024 Dymond Lecture, also online, will be held on 5 December 2024 at 7 pm. Professors John McAleer and Craig Lambert will be presenting on 'English merchant shipping and early modern maritime communities, c.1588–c.1765' (see this issue's supplement for more).

In early 2025 we are planning a new series of lectures with the Historic Towns Trust as well as other talks.

The BALH is always looking to arrange more talks, attend more events and run more projects but requires volunteer assistance to achieve this as well as our other initiatives. If you would be interested in helping, please contact outreach@balh.org.uk.

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

The BALH blog continues to draw in excellent research as does our popular series of online 'Ten-Minute Talks'. The 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 have been 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

Readers can keep up to date with our activities via *Local History News*, the BALH website and e-newsletter.

A reminder: *Local History News* welcomes your newsletters, both as sources for news items here and for consideration in the annual BALH Newsletter Award: please send digitally if possible, to editor.lhn@balh.org.uk *and* to reviews.editor@balh.org.uk, otherwise by post to BALH Office c/o Moore Insight, St James House, Vicar Lane, Sheffield S1 2EX.

Notes News Issues

The BALH team

Local history online short courses
BALH, in collaboration with our education partner Pharos Tutors, run two four-week courses:
Getting Started with Local History is aimed at any local historian looking for inspiration and advice, though it will especially appeal to those of you who have recently started or would like to start researching local history. It introduces you to local history as a subject and discusses key skills and sources to help you with your research. The focus is on modern British history from c.1780 to the present day.

Progressing Your Local History Research is for any local historian looking for inspiration and advice, though it will especially appeal to those who have already begun their research. The course builds upon the themes, skills and records considered in the Getting Started with Local History course, developing research skills and moving to the period before the Industrial Revolution. We then move onto bringing the pieces of your research together for analysis, selecting appropriate analysis techniques and thinking about how to share your findings.

The course tutor is Joe Saunders. Joe has degrees in history from the University of Glasgow and is a PhD candidate at the University of York, where he also teaches. He is a freelance historical researcher, a BALH Trustee and currently Outreach Team Chair.

For more information on these and other Pharos courses visit their website at www.pharostutors.com

A 15 per cent discount on both courses is available to BALH members using codes found in the members' area of the website: www.balh.org.uk/members

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

Ask BALH
Remember, if you have questions about local history research or any aspect of running a local history society, do send them to our 'Ask BALH' feature via editor.lhn@balh.org.uk and we will aim to provide answers. Look out for a potential 'Ask BALH' event next year, too!

Next copy deadline
The next issue of *Local History News* will be out around the end of February – please note the copy deadline for that issue (No. 154) is 3 January. If you wish to promote a society event here, it will need to take place not before late February – 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 role of the rivers Adur and Arun in the development of their local Sussex communities.

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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: A recent 'how-to' day held by Cumbria Local History Federation – see page 14.
Below left: Martin Watkinson being presented with his essay prize certificate by BALH Chair Paul Dryburgh and SLHA Chair Dr Andrew Walker at Lincoln.
Below right: a picturesque scene in St Mary Bourne, Hampshire (see page 12 – photo: Barry Shurlock).



