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• EDITORIAL •

In this issue I include all the responses received from readers commenting on the article by George and Yanina Sheeran, published in the November 2009 journal. It is perhaps to be expected that the majority of those who wrote were essentially opposed to the views expressed in that article, though few will disagree that the paper was both challenging and stimulating. Now we have not only some shorter replies, but also an article by Mark Smith, almost as long as the original and carefully analysing and weighing up the arguments put forward by the Sheerans. Mark presents a series of counterpoints, dissecting the analysis and sometimes accepting, sometimes rejecting, the conclusions which they reached.

It is important in local history, as in any other subject, that there is space in which ideas, philosophies and perspectives can be discussed and debated, and strength in the notion that the practical approaches to research and analysis—our methodologies—should be subject to scrutiny. Of course, there are so many questions. Why do we employ certain approaches but not others? Why do we take a particular perspective, or work from a certain starting point? Is there a ‘right’ and a ‘wrong’ way to tackle topics and themes within local history? Some local historians flatly reject any idea that the subject has a theoretical basis, and are adamant that it does not need one, because its strengths are purely empirical. Others are instinctively mistrustful of non-traditional perspectives. Still others want actively to reshape and transform our views, radically altering the way local history is practised.

One point often made is that local historians are not a representative group. Should we be worried about the apparent demographical and social imbalance, whereby our age, ethnic and gender profile is not congruent with that of the population as a whole? Or should we simply accept that it is so and get on with it, not least because we derive personal satisfaction from what we do? Are we actually any less unrepresentative than, for example, those who like hillwalking, or go to concerts, or regularly attend football matches? Each of these may have a different profile, but is any of them any closer to matching the population in its entirety? And are academic local historians any different from the mainstream historians in this respect? Perhaps we need some comparative statistics, rather than relying on impressionistic perceptions.

The arguments about the November 2009 article will not end here. I expect that Mark Smith’s paper, and the varied and interesting replies from other contributors, will stimulate others to put pen to paper or fingers to keyboard. If you do have additional points to make, or would like to take issue with the subjects raised by the original article or the responses, please write to me with material for the August issue. As before, you may remain anonymous if you prefer. At some stage I may use the time-honoured editorial guillotine (‘This correspondence is now closed’) but that time has not yet come!

ALAN CROSBY

Themes in local history

Zion's people: who were the English Nonconformists?

Part 1: Gender, age, marital status and ethnicity

CLIVE D. FIELD

Nonconformity has its roots in the puritans and separatists of Elizabethan England, but traces its formal foundations to the Act of Uniformity 1662 and the subsequent ejection from their livings in the Church of England of some 2,000 Presbyterian and other ministers who refused to conform to the legislation. The movement will thus celebrate its 350th birthday in 2012.¹ During the intervening centuries Nonconformists, alternatively known at different periods of their history as Religious Dissenters or the Free Churches, have exercised a powerful influence over the life of the nation. Taking an inclusive (not to say lax) theological definition, to incorporate not simply the Presbyterian tradition (always officially recognized in Free Church federal structures alongside Baptists, Congregationalists, Methodists, Quakers and so forth) but a myriad of other Trinitarian and non-Trinitarian groupings outside the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christian communions, Protestant Nonconformity has been a very significant numerical force. At the time of the 1851 religious census of Britain, well before the late Victorian and Edwardian heyday of the Free Churches, there were no fewer than 113 distinct Dissenting denominations with 22,900 places of worship (three-fifths of the total for all Churches) and aggregate attendances at morning, afternoon and evening services of 6,842,000 (representing 54 per cent of total worshippers and equivalent to a third of the population).² Even today, after the ravages of twentieth-century secularisation and the rise of non-Christian and alternative religions, there are still 2.8 million church members in 29,600 places of worship who could legitimately be classified (on a broad definition) as Nonconformist, about 45 per cent of the overall Christian membership in the United Kingdom.³ Moreover, the contribution of Nonconformists to most walks of national life—political, social, economic, intellectual and scientific—has been disproportionately large in relation to their number, particularly in the case of smaller denominations such as the Quakers and Unitarians.

At the local level this all-pervasive influence of Nonconformity is most easily seen, both in terms of the physical presence of the chapel in the community,⁴ and in the movement's penetration of family networks. A recent survey of readers of one genealogical magazine revealed that no fewer than 52 per cent could lay claim to Methodists in their family tree, with 26 per cent having Presbyterians and 15 per cent each Baptists and Quakers.⁵ But what do we know about these tens of millions of Nonconformists over three and a half centuries? Who were they? As some of the 'mainstream' denominations have declined during the twentieth century, the impression has been created that the Free Churches are mostly composed of women, the elderly, the single and widowed, white racial groups and the middle class. Does that perspective have any empirical foundation and, if so, when did these trends emerge? This article synthesises what is currently known about the socio-demographic

background of Nonconformists, using original research conducted by the present author and many others.⁶ To contain the survey within a reasonable length, the scope has been deliberately limited. In particular, the focus is on England and not Wales, Scotland and Ireland; on Quakers, Baptists, Congregationalists and Methodists rather than on the full range of smaller denominations; on the rank and file laity rather than the ministry or lay leadership;⁷ on adults rather than children and youth; and on quantitative rather than qualitative sources (with much of the discussion essentially a commentary on the statistical tables).

Our picture derives from a variety of sources, mostly local and many unpublished,⁸ and it is necessary to understand a little of this evidence, including its pitfalls, and the community to which these sources relate. In reality, there have been three distinct Nonconformist constituencies, each with a different level of attachment and a slightly different profile. At the core have been the *members*, generally the most committed and enthusiastic in terms of their spiritual, time and financial allegiance to Nonconformity, and formerly subject to exacting denominational disciplines. As has often been demonstrated,⁹ they were outnumbered several times over by non-members until well into the nineteenth century, although that is no longer the case. Membership registers exist in relatively large quantities, for the Baptists and the Congregationalists from the seventeenth century onwards, for the Methodists from the eighteenth and the Quakers from the nineteenth (the Quaker concept of membership being slow to emerge). For some of the bigger urban chapels of the Old Dissent, lists of members may also have been included in printed local church directories in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Membership registers are a guide to the gender and, less often, the marital status of Nonconformists, but only rarely to their age and occupation, except when used in conjunction with other sources such as the census.¹⁰

The second category, the *adherents* (or *attenders* or *hearers*) will naturally have included the overwhelming majority of members, although with a small proportion of 'dead wood' in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries, folk who rarely, if ever, worshipped at their home chapel, possibly because they had moved away to reside at a distance yet still retained their membership. But the greater part of this second group will have steadfastly attended public worship *without* entering into the formal commitment of membership. Separate returns of these non-member adherents are uncommon except at the level of undifferentiated totals, which first appeared in the Evans List of 1715-1729 and were more routinely reported by some denominations from the later Victorian era.¹¹ Only in the twentieth century does disaggregation show up in the various local (from the 1900s) and national (in 1979, 1989, 1998 and 2005) censuses of churchgoing, which record information about the gender, age and some other characteristics of attenders at Free Church worship.

Fortunately, however, for earlier centuries baptismal/birth and marriage registers serve an equivalent function, spanning both members and some adherents, and often noting occupations (for baptismal/birth registers, more so in northern than southern England). Although there was no legal requirement for Nonconformists to keep registers before the advent of civil registration in 1837, baptismal/birth registers exist from the seventeenth century, chiefly from 1689 when the Toleration Act removed the danger of prosecution before the civil and ecclesiastical courts for the practice of Nonconformity (and thus made it safer to keep records). But they only become plentiful from the 1780s, with Methodist registers not really starting until the 1790s and becoming widespread from the 1810s. Baptists had, proportionately, the fewest registers of all, unsurprisingly given their practice of adult rather than infant baptism.

The major extant corpus of baptismal/birth registers dates from 1790 until 1837, when most of these so-called non-parochial registers were surrendered to the Government on the introduction of civil registration, subsequently becoming available at The National Archives.¹²

Baptismal/birth registers are not an exact numerical representation of the chapels to which they relate. In particular, they will omit: male Nonconformists who did not marry at all or who married but were childless (affecting, for instance, about 15 per cent of Victorian Methodists);¹³ married men of advanced years whose wives were past child-rearing; all women, many of whom may have been in employment; and parents who (for legal or ceremonial reasons) preferred to have at least some of their children baptised in the Church of England (a practice widely pursued by Wesleyan Methodists especially until well into the nineteenth century).¹⁴ Yalden has shown that in Wem (Shropshire) between 1813 and 1837 nearly a third of parents had different children baptised in church and chapel.¹⁵ However, even if quantitatively imperfect, there is evidence to suggest that baptismal/birth registers still constitute a fair *qualitative* reflection of the Nonconformist worshipping community (members and hearers)¹⁶ and, as Snell has argued, they cover 'a larger period of a man's life than do marriage or burial registers, and [are] more likely to reflect accurately the composition of the male working population. Marriage and burial registers would prove less adequate as sources because they indicate occupations towards the start and end of a man's working life'.¹⁷ In respect of social class the major interpretative challenges of baptismal/birth registers are the often high incidence of missing occupational data, and deciding whether to record a man's employment solely on the occasion of a first birth (introducing a bias towards the earlier stage of the life-cycle and missing subsequent social mobility) or each time a father presented a child for baptism (introducing the possibility of distortion through differential class fertility). Unfortunately, the practice varies between historians, making strict comparisons difficult.

Nonconformist marriage registers also provide information about occupations among this wider worshipping community. Some predate the Marriage Act 1753 which, in an attempt to curtail clandestine weddings, made it illegal for all but Quakers and Jews to solemnize their own marriages. Thereafter, everybody else had to marry in the parish church, until in 1837 it became possible for chapels to apply for a license to conduct marriages. However, the process was relatively bureaucratic and expensive, and, even after a license was granted, the presence of the civil registrar was still required at Free Church weddings until 1898, involving yet more cost and inconvenience. It was thus easier to get married in the parish church (probably the preferred Wesleyan option), with the added advantage of a 'proper' ambience for the occasion, or to elect for a civil ceremony in a registry office followed by a religious service (which had no legal status) in the chapel. Not until after the First World War did most Nonconformists marry in chapel, and the majority of chapels become licensed to conduct weddings.¹⁸

Before 1900, therefore, Nonconformist marriage registers are an unreliable numerical guide to the worshipping community of members and adherents, even before taking account of those who never married. There are also some analytical challenges. In terms of occupation, it has been common to consider that of the bridegroom alone, but this risks a bias towards the youngest age cohort of the chapel and fails to allow for the effects of social mobility in later life. It is thus desirable to include the occupation of the bridegroom's father as a counterpoise—but both approaches assume that the male parties were active Nonconformists, whereas the choice of a chapel wedding may have represented the religious faith of the bride and her family. However, we do know

that between the late Victorian era and the 1920s, many weddings took place among people who had met at the chapel.¹⁹ Nonconformist burial registers are relatively uncommon as few chapels had their own graveyards, and those that existed were increasingly closed from the mid-nineteenth century, after which chapelgoers tended to be buried in public or parish church cemeteries (in the latter case often with the ministrations of Anglican clergy, certainly for Wesleyans).²⁰

The third category of Nonconformists comprises the *affiliates*, those who, in response to a question about their religious allegiance, self-identify as belonging to the Free Churches. They will certainly include members and attenders, but many will have no current practical link with a Nonconformist denomination, except for an occasional attendance for a chapel anniversary, harvest festival or Christmas carol service. Their attachment may simply be an emotional tie, a reflection of family tradition, or perhaps a Free Church baptism, Sunday school attendance or other childhood but long-dormant association. In other Western countries they would be recorded by the official census of population. Regrettably, Britain does not have a tradition of Government censuses of religious profession (except in Northern Ireland since 1861), and even when such a census was conducted on the mainland for the first time, in 2001, it was voluntary and no attempt was made to differentiate within professing Christians in England and Wales.²¹

Affiliates therefore become properly visible only with the advent of public opinion polling in Britain.²² Beginning with a British Institute of Public Opinion survey in August 1943, hundreds of polls have enquired into the religious profession of British adults. Sample sizes for individual surveys have mostly been too small to be meaningful for studying specific denominations, although usually there has been a catch-all Free Church category. A major exception is the annual British Social Attitudes surveys, which have recently been cumulated for the years 1983-2008 to yield a universe of 75,000 adults aged 18 and over. From such a large dataset it has been possible to extract Methodist, Baptist and United Reformed affiliates (Quakers were not separately coded), as well as a more generic cluster of all Protestant Christians other than Anglicans (somewhat crudely equating to the Free Churches). That this group extends well beyond the categories of members and attenders can be seen from their self-reported church attendance. Regular churchgoing, defined as being once a month or more, was claimed by 41.3 per cent of these Free Church adults on average (though much higher for the Baptists and United Reformed Church), and that was undoubtedly an exaggeration. Even taking the data at face value, 23.9 per cent of Free Church affiliates attended worship less than once a month and a further 33.6 per cent never or practically never.

In the following analysis of the gender, age, marital status, ethnicity and occupation of English Nonconformists, attention is paid where possible to differences between these three quite distinct categories of members, attenders and affiliates.

Gender

Table 1 sets out the gender profile of Baptist and Congregational membership, based upon 704 lists from all over England between 1651 and 1950.²³ For both denominations the proportion of female members has averaged almost two-thirds throughout these three centuries, with no consistent regional variation.²⁴ Only in the late-eighteenth century did the ratio fall significantly below three-fifths, this trend being in large part a consequence of the 150 per cent growth in the combined Baptist and Congregational membership in England which is estimated to have occurred

during these years.²⁵ It would seem reasonable to assume that such rapid expansion could only have been achieved through some broadening of the traditional constituency, widening its demographic composition. However, the change probably also results from imperfections in the sample for this half-century. The abnormally low mean number of members per list in 1751-1800 reflects over-dependence on church covenants and other foundation rolls of members, which tended to include fewer women than lists for longer-established chapels. Women, especially married ones, perhaps preferred to remain in the background during the 'church planting' phase but came to the fore as the cause matured. Almost one-third of the lists for this half-century contained more men than women.

Table 1:²⁶ Proportion of women members in Baptist and Congregational Nonconformity in England 1651-1950

date range	BAPTIST			CONGREGATIONAL		
	no. of lists	members	% women	no. of lists	members	% women
1651-1700	30	4,304	62.3	34	4,248	61.5
1701-1750	49	4,704	61.8	22	2,742	64.0
1751-1800	65	4,719	56.1	40	1,768	58.0
1801-1850	95	11,867	64.5	79	7,726	62.9
1851-1900	82	15,304	67.4	82	15,207	67.4
1901-1950	60	13,083	69.7	68	20,046	66.5
total	381	53,981	65.4	325	51,737	65.4

The Baptist statistic of 67.4 per cent for the second half of the nineteenth century is broadly substantiated by a survey organised by John Clifford in 1876, the original returns for which are now lost. This showed that rural Baptist causes had a membership which was three-fifths female, chapels in small towns two-thirds, and those in large manufacturing towns approaching three-quarters.²⁷ The average for 100 English and Welsh Baptist churches in 1979 was 66.8 per cent, while 70 per cent of Birmingham Baptist members in 1988 were women.²⁸ The position for the Congregationalists and, after 1972, the United Reformed Church was not dissimilar. Thus, 64 per cent of the members of 41 churches in Greater Manchester in 1966 were female, and 66 per cent in 74 churches in England and Wales in 1979.²⁹ For the Baptists and Congregationalists, therefore, we have a fairly constant ratio of two female members for every male for virtually the entire course of their denominational history, very considerably more than the proportion of women in the adult population at large.³⁰

Among Quakers the female imbalance was less pronounced—indeed, such limited evidence as we have before the mid-nineteenth century suggests a position of near parity of the sexes among the Friends.³¹ A modest shift was indicated by the 1840 and 1847 denominational censuses,³² 55.6 per cent of all adult Friends being female at the latter date, although for children and the under-30s there was an almost exact gender balance (Table 2). Little information is available for the late Victorian era, but in the large Durham Quarterly Meeting in 1879 there was only a marginal majority of women among the adult members (50.7 per cent).³³ National Quaker membership data has been disaggregated by sex on an annual basis since 1935, demonstrating a steadily increasing female majority, the proportion of women rising from 56.1 per cent in 1935 to 57.4 per cent in 1960, 59.1 per cent in 1985, and 61.3 per cent in 2006.³⁴

Table 2:³⁵ Members of Religious Society of Friends in Great Britain and Ireland 1847

age	number	% in each category	% men in each category	% women in each category	women as % of all members
<i>children</i>					
under 5	1,504	8.0	8.7	7.5	50.3
5-10	1,631	8.7	9.4	8.1	50.3
10-15	1,751	9.3	10.4	8.5	49.0
sub-total	4,886	26.0	28.5	24.1	49.9
<i>adults</i>					
15-20	1,790	9.6	10.4	8.8	49.9
20-30	2,895	15.5	16.5	14.5	50.9
30-40	2,281	12.2	11.6	12.6	56.2
40-50	2,232	11.9	11.0	12.7	57.6
50-60	2,016	10.8	10.0	11.4	57.2
60-70	1,466	7.8	6.9	8.6	59.7
70-80	916	4.9	3.8	5.8	64.1
80+	248	1.3	1.1	1.5	61.3
sub-total	13,844	74.0	71.3	75.9	55.6
total	18,730	100.0	99.8	100.0	54.1

The gender balance of Wesleyan Methodism to 1832 is shown in Table 3, based upon an examination of most of the surviving circuit membership registers. The mean of 57.7 per cent exceeded by more than five points the proportion of women in the adult population as a whole at the 1821 census. Although there was a wide variation in the proportion of female members, from a high of 70.5 per cent in London in 1745 to a low of 48.1 per cent in Colchester in 1823, 90 of the 108 cases clustered in the 50.2 to 60.8 per cent range.³⁶ Discounting the 1745 evidence, the average for the combined sample of 80,361 members was remarkably stable over time, although in the 1770s and 1780s the number of female members fell somewhat (decades during which Methodist membership in England grew by 116.7 per cent).³⁷ The south-eastern and south-western counties registered the highest percentage of women in membership, with west central and far northern England recording the lowest.

Table 3:³⁸ Proportion of women members in Wesleyan Methodism: Great Britain and Ireland 1745-1832

	number	% women
<i>date range</i>		
1759-1770	4,90	57.8
1771-1780	1,739	56.4
1781-1790	9,615	55.0
1791-1800	14,423	57.4
1801-1810	9,555	57.9
1811-1820	12,363	58.7
1821-1832	25,730	57.5

<i>region</i>		
South-east England	6,268	60.8
South-west England	12,054	59.4
East central England	10,964	56.1
West central England	11,479	55.9
Lancashire and Yorkshire	31,592	58.2
Northern England	5,867	55.7
Wales, Scotland, Ireland	2,137	56.1
total	80,361	57.7

Much less research has been done on the 1832-1932 period, but females accounted for 59 per cent of Wesleyan members in the Spalding circuit in 1837, and 60 per cent in the Coventry circuit in 1839,³⁹ with even higher proportions recorded for some individual chapels a half-century and more later.⁴⁰ For Primitive Methodism a few of the early circuit membership registers record a minority of women, such as Oswestry in 1843 (48.6 per cent), but most reported a female ascendancy, including Hull in 1832-1838 (56.3 per cent), Hexham in 1832-1849 (60 per cent), Darlaston and Bilston in 1837 (60.8 per cent), and Oxford in 1932 (57.8 per cent).⁴¹ An early Methodist New Connexion membership register, for Barnsley in 1824, also revealed a minority of women (44.7 per cent).⁴² The position for the reunited Methodist Church in the late twentieth century is set out in Table 4, from which it will be seen that two-thirds or more of members and new members have been women, a good fifteen points above the proportion in the adult population at large.

Table 4:⁴³ Proportion of women members in Methodism in Great Britain 1962-2008

	number	% women
<i>all members</i>		
Wolverhampton, 1962-1965	610	60.3
Manchester and Stockport District, 1966	26,874	66.4
Bristol District, 1967	21,095	65.4
York Wesley Circuit, 1967	1,433	66.7
Leeds District, 1968	342	62.0
South Shields Circuit, 1970	1,397	71.4
Durham and Deerness Valley Circuit, 1975	1,871	67.5
Liverpool District, 1976	5,126	66.4
London North-East District, 1978-1981	1,057	66.0
<i>new members</i>		
1970	500	65.0
1976-1977	806	67.1
1981	10,617	66.3
1987	1,862	68.0
1989	709	68.0
1999	1,613	69.7
2008	599	65.8

The female majority was initially less pronounced among Free Church attenders than members. Twentieth-century local church censuses in Table 5 demonstrate that it was well under three-fifths until the 1930s, and typically several points below the number of women attending all forms of worship. Thereafter, the gap between the proportions of women in membership and attendance in the Free Churches narrowed, and the percentage of female Free Church worshippers started to exceed the average for all denominations. York epitomised this change, with the majority of women at Free Church services rising from 51.8 per cent in 1901 to 57.4 per cent in 1935 and 61.5 per cent in 1948, whereas the mean for all Churches hardly moved. Within the Free Churches, the Baptists tended to have most female worshippers, followed by the Congregationalists, the Methodists and the Quakers. The Quaker percentages in Table 5 are often based upon small numbers, but national censuses of attendance in the Religious Society of Friends undertaken in 1904, 1909 and 1914 produced figures of 54.1, 54.3 and 56.1 per cent women respectively.⁴⁴ The West Cumberland data appear to have been distorted by the fact that the census was taken on an exceedingly stormy day, which, in this rural area with indifferent transport and roads, apparently reduced congregations by up to two-thirds.

Table 5:⁴⁵ Proportion of women worshippers in the Free Churches in England 1901-1968 (%)

year	area	attendances	all churches	Free churches	Baptists	Congregationalists	Quakers	Methodists
1901	York	17,061	58.4	51.8	-	-	-	-
1902	West Cumberland	17,965	47.5	45.2	45.8	44.2	47.1	43.5
1902-3	London County	679,626	60.8	55.8	59.8	57.0	52.0	56.4
1903	Lincoln	16,149	56.3	54.0	57.3	60.1	56.6	51.8
1903	Wallasey	12,731	57.6	54.6	62.2	54.9	50.0	53.5
1903	Greater London	347,705	61.9	58.6	60.6	58.9	52.0	57.2
1903	Chester + Hoole	13,972	55.7	52.2	51.8	49.6	50.0	51.9
1903-4	Hull	22,872	55.6	53.4	54.8	57.2	-	52.9
1904	Middlesbrough	15,585	53.6	52.2	54.5	57.0	44.6	52.3
1906	Wallasey	16,257	57.6	54.3	59.4	58.6	46.5	54.8
1928	Wallsend	6,172	58.0	56.2	-	-	-	-
1935	Hertford	1,698	64.4	61.1	63.1	60.9	57.1	54.7
1935	York	12,770	61.3	57.4	-	-	-	-
1947	High Wycombe	3,427	58.2	58.9	56.1	67.1	51.7	58.8
1948	York	10,220	59.1	61.5	-	-	-	-
1954	Scunthorpe	4,036	60.7	63.8	-	-	-	-
1955	Rawmarsh	1,093	63.8	65.1	-	-	-	-
1959	Billingham	3,122	58.9	70.5	-	-	-	-
1966	Billingham	3,018	57.7	58.7	-	-	-	-
1968	Banbury	2,202	60.0	60.2	-	-	-	-
1968	Hemel Hempstead	2,909	59.6	58.8	-	-	-	-

Table 6:⁴⁶ Proportion of women worshippers in the Free Churches in England 1979-2005 (%)

year	all churches	Baptists	URC/ Congregations	Methodists
1979	55	57	57	60
1989	58	60	63	63
2005	57	59	65	64

The tendency for the Free Churches to have proportionately more female attenders than other denominations persisted after the 1970s, as shown by the three national censuses of churchgoing in Table 6. However, the Methodists now tended to have the greatest gender imbalance and the Baptists the least. Quakers were not separately tabulated in these particular censuses. These figures relate to all attenders, including children. The 2001 Church Life Profile provides data for adult worshippers alone, the percentages of women in the congregations then being 63 for the Baptist Union, 68 for the United Reformed Church and 69 for the Methodist Church, as against 65 for all Churches.⁴⁷ Again the Quakers were excluded, but their own national census in 2006 found that 61.7 per cent of their attenders were female.⁴⁸ Other unpublished denominational surveys produced figures of 67 and 68 per cent for the Methodists in 1991 and 2005 respectively, and 59.8 per cent for Baptist worshippers in 1999 (60.8 per cent for members attending on census day and 58.5 per cent for adherents).⁴⁹ So, with the exception of the Baptists, the proportions of women in the membership and Sunday congregations of the Free Churches were very similar by the end of the twentieth century.

Affiliates are those who, in an opinion poll, profess allegiance to the Free Churches without necessarily being in direct contact with them. Tables 7 and 8 show that the percentage of women is lower among this category, although still above the mean for the population as a whole and (for the Baptists, United Reformed Church and Methodists) now not so far behind the figure among worshippers. There has also been a tendency for the percentage to rise over time, albeit with an apparently modest reversal of this trend since 2000. A sub-division of the Methodist data revealed a strong correlation with churchgoing; whereas 68.6 per cent of professing Methodists who attended church regularly were women, the proportion among less frequent attenders was 63.4 per cent and for non-attenders 53.6 per cent. This finding corroborates other evidence and suggests that the ratio of women in lay religious communities is in direct relationship to the level of commitment—spiritual, intellectual, social, financial—demanded of that community. In other words, the less that is required by way of active involvement or personal sacrifice, the greater the number of men.

Table 7:⁵⁰ Proportion of women among people professing allegiance to the Free Churches in Great Britain 1948-2009 (%)

	polling agency	number	all adults	Free Church
1948	Mass-Observation	6,094	51.1	53.1
1978	Gallup	11,089	52.3	54.1
1992	Gallup	4,064	51.9	54.1
2005	MORI	4,270	50.8	55.9
2009	MORI	6,029	51.6	56.3

Table 8:⁵¹ Proportion of women among people professing allegiance to the Free Churches in Great Britain 1983-2008 (%)

	number	1983-1989	1990-1999	2000-2008	total
all Free Churches	11,897	59.5	60.1	59.0	59.5
Methodists	1,995	60.4	63.8	62.8	62.5
Baptists	806	59.9	68.3	62.2	63.6
URC/Congregationalists	425	63.2	64.7	64.5	64.2
all adults	75,270	53.3	54.4	53.8	53.9

Age

Given the greater longevity of women, the gender balance in Nonconformity needs to be understood within the context of its age structure. Unfortunately, less information is available on this topic. Some of the earliest is for Quaker members in 1847 (Table 2), whose mean age was 31 years for men and 34.6 for women, compared with 26 and 26.8 years for the population of England and Wales in 1851. One Friend in four was a child and one in seven was aged 60 and above (double the national average). Quaker life expectancy at birth was 4.9 years longer than the norm for men and 3.5 for women.⁵² Correlation of chapel membership lists with the 1881 census illuminates the beginnings of Nonconformity's more elderly profile, and of its struggles to appeal to the young. In Bradford a quarter of the adult population was aged 45 and over, but among Congregational members the figure was 41 per cent, Quakers 37 per cent and Baptists 34 per cent (Table 9). There are no directly comparable Methodist data before the Second World War, but their rising death rate after 1900 strongly suggests an ageing membership.⁵³ The sources are better from the 1960s (Table 10), when the relatively low number of Methodist members under 30 and the increased dependence upon the over-60s are clearly visible. The United Reformed Church and the Quakers seem to have been particularly affected by the same trend.

Table 9:⁵⁴ Age structure of Free Church membership: Birmingham and Bradford 1851 and 1881 (%)

age	BIRMINGHAM		BRADFORD			
	Baptists 1851	Baptists 1881	Baptists 1881	Congregational 1881	Quakers 1881	Borough 1881
no.	200	545	669	1,263	334	
15-24	20	14	28	18	22	31
25-34	16	13	20	22	24	25
35-44	16	16	17	18	17	19
45-54	16	21	14	18	16	13
55-64	19	23	13	14	10	8
65+	13	13	7	9	11	4

Table 10:⁵⁵ Age structure of Free Church membership in Great Britain 1962-1983 (%)

year	area	number	< 30	31-60	60+
<i>Baptists</i>					
1979	England and Wales	11,735	18.8	40.8	40.5
<i>URC/Congregationalists</i>					
1966	Greater Manchester	3,862	16.0	49.0	35.0
1979	England and Wales	6,718	9.5	42.8	47.7
<i>Quakers</i>					
1964-1965	Great Britain	892	17.3	49.3	33.4
1980	Great Britain	705	8.0	40.0	52.0
<i>Methodists</i>					
1962-1965	Wolverhampton	610	27.5	48.5	23.9
1966	Manchester and Stockport District	26,874	20.3	48.0	31.7
1967	Bristol District	21,095	18.1	47.5	34.3
1967	York Wesley Circuit	1,433	19.0	50.4	30.6
1968	Leeds District	342	19.8	42.2	38.0
1970	South Shields Circuit	1,397	19.6	40.7	39.7
1975	Durham and Deerness Valley Circuit	1,871	12.4	40.9	46.7
1976	Liverpool District	5,126	16.7	45.8	37.5
1978-1981	London North East District	1,051	10.9	51.2	37.9
1980	North Kesteven	516	10.3	39.0	50.8
1983	England and Wales		14.3	42.2	43.4

The earliest statistics for the age of adult Free Church attenders date from the 1930s. In Liverpool in 1930-1931 42 per cent of their worshippers were aged 14-29, 43.5 per cent 30-59 and 14.5 per cent 60 and over; expressed as a ratio of population, Free Church attendance initially peaked among people aged 17-21 (20.5 per 1000), then fell away to a low of 12.6 per 1000 for those aged 30-39, before climbing again to reach 18.8 per 1000 for those aged 60 and above.⁵⁶ In York in 1935 16.6 per cent of Nonconformist adults in the pews were aged under 25, compared with 55.4 per cent aged 25-49 and 28 per cent 50 or over.⁵⁷ Thirteen years later, the figure for the latter had jumped to 45.1 per cent. In 1947 in High Wycombe 44.8 per cent of Free Church members were 50 or over, and the equivalent proportions at Scunthorpe (1954) and Rawmarsh (1955) were 40.8 and 43.1 per cent, confirming the ageing of Nonconformist worshippers after the Second World War.⁵⁸

More recent data from the four English church censuses since 1979 (Table 11) show a further ageing, a trend affecting all Christian denominations and greatly outstripping the ageing of society at large. The Baptists fared the best under these adverse circumstances, recording an increase in average age of seven years between 1979 and 2005, but the United Reformed Church and the Methodists saw the mean age of their worshippers rise by a staggering fourteen years, to reach 55 (fifteen years more than in the population), with almost a quarter aged 75 and above. The 2001 Church Life Profile returned 36 per cent of English Baptists as aged 15-44 compared with 18 per cent of the United Reformed Church, 17 per cent of the Methodists and 23 per cent for all denominations; the proportions aged 65 and over were, respectively, 29, 51, 49 and 43 per cent.⁵⁹ Sample surveys of Quaker attenders chart dramatic growth in the over-60s, from 36.6 per cent in 1990 to 61.3 per cent in 2003, with a fall in the under-30s from 9.7 to 2.2 per cent, and a rise in the median age from 51 to 64 years.⁶⁰

Data for the age of affiliates follow a similar pattern, especially from the 1970s when the majority have been aged 45 and over. The best evidence comes from the British Social Attitudes surveys for 1983-2008 (Table 12). Whereas in the population as a whole 33.6 per cent of adults were aged 55 and over, the percentage averaged 49.5 per cent for Baptists, 63.2 per cent for the United Reformed Church, and 58.7 per cent for Methodists. Moreover, the position worsened over time, with the respective figures for 2000-2008 alone being 54.3, 69.4 and 66.3 per cent. At the other end of the age spectrum, the under-35s are underrepresented among affiliates to the historic Free Churches, with 29.8 per cent in the total population but 17.2 per cent for the Baptists, 12.5 per cent for the United Reformed Church and 14.0 per cent for the Methodists. An alternative presentation of the same data (Tables 13-14) reveals a clear generation effect, with allegiance in a relentless spiral of decline, threatening mainstream Nonconformity with near-extinction within a few decades as the older age cohorts die out. Note, however, that the position for the Free Churches as a whole is better, because of the resilience of independent, Pentecostal and charismatic churches. For the moment, the number of elderly people among Free Church affiliates generally remains less than among members and attenders, mirroring the pattern found for gender.

Table 11:⁶¹ Age structure of Free Church worshippers in England 1979-2005 (%)

	>15	15-19	20-29	30-44	45-64	65+	average (years)
<i>all Churches</i>							
1979	26	9	11	16	20	18	37
1989	25	7	10	17	22	19	38
1998	19	6	9	17	24	25	43
2005	19	5	7	16	24	29	45
<i>Baptists</i>							
1979	30	8	9	16	19	18	36
1989	26	7	10	18	20	19	37
1998	22	6	9	18	22	23	41
2005	22	4	7	17	25	25	43
<i>URC/Congregationalists</i>							
1979	27	5	7	14	21	26	41
1989	24	4	6	13	23	30	44
1998	18	3	5	12	24	38	49
2005	15	2	2	10	24	47	55
<i>Methodists</i>							
1979	28	5	5	12	25	25	41
1989	23	5	7	12	23	30	44
1998	19	4	4	11	24	38	49
2005	14	2	3	9	25	47	55

Table 12:⁶² Age structure of people professing allegiance to Free Churches in Great Britain 1983-2008 (%)

	number	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
<i>all Free Churches</i>							
1983-1989	2,215	9.4	14.1	17.8	16.3	17.2	25.2
1990-1999	4,023	8.8	15.1	16.0	17.3	15.4	27.4
2000-2008	5,635	10.0	14.0	16.3	17.0	17.3	25.3
mean	11,873	9.5	14.4	16.5	17.0	16.6	26.0
<i>Methodists</i>							
1983-1989	527	5.5	11.6	13.9	16.5	17.6	34.9
1990-1999	746	4.6	10.6	12.6	16.6	17.3	38.3
2000-2008	715	3.5	7.0	11.7	11.5	20.8	45.5
mean	1,988	4.4	9.6	12.6	14.7	18.7	40.0
<i>Baptists</i>							
1983-1989	218	6.0	11.9	23.4	12.8	20.2	25.7
1990-1999	283	5.7	12.7	16.3	18.0	13.4	33.9
2000-2008	304	5.3	10.2	12.5	17.8	22.4	31.9
mean	805	5.6	11.6	16.8	16.5	18.6	30.9
<i>URC/Congregationalists</i>							
1983-1989	152	7.9	7.2	12.5	17.1	21.7	33.6
1990-1999	153	4.6	9.2	7.8	12.4	23.5	42.5
2000-2008	121	2.5	5.0	8.3	14.9	23.1	46.3
mean	426	5.2	7.3	9.6	14.8	22.8	40.4
<i>all adults</i>							
1983-1989	13,835	13.8	19.0	19.6	15.3	14.5	17.8
1990-1999	26,595	11.4	20.3	18.7	17.4	13.3	19.0
2000-2008	34,674	10.5	16.7	19.9	18.0	15.5	19.4
mean	75,104	11.4	18.4	19.4	17.3	14.6	19.0

Table 13:⁶³ Proportion of people professing allegiance to the Free Churches by birth cohort in Great Britain 1983-2008 (%)

	BORN						mean
	number	pre-1910	1910-1929	1930-1949	1950-1969	since 1970	
all Free Churches	11,878	26.1	21.6	17.4	13.0	13.8	15.8
Methodists	1,991	8.9	5.7	3.4	1.5	0.9	2.7
Baptists	805	2.5	1.9	1.3	0.8	0.4	1.1
URC/Congregationalists	427	2.0	1.5	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.6

Table 14:⁶⁴ Proportion of people professing allegiance to the Free Churches by survey date in Great Britain 1983-2008 (%)

	number	1983-1989	1990-1999	2000-2008	total
all Free Churches	11,895	16.0	15.1	16.2	15.8
Methodists	1,994	3.8	2.8	2.1	2.6
Baptists	805	1.6	1.1	0.9	1.1
URC/Congregationalists	425	1.1	0.6	0.3	0.6

Table 15.⁶⁵ Marital status of Wesleyan Methodist members in England 1759-1823

	number	% single	% married	% widowed
<i>date range</i>				
before 1781	4,246	26.1	63.1	10.9
1781-1800	14,882	24.6	64.7	10.7
after 1800	4,000	23.1	68.6	8.3
<i>region</i>				
Southern England	4,726	25.7	63.9	10.4
Central England	6,864	22.1	67.6	10.3
Northern England	11,538	25.6	64.1	10.3
<i>gender</i>				
men	10,092	21.5	72.8	5.7
women	13,036	27.0	59.1	13.9
total	23,128	24.6	65.1	10.3

Marital status

One of the earliest sets of data about the marital status of Nonconformists is for Wesleyan Methodist members before 1830 (Table 15): overall, one-quarter were single, two-thirds married and one-tenth widowed (though there was a wide degree of local variation).⁶⁶ Although the comparable secular evidence is very thin for the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, the number of single persons in Methodism seems to have been significantly smaller than in the adult population as a whole, the proportion of married individuals correspondingly greater (in implicit rejection of John Wesley's pro-celibacy stance),⁶⁷ and the number of widowed fairly similar. Thus, the Wesleyan figure for married and widowed members combined was 76.9 per cent after 1800, whereas the figure for England and Wales as a whole in 1851 was 70.7.⁶⁸

The number of single and widowed Methodists declined over time while the married contingent grew, but whether as the result of increased recruitment of married couples is hard to tell. Regionally, central England had the fewest single and most married members. The biggest discrepancies, however, were between the sexes, there being 5.5 per cent more single women than men, 13.7 per cent fewer married and, predictably in view of the greater longevity of females, 8.2 per cent more widowed. In the population as a whole in 1851 these differences were much less marked (-2.0, -3.9, and +5.9 per cent respectively). By recalculating the data to reveal the extent of the female majority, the difference is highlighted: for single Methodists it was 61.9 per cent women, falling to 51.2 per cent for married, and 75.9 per cent for widowed (nationally in 1851 the figures were 50.3, 50.3 and 66.5 per cent). Single women were probably more likely to join a Methodist society than single men, and also to join at an earlier age.⁶⁹

An above-average incidence of celibacy, especially among Nonconformist women, is also suggested by the Quaker evidence for the first half of the nineteenth century,⁷⁰ and by Baptist and Congregational membership rolls for the following hundred years (Table 16). It is striking, in comparison with the earlier Wesleyan data, that the number of single and married female members was almost evenly balanced between 1876 and 1925, and for the Baptists throughout,⁷¹ but all the figures exceed the proportion of single women in the adult female population of England and Wales (which varied between 35 and 40 per cent until the Second World War). The effect

cannot be wholly explained as a reflection of the 'surplus women' problem, which so troubled Victorian and post-First World War commentators. but must be associated with denomination-specific factors, such as a lowering of the age at which Nonconformists were admitted into membership.

Table 16:⁷² Marital status of female Baptist and Congregational members in England 1851-1950

	number	% single	% married
<i>date range</i>			
1851-1875	1,532	38.3	61.7
1876-1900	4,669	48.1	51.9
1901-1925	7,614	49.6	50.4
1926-1950	8,508	45.2	54.8
<i>denomination</i>			
Baptist	7,903	49.7	50.3
Congregational	14,420	45.3	54.7
total	22,323	46.8	53.2

Writing in the 1930s, Caradog Jones was struck by the abnormally high proportion of single people and the relatively low number of married in the congregations of Liverpool's Free Churches,⁷³ but respondents to an oral history survey mostly refuted the suggestion that the Methodist Church was a magnet for the single and the widowed.⁷⁴ Empirical evidence from after the Second World War also casts some doubt on this stereotype: thus, in Rawmarsh and Scunthorpe 20 per cent of Free Church members in 1954-1956 were single, 68.9 per cent married and 11.1 per cent widowed.⁷⁵ In Wolverhampton (1962-1965) 26.6 per cent of Methodist members were single, 64.9 per cent married and 8.5 per cent widowed.⁷⁶ A national sample of Quakers in 1964-1965 showed that 26.2 per cent were single, 63.3 per cent married, 9 per cent widowed and 1.6 per cent divorced.⁷⁷ Among Greater Manchester Congregationalists in 1966 25 per cent of members were single, 64.7 per cent married, 10 per cent widowed and 0.3 per cent divorced.⁷⁸

Among worshippers, the best guide to the contemporary situation is the 2001 Church Life Profile (Table 17). For English adult churchgoers as a whole two-thirds were currently married,⁷⁹ with slightly fewer for the Baptists (64 per cent), United Reformed Church (60 per cent) and Methodists (63 per cent). The high incidence of marriage in the mainstream Free Churches, particularly of those still in a first marriage (although one-tenth have been divorced), and the tiny proportion cohabiting were at variance with society in general, epitomising both the effect of the Churches' teaching on the sanctity of marriage and the older age profile of Free Church worshippers. The same skew in the demographic profile accounts for one-fifth of United Reformed Church and Methodist attenders being widowed.

Among those professing allegiance to Nonconformity, rather than being in membership or attendance, the proportions of married and widowed are also higher than in the nation at large and of single correspondingly lower (Table 18). This is especially the case for the three historic Free Churches, the married figure standing at 66.1 per cent for the Baptists, 63.3 per cent for the United Reformed Church and 65 per cent for the Methodists, compared with 58.7 per cent for all adults. Again, this is partly a reflection of the older age profile of the Free Churches. However, they are not

entirely immune from trends affecting society in general, and some reduction in the incidence of Free Church marriage is visible, with a modest increase in cohabitation (probably especially among newer manifestations of Nonconformity) and a significant number of separated (in the latter case not too far behind the secular mean).

Table 17:⁸⁰ Marital status of Free Church worshippers in England 2001 (%)

	Baptist Union	United Reformed Church	Methodist Church
never married	18	13	12
never married but cohabiting	1	1	1
first marriage	58	54	57
separated but not divorced	1	1	1
divorced and remarried	5	5	5
divorced and not remarried	5	4	3
widowed	10	20	18
widowed after remarriage	2	2	2

Table 18:⁸¹ Marital status of people professing allegiance to Free Churches in Great Britain 1983-2008 (%)

	number	single	married	cohabiting	separated	widowed
<i>all Free Churches</i>						
1983-1989	2,222	14.5	67.8	1.1	3.9	12.6
1990-1999	4,029	15.6	62.0	3.7	6.9	11.8
2000-2008	5,644	19.0	56.6	6.3	8.2	9.8
mean	11,894	17.0	60.5	4.5	7.0	11.0
<i>Methodists</i>						
1983-1989	526	12.4	67.9	1.1	2.3	16.3
1990-1999	749	10.8	65.6	3.6	5.2	14.8
2000-2008	718	10.9	62.4	2.2	7.2	17.3
mean	1,994	11.2	65.0	2.5	5.2	16.1
<i>Baptists</i>						
1983-1989	219	11.9	69.4	0.0	5.0	13.7
1990-1999	283	12.0	65.7	0.4	6.4	15.5
2000-2008	304	14.5	64.1	2.3	6.6	12.5
mean	806	12.9	66.1	1.0	6.1	13.9
<i>URC/ Congregationalists</i>						
1983-1989	153	17.0	64.1	1.3	4.6	13.1
1990-1999	153	14.4	64.7	1.3	5.2	14.4
2000-2008	122	10.7	59.8	0.8	6.6	22.1
mean	425	14.1	63.3	1.2	5.4	16.0
<i>all adults</i>						
1983-1989	13,849	16.9	66.8	2.6	5.0	8.7
1990-1999	26,655	18.3	59.5	6.7	7.2	8.2
2000-2008	34,725	19.3	54.8	9.9	8.7	7.3
mean	75,229	18.5	58.7	7.4	7.5	7.9

Ethnicity

Almost nothing is known about the national and racial origins of English Nonconformists until after the Second World War, but it would be fair to say that they were universally white and overwhelmingly British (there would have been some recruitment through migration from Wales, Scotland and Ireland). Only with the advent of immigration from the British Commonwealth in the 1950s did the English Free Churches face the challenge of assimilating members and worshippers from outside their traditional ethnic constituency. One of the first major pieces of empirical research to be undertaken in this area was in 1963 by Clifford Hill, on West Indian migrants to London. Confined to six denominations, this identified 11,723 West Indian contacts, of which 29.4 per cent were with the Methodists, 6.6 per cent with the Baptists and 1.7 per cent with the Congregationalists.⁸² A subsequent report focused on Methodists in England and Wales in 1983, among whom 2.1 per cent of the total church family were estimated to have an ethnic minority background, 73.2 per cent of them West Indian, 10.4 per cent Asian and 16.4 per cent African. The range was from 1.2 per cent of members to 5.2 per cent of regular worshippers. All these figures were considerably higher in Greater London, where Methodist ethnic minorities were especially concentrated: for instance, they accounted for 13.4 per cent of the total church family there.⁸³ Unpublished data from another survey in 1995, confined to Methodists living in English and Welsh cities, produced figures of 94.2 per cent white, 2.4 per cent Black Caribbean, 1.3 per cent black African, 0.3 per cent other black, 0.3 per cent Indian, 0.1 per cent Chinese and 1.3 per cent other races.⁸⁴ A Baptist Union enquiry three years earlier revealed worshippers to be 97.1 per cent white, with 2.3 per cent black and 0.4 per cent Asian.⁸⁵

The principal contemporary evidence derives from the English church censuses of 1998 and 2005 (Table 19) and the 2001 Church Life Profile (Table 20). Table 19 indicates that the English Churches overall have become more ethnically diverse between 1998 and 2005, but this was not the case with the Baptists, partly because they had made early advances in this area. The United Reformed Church and the Methodist Church did make some modest progress during these seven years, among both blacks and Asians, but remained 93 per cent white. The 2001 data permit a slightly finer analysis, especially through the sub-division of whites and blacks and the introduction of a category for mixed races. However, they are based on fewer congregations than the English church censuses, which may help to explain why the predominance of whites in Table 20 is higher than in Table 19, accounting for 93.1 per cent of Baptists, 97.1 per cent of the United Reformed Church and 96.6 per cent of Methodists. In the case of white British, the United Reformed and Methodist figures were 5.5 points above the civil census statistic. The Baptists had above-average numbers of black people in their congregations, but the United Reformed Church was below the norm, with the Methodist Church at the norm. Many blacks have increasingly gravitated to alternative (especially Pentecostal) expressions of Christianity beyond the mainstream Free Churches. All three denominations were well behind the census return for Asians, who of course normally practice non-Christian faiths. To judge by a sample survey of Quaker attenders in 2003, 99.7 per cent were white.⁸⁶

These attendance data can be supplemented from information about affiliates available from the British Social Attitudes surveys for 1983-2008. Among all adults in this merged dataset 93.9 per cent were white. The Free Church average was slightly below, at 93.1 per cent, doubtless reflecting the appeal of black Pentecostal churches.

The historic denominations returned figures of 90.3 per cent for the Baptists, 95.6 per cent for the Methodists and 99 per cent for the United Reformed Church.

Table 19:⁸⁷ Ethnic profile of Free Church worshippers in England 1998 and 2005 (%)

	white	black	Indian	Chinese	Asian	other
<i>all Churches</i>						
1998	88.1	7.2	1.5	1.5	1.0	0.7
2005	83.4	10.4	1.9	1.8	1.4	1.1
Baptists						
1998	87.7	7.8	0.9	1.6	1.2	0.8
2005	87.8	7.7	1.1	1.6	1.1	0.7
<i>United Reformed Church/ Congregationalists</i>						
1998	93.7	4.3	0.7	0.9	0.2	0.2
2005	92.6	4.6	1.1	1.1	0.3	0.3
Methodists						
1998	94.3	3.9	0.5	0.9	0.2	0.2
2005	93.3	4.2	0.6	1.0	0.5	0.4

Table 20:⁸⁸ Ethnic profile of Free Church worshippers in England 2001 (%)

	white British	white Irish	other white	black African	black Caribbean	other black	Indian	Chinese	other Asian	mixed	other
Baptist Union	88.9	0.7	3.5	1.6	2.5	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.7
United Reformed Church	93.7	0.5	2.9	0.9	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.5
Methodist Church	93.7	0.5	2.4	0.9	1.0	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.6
Civil census	88.2	1.2	2.5	0.8	1.0	0.2	1.8	0.4	2.2	1.2	0.4

Parts 2 and 3 of the article will consider the occupational structure of English Nonconformity. Part 3 will also contain a conclusion for the essay as a whole.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1 The most recent single-volume history of the movement is Paul Sangster, *A History of the Free Churches* (Heinemann, 1983) but it is not

wholly adequate. More scholarly is Michael Watts, *The Dissenters* (Clarendon Press, 1978-1995 2 vols) which currently takes the story to

- 1859 (two further volumes are projected), but see also his *The chapel and the nation: Nonconformity and the local historian* (Historical Association, 1996). A selection of (mostly printed) primary sources is available: Alan Sell (ed), *Protestant Nonconformist Texts* (Ashgate, 2006-2007 4 vols). A new *Companion to Nonconformity*, edited by Denis Morgan and Robert Pope will be published by T & T Clark in 2012.
- 2 Calculated from *Census of Great Britain, 1851: Religious worship, England and Wales: report and tables, Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons, 1852-1853, vol.89* (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1853) p.clxxxii and *Census of Great Britain, 1851: Religious worship and education, Scotland: report and tables, Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons, 1854, vol.59* (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1854) p.5
 - 3 Calculated from Peter Brierley (ed), *UK Christian Handbook, Religious Trends, No. 5, 2005/2006: The Future of the Church* (Christian Research, 2005) pp.2.22-2.23, 8.10-8.11, 9.4-9.20, 10.2-10.3
 - 4 The built heritage of Nonconformity is especially celebrated in [Christopher Stell], *An Inventory of Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting-Houses* (HMSO, 1986-2002 4 vols)
 - 5 *Your Family Tree* no.73 (February 2009) p.8
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 - 7 The best studies of the ordained ministry are by Kenneth Brown: 'The Congregational ministry in the first half of the nineteenth century: a preliminary survey', *Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society* vol.3 (1983-1986) pp.2-15; 'Ministerial recruitment and training: an aspect of the crisis of Victorian Nonconformity', *Victorian Studies* vol.30 (1986-1987) pp.365-383; 'An unsettled ministry? Some aspects of nineteenth-century British Nonconformity', *Church History* vol.56 (1987) pp.204-223; 'The Baptist ministry of Victorian England and Wales: a social profile', *Baptist Quarterly [BQ]* new series vol.32 (1987-1988) pp.105-120; and *A Social History of the Nonconformist Ministry in England and Wales, 1800-1930* (Clarendon Press, 1988); and cf John Lenton, *John Wesley's Preachers: a social and statistical analysis of the British and Irish preachers who entered the Methodist Itinerancy before 1791* (Paternoster, 2009), although they were mostly lay itinerants at that stage. The best evidence about Nonconformist lay leaders is for trustees. However, they were not representative of the rank and file since, as guarantors of chapel property, they tended to be people of relative substance and were often drawn from outside the immediate congregation. Recent studies of trustees include John Horner, 'The Influence of Methodism on the Social Structure and Culture of Rural Northumberland from 1820 to 1914' (Univ. Newcastle-upon-Tyne MA thesis, 1971) pp.134-139; Charles Wallace, 'Religion and Society in Eighteenth Century England: Geographic, Demographic and Occupational Patterns of Dissent in the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1715-1801' (Duke Univ. PhD thesis, 1975) pp.249-347, 436-475; John Vickers, 'Methodism and Society in Central Southern England, 1740-1851' (Univ. Southampton PhD thesis, 1986) pp.421-425; Rodney Ambler, 'The social composition of church leadership: Nonconformist trustees in Lincolnshire, 1800-1870', *John Rylands Bulletin* vol.75, no.1 (Spring 1993) pp.133-156; Rodney Ambler, 'Local Baptist leadership: a Lincolnshire study', *BQ* new series vol.35 (1993-1994) pp.43-50; and Peter Yalden, 'Nonconformity in North Shropshire: The Evolution of Chapel Communities in a Rural Society, c. 1650-1900' (Univ. New South Wales PhD thesis, 1997) pp.162-182, 347-354. For Methodist local (or lay) preachers see Clive Field, 'The Methodist local preacher: an occupational analysis', in Geoffrey Milburn and Margaret Batty (eds), *Workaday Preachers: The Story of Methodist Local Preaching* (Methodist Publishing House, 1995) pp.223-242, 324-327; Nicholas Paterson, Ian Paterson and John Sawkins, *A Demographic, Educational and Occupational Analysis of Methodist Local Preachers in England*, Discussion Paper in Economics no. 98/6 (Department of Economics, Heriot-Watt University, 1998); and John Sawkins and Margaret Batty, 'Methodist local preachers in Great Britain: a millennial profile', *ER* vol.29, no.3 (July 2002) pp.48-55.
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 - 14 Watts, *The Dissenters*, vol.2, pp.308, 680-681; Shorney, *Protestant Nonconformity and Roman Catholicism*, p.31; Frances Knight, 'Conversion in 19th century Britain and the phenomenon of double allegiance in Anglicanism and Methodism', in Ulf Görman (ed), *Towards a New Understanding of Conversion* (Teologiska Institutionen, 1999) pp.118-119; Anne Woodcock, 'The emergence of religious competition in Cropwell Butler, Nottinghamshire, in the early nineteenth century', *Transactions of the Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire* vol.110 (2006) pp.111-112. The practice also affected some Primitive Methodists; James Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey, 1825-1875* (Clarendon Press, 1976) pp.240-241.
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The Women's Land Army in the Craven district of Yorkshire during the Second World War

MARGARET BULLOCK

The Women's Land Army [WLA] originated during the First World War, operating between 1917 and 1919. It was re-established on 1 June 1939, with a similar administration to its predecessor. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries [MAF], under whose governance the WLA functioned, described the organisation as 'primarily a mobile force consisting of women who are ready to undertake all kinds of farm work in any part of the country'.¹ Its purpose was 'to recruit, equip and supply girls and women from non-agricultural occupations between 18 and 40 for regular full-time employment in agriculture and in this way supplement the ordinary sources of agricultural labour during the period of emergency'.² The need for this labour force became increasingly clear: Britain was not self-sufficient in food and faced starvation as food imports were lost through enemy action at sea (35,600 tons of food were lost in 1939, rising to 65,000 tons in 1941).³ Agriculture was a particularly labour-intensive industry and as skilled male labour was conscripted into the forces, a void was created in the agricultural labour market. The WLA was therefore charged with assisting in the production of home-grown food.

The MAF appointed Lady Gertrude Denman as the WLA's unsalaried honorary director in 1939—she had been assistant director during the First World War, and was president of the National Federation of Women's Institutes. Her extensive contacts readily enabled her to fulfil her first major assignment, that of setting up women's committees in each county. Their priority was to recruit suitable women for placement on local farms where labour was needed. The WLA grew in size and complexity, attaining a peak membership of 76,961 by September 1943 when the government placed a ceiling on recruitment as it strove to attract labour to other industries.⁴

The research

This paper analyses the WLA organisation at different levels, from national government, through the county structure within the West Riding of Yorkshire, to the women who worked on the land in the Craven district. When I began the study in 1996 the WLA had been the subject of little academic research, with the exception of Carol Twinch who, in her *Women on the Land* (1990) examined the emergence of the WLA and recorded reminiscences from former members. War histories, such as K.H.A. Murray's *Agriculture* (1955) and H.M.D. Parker's *Manpower* (1957), chose not to take account of the contribution made by the WLA, while Vita Sackville-West's record of the early years, *The Women's Land Army* (1944), was only a partial history as the organisation continued until 1950. Other literature was autobiographical, with reminiscences of WLA members such as Barbara Whitton, *Green Hands* (1943) and E.M. Barraud, *Set My Hand Upon the Plough* (1946). Work of a similar nature followed including Irene Wells, *My Life in the Land Army* (1984) and Anne Hall, *Land Girl*

(1993), although in some cases it was difficult to determine whether the accounts were fictional or factual: the aim often appeared to have been to entertain the reader with stories of family life and personal relationships.

There seemed to be a significant gap in both women's history and agricultural history which needed to be addressed. Research at The National Archives [TNA] produced information from government files on the WLA—in particular those of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Ministry of Labour and National Service. Copies of *The Land Girl* (the WLA official magazine) are also held at TNA, as are county records including the minutes of the Yorkshire WLA committee and minute books of the former West Riding War Agricultural Executive Committee (WRWAEC) which oversaw the WLA in Craven. It was too late to talk to government representatives—they had already died—but the Imperial War Museum [IWM] holds tapes of interviews with WLA members, farmers and county staff from various districts. The local studies library at Skipton had copies of the *Craven Herald & Pioneer* newspaper, a valuable source because it covered debates between Craven farmers and government agencies regarding the use of a Women's Land Army and agricultural methods, both contentious issues in the 1940s. It was essential to interview women who worked on the land, because the record of their experiences was otherwise largely restricted to unstructured reminiscence. The MAF stated that most personal records of WLA recruits were destroyed a few years after the organisation was disbanded in 1950, and all that survives is an incomplete card index of members.⁵

The most prominent issues during the war included recruitment, accommodation, training, work and conditions of service. My research therefore focused on these topics, using a series of questions. I was aware that a group of former WLA members who had worked in Craven had held annual reunions since 1949, and I made contact with the organising secretary. She circulated the questions and letter of introduction to her members on my behalf. The outcome was that 38 former land girls (the term given to WLA recruits) provided information on their experiences, 32 of whom were interviewed. Of these, 28 had worked only in Craven, five there and in other counties, and five had only worked elsewhere. Thirty-three had worked under the guidance of the WRWAEC at some point in their WLA service, and five worked only on private farms. In addition, two WRWAEC foremen were also interviewed.

Although the documentary and oral sources may have different biases, they also provide points of cross-reference for information gathered. Interviews were recorded on tape or using verbatim shorthand, and were transcribed immediately afterwards. Some information was also recorded separately on a database for ease of reference. The transcriptions, diaries and photographs lent by former WLA members for photocopying have not been made available for public use.

Craven and the West Riding

Craven was in the West Riding of Yorkshire, and since 1974 has been a district within the county of North Yorkshire. Today, though, its boundaries are reduced: it formerly included Sedbergh (now in Cumbria), Bolton by Bowland (now in Lancashire) and Keighley (now in West Yorkshire). The government had decreed that the ploughing of pastureland should be undertaken to increase food production, as it was estimated that 'an acre of crops available directly for human consumption produces three or four times as much energy as an acre of grassland does in the form of livestock products'.⁶

Livestock farming was the mainstay of Craven agriculture, because of the limitations posed by its geography and prevailing climate, and much of the area was clearly unsuitable for arable cultivation. Some fields near Kettlewell in Wharfedale were over 1500 feet above sea level, and were so steep that land girls and foremen could only plough downhill—when driving uphill the plough had insufficient traction into the ground to make a furrow. Between Horton-in-Ribblesdale and Skipton the land was very hilly, and the valleys in between were subject to waterlogging. Wind and rain resulted in rapid erosion, so the soil became too shallow above the limestone to take roots.⁷ A combination of heavy rainfall, low temperatures and high altitude had, therefore, precluded large scale arable cultivation in the district.

Yet Craven farmers were required to plough 10 per cent of their land, a demand met with reluctance and hostility towards the WRWAEC and the government. In October 1943 farmers threatened to withhold milk supplies from Leeds and Bradford, an action deplored by Tom Williams, the Minister of Agriculture.⁸ If designated land was not ploughed farmers could be prosecuted. A Bradley farmer was taken to court for not ploughing four acres, and was fined £20 with four guineas costs.⁹ Foreman Ron commented that many farmers refused to allow a tractor on to their land because they wanted their livestock to eat the grass. On one occasion he ploughed as the farmer drove sheep in front of the tractor, to eat the grass before it was ploughed up. He considered that it would have been more appropriate for farmers to have continued with sheep and milk production, rather than ploughing their best land.

The chairman of the West Riding WLA committee was Lady Bingley of Bramham Park, Boston Spa. Although the national administration was criticised as being 'too county' by recruits and Labour MPs, such people were often the only members of the community who could make a significant contribution, and give enough time, without receiving remuneration for their efforts. Furthermore, their positions in their respective communities gave them the ear of local farmers and landowners, allowing them to publicise the benefits of WLA labour. Miss Pam Preston of Flasby Hall, Gargrave, herself a landowner and member of the Staincliffe Panel of the National Service Committee, was appointed to take charge of Craven recruitment to the WLA in June 1939. The WRWAEC, comprising farmers, landowners and representatives of farmworkers, played a major role in the agricultural community of Craven. It advised on food production, the supply of agricultural machinery, fertiliser, foodstuffs and farm labour, and took greater responsibility than the WLA for such essentials as hostel accommodation. A particularly important position was that of foreman: these male employees of the WRWAEC oversaw the work of WLA recruits at depots, and liaised with local farmers. Like the county WLA committee, the WRWAEC received most of its instructions and information through circular letters received from the MAF.

When they reached the age of eighteen women were directed to join one of the WRNS, WAAF, ATS, WLA or munitions industries. The WLA was primarily a mobile force, so most recruits were unmarried—the average age at entry of the volunteers interviewed was 19½ years. They were required to be in good physical health and mentally mature. Many potential recruits wanted to volunteer for the service of their choice, rather than being compulsorily directed to work in a service to which they did not aspire. Annie was attracted by the WLA publicity poster, in which the sun was shining and 'everyone looked lovely. Mum said, "It's not like that but I'm not going to stop you." Some WLA volunteers had already had limited involvement with the forces, which influenced their views. Doreen C 'had been in the Junior Air Corps, which really put me off—we did a lot of marching and polishing and I wouldn't want to do that all the time'. Gladys did not want to join the forces because she 'didn't want to

salute people', but equally did not relish the prospect of working in munitions, having 'seen those from the powder room with yellow skin and didn't fancy that'. Joyce saw the WLA as a pacifist occupation. She did not want to remain at home, 'but didn't believe in military things like the Army so thought this was something I could do.'

Of the ex-land girls providing information, five came from Huddersfield, four from Bradford, and three each from Wakefield, Leeds, the Keighley area and Skipton. Some would have preferred a move away from the Yorkshire—Nora F from Keighley applied to work in Arundel, Sussex, but was sent only as far as Craven. Edith D from Leeds requested work on a fruit farm in warm weather in the south, but found herself in Skipton and Settle. Their occupations prior to joining included office work (ten), shop work (eight), sewing (eight), factory work (two), companion/help (two) and a bus driver and hairdresser. Miss Preston stated that they were 'absolutely new to farming. Yet the percentage of girls who do not settle down to wartime work on the land is remarkably low'.¹⁰ In order to be accepted to the WLA, women had in principle to provide satisfactory references, pass a medical, and attend for interview—but, as Joyce said, 'they were jolly glad to get you because it released the men.'

Uniform

Land girls were entitled to a uniform including a hat, greatcoat, shoes and breeches which were often worn at social and formal occasions, together with shirts, pullovers and dungarees. Several recruits purchased second-hand uniform from their own money—Dora modified her cord breeches by taking them to the local tailor 'to have a lot of the bag taken out because they were really elephantine'. However, Win found her uniform very difficult to replace, resulting in much patching and mending of the original issue. Marion did not consider her uniform to be very appropriate for the harsh winter weather and purchased ex-army battle dress for warmth. Recruits often found it necessary to wear their own clothes in the fields, either because the uniform had worn out or to augment it in very bad weather. Joyce found that if she spilled paraffin on her mackintosh it dissolved the garment. Grease and fuel oil were particularly difficult stains to remove. Doreen C felt that although recruits were not given a lot of uniform, one accepted the situation because it was wartime. She did not recollect having any of her uniform renewed during her four years of service.

Hostels

The initial intention of the MAF was that the majority of recruits would be employed and paid by individual farmers, although some volunteers could be organised into travelling gangs at harvest time.¹¹ However, Craven farmers were reluctant to both employ and house WLA recruits as they felt the government 'could not expect farmers to take girls on to their farms and pay them high rates. There should be hostels provided in suitable towns and suitably managed from which they could go out to the farmers each day'.¹² Therefore, although some land girls were employed by private farmers, many were billeted in hostels. By 1943 the WRWAEC and WLA had provided six hostels in Craven, the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) providing a warden and eventually taking over their operation. The hostels at Settle and Skipton were purpose-built one-storey constructions, consisting of three blocks containing a dormitory of two-tier bunks, bathing and toilet facilities, dining and recreation rooms, kitchen, larder, sick bay and warden's living quarters. Most of the furniture was supplied and heating was by slow combustion stoves.

Properties deemed appropriate for conversion to hostel accommodation were also requisitioned. These included a former nursing home at Holden Clough near Slaidburn, and the Corner House Cafe near Gisburn, each of which accommodated forty recruits,¹³ and a private house at Cattleside, Rathmell, near Settle, with a capacity of sixteen to twenty. Miss Preston considered them to be 'beautifully situated [making] excellent homes for land girls'.¹⁴ However, Cattleside closed for the winter months as it was too remote in bad weather for recruits to travel to outlying farms. Howden Hall Hostel, Silsden, was opened in May 1942 for approximately 180 workers and was approved as suitable for WLA recruits. Here there were more social amenities, such as a library with over 400 books, and a large concert room with a dance floor. Cattleside and Corner House closed in 1944 and the recruits living there were transferred to hostels at Settle, Skipton and Holden Clough. The last-named closed in May 1947 and that at Settle in 1949, but Skipton remained open for a further period to accommodate men on drainage and opencast restoration work.

During the early days of hostel life, some basic facilities at Settle, Skipton, Howden Hall and Cattleside were in short supply. One recruit had to go home for baths at weekends because water was scarce and another was unhappy because there was insufficient food and she had to gather mushrooms for breakfast. Janet started smoking, because she did not receive enough food when based at Settle. She often took her sugar ration home to allow her mother to bake. Eileen and Ivy sent food home to their families. During the war the Post Office charged sixpence to deliver a dead rabbit wrapped around its middle in brown paper with an address tag on its leg. However, Win recalled putting on two stones in weight during her first year in the WLA, through eating packed lunches and dinners offered by farmers' wives and then returning to the hostel for her evening meal.

Most of the recruits accommodated in Craven hostels thoroughly enjoyed their social lives. Freda said that 'there was good camaraderie when you got to know everyone', and recruits tended to form cliques with others who were in the same bunk cubicle. Joyce appreciated the fact that they were all doing the same job at different depots, which helped when they needed to talk things over. There were rules and regulations governing leisure hours—land girls had to return to Skipton Hostel by 10pm with a weekend extension to 11pm, or midnight at Cattleside. They were able to visit home at weekends when it was not harvest time, but when Norma returned home without permission one weekend she was transferred to Bradford WLA and billeted at home.

Picture houses in Settle and Skipton were often patronised. Recruits based at Cattleside visited Settle, travelling ten in a taxi as only two buses a week operated. Dances were held at Skipton town hall and at Skipton hostel, to which the local community was invited. The RAF built a hut with a dance floor and stage alongside the *Falcon Hotel* in Settle, where dances were held every Saturday. At Corner House near Gisburn, land girls were issued with bicycles for work but they also used them for transport to dances at Clitheroe. Initially they were often almost too exhausted to have a social life but on becoming used to physical work they could readily cycle a few miles in an evening to attend social activities.

Transport

Hostel land girls were transported to depots, whence they were allocated to farms to carry out specific tasks. There was occasionally competition between depots to achieve the largest acreage ploughed, with Gargrave often winning because it had the biggest fields. Some depots had few facilities and toilets were seldom provided. When women

went to a new field the first thing many of them did was to find an appropriate place 'to spend a penny'.

Betty worked out of Linton depot, which covered an area including Buckden, Kettlewell, Grassington, Bolton Abbey and Barden and she worked in every village between Hubberholme and Ilkley during her five years of service. Eileen and Edith D, billeted at Skipton hostel, caught the 7.30am Pennine bus from Skipton to Gargrave depot, where a van collected them to transport them to outlying farms. However, as Mollie commented, it was sometimes as late as 11am before she started work because of the distance involved in travelling from Skipton depot to her place of work. Women working from Settle travelled to Bentham in the north (a distance of approximately 12 miles) and regularly worked on farms around Ingleton, Clapham, Austwick, Otterburn, Wigglesworth, Hellifield, Stainforth and Malham. Poor road conditions and inadequate transport added to journey times and some farms were so far from a road that the only way to get there was by the WRWAEC's own transport. In the Settle area Doreen L was conveyed to work by the WRWAEC in a van so decrepit that it could not climb steep hills with the workers inside: they had to disembark at the bottom and walk up the hill while the van was driven to the top. Others were 'absolutely frozen' when transported to work in an old bus with only canvas covering some of the windows.

Tractors

When Herbert became foreman in charge of operations in 1942, few people in Craven had yet seen a tractor. However, by 1943 there were approximately 120 tractor drivers in the area employed by the WRWAEC, and a further forty WLA personnel on private farms.¹⁵ Fordsons became the most popular make of tractor, although the smaller Massey Fergusons were also used—they could be more easily manoeuvred through entrances to enclosures which had been made for horses and carts. Negotiating drystone walls constructed at least 150 years earlier also proved problematic, as did the small size of fields (the majority were under two acres and none was over ten acres) which reduced the speed at which an area could be ploughed.¹⁶ Nevertheless, the WLA in Craven was described as 'a sort of panzer division equipped with tractors and all the paraphernalia of modern agricultural machinery which can be operated in conjunction with them'.¹⁷

Most land girls allocated to Skipton undertook a tractor-driving course held at the 'tractor school' ('a barn in a field near the Skipton to Bolton Abbey road'). Although some held driving licences, they found tractors to be very much heavier to drive than cars. They were taught how tractors worked, how to drive and maintain them, and how to use various implements such as ploughs, disc harrows and rollers. However, some land girls at Settle had little formal training. Thus, Gladys was not advised how to stop the vehicle, resulting in her driving round and round a field until the engine stalled. She returned home in the evening but the following morning found the engine had flooded, so it was explained to her how to turn off the fuel. The remainder of Gladys's training consisted of a diagram of the gears being drawn for her on a toolbox.

Tractors were fitted with different types of wheels to suit the terrain. Tractors with lug wheels (large iron spikes) were more appropriate to power through heavy ground although it was illegal to drive them on the highway as they wrecked the road surface. In fact the *Craven Herald* reported that Settle tractor driver Rennie Whiteoak was fined £5 for driving a land tractor on the road without protective tyres.¹⁸ If lug-wheel tractors were to be moved they were conveyed on a trailer by a tractor with rubber tyres or, alternatively, wooden bands were bolted on the lug wheels. Both methods were

problematic. The former could be slow but the latter was physically demanding and the bands quickly disintegrated as the tractor moved along the road.

The cold winter weather and the very basic construction of the tractors combined to provide uncomfortable working conditions. On arrival at work recruits often found the iron tractor seat in a block of ice which had to be chipped away before work could begin. Between October and March the tractors were drained of water at the end of each day's work, to prevent them from freezing. During the 1940s all tractor drivers were exposed to the elements: there were no hoods or cabins to afford protection. Edith W suffered from chilblains on her knees because her tight breeches became wet and cold when her knees were jammed against the cold metal of the tractor. She managed to protect her hands by wearing old socks.

To start the tractor the ignition was turned on and the engine fired by means of a starting handle. Recruits needed to ensure their thumbs were placed in the correct position, as the handle had a nasty habit of springing back and breaking the thumb. One land girl suffered a broken nose when the starting handle kicked back. Difficulty was also experienced in getting the engine to turn over on mornings when the oil had thickened during a cold night. When the engine was sufficiently warm it was switched over from petrol to tractor vapour oil [TVO], a paraffin-based substance. To test whether the engine was sufficiently hot to switch to TVO, Norma would spit on the hot plate and if her saliva sizzled it was deemed suitable. A land girl known as the 'flyer driver' would refuel tractors working at outlying farms, driving a tractor round the area drawing a tank of TVO.

Tractors hauled other implements such as ploughs, harrows and binders, and were therefore in use for much of the year. Some equipment had to be operated by the tractor driver at the same time as she drove the vehicle, either standing or sitting to obtain better control of both machines. Other complex devices, such as the binder, were operated by two workers, with a land girl or labourer sitting on the implement, leaving the other free to concentrate on driving the tractor.

Tasks using the tractor

Ploughing took place between November and March and was a single-person operation. Land girls had to keep the tractor wheel adjacent to the edge of the last cut, while at the same time watching for stones and tree roots. The ploughshares had to be lifted over these, to avoid damaging the implement. There were, however, many occasions when this was unavoidable. Multiple furrow ploughs were used in Craven, with two or occasionally three ploughshares. The operation of levers enabled the depth and direction of the plough to be altered if necessary, and also pulled up the ploughshares to allow turns to be made at the headland (the land between the field's boundary and the main ploughing area). Some recruits participated in local and regional ploughing competitions, performing to a sufficiently high standard to win prizes against men who had many more years ploughing experience. The *Bradford Telegraph & Argus* reported on 21 January 1944 that Dora, formerly a cashier in the city, represented Skipton and Bowland in the final of the West Riding ploughing competition for the WLA and WAEC. A field was measured into plots of land which were allocated to competitors to plough. Judges gave marks on whether the furrows were straight and of an appropriate depth. The *Sunday Express* stated on 30 January 1944 that the 'ploughgirls' were praised by judges in the Yorkshire Ploughing Championships who felt that 'on the whole they are better than the men ... they take more time, more pains, and are more tidy with their work'.

After ploughing had ended, fields were usually disc-harrowed several times between March and April, the land girl performing the operation at the same time as she drove the tractor. The harrow consisted of a frame holding sets of between eight and ten discs placed at an angle. The discs cut through the ploughed furrows breaking down the land further. A lever enabled the harrows to be set at different angles thereby achieving a variety of cuts required by different surfaces.

Fertiliser, consisting of basic slag from blast furnaces and lime, was spread on ploughed land in November, December and April. In the early days of operation it was delivered loose and spread from a trailer by land girls who had to master the art of balancing on the moving tractor-drawn trailer while digging out the lime with a flat shovel and dispersing it across the fields. They were often more concerned not to fall off the trailer than to ensure an even distribution. If the lime blew back, it could affect the eyes and mouth and, according to Win, if 'you licked your lips and the lime stuck, before you finished your mouth was like a pudding'. It was later delivered in bags, from which WLA recruits transferred it into a spreader—a trough from which it was fed on to saucers which spun round when the tractor was in gear, spreading the lime.

Seed was usually sown in April, utilising a tractor with rubber tyres drawing a seed drill. This was a two-person operation: a land girl or labourer drove the tractor and a second person sat on the drill platform. The task of the latter was to work levers, allowing the seed to travel down 10-12 pipes into rows made by cutters at the bottom of the pipes, the size of which varied according to the size of seed. The drill operator also ensured that the pipes were kept clear and, on reaching the headland, pulled a lever which prevented seed being sown. Grass reseeding was also undertaken by hand with a 'fiddle drill', a bag carried round the shoulders containing seed which dropped on to a pulley system, across which was drawn a leather thong which scattered the seed.

After seed had been sown, the field was chain-harrowed. The chain harrow was a tractor-drawn implement consisting of a square metal frame within which were fastened metal chains and/or spikes. When drawn over the ground, the chains disturbed the soil and covered up the seed. The ground was then rolled in an attempt to ensure that only the minimum amount of soil (and seeds) blew away. Rubber-wheeled tractors drew cylindrical shaped ridged iron rollers over the ground.

Grass was usually cut for hay in July and August, but it was often necessary to dry it, using machinery to pick up the grass and spin it in the air. It was then raked into rows by labourers and farmers and occasionally by land girls, who also did the baling. Straw and hay were baled for storage purposes and ease of transportation. The tractor engine powered a pulley belt, operated by a lever on the tractor. The straw or hay was sent down a chute from where it was compressed to form a bale. Two grooved wooden boards were then inserted through which a land girl threaded wires for a colleague placed opposite her to tie round the bale. Several recruits found the manipulation of wire particularly difficult and some of the machinery was said to be rather ramshackle.

Binding or cutting corn was carried out in July and August, although it often failed to ripen successfully because of the poor climate. After it had been flattened by rain, labourers sometimes had to walk in front of the corn-cutter lifting up the crop for cutting. On other occasions, stooks of corn (six sheaves stacked in a pyramid to dry out ready for threshing) were so wet that harvesting was not immediately possible and grass grew up into them. This made them extremely difficult to harvest when the weather finally improved. Cutting corn was a complicated operation carried out in partnership between tractor driver and binder operator (usually a land girl). She operated a lever, which manoeuvred 'sails', depending on the height of the corn and

the inclination of the ground. As the sails rotated they flattened the corn which was then cut by a blade. The corn fell onto a belt, from which it was fed between the rollers into a box. When there was sufficient corn in the box it was spun round to form a sheaf, which was bound with string and ejected to the ground. The tractor and binder would travel round the field cutting the corn from the perimeter inwards. As the strip of corn in the middle of the field became narrower, small animals such as rabbits and field mice ran out and were often killed by farmers or by the binder blade, something which distressed many recruits.

Threshing was usually done in September, by which time rats had often moved into the stacked sheaves. When threshing time approached men with pitchforks surrounded the stacks, watching for rats to come out of their holes. Hazel and Norah W hated hearing the rats squeal as they were caught by the pitchforks or worried by dogs. The huge threshing-machine was tractor-powered and the 'threshing gang' had several members. A land girl threw sheaves up to the 'bondcutter' standing at the top of the thresher. She caught the sheaf string with a hooked knife thereby cutting the string in one movement. Another recruit (known as the 'feeder') caught the sheaf before it disintegrated and held it head down into a drum where a set of bars beat out the grain. The straw was then conveyed to the front of the machine for collection and baling, to be used for animal fodder and bedding. Grain, broken straw and chaff fell through sieves, from which the grain was transported to the back of the machine to run through spouts, at the bottom of which were fastened sacks. The whole process was extremely dirty and dusty: land girls usually wore a scarf round their heads or mouths as their uniform provided insufficient protection.

It was the responsibility of land girls to maintain machinery, which was cleaned, greased and put away after each seasonal task. When equipment was needed for use again recruits had to ensure that no deterioration had taken place while in store. Edith W recalled painting and cleaning implements—the recruits wanted to use the grease gun because it helped to keep their hands soft in the absence of toiletries. Mollie and Joan put tractor oil on their arms to prevent being burned in very hot sun, despite the awful smell which emanated from them as a result. General machine maintenance was also undertaken in depots, when the weather was too poor to work outdoors. Some recruits also occasionally helped out in the farmhouse, sheltered in a barn, or sat round a fire made in an old bucket.

Fieldwork and other tasks

The term 'fieldwork' was used for a multitude of general farm tasks, including stone-picking (the removal of stones from fields) to facilitate better ploughing, hoeing, harvesting turnips and gathering potatoes. Land girls working for the WRWAEC undertook some fieldwork when tractor-driving duties were out of season or when tasks such as potato-gathering took priority. Those employed on private farms often carried out fieldwork jobs.

The job most hated by recruits was picking potatoes (usually between August and October). This involved working in groups, following tractors drawing 'spinners' which threw out potatoes in different directions. Land girls gathered the potatoes in sacks and buckets. Norah W described the work as 'back-breaking' as it involved so much bending and, if the ground was heavy, recruits became bogged down in the mud. Annie and Doreen C picked potatoes in October when the soil was particularly wet, causing many of the potatoes to go bad and disintegrate when picked up. Gloves and hands became wet and cold and, if working in pouring rain with no shelter, recruits could barely stand at the

end of the day. Harvesting or 'snagging' turnips was also hard physical work. It took great effort to pull the turnips out of the ground, particularly in the harsh October weather. The roots and tops were chopped off with knives and the vegetables placed in piles to be collected. Win said: 'You wrapped paper and all sorts round your legs to try and keep them dry but ended up being wet through to the knees; your hands were cold and you could hardly move them. It was the most hateful job, turnip snagging. Yes, it was terrible'.

Other important tasks (apart from tractor-driving and fieldwork) were also undertaken. Joan learned milking on a farm at Eastby, near Skipton, using a specially constructed bag with the farmer telling her the order in which to pull the 'teats'. She was later able to put her newly acquired knowledge into practice on a live animal. This was, in fact, a common method of instruction and is shown in photographs of training courses issued by MAF.¹⁹ Marie was one of several pest control officers in Craven, responsible for rat- and mole-catching. She travelled to farms on a very heavy bicycle with the tools of her trade—large boxes of poison—strapped to the back. Rats were a particular problem in the Settle area, where the rural district council paid 1½d per tail delivered to the sanitary department.²⁰

Betty worked for the Women's Timber Corps, an offshoot of the WLA. Following a month's training at Wetherby, her duties were to measure timber after it was felled and transport it to local railway stations such as Clapham, near Settle, where it was loaded onto railway trucks and dispatched to collieries to be used as pit props. Doreen L worked on a private farm at Stackhouse near Settle following her time in a hostel. She was responsible for a milk round, working in the dairy and bottling milk. She also took milk-kits [churns] round in a van (although other milk rounds used horse power) from which people would obtain their milk in a jug. Although horses were not used by the WRWAEC Muriel, who worked on a private farm near Gargrave, became an expert and won several competitions using horse-drawn ploughs.

Given the working conditions and tasks undertaken, it is not surprising that several land girls suffered injury. Joan had a tractor accident when on active service, for which the WRWAEC awarded her compensation. She was disc harrowing with an Italian prisoner of war whose tractor became bogged down. Joan went to assist him, but when she climbed on to the tractor it tipped over and pinned her down. Her left leg was burned and her right leg almost amputated. She later contracted tetanus as dirt and grass had infected the wound. However she was determined not to lose her leg, and managed to walk again after treatment lasting two years. Another tractor accident occurred when Connie and colleagues were told by a foreman to move a trailer carrying a tank of TVO manually, instead of hitching it to a tractor. A combination of the slope of the ground and the weight of the trailer caused it to become too heavy to hold and the trailer ran over Connie. She suffered a leg injury, which became ulcerated and septic and caused muscle damage. She, too, received compensation from the WRWAEC.

Joyce and Gladys contracted asthma from the dust produced by threshing. Joyce lost two stones in weight, initially receiving sick pay but no compensation, and had to leave the WLA and find alternative employment. Norma was also 'invalided out' of the WLA, having developed fibrositis in her shoulder through ploughing. She was told that if she did not give up that type of work she could become disabled. She received no assistance in finding alternative employment, stating 'you were left to fend for yourself'.

Pay and hours of work

The WRWAEC attempted to keep within the WLA-recommended 48-hour working week for land girls, with Sundays off. Understandably at harvest time this figure was

greatly exceeded. Eileen worked a 14-hour day in Gargrave when double summertime was in operation. Freda did not return to Settle hostel until approximately 11pm during double summertime, having been cutting corn until darkness descended. Foreman Ron said he 'got a rollicking [from the hostel warden] for keeping them out'. Many recruits found consecutive 12- and 14-hour days of physical work almost too much to bear, and Marion recalled the long walk back to Skipton hostel when she was so tired she 'could have wept'. Norma's 1943 diary showed that her income varied in relation to hours worked. She was paid £1 8s 3d on 16 January 1943 and £4 6s on 29 August 1943 for extra hours worked in harvesting. Marion's diary for the same year showed increases in the summer months although on one occasion she recorded a 75-hour week and a wage of only £1 11s 3d. Not unreasonably, she commented that the 'wages were really poor for all the very hard work we did'. However, Freda's net weekly WLA wage of £1 in 1944-1945 compared favourably with her previous wages of 15s (from which was deducted 7s 6d for board and lodging) as an assistant in a confectioner's shop.

The verdict

Most Craven land girls left the WLA well before the final disbanding of the organisation in 1950. Local farmers resumed livestock farming and stopped the more labour-intensive arable cultivation as soon as they were able. Many recruits felt they had fulfilled their wartime duties but now wanted to resume their peacetime civilian lives. Fifteen of the 38 land girls who provided information left the WLA in 1945, five in 1944, nine in 1946, five in 1947 and three in 1948. The average length of service was 3 years 3 months. Various reasons were given for leaving the WLA. Of course, the WLA was winding down in the area, but 22 of the 38 mentioned marriage as the main motivation. Others wanted to return to their old jobs, which had been kept open for them. Three left due to the illness of parents, being required to assist with the care of younger siblings or the family home and business. Six WLA members had to leave due to illness or injury sustained at work.

Agriculture in Craven was in turmoil when the WLA entered the area, because the farming community had been instructed to focus on arable cultivation, which was fundamentally unsuited to the environment. Farmers initially resented the intrusion of the WLA: they did not want their land ploughed and could not understand how young women could undertake the type of agricultural work required of them. Relationships between farmers and land girls were sometimes strained—on one occasion a farmer filled Marion's tractor petrol tank with sand so she and her partner could not work that day. The farmers might also misunderstand the new working methods, creating confusion. Foreman Ron recalled an incident when corn was ready for cutting but, because of a very heavy dew, the land girls could not begin work. He was advised by a farmer to 'catch up on yon two buggers; they've done nothing this morning at all'. Ron replied that it was necessary to wait until moisture had drained away otherwise the binding equipment would skid over the grass instead of cutting it. 'Oh, oh', responded the farmer, 'I thought they were larking about'. As Ron said, 'It was a time when the girls and the farmers had an entirely new type of life'.

Doreen and Ivy found that the farming community changed its view of the WLA, as recruits proved they could carry out the work required of them. Janet said that in Craven 'farmers came to realise we could do a man's job—lifting and twisting through gateways'. Recruits occasionally worked with a male partner on two-person tasks such as binding and seeding, and were generally appreciative of their support in showing

them how to perform tasks. Marion said there were also times when the physical strength of men was particularly helpful, especially in trying to manipulate heavy machinery. Edith D felt that while initially some labourers were rather cynical and laughed at the efforts of recruits from the city, they began to admire them for their determination to learn and do a good job. In summing up the achievements of the WLA, Annie said 'at first we were looked on very much as the weaker sex, but gradually we gained their respect, and also the respect of the men with whom we worked'.

Others felt some of the women's services 'looked down' on the WLA. Eileen and colleagues from Gargrave managed to get their own back on some of their peers from the Johnson & Johnson factory, who 'looked down their noses at us in our dirty uniforms and unkempt appearance, so we made a point of sitting next to them [on the bus] if we were a bit smelly'. Doreen L, Gladys and Edith W said that although their work was recognised by farmers, it was not necessarily acknowledged by those further afield. Ivy felt the WLA was never made to 'feel equal to the main services'. She recalled an Armistice Day church parade when the WLA was placed last—behind the boy scouts—which she found demeaning. Win suggested that difficult working conditions, and the physically demanding tasks carried out by the WLA, were away from the public eye, and therefore underestimated, whereas people saw newsreels reporting on the actions of others.

The *Craven Herald* considered the WLA to have been a success, suggesting that 'Craven would be among the first areas of the country to pay tribute to the fine work of the WLA during the strenuous years of the war. It must be admitted that our farmers were more than a little sceptical about the wisdom of employing lasses at first ... Our hills and fells called for many qualities not needed on the flat, arable lands elsewhere. It was doubted whether the WLA would be able to "take it" [but] they carried off the trophies at ploughing competitions and tractor management tests, and proved their worth in the arduous daily routine of our Pennine farms. Doubting farmers began to express real admiration for their work'.²¹

Afterword

The WLA disbanded on 30 November 1950, but only in 2008 did the land girls receive belated recognition of their contribution to the war effort, when the prime minister, Gordon Brown, awarded a veteran's badge and citation to surviving members. The WLA still continues in Craven, however—former land girls attended their 60th annual reunion in 2009.

In recent years, possibly due to the continuing campaign for recognition of the WLA by former members, MPs and others, the organisation has enjoyed a higher profile. The internet has made WLA sources more accessible, and the BBC and local history societies (for example, in the Craven area, www.kirkbymalham.info) include features on wartime activities. The primary and secondary sources indicated above are still lodged at TNA and IWM, although it should be borne in mind that some government and county records have not survived. Local record offices may also have relevant material. Many former members of the WLA remain happy to talk about their experiences and are often able to provide documents and photographs of their service. The WLA has also been the subject of recent publications, such as *The Women's Land Army in Bedfordshire 1939-1950* by Stuart Antrobus (2008) and *The Women's Land Army: A Portrait* by Gill Clarke (2008), who adopts an original approach by examining the WLA through wartime art.

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Neglected practitioners: the bonesetters of early modern England

MICHAEL HEERY

Introduction

This article examines the role of bonesetters in early modern England, from 1550 to 1800, considering the distribution of these specialised medical practitioners, their training and practice, and their relationships both with clients and the more orthodox medical profession. It also explores the extent to which bonesetters can themselves be deemed professional practitioners, and uses a wide range of sources to argue that they were an important part of the medical scene in the early modern period, though often misunderstood or neglected by historians. Relatively little has been written about bonesetters, though some were well-known. Thus, Sally Mapp, who practised at Epsom in the 1730s, was caricatured by Hogarth (see figure 1) and Smollett, who drily commented that ‘the great professor F—, has, like the famous Mrs. Mapp, the bone-setter, cured many patients that were never diseased’.¹ Others locally-celebrated included the Taylor family of Lancashire, bonesetters for almost a century and a half from 1750 to 1890, and the Thomas family who originated in eighteenth century Anglesey and later practised in Liverpool.² Yet few academic works are devoted to them (a monograph about the Taylor family is written as a piece of family history) and, indeed, some modern writers dismiss bonesetters as quacks while others see them as legitimate practitioners.³ A recent article about nineteenth-century bonesetters in Warwickshire is a rare and important exception to the general lack of attention.⁴ This article takes the latter view, seeking to re-evaluate early modern bonesetters and to rescue them from the unfavourable image depicted in Hogarth’s caricature of Mrs Mapp.

What did bonesetters do?

Bonesetters ministered to the many people in early modern England who injured their arms, legs or other bones. They and their clients lived in what Peter Laslett called a ‘handmade’ world, a phrase which emphasises the importance of human muscle power.⁵ Domestic manufacture led to injuries, especially to children,⁶ and many people rode or handled horses and other animals, with all the attendant dangers. The result was a large number of accidents and injuries. The accounts of overseers of the poor, and other parish records, have many references to ‘cripples’ and others who were lame or had damaged feet, legs, arms and hands. Bonesetters manipulated these damaged limbs, ribs, joints and skulls, often repairing fractures and dislocations.

Medical historians provide an indication of the work done by bonesetters. Santy and Knight observe that they were called upon ‘when community members sustained musculoskeletal injury’,⁷ while Cooter states that ‘bone-setting was a practical craft and not a theory-laden medical system’.⁸ He describes osteopathy and chiropractic as descendants of bonesetting, a point endorsed by Smith, who maintains that their skills ‘seem to have combined those of the modern physiotherapist, chiropractor and osteopath’. Smith also gives useful information about their methods: ‘unlike orthodox



1 In Hogarth's 'The Company of Undertakers', Sally Mapp is the central character in the top row, where she is pointing to a bone.

Wood. One of Wood's eccentricities was to refer to himself in the third person, as in the following account from 1652:

July 26 ... the horse of A. W. being bad, or else he was no good rider, he had a fall, and put out his arme. When he came to Shabbington, he put off his doublet and found his arme swel'd and exceeding tender. Thomas Williams, who had been bred an apothecary, would needs perswade him, that his arme was not out of joynt, only bruised, and so applied a cloath and oyle to it ... in this condition he continued about a week there, rode to Thame... and at length came home in a most afflicted condition. After he had been at home some dayes he was advised to go to Adams a locksmith living in Catstreet who was an expert bone-setter, to the end that he might look upon it, and see what was to be done ... Aug 10; he spoke mildly to A.W. when he look'd on his arme, gave him sweet words and told him all was very well. At length casting his head aside, Adams fastned one of his hands above and the other below the elbow, pluck'd the arme straight, and set it. But the paine being great and unexpected (because that the veines and arteries had been shrunk) he fell into a sown [sic], and could see nothing but green before his eyes. Adams then laid him upon the bed, gave him cordials, and put him to sleep. Afterwards he found himself at ease, and better every day.¹²

practitioners, they used manipulation and brute strength to 'snap' things back into place (the patient always expected the 'snap', as a sign that the process was succeeding)⁹. John Taylor of Lancashire was described as 'setting broken bones and straightening twisted and contorted limbs ... his boldness carried through what more scientific hands dared not to have undertaken'.¹⁰

Elliott provides more detail about their methods: 'Bonesetters approach a joint peripherally, relaxing active and antagonistic muscle support by flexion and extension techniques. Any diminished range of joint movement is improved by encouraging passive movement in the direction opposite to that producing pain. Non-vertebral joints are treated with the patient seated, and the lumbar region with the patient leaning over the back of a chair'. As an example he describes the treatment of George II by Joshua Ward who 'without warning manipulated the thumb forcibly and was kicked by the king for his pains'.¹¹ A graphic description of the bonesetter's craft occurs in the diary of the Oxford antiquarian Anthony à

Who practised as bonesetters?

Anthony à Wood's bonesetter was also a locksmith, and indeed the combination of bonesetting with another occupation seems to have been common. Richard Gilbert doubled as both knife-maker and bonesetter in London in 1640.¹³ Ray Wilkins practised as both blacksmith and bonesetter in York,¹⁴ and Roy Porter stated that 'blacksmiths with a side-line in bonesetting [were] not unusual'.¹⁵ In the case of the Thomas family of Anglesey, 'Most ... were farmers and many of them practised bonesetting as a secondary interest only, albeit one for which they felt a vocation'.¹⁶

However, other people, among them itinerants, earned a living solely from their bonesetting practice.¹⁷ Some established a successful practice to which people travelled long distances. Sally Mapp is perhaps the best known of these, but others include Richard Horsfall of Merrydale in the Colne Valley, Yorkshire (known in the area as 'Merrydale Dick'), who became well known in the locality for healing 'wounds, bruises, sores and dislocations',¹⁸ and Richard Durrant, a very successful bonesetter employed by the authorities in late-sixteenth century Norwich.¹⁹ In some cases several generations of one family were well-established as bonesetters in their communities—examples include the Taylors of Lancashire and the Masons of Wisbech,²⁰ while Sally Mapp was herself the daughter of a Wiltshire bonesetter.²¹

She was not the only female bonesetter. Indeed, Samuel Homola goes so far as to suggest that 'bonesetting was a practice commonly employed in the homes of England in the seventeenth century, and, curiously, primarily by women'.²² The seventeenth-century Essex diarist Ralph Josselin consulted two local female bonesetters following injuries to his children. When John 'had a fall about the street threshold which made him limp', the 'shut-bone in his instep' was set by 'Spooner's wife'. And when the second Mary's arm was dislocated by the maid, 'Mrs Withers came and set it'.²³ A celebrated eighteenth-century female bonesetter in the Forest of Bowland, Ellen Haythornthwaite, who treated 'scalds, fractured skulls, bruises, all external wounds',²⁴ was an example of a popular medical practitioner with a wide range of skills. Wyman lists several female bonesetters: 'At Fulham, in 1777, Mrs Walker was paid the comparatively large sum of £2. 2s. 0d. for 'the cure of Culvers leg', while at Woodstock in 1758 the vestry decided 'to give Mrs Southam two guineas and a half for the cure of James Smith's leg', one guinea down and the balance when they were satisfied with the cure. Elizabeth Wheatland was 'boan setting' in Winchester in 1687,²⁵ and Elizabeth Sims practised in Wirksworth, Derbyshire, during the 1740s.²⁶

In Wakefield and Huddersfield 'women were employed in considerable numbers by the overseers, sometimes as part of a husband and wife team, such as the Jubbs of Mirfield, who were both engaged in medical practice. Otherwise they worked alone, frequently specialising, for example, in bonesetting, the cure of 'sore legs' or in the treatment of children'.²⁷ Margaret Pelling, describing the medical practitioners who served early modern Norwich, states that 'Over a third were women, including a surgeon and other healers; the men, the remaining two-thirds, included barber-surgeons, surgeons, bone setters, some apothecaries and physician-surgeons and recruits to medicine from other trades'.²⁸ One female bonesetter in Norwich was Mother Colle who 'seems to have specialized in broken limbs'.²⁹

There seems to have been a distinction between those bonesetters who were licensed, like Mother Colle, and those, perhaps like the women who treated Ralph Josselin's family, who were not. In the countryside this may not have mattered, but in the towns it did: 'more commonly women practised without a licence. Twelve women outside Norwich were prosecuted during the 1597 visitation. This number suggests that

women were playing a substantial part in bonesetting, surgery and medical practice, as well as following the traditional vocations of midwifery and nursing'.³⁰ Norwich, however, may not have been typical. Rosemary O'Day, for example, maintains that 'there is little evidence that women practised medicine with the approval of the authorities before the Restoration [and] John Raach discovered only one woman licensed to practise physic out of more than 800 licensed medics between 1603 and 1643'.³¹ Similarly, the Burgess Admission books for Bristol covering the period 1344 to 1835 list only two female medical practitioners, both barber surgeons practising in the 1630s.³² It may well be that women were more represented in bonesetting than in other forms of medical practice.

The distribution of bonesetters in England

Roger Cooter speculates that 'bonesetters tended to be situated in rural areas, away from large towns, and away from London in particular suggest[ing] that the continuance of bonesetting depended to a large extent on its geographical separation from both the authority and the provisions of orthodox medicine'.³³ He is not alone in believing bonesetting was primarily found in rural communities. For example, Elliott states that 'its origins are rural and have often evolved as a subsidiary craft, beginning with the intuitive care of injured animals'.³⁴ It is certainly true that some bonesetters continued to treat both human and animal patients throughout their careers. Bonesetters certainly did practice in rural areas. For example, Thomas found bonesetters active in eighteenth-century Oxfordshire villages,³⁵ while a bonesetter's burial is recorded in the Nottinghamshire village of Rolleston in 1590,³⁶ and there are references to John Darlington of Smallwood, Cheshire, and John Flewell of Liddington, Wiltshire, in the seventeenth century. But Cooter's statement is clearly inaccurate, for bonesetters were also commonly found in towns, including London, and they often worked alongside orthodox medical practitioners.

As noted above, Margaret Pelling shows that between 1550 and 1640 the city authorities in Norwich employed three bonesetters, as well as more orthodox medical practitioners, and they also employed a bonesetter in 1669.³⁷ This use of bonesetters in Norwich is confirmed by Rawcliffe and Wilson, who note that the city's Great Hospital 'hired a barber, bonesetter and surgeon to care for its poor'.³⁸ The examples already quoted support the contention that bonesetters worked in towns: at Huddersfield and Wakefield in the eighteenth century,³⁹ and the one employed by Anthony à Wood in Oxford in 1652.⁴⁰ A bonesetter was practising in Brentwood in 1580, another in Bedford in 1777, and the parish records of Westbury-on-Trym show that at least one worked in Bristol in 1678.⁴¹ Further evidence comes from eighteenth-century wills, such as those of the bonesetters Robert Ledbrook of Northampton and James Breach of Reading,⁴² while a search of references in quarter sessions records has identified the following from urban areas:⁴³

John Garnett, Newton-in-Makerfield, Lancashire (1634)
Richard Nightgall, Manchester (1665/6 and 1667)
Richard Fetherston, Birmingham (1630 and 1633/4)
William Edwards, Kenilworth (1649-1709)
Chambers Potter, Bedford (1752)

These, with other records, argue for a wide geographical distribution of bonesetters in early modern England, and it seems safe to conclude that they were often to be found in the provincial towns. There is also good evidence for bonesetters practising in London. Beier makes a case for the Barber Surgeons' Company

awarding special licences to bonesetters.⁴⁴ One of these is recorded as treating the future Charles I: 'In fact Sir Robert and Lady Cary had taken matters into their own hands and employed Edward Stutfeyld, a practitioner of bonesetting, who had been licensed by the Company of Barber-Surgeons of London on 20th April 1602'.⁴⁵ Mauer states that at St Bartholomew's Hospital 'there were a number of surgeons and a bonesetter who treated fractures, until these duties were assigned to the surgeon in 1628',⁴⁶ while in the eighteenth century Sally Mapp, though based in Epsom, often treated clients in London.⁴⁷

Bonesetters and poor relief

Parish records, such as the accounts of churchwardens and overseers of the poor, have been relatively neglected by historians of the medical profession, but they can reveal how practitioners were used to treat the illnesses and injuries of those charged to the parish. For example, the overseers' accounts for the parish of Westbury-on-Trym near Bristol record that in 1684 10s was 'paid to a bonesetter for setting William Boure ribs', while in 1678 the following items were recorded:

paid to Robert wade for going to a bone setter	2s
spent that day that Edward bourne bones was set	5s 6d
paid to the bonesetter	10s
paid for one to go to Bristoll to the bonesetter	1s
spent upon the bone-setter	6d

Why such a small payment was made in the last instance is unknown. The payment of 10s is more typical at this time—the same sum was paid to a surgeon in Westbury, Wiltshire, for curing a leg in 1693.⁴⁸ In Knebworth (Hertfordshire) in 1600 a bonesetter was paid 2s for 'setting of her boyes legge that was broken'.⁴⁹ In 1692 the overseers at Ashwell in Rutland paid 8s to a bonesetter for setting a child's leg in 1692.⁵⁰

In his research E.G. Thomas used parish records from Berkshire, Essex and Oxfordshire for 1720-1834, and suggests that 'ordinary complaints were often dealt with by a local "nurse" or bonesetter, and serious cases by a professional doctor. Broken limbs proved expensive items always'. His examples include a payment of four guineas for a broken leg at Wheatley in 1768 and three guineas for setting a girl's thigh at Kidlington. He concludes that, 'generally speaking the parish authorities were sympathetic and generous in their approach to medical care. The account books often reveal genuine understanding of humanitarian needs—a fact not emphasised enough in studies of poor law administration'.⁵¹ The Westbury-on-Trym records support this perspective. Thomas also notes that 'the Elizabethan legislation referred to the care of the Lame, Impotent, Old and Blind'. Margaret Pelling's research into medical care of the poor in early modern Norwich shows that those treated included patients who 'were called weak, diseased, bed-ridden, lame, crooked, or suffering from gout [or had] broken legs ... broken ribs ... or were one one-legged or one-handed'.⁵² Similarly, Barnet's study of the ordinances of the York Guild of Barber Surgeons reveals that 'there are many references to bad legs, sore legs and lameness, or mortifying feet'.⁵³

Hilary Marland, using the overseers' accounts of Wakefield and Huddersfield, concluded that 'payments were recorded in the overseers' account books to a large number of fringe personnel, including a variety of local healers, bonesetters, doctresses, and most commonly midwives'. She explains that 'cost-conscious overseers

were anxious to find ways to reduce expenditure on the sick [which] explains, in part at least, why overseers were ready to employ fringe medical personnel to treat the sick [who] often cost less than a regular doctor ... Broken limbs were an expensive item, and when treated by a regular medical man would cost as much as 10s to a few pounds. This item was normally excluded from medical contracts. Bonesetters, who usually charged something in the region of a few shillings, were frequently employed to treat this category of complaint'. She gives the example of the payment in 1792 of 10s 6d 'To Robert Crowther for setting Wid. Tattersall Thigh'.⁵⁴

Geoffrey Oxley also states that broken limbs were regularly excluded from contracts between poor law officials and orthodox medical practitioners: 'certain items were often excluded, the favourites being smallpox, midwifery and broken bones. For the last two, a fixed price per case was sometimes agreed ... from time to time other persons were employed to do specific jobs. They ranged from bonesetters ... to midwives'.⁵⁵ In the eighteenth century, according to Pelling, medical contracts 'appear more like retainers, and are seen as peculiar to the poor-law context; expensive or ubiquitous conditions such as bonesetting or midwifery continued to require special arrangements'.⁵⁶ For example, a 1788 article of agreement at Northill in Bedfordshire in 1788 confirmed that the parish was to pay for bonesetting'.⁵⁷

Bonesetters and other medical practitioners

It is therefore clear that bonesetters sometimes worked alongside other medical professionals. They could be found as one element of a town's medical provision for poor relief, as in Norwich and Wakefield, or could be employed alongside other medics in a hospital, as at St Bartholomew's in London. Mostly, however, they worked alone or with other family members: 'their skills ... were often handed down within families from father and mother to son and daughter, although most bone-setters were male'.⁵⁸ Cooter calls this their 'informal apprenticeship'.⁵⁹ It did not place a barrier between bonesetters and other medical practitioners, since many surgeons and apothecaries also learned their skills from family members. For example, the Bury (Lancashire) surgeon-apothecary Richard Kay learned from his father in the 1740s.⁶⁰ Geoffrey Holmes endorses this point, suggesting that 'as with the physicians—as, indeed, with most professions by this time—family tradition was becoming an increasingly important factor in recruitment'.⁶¹

Like many bonesetters, some orthodox medical practitioners had more than one occupation. Pelling describes those who doubled as tallow-chandlers, wig-makers, musicians, tobacconists, distillers and perfumers.⁶² George Winter farmed near Bristol and wrote a manual on husbandry but also practised as a physician three days a week.⁶³ Richard Kay worked as both apothecary and surgeon, there was a surgeon-apothecary in Bristol in 1754,⁶⁴ and a bonesetter-surgeon is recorded from Warwickshire in the late-seventeenth century.⁶⁵

Notwithstanding this, some orthodox medical men did attack bonesetters. For example, in 1676 the surgeon Robert Wiseman complained about 'the wickedness of those who pretend to the reducing of luxated joints by the peculiar name of *Bone-setters*'.⁶⁶ In 1695 Daniel Turner wrote his *Apologia Chyrurgia* to defend 'the noble art of chirurgery, from the gross abuses offer'd thereunto by montebanks, quacks, barbers, pretending bone-setters, and other ignorant undertakers'.⁶⁷ However, these attacks probably carried little weight with the public and were doubtless shaped by narrow personal and professional interests. The same might be said of Sir Percival Pott, a physician contemporary with Sally Mapp, who referred to her as an 'ignorant, illiberal,

female savage'.⁶⁸ Nor was Tobias Smollett's caricature of Mrs Mapp objective, for he had practised as a surgeon in London for a number of years before becoming a writer.⁶⁹ These seem to be examples of the medical establishment attacking successful bonesetters who poached their wealthy clients.

Vicious attacks between branches of the medical profession were not directed solely at bonesetters. In 1606 the physician John Cotta made an indiscriminate attack upon 'empirics, women, fugitives, jugglers, quacksalvers, practising surgeons and apothecaries, practicers by spells, witches, wizards, the servants of physicians'.⁷⁰ His provocative inclusion of surgeons and apothecaries alongside quacks and witches puts similar attacks upon bonesetters into perspective. After all, Anthony à Wood turned to a bonesetter because a more orthodox practitioner had failed him. Thomas provides a balanced opinion: 'In the past such genuine bonesetters played an important role in the community, especially in rural districts, for the regular doctors regarded them as auxiliaries in a field in which they themselves had little interest and less knowledge'.⁷¹ In some places coexistence is evident: the bonesetter Ray Wilson was granted his freedom to practise in York, where 'the Ordinances of the Barber-Surgeons ... stated that people must always consult a licensed surgeon first for treatment, with the exception of bonesetters'.⁷²

Bonesetters and their clients

The clients ranged from paupers and naval casualties to royalty. Marland argues that if bonesetters were successful in treating the parish poor, other people must have used them too: 'it can be assumed that fringe practitioners, with their advantages of cheapness, easy access and familiarity, were also resorted to by many of the poor who were not in receipt of poor relief'.⁷³ Middling sorts such as Ralph Josselin and Anthony à Wood also made use of bonesetters.

George II showed his appreciation of Joshua Ward for curing his thumb: 'as a result of the king's recovery he was granted an apartment in the almonry office in Whitehall and prospered', doubtless to the annoyance of the court physicians.⁷⁴ West states that 'the clients of George and John Taylor of Rochdale were reputed to include on occasion aristocracy, as well as common, local folk', and John Taylor was reputed to have travelled from Lancashire to Cheltenham to treat the duchess of Ancaster.⁷⁵ The incidence of riding accidents among the landed gentry meant that they too used bonesetters, 'because the bone setter catered particularly for ... "men of the hunting field" (a group among which richer potential patients were likely to be over-represented)'.⁷⁶ Indeed, Sally Mapp settled at Epsom precisely because 'the horse-racing there produced a useful crop of mangled bones'.⁷⁷

In 1736 the wealthy Catherine Verney wrote that 'Mrs Philly Isted is come up to Mrs Matt [sic] the bonesetter. The woman says she has put in severall bones of her foot and was to set her backbone'.⁷⁸ In fact, Sally Mapp's clientele included rich Londoners, though she eventually died in poverty. Her obituary in *The London Daily Post* (22 December 1737) noted that 'Died last week, at her lodgings, near the Seven Dials, the much-talked of Mrs Mapp, the bone-setter ... driving a profitable trade at home, she used to drive to town once a week, in a coach-and-four, and return again bearing the crutches of her patients as trophies of honour'.⁷⁹ Elliott quotes the *Gentleman's Magazine* on Mrs Mapp's success with her clients: 'She has cured persons above twenty years disabled and has given incredible relief in the most difficult cases. The lame come daily to her and she gets a great deal of money, persons of quality who attend her operations making her presents'. Her practice moved into Pall Mall and she was

successful in curing a niece of Sir Hans Sloane. Indeed, 'the authorities of Epsom offered [her] £100 a year to remain in the neighborhood'.⁸⁰

To some extent the social and economic status of successful bonesetters is itself an indicator of the respect with which they were regarded. For example, in late-sixteenth century Norwich Richard Durrant became sufficiently prosperous to treat paupers free of charge—he eventually became warden of the barber-surgeons company and stood surety to licences relating to the retailing of drink.⁸¹ Two hundred years later, the Taylors of Lancashire and the Thomas family of Anglesey and Liverpool became widely respected members of the community, while in his will of 1750 Robert Ledbrook of Northampton bequeathed land and £250 in cash, and James Breach left property in Reading and several hundred pounds in cash.

A bonesetting profession?

A key question is whether bonesetters may be termed professional medical practitioners. They did not share the formal education of physicians or the guild apprenticeships of surgeons and apothecaries although, as has been seen, there were similarities between their practical family training and practice and that of some orthodox practitioners. Even those bonesetters who pursued a parallel career had their counterparts in the orthodox medical profession. Rosemary O'Day lists the attributes of a 'profession' as vocation, justice, learning and service, arguing that 'there is sufficient evidence of medics offering conscientious medical care and striving to find the best treatment for their patients at a reasonable cost: doctors such as the Symcotts had a socially varied patient list and seem often to have fitted the cost of the treatment to the purse of the individual'.⁸² Wilfrid Prest echoes this, drawing attention to the diversity of the clients served by early modern professions, whereby they could encompass 'hobnailed boors and sheepskin country clowns' as well as the wealthy.⁸³ If these were the characteristics of professional practice then some bonesetters certainly had them. Thomas says of the Anglesey bonesetters that they 'felt a vocation', while Corfield emphasises the 'mystery' of the work undertaken by professionals who had 'exclusive access to knowledge ... sharing a secret, known to the few'.⁸⁴ This certainly applied to bonesetters. Indeed, Eric Trimmer goes so far as to write of 'a whole paramedical profession of bonesetters'.⁸⁵ Bonesetters, like any medical practitioners, would not retain their clients if they were abusive, neglected the patient or proved obviously ineffective. Furthermore, as Roy Porter states, 'lay opinion, as crystallized in the *Gentleman's Magazine* and similar periodicals, did not view medical practice in terms of any 'great divide' between practitioners proper and improper, official and marginal, legal and twilight, elite and vulgar'.⁸⁶

Another way by which early modern society recognised the worth of bonesetters was by licensing their practice. It has been shown that towns such as Norwich did this, but David Harley explains that this was by no means unusual: 'viewed as a regulatory system, the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts in England looks rather haphazard but its greatest strength was its flexibility in recognising a wide range of skills, from the village midwife, herbalist or bonesetter to the non-graduate physician'.⁸⁷ This is endorsed by Ian Mortimer, who describes the pragmatic ecclesiastical licensing of 'procedural specialists whose work came under the umbrella of surgery, such as bonesetters'.⁸⁸

The question of what constituted professionalism is not easy to resolve. Porter documented the remarkable diversity of practice within the medical profession, and in early modern England the professions, perhaps particularly that of medicine, were

fluid and experienced uneven development. Corfield states that 'throughout the period, the professions themselves were not rigidly defined or uniformly organised'.⁸⁹ Without the fixed boundaries that later became normal, it may be permissible to regard bonesetters as professional practitioners, albeit of a very specialised nature. They were widely distributed, treated clients from all social classes and had some similarities in their practice with orthodox medics. More women appear to have worked as bonesetters than was the case with other medical practitioners. Bonesetters have been somewhat neglected by historians, and further investigation using diaries, personal correspondence and particularly parish records would provide a more detailed picture of their employment in early modern England.

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Themes in local history

Liquor licensing and the local historian: inns and alehouses 1753-1828

PAUL JENNINGS

In a previous article in *The Local Historian*, I examined a particularly full set of records generated as part of the administration of the liquor licensing system, those stemming from the Licensing Act of 1904.¹ In this second article, I look at a similarly rich survival, the records relating to the licensing of inns and alehouses in the second half of the eighteenth and the first quarter of the nineteenth centuries. The liquor licensing system may be defined simply as that body of regulation concerned with the consumption of alcoholic drinks and the public places in particular in which they are enjoyed. I begin by tracing the historical development of that system down to, and including, the important Act of 1753. The operation of the system from that date is then examined, ending with an equally significant piece of licensing legislation, the consolidating statute of 1828. The location and contents of the records themselves are then described. There follows an attempt to portray how the system worked, giving flesh, so to speak, to the records as we encounter the individuals taking part and



1 The Kings Arms Inn, Great Horton, near Bradford: this building dates from 1739, when it was a small village inn, but was photographed here at the beginning of the twentieth century, by which time the erstwhile village had been absorbed into the city of Bradford.

conveying some impression of the diversity of actual practice. Finally, there is analysis of some of the ways in which the material can be used in a range of historical enquiries, relating to particular inns or alehouses and their keepers, to specific places, or to more general questions in social, economic, administrative, legal and, of course, licensing history.

The development of licensing

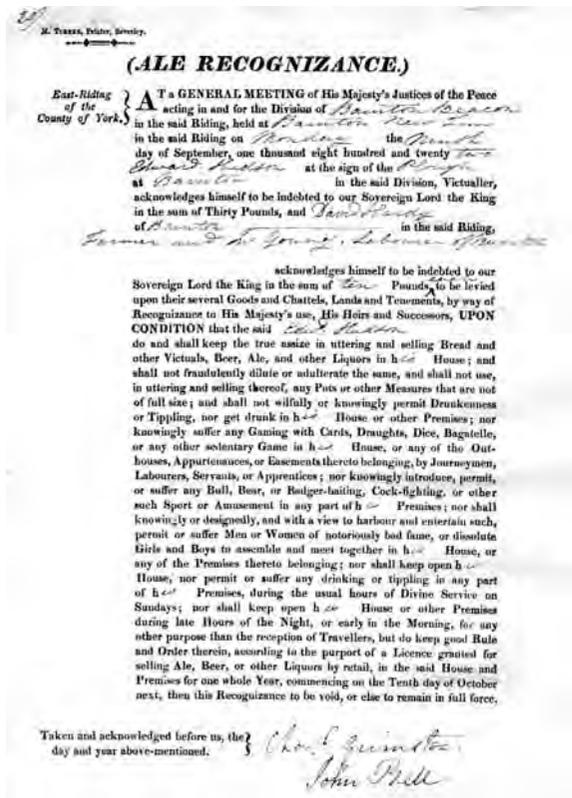
The modern licensing system had a lengthy prehistory; precedents for later regulation can be found from the Anglo Saxon period onwards. Rules covered the right to trade in alcoholic drinks and the number of drinking places; the location, designation and construction of premises; permitted opening times; the character and conduct of the retailer; the behaviour of customers; and the supply, cost and quality of the drink sold and consumed. Some of this regulation applied to the whole country, such as the thirteenth-century 'assize of ale' governing its price. More typically it was localised, like a mid-fourteenth century order to Bristol's ale-sellers to display a sign, or a Nottingham requirement of the mid-fifteenth century that they close at 9pm.² Local initiatives like those continued to be taken, but from the late fifteenth century and over the course of the succeeding century and a half, a national regulatory framework was put together in a long series of statutes, royal proclamations and government orders. In 1495, a statute concerned with 'vagabonds and beggars' gave to local justices of the peace the power to suppress alehouses and to take surety of their proprietors for good behaviour.³

However, it was a measure of 1552, requiring 'common Alehouses and Other Houses called Tipling houses' to be licensed by the justices, which is generally regarded as the first licensing act.⁴ It did not make clear the distinction between the two types of house which it named. In practice they may have been synonymous, but it seems likely that tiplers (or *tipplers* and *tippling houses* as it is often given) merely sold drink, whereas alehouse keepers might brew their own on the premises. That would seem to be the import of a reminder to the tiplers of York by the city's corporation in 1594 that they were not permitted to brew. Similarly, at a licensing sessions in the West Riding of Yorkshire in 1723, the tiplers were distinguished from the brewers.⁵ In any event, the term as applied to a drinking place seems to have fallen out of use by this time, except in the sometimes rather archaic language of the formal sessions (see fig.4). It survived as a term for prolonged or habitual drinking and for much longer as 'tipple'—a generic term for strong drink.

The 1552 measure and succeeding government orders and royal proclamations arose from the hostility of the upper ranks in society to the growing number of alehouses, the basic everyday drinking place of the great mass of the common people. They were seen as a source of disorder. Religious and moral concerns focused on the drunkenness and immorality alleged to abound in them, and the threat they posed as an alternative social centre to the church. Wider contemporary fears over the perceived growing ranks of the poor naturally found a focus on the alehouse. The process was also driven forward by the desire of central government to exert its authority in the localities and to raise revenue.⁶ There is not space here to chart the complex process itself; I refer the reader to an earlier study by Sidney and Beatrice Webb of the subject, but particularly to the more recent work of Peter Clark and Judith Hunter.⁷

However, the key features of the resulting system which should be noted are as follows. From being confined to ale- and tipling-houses, the obligation to obtain a justices'

licence was soon extended to inns, as the sale of beer was an essential part of their hospitality function, providing as they did food, drink and accommodation to travellers.⁸ This brought under the control of the justices the two main types of drinking place, leaving the keepers of taverns, which specialised in the sale of wine, to trade either under licence from the Crown, or as a right by virtue of being freemen of the London Vintners' Company.⁹ The justices' authority was further extended over the sale of spirits, following widespread concern over the indiscriminate and heavy consumption of gin in the early part of the eighteenth century, the so-called Gin Craze. A succession of statutes were enacted, seeking to confine its sale to premises licensed by the justices, with those of 1743 and 1744 appearing finally to have the desired effect—statistics for the number of spirit licences taken out from the Excise, which required the production of a justices' licence, commence in the latter year.¹⁰ Although inns, alehouses, taverns and houses specialising in selling spirits were thus distinct establishments, it should be noted that increasingly over the course of the eighteenth century the term public house came to be used for all types of drinking place. In practice, distinctions were not always clear. A more substantial alehouse might provide the services of an inn—over the course of the century, many alehouses did so, often upgrading their premises (see figs.1 and 7).¹¹ The other important development concerned the grant of the licence. Over time, this became confined to specific divisions within counties, rather than justices granting one to any retailer who applied, and limited to special licensing (or brewster) sessions. This common practice was put on a statutory footing in 1729.¹² This, then, was the system in place by the middle of the eighteenth century. Licences to sell beer and spirits were issued at the discretion of local justices of the peace for specific divisions at annual licensing sessions.



The Acts of 1753 and 1828

A further Act of 1753 restated this well-established system, but with some important modifications designed, as its preamble put it, to deal more effectively with 'the Abuses and Disorders frequently done and committed' in drinking places, together with provisions to deal more effectively with unlicensed retailing.¹³ It is with the former that I am concerned here. The following were in this respect the measure's key provisions:

2 Recognizance of 1822 for Edward Hudson, licensee of the Plough at Bainton in the Bainton Beacon division of the East Riding of Yorkshire
(courtesy of East Riding Archives and Local Studies [ERALS] QDT 2/1/1).

- All applicants for a licence had to enter into recognizances, or bonds, in the sum of £10, that they would maintain 'good Order and Rule' in their houses. They had also to provide either one or two sureties to the same amount. If, due to sickness, infirmity or other reasonable cause, the applicant could not attend in person, the licence could be granted to two sureties of £10 each.
- Licences were to be issued at set times, for one year only, with notice of same to be given in advance to innkeepers and alehouse keepers within the division.
- New applicants for a licence now had to produce a certificate that they were 'of good Fame and of sober Life and Conversation', signed by the local clergyman, the majority of churchwardens and overseers, or else three or four 'reputable and substantial householders'.
- Whereas under the original statute of 1552, recognizances had to be certified at the next quarter sessions, the clerks of the peace now had also to keep a calendar, or register, of them.
- Where a justice adjudged the recognizance to be forfeit and a jury at quarter sessions found the licensee guilty, then the recognizance could be estreated and the licensee prohibited from trading for three years.

This system remained largely unchanged for some three-quarters of a century. In 1792 the sale of wine was brought under the control of the justices, although the special position of the London Vintners' Company was preserved.¹⁴ Then, particularly from the beginning of the new century, the licensing system came in for growing criticism. This focused on allegations of abuse by magistrates in their grant or refusal of licences and concerns over the growth of brewers' control of public houses. The agitation was strongest in London, where in response parliament set up a special enquiry to look at licensing as part of its investigations into the policing of the capital. Its report was critical of both magistrates and brewers. It found 'strong evidence' of 'improper prejudice' in the minds of some of the former, and that the monopoly of the latter over public houses was 'very prejudicial to the community at large'.¹⁵ Both issues were linked in a movement to free up the licensing system, which was connected in turn with a wider movement towards free trade.¹⁶ The threat of disorder in public houses was also a recurring concern. A temporary measure of 1822 sought to address this and made some minor amendments to the system. In particular, the amount of the recognizance was raised to £30 and a standard printed version was produced (figure 2) with greatly expanded conditions including newer concerns over blood sports like bull, bear or badger baiting and cock fighting, which were now prohibited, although none were actually illegal at this time.¹⁷

But the most important measure was the consolidating statute of 1828, sponsored by Thomas Estcourt, the Tory MP for Oxford University, and usually bearing his name. This did embody some of the suggestions of the reformers in limiting the discretion of magistrates and opening up the trade of publican. The requirement for the licence-holder to enter into recognizances and find sureties was removed, as was that for new applicants to obtain character certificates. According to Estcourt, these were impositions which 'had been found vexatious to the parties, and of no security to the public'.¹⁸ Provision was made for special sessions for the transfer of licences, rather than at petty sessions, for greater openness in the process. A right of appeal was introduced from the local licensing magistrates to quarter sessions. The licence itself, granted for one year, was subject to the conditions specified on it, covering

drunkenness and disorder, unlawful games, adulteration and illegal measures. Closing during church services was also specified. The Act repealed a mass of previous legislation and remained the basis of licensing law for almost a century, until a further consolidating statute in 1910.¹⁹

The records

The administrative system here outlined produced a number of documents:

- certificates of good character for new applicants
- the licence issued by the magistrates
- in addition to the licence to trade from the magistrates, publicans also had to purchase a second licence from the Excise to sell spirits. From 1808 this requirement was extended to beer.²⁰
- the recognizances entered into by innkeepers and alehouse keepers
- the calendars, or registers, of licence holders and their sureties kept by the clerks to the peace

The last two sets of documents in particular have survived in considerable numbers for the period. Although recognizances were actually introduced as part of the legislation of 1552, it is from the passing of the 1753 Act that their survival becomes more common. The 1552 Act also required that the recognizances be certified at the next quarter sessions, and some records of this do survive, but it was the specification that a register be kept which, although not universally obeyed by clerks of the peace, has left for us a large body of records. As we saw, the legislation of 1828 did away with recognizances and as no specific mention was made of it, the requirement to keep a register of licence holders seems also to have lapsed. Certainly they do not appear to have been kept from this date until further licensing legislation in 1872, producing a frustrating gap in records for the researcher.

The most convenient guide to the records is *Victuallers' Licences: Records for Family and Local Historians*.²¹ This provides an introduction to the documents, a chronology of key statutes, and a useful glossary of terms, together with a listing by county. The material is to be found in the records of quarter sessions. An example of a listing from the guide covering the East Riding of Yorkshire is reproduced as figure 3, clearly identifying the recognizances and the registers. The guide notes the difficulties which the records present, including the variations introduced by the manner in which they are catalogued by the different record offices or the way in which they completed the compilers' questionnaire. In many counties records have not been listed in detail and thus without personal inspection it is not possible to know whether they contain relevant material. Accordingly, published and typescript calendars and indexes should be consulted where available.²² The published guide to the quarter sessions records of the West Riding of Yorkshire, for example, details the divisions (wapentakes in the north of England) for which recognizances and registers survive.²³

Yorkshire: East Riding continued

East Riding of Yorkshire Archive Office, Beverley.

1552-1828: Inns and Alehouses

East Riding Quarter Sessions records
Sessions Order Books, occasional refs 1647-1651,
1708-1828; Reg of recogs on granting lics to keep
inns or victualling houses 1822-28; Alehouse
recogs, lists of lics, and certs of ministers and
inhabitants supporting applications. Arranged
according to Divs (incomplete) 1754-1826.

Borough records

Beverley: Possible scattered references.
Hedon: Alehouse recognizances 1758-1828;
Register of innkeepers' licences 1757-1873.

3 Entry for the East Riding of Yorkshire from *Victuallers' Licences* (courtesy of The Family History Partnership).

Catalogues may also be searched online using the A2A database, the English strand of the UK archives network, but the online catalogues of individual record offices must also be examined.²⁴ There are also some published transcripts of the records, such as that for Nottingham produced by the Nottinghamshire Family History Society, which is listed along with others in *Victuallers' Licences*.²⁵ There are undoubtedly more (for example, a transcript covering the wapentakes of Staincliffe and Ewcross in the West Riding of Yorkshire, produced by the Keighley and District Family History Society)²⁶ and their number is likely to grow.



4 Character certificate of 1780 for Samuel Towse to trade at Great Driffield (courtesy of ERALS, QDT 2/1/156).

Licensing in practice

The following discussion is based upon a detailed examination of the records for all three Ridings of Yorkshire, together with those for some of the boroughs within their boundaries, and for parts of the county of Lancashire. It also uses the transcripts noted above. The records are set in the context of actual practice as experienced by individuals, conveying something of the resulting diversity which the researcher may encounter.

All existing innkeepers and alehouse keepers, together with new applicants, were required to attend the annual licensing, or brewster, sessions. It was the duty of the local constable to give notice to them to that effect. For example, John Carrington, who was the chief constable for seven parishes in Hertfordshire, records doing so in his diary a few days before the licensing day at St Albans in

1803.²⁷ Another diarist, Robert Sharp of South Cave in the East Riding of Yorkshire, a deputy constable there, similarly records giving due notice to the local publicans of the sessions at Beverley in 1826.²⁸ The 1753 Act prescribed that they should be held on 1 September, or within twenty days, except that corporate towns and cities might set their own dates. Nottingham, for example, held them in May, while at Richmond in Yorkshire they were at Easter.²⁹

There was a huge range in the numbers of publicans within individual licensing districts. By the early nineteenth century the Surrey division of Southwark and the east half hundred of Brixton, covering a large area of the capital south of the Thames, contained well over 800 licensees and accordingly spread the business over three days. Similarly, the Tower division of Middlesex dealt with almost a thousand applicants. The Manchester division of the Hundred of Salford had over 400 licensees; the Bolton division around 200. At the other end of the scale, the little borough of Hedon in the East Riding of Yorkshire processed annually just eight or nine individuals.³⁰ The sessions might be held at some public building, like the Guildhall in Nottingham or the Town Hall at St Albans, but it was quite common for an inn to provide the venue. Typical were the sessions for the division covering the Hundred of Lonsdale south of the sands [Morecambe Bay] in Lancashire, which we find, for example, in 1769 at the

Sun in Lancaster or at the *White Hart* in that town in 1801.³¹ They might therefore be convivial affairs. The magistrates of the Holborn division of Middlesex in the 1820s, for example, deliberated in a room at the Freemasons' Tavern in Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, where they were provided with refreshments of tea, coffee, wine and cold meat.³²

Two justices were required for the sessions, although more did attend, and the records often give their names, and in addition they signed the documents. At the 1771 sessions for the wapentake of Claro in the West Riding of Yorkshire, held at Knaresborough, five magistrates, Andrew Wilkinson, Charles Slingsby, Oliver Coghill and two clerical justices, Thomas Collins and Richard Thompson, attended to deal with over 300 publicans.³³ The chief business was the issuing of licences to existing publicans and new applicants and the recording of their recognizances and sureties by the clerk to the justices. Originally, licence and recognizance might be hand-written documents, but increasingly printed forms came to be used. At Richmond, for example, the conditions attaching to the licence were also printed: that the holder should permit no unlawful games on the premises but 'behave himself in all Things according to the Laws and Statutes of the Realm'.³⁴ The recognizance essentially bound the publican to the same conditions. Elsewhere, the conditions were similarly straightforward. The Manchester division, typically, required that the persons 'keep good Rule and order ... and behave in all things according to the law'.

Borough of Hedon } Innkeepers Licences granted by his Majesty's Justices of the peace for the Borough of Hedon at a meeting held for that purpose the 22nd of September 1757.

Ann Hudson	Old sun - Austingate
Mary Worlington	Dog & Duck - Marketplace
Peter Lock	Marketplace
James Fleming	Austingate
James Watson	Three Tuns - Austingate
Thomas Ding	Marketplace
Thomas Hoo	Kingshead - Southergate
William Thorp	Marketplace
Thomas Robinson	Southergate
William Burdett	Old market hill

5 Innkeepers' licences granted in the Borough of Hedon, bound book showing the first entry of 1757 (courtesy of ERALS, DDHE /16/64).

These conditions became more elaborate. By the early nineteenth century at the latest, those for Manchester included, in addition to the usual good order and rule, no unlawful games or disorders, that no mountebank, quack doctor or unlicensed showman perform or exhibit, no bullbaiting or horseracing take place, no drinking or tipping on the Lord's Day, no sale during divine service, no drinking after 8 pm on Sunday or 9 pm any other day between Michaelmas to Lady Day (9 pm and 10 pm respectively for the rest of the year) and that no unlawful societies be allowed, comprising clubs for such as money, cloth, clocks and watches.³⁵ The statute of 1822, as we saw, prescribed the most elaborate conditions of all (see fig.2). New applicants had further to provide a character certificate. From the 1820s for a licence at Richmond, for example, it was attested for John Rushforth by the minister, churchwardens and others that he had lived at Catterick Bridge in the capacity of Boot Boy for sixteen years as a sober, honest man.³⁶ An earlier example, from Great Driffild in the East Riding, is reproduced as figure 4. But there seems also to have been the possibility of more informal approaches. In Hertfordshire, John Carrington noted how he interceded with one of the magistrates to facilitate the grant of a licence. He was clearly successful, as there is later reference to his dining at the man's newly-built public house at Hartford Heath. Carrington was similarly helpful in the case of a publican threatened with the loss of his licence.³⁷ Refusal of a licence might be mentioned in the records. For example, at the sessions for the Hunsley Beacon division of the East Riding of Yorkshire in 1745, there is a note that one John Shoemsmith of Sculcoates, adjoining Hull, was not to have a licence, having previously kept a disorderly house.³⁸ This was, however, an isolated example in the records examined, although more may exist elsewhere.

Finally, the clerk to the justices kept (or was meant to keep) a calendar, or register of the licensees and their sureties. This document might simply give their names, with no indication of the name of the inn or alehouse to which the licence applied. Other registers did provide that information, such as those for the Bolton and Manchester divisions in Salford Hundred. That of 1771 for Bolton, for example, includes the town's famous *Man and Scythe*, while that for Manchester for 1802, in addition to the more common public-house names, lists a *Flower Pot*, an *Elephant* and a *Grecian's Head*.³⁹ These particular registers consist of large single sheets or sometimes rolls of parchment, but elsewhere a book was used. This was the case for Hedon, for example, beginning in 1757 (see fig.5).⁴⁰ This practice seems to have become more common after the legislation of 1822. Such was the case for both the East and North Ridings of Yorkshire. In the latter, for example, two volumes cover the whole riding for the years 1822 to 1829. Each entry gives the township in which the premises were located, the name of the person licensed, the name of the house and the sureties' names, place of residence, occupation and the sums in which they were bound.⁴¹ For the former, see figure 6.

While by no means universal, the citing of the sureties' occupations is a useful further piece of information. The listings for the borough of Nottingham, for example, also provide it. To take just one example, from 1756, the sureties for George Dakeyne, who kept the *Dog and Bear* in Bridlesmithgate were William Baillie, barber and William Coppock, framework knitter.⁴² Finally, individual registers may provide a variety of further items of information. For example, in 1771 for the Claro division of the West Riding of Yorkshire, whose sessions were held at Knaresborough, it was noted that of the 41 women granted licences, 36 were widows. It was further recorded of the total 302 licensees, those who were 'old' (2), 'very old' (4), 'old and infirm' (3), 'old and lame' (2), 'lame' or 'very lame' (8 and 3), or 'badly' and 'very badly' (2 and 1), plus one 'ill with the palsy and very old' and one simply '80 years old'. Some were recorded as absent and two as 'abroad'.⁴³ Similarly, the Nottingham records provided details of

were known. Based on an estimate that one-third of alehouse keepers did *not* brew their own beer, Peter Clark has suggested a figure of as many as 58,000 alehouses. This works out at roughly one for every 90 of the country's inhabitants, comparable with a contemporary figure for London in the 1730s of almost 6,000 alehouses, or one for every 100 of its citizens.⁴⁹ For inns, an estimate by John Chartres gives between 6,000 and 7,000 establishments at the beginning of the eighteenth century.⁵⁰ Since the two types of drinking place overlap in the two sources for our estimates, a figure of 60,000 in total around 1700 is an appropriate approximation. Assuming that to be the case, there was a reduction of over 10,000 in the number of inns and alehouses during the eighteenth century. However, that total, having remained virtually stationary from 1810, rose by 1829 to 50,442 licences.⁵¹

Within this overall context, and especially from 1753, the local licensing evidence permits a more detailed picture to be drawn. Taking Clark's researches and my own,⁵² the following outline may be offered. In rural areas, the overall pattern is one of contraction. This was true of rural north Lancashire, and the East and North Ridings of Yorkshire. In the North Lonsdale division of Lancashire [north of Morecambe Bay], the number of licences granted fell from 113 in 1771 to 87 thirty years later, before rising to 96 in 1828. In Lonsdale south of the sands, which excluded Lancaster, the 77 licences of 1769 contracted to 66 by 1801, but had crept up one by 1828. Taking the whole East Riding, the number of licences fell from over 600 in the 1750s, to a little over 500 by the beginning of the 1770s and continued to fall thereafter before recovering to 485 in 1828. In the North Riding, the fall was from over 1,300 at the close of the 1770s to a little over 1,000 by 1801 and continued falling, before similarly recovering to 1,014 in 1828.⁵³ For Kent, Essex, Shropshire, Leicestershire, Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire, Clark found a similar downward trend from the mid-eighteenth century. Only in eastern counties, such as Cambridgeshire and parts of Lincolnshire, was there rather more stability. Not until the very end of the period in some counties, for example Kent, was there the reversal of this downward movement also seen in Lancashire or Yorkshire.

Turning now to towns, in the capital Clark also found a decline and an eventual recovery in the 1820s, although it is difficult to compare geographical areas. The estimate for the 1730s, cited above, produced an astonishing figure of nearly 16,000 establishments selling drink, but more than half of those were more or less transitory gin-sellers. At the end of the period in 1831, the recently formed metropolitan police district contained just over 4,000 premises.⁵⁴ In the older provincial towns, Clark found some expansion in the 1730s and 1740s but later in the century numbers were also either static or falling. In Bristol the number of inns and alehouses peaked in 1760 at 592, fell to an annual average of 481 in the early 1770s and to below 400 in the new century. In York the peak year was earlier, in 1683, with 263 licences. This total fell through the eighteenth century to a low of 164 in 1795, before rising to 173 in 1822.⁵⁵ There was a similar trend, with some local variation, in smaller towns. Also in Yorkshire, the number of Richmond's public houses rose slightly from 40 in 1724 to 44 in 1752, before falling to 31 in 1774 and remaining virtually stationary thereafter. Ripon saw a rise from 36 in 1773 to 54 in 1785, before falling away to 41 in 1801 and 36 in 1826.⁵⁶

This pattern of decline or little change was replicated across the more rural parts of the county. Exceptions can sometimes be explained by the proximity of a growing town, as was the case with Sutton and Sculcoates close to Hull, where in both cases numbers more than doubled from the mid-eighteenth century to the late 1820s. It is in the growing towns that we find expansion. In Manchester township the number of

licences issued rose from 164 in 1773 to 223 in 1802 and to 436 in 1828-1829 and growth was seen in other Lancashire towns such as Bury or Bolton. In the similarly industrialising West Riding we see the same trend, with growth in Bradford, Huddersfield and Sheffield. But this growth notably failed to keep pace with the rise of their populations. In Manchester, for example, the ratio of licences to inhabitants declined from around one for every 134 in 1773 to one for every 326 by the close of the 1820s; in Bradford over roughly the same period the fall was from one for every 164 inhabitants to one for over 550, or, to put it another way, a 50 per cent rise in the number of public houses over half a century was dwarfed by a population growth of over 410 per cent.⁵⁷

It can be seen from this brief outline of trends that there is an important regional and local dimension to the distribution of licences. It is at this level that one must work to discern explanations for those trends. Sometimes the answer lies fairly obviously in the growth of the town, as we have seen. Equally the answer might lie in decline. The contraction of Bridlington as a port in the late eighteenth century saw numbers fall from 45 in 1754 to 36 by 1798, but within that overall total the real fall was in the old town; numbers at Bridlington Quay remained the same as it developed an alternative role as a seaside resort. But that lack of increase in numbers was in turn offset by improvement in the scale and quality of existing premises to cater for the new holiday patrons, as the *New Inn*, for example, was improved from 1805 by its new proprietor, a former butler. It was also offset by the replacement of older alehouses with new, more elaborate, premises, as also in 1805 when a private residence was converted to the *George Hotel*.⁵⁸ This pattern was found in my own study of Bradford, a West Riding market and textile town which was emerging as a major industrial centre. The number of public houses rose, although lagging markedly behind population growth. Existing inns were rebuilt, as the *Sun* and the *Bowling Green* at mid-century to cater for increased passenger traffic after the roads were turnpiked. As older alehouses closed, new, more spacious, premises were opened: thus, Joseph Taylor moved from the *Golden Fleece* in Kirkgate in 1786 to a 'large new inn' adjoining a proposed new market place.⁵⁹

Peter Clark has suggested explanations for differences in the number of alehouses in rural areas, based on two main types of farming country—that is, between wood-pasture areas and sheep-corn districts. In Northamptonshire, for example, the former were areas of rural industry, heavy immigration and fairly lax magisterial controls and greater numbers and density of alehouses, but in the latter the power of the local gentry was stronger and the economic order more polarised, so alehouses were fewer. A further explanation is based in the distinction between 'open' and 'closed' villages. The former, with many freeholders and relatively ineffective forms of local government, generally had rising population density and high immigration, while the latter were ruled by landowners keen to maintain demographic and social stability. The result was greater numbers of drinking places in 'open' villages. Though the distinction between woodland-cum-pastoral and arable districts had become less important by 1800, that between 'open' and 'closed' parishes became more so as the power of landowners and farmers increased. Clark looked at a cross-section of Leicestershire settlements in the 1820s and found that nine 'closed' villages, with a total population of 1,349, had only two public houses, while a group of ten 'open' villages had 27 serving 7,692 inhabitants.⁶⁰

Another possible explanation for differences in licence numbers relates to the control of public houses by common brewers, the so-called tied-house system in which, by ownership, lease or some other means such as a loan, a publican was 'tied' to a particular brewery and its beer. Given the investment which public houses represented

to brewers and the need to maintain their reputation, it was essential that the licence should not be lost for any reason. Margaret Bird's researches in Norfolk suggest this process was at work there. William Hardy, the common brewer noted above, with a tied estate of public houses in the county, maintained close relations to this end with the local justices. As we saw, he customarily attended the brewster sessions alongside his retailers and their sureties, and later dined with the magistrates. Out of sessions, he or his son would visit the home of an individual justice if a change of publican necessitated a new licence. Thus he very rarely lost a licence through the regulatory system. And in Norfolk as a whole, an area of common brewer control of public houses rather than of independent brewing victuallers, the number of licences did not fall, but actually rose slightly in the late-eighteenth century.⁶¹



7 The Fox and Coney at South Cave, whose landlord Barnard Cook was the only one of the village's publicans who escaped the refusal of his licence at the 1827 brewster sessions. For Cook's entry in the register see figure 6. This small inn was built in 1739 (D. Neave ed. *South Cave: a market village community in the 18th and 19th centuries*, 1984) and photographed here in 1986 (author's collection).

Such research involves a much wider range of source material than the licensing records which are my main concern here. This is also true of licence reduction, as the records here outlined in fact rarely note it. But it undoubtedly took place, as the estimates of overall numbers and local evidence demonstrate. Landowners (as Peter Clark also shows) were active in this process. For example at Terling in Essex, the squire was complimented in 1768 by another local gentleman on the 'prudent and necessary regulations' observed in its last remaining alehouse.⁶² In the same period, at Kirkleatham, close to the Yorkshire coast near Guisborough, the landowner and magistrate Charles Turner replaced 'a collection of little blackguard alehouses, which not only encouraged idleness and drunkenness among all the villagers, but were constant receptacles of smugglers', with two 'handsome inns': one in the village itself

and one at his new bathing resort.⁶³ Local clergymen were also active. In 1766, the rector of Newport Pagnell, informed of the habit of his younger parishioners of frequenting 'Ale-Houses & Places of Ill Fame', personally intervened with the justices to stop their licences.⁶⁴

At the same time, there was contemporary criticism of the apparent laxity of the justices in not refusing licences to badly-run houses. This was emphasised by the Webbs in their study of licensing, characterising the period from the late-seventeenth century to the 1780s as one 'of extreme laxness', when the suppression of alehouses by the justices 'went entirely into desuetude'. This was reversed, according to the Webbs, under the influence of the movement for the reformation of manners, exemplified by the King's proclamation of 1787, which inaugurated a period of 'regulation and suppression'.⁶⁵ Certainly one finds examples of increased regulation, seen for example in the greater detail of the conditions on the recognizances that we have noted, but the statistical picture does not support a major change of policy.

There may also have been a certain amount of rhetoric rather than action. Robert Sharp, the diarist from South Cave in the East Riding, recounts how at the 1827 brewster sessions all but one of the village's publicans had their licence refused, apparently at the instigation of the 'meddling parson'. The parson, however, denied this charge, although the justices gave the landlords to understand that it was indeed his intervention that was responsible. At any event, the licences were subsequently all renewed (see fig.7).⁶⁶ The charge of laxity continued to be levelled, particularly in London. The parliamentary committee looking at licensing there found that the certificate of character was meaningless, no recognizances were ever estreated, and that in some districts there did 'appear to have been a general indifference ... to the existence of disorderly houses'.⁶⁷ Statistical evidence suggests that refusal was not common. In the Tower division, in the five years 1817 to 1821, just 22 were refused among over 4,700 granted. Similarly in Holborn, 24 were refused compared to over 3,700 granted. In the St George's, Hanover Square, division six were refused but over 900 granted. In one of the six, the Duke of York in Shepherd Street, a licence was refused in 1818 to Matilda Shailer, but granted there two years later to one Lawrence Tulley.⁶⁸ This concern was mirrored, however, by that over the alleged improper use of their discretion over new licences noted earlier in this article.

From the numbers of licences, I return now to the licensing records and the licence holders and their sureties. Women were a significant minority of innkeepers and alehouse keepers. In Bradford, for example, in six years for which evidence was available between 1771 and 1827, the proportion of women varied from a tenth to a fifth of the total licensed. The majority of them were widows, as the records often specify. For the Agbrigg division of the West Riding in 1771, the 55 women (14 per cent of the total licensees) included no fewer than 52 widows, with just three 'singlewomen'. It is also possible to plot licensees' time in the trade locally. In Bradford, over the five years from 1773 to 1778, 57.1 per cent of licence holders remained in the trade there, which rises to 67.3 per cent if one includes a widow continuing the business after the death of her husband. At the close of the period, in the five years from 1822 to 1827, 72.4 per cent so remained.⁶⁹ And as we saw above, occasionally we have information on their physical condition.

Turning to the sureties, a range of occupations can be found. Those for mid-eighteenth century Nottingham included butchers, bakers, barbers, cordwainers and framework knitters but also a schoolmaster, surgeon, trumpeter, dealer in mustard and keeper of the house of correction. But it was also common for licensees to act as sureties for each other. In 1767, 1768 and 1769 the entire body of Nottingham publicans acted in this way: 'And the said Victuallers having Licenses were bound in the said Recognizances by three at once who were alternately Sureties one for another'. Also in Nottingham, many were

friends or relations of the landlord and some signed for the same public house over several years.⁷⁰ It was also common for other branches of the drink trade to act. In Bradford in 1827 a wine and spirit merchant did so for thirteen publicans and a brewer for another three, accounting together for almost a third of the licensees in the town.⁷¹ In this way it is possible to construct a detailed picture of the structure of the drink trade in a given locality.

Conclusion

We thus find, as in my previous article, how important it is to appreciate the significance of locality. Licensing legislation covered the whole country, but its effects were different according to local circumstances. Understanding those circumstances gives us insights into the individual histories of places, but also shows the way to fresh perspectives and new questions in a wide range of historical enquiries.

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Opinion: ‘No longer the 1999 show’: the Sheerans, postmodernism and local history in the twenty-first century

MARK SMITH

‘The reports of my death are greatly exaggerated’ (Mark Twain)

Regular readers of this journal need no reminder that in 1999 George and Yanina Sheeran published an article in *The Local Historian* advocating a closer and more active engagement between local historians and recent developments in historical theory—especially those developments usually classified under the heading of ‘postmodernism’.¹ They themselves had attempted to lead the way, laying the groundwork for such an engagement in an article published in the previous year in the recently-established postmodernist-leaning journal *Rethinking History*.² This call proved controversial in local history circles,³ and the Sheerans are correct in asserting that such an engagement has been more enthusiastically pursued elsewhere in the historical profession.⁴ Especially when shorn of the more exaggerated conclusions of postmodern theorists and their most enthusiastic historical acolytes, the benefits of at least some of the insights and techniques of postmodernism have been quite widely received. Historians have been newly reminded, for example of the importance of paying close attention to the language in their sources, the ‘discourses’ or messages that they contain and the often hidden social and political content of both the sources and the history that is written from them. The tendency of postmodern writings to dethrone ‘grand narratives’ (such as the ‘formation of the nation state’, ‘class struggle’ or ‘progress’) as central organising concepts can free historians to write more nuanced accounts of phenomena in the past, to ask new questions, trace new trends and hear voices silenced in previous historiographies.⁵

It is certainly not impossible for local historians, whether in an academic or a more popular context, to achieve at least some level of fruitful engagement with these developments.⁶ For some years in my own department (Oxford University Department for Continuing Education), the attention of students has been drawn to the debates around postmodern history writing—and the Sheerans’ article has achieved virtual ‘set text’ status as part of the discussion. At postgraduate level increasing interest in, though not necessarily acceptance of, postmodern ideas and methods is noticeably on the increase. Indeed, a generous postmodernism might be welcomed by professional and amateur local historians alike as a potential friend. It legitimates the passion for telling stories about the past that lies close to the heart of much local history, and its acceptance of the validity of many genres of historical literature opens up space for popular as well as academic production. It is partly on these very grounds that I find myself doubtful about the Sheerans’ most recent intervention in the debate,⁷ and in offering reasons for my discomfort it seemed best to me to try to tackle their article in its own terms—to untangle some of the discourses it expresses and circulates.

‘No Longer the 1948 show’ is a relatively complex piece of writing constructed from a number of intertwined discourses, but for the purpose of the present discussion I propose to highlight three. The first is a *discourse of anxiety*. An attempt to express, recirculate and indeed increase anxiety, especially about the future of local history, is

fundamental to the article. ‘Nervousness’, ‘despondency’, ‘unease’ and ‘untenable’ all appear in the first paragraph alone. Local history, we are required to accept, has a serious problem—one that needs analysis, is susceptible to quantification (and is therefore by implication real) and one we certainly ought to worry about. This kind of discourse is, of course, common currency at times of economic crisis and can be found in many spheres of our common life, not least in our universities, but nonetheless it has a particular purchase in the minds of local historians. Ever since its parents abandoned it so they could pursue the exciting project of national (or nationalist) and transnational historiography, local history has been a rather insecure and anxious child. However marked its achievements, whether in engaging a vast amateur historical effort, in building bridges between academic and popular history via the world of extramural classes, or in the development of an academic local history culture, they have not been enough to generate approval for local history as a discrete subject. Even the creation of the Department of English Local History at the University of Leicester did not represent a return of unconditional affection from the mainstream academic historical establishment. Indeed the orientation towards seeking such approval seems as likely to generate anxiety as to allay it. As the Sheerans demonstrate, I think convincingly, this tendency to anxiety is magnified by the location of much academic local history effort in that other marginal and conditionally approved sector of university life—departments of continuing education or lifelong learning. This sector is going through a well-documented and genuine crisis, as a direct consequence of changes in government funding. This is undoubtedly a serious matter. It is not quite the same, however, as a perceived crisis in local history as a subject of academic activity; and the points of contact between the two need more careful delineation. Postmodern approaches to history point us not just to noticing the shape of discourses within a text but also to the purposes they serve. Historically, discourses of anxiety are very plentiful and they generally share a single end—an attempt to persuade an individual or group to choose a course of action they would otherwise be disinclined or at least be unlikely to follow (the invasion of a Middle Eastern country, for example). This is a point to which we need to return in relation to the discussion of the third discourse below.

The second major strand in the article is a *discourse of nostalgia*: for all the present insecurity of local history, it was not always thus. This strand generates some of the best writing in the piece, with its evocation of the happy united Britain of the four decades following the Second World War. Words and phrases like ‘justice’, ‘consensus’, ‘democratic’, and ‘social progress’ paint a picture around perhaps the most evocative phrase of all, ‘The Great Tradition’,⁸ Chris Duke’s description of the heritage of liberal adult education. This is of course a variety of discourse intimately familiar to many local historians—it might almost be Hoskins at his elegiac best. Through the Sheerans’ vicarage window we can see the ‘epitome of the gentle unravished English landscape’ inhabited by this happy band of workers by hand and by brain, watered by ‘The Great Tradition’ whose tributaries can be traced in nonconformist Christianity, socialism and welfare liberalism. In those days, the shades of Ruskin, Morris and Tawney smiled benignly on. But they do so no longer and especially since the year 1979 every single change to this landscape ‘has either uglified it or destroyed its meaning, or both’.⁹ As the Sheerans themselves have pointed out, discourses of nostalgia may have many purposes—social and political conservatism among them.¹⁰ Here, though, in the context of a running discourse of anxiety, the function is to heighten the contrast between our present predicament and the world we have lost. With all the finality of an enclosure act we are told our world has changed—the small farmers of lifelong learning academia will either have to pay the price of fencing and ditching or sell up, while the amateur historians risk losing what little sustenance they had previously been able to gain from the extramural common. Moreover, no amount of conservative

protest will avail us. Breaking the fences of accreditation or burning the ricks of research assessment might relieve our feelings but they are powerless to return the past or hold back the future. Our only practical recourse is a wholehearted embracing of the new modernity, which means, we are intended to infer, postmodernity.

The third and predominant discursive strand in the article is (perhaps inspired by Hoskins' portrayal of the local historian as a GP) closest to a *medical examination*. Having understood that our predicament cannot be remedied by liberal educational irredentism and having been taught that we ought to be worried about it, the next step is to have a proper examination of the nature of our disorder which we might expect to be followed by the preparation of a prescription for us to swallow. The analysis reveals a complex set of ills:

First, there is a measurable decline in local history provision—a diagnosis confirmed by an analysis of HESA statistics relating to courses in higher education.

Second there is a lack of academic credibility: local historians, sheltered in continuing education departments, have avoided the kind of scrutiny to which their more mainstream academic colleagues have routinely been subjected via the RAE [Research Assessment Exercise]. Moreover, despite the Sheerans' own urging, local history has avoided the kind of theoretical development prominent in other parts of the discipline of history—particularly significant as 'empiricist and largely narrative accounts of the history of place are failing to survive in today's academic world'.¹¹ Further, local history has failed to address many of the themes now prominent in national history writing, such as gender, ethnicity, and the empire ... Like the decline in provision, this lack of engagement too is measurable—in this case by a review of the contents of *The Local Historian* over the last decade. Crucially, it is precisely the 'empiricist study of locality' that 'limits the contribution that traditional local history can make in today's academy'.¹²

Third, there has been a failure of inclusiveness: despite its heritage of community engagement, local history is now largely the preserve of 'aging white adults' with black history and women's history increasingly being organised in parallel but separate groups.¹³

Fourth, there is a failure to respond to globalisation: the inter-disciplinarity formerly so characteristic of local history has not been pursued into cross-fertilisation with 'new geographies' pioneering alternative notions of place. The development of IT and the general internationalisation of the research community have not found a parallel in local history, though this might have enriched our activity by producing a comparative history of locality that reached across national boundaries. The requirement to achieve an 'international' level of excellence in order to gain the highest scores in the RAE is also a challenge to the study of localities, which must now reflect a global context to gain purchase in the academic mainstream.

Fifth, and finally, looking beyond the university sector, popular local history is far from immune from the disorders afflicting academic local history. The same issues of declining state support, limited inclusivity and new trends in the popular consumption of history threaten the viability of a project increasingly restricted to the middle-aged and the elderly.

The Sheerans' diagnosis here is, I think, a model of clarity and summed up in a stark metaphor early in the article: 'If the engine of your car is broken, there is little point in putting more fuel in the tank to make it go'.¹⁴ The same clarity, however, does not emerge in the complementary prescription. It is certain that the remedy must be radical—we need 'wide-ranging and innovative changes' that will give local history a position of respect in the academy and a justification of local history activity 'in terms of the instrumental purposes of university education'. It is also most certainly urgent, for if we do not take our medicine 'the study of local history may well disappear from

the curricula of most universities. Certainly any continuance in its traditional form as a discrete academic subject is unlikely'.¹⁵ However the actual make up of the prescription is rather less certain and is conveyed largely by inference. We are not (moving to the Sheerans' own metaphor) required to replace the car altogether—neither abandoning particularist local history or popular engagement, nor becoming 'submerged' by theory. But we do, it seems, need to replace the engine, by embracing the globalisation of academic activity, becoming inclusive of social and ethnic groups little touched by our previous activities, and above all by pursuing a respected place in the academy by active engagement with the agendas and theoretical developments of mainstream academic history.

One might respond to this discourse in terms of its content by questioning the analysis that is its major feature. One might query, for example, the extent to which local history is necessarily quite so disengaged from the historical mainstream. It could be argued, on the contrary, that both the study of local history and the study of history in localities continues to flourish within the academy, sometimes acknowledging the label and sometimes not. Neither Paul Monod nor Eamon Duffy could, by any stretch, be regarded as 'tribal' local historians, but their recent work has included richly textured local studies using many of the methods associated with local history.¹⁶ Important though this journal is, articles published in *The Local Historian* are not an adequate proxy for the generality of the work undertaken even by self-identified local historians (examples readily spring to mind of those whose work includes serious treatment of issues like the African diaspora or the cultural construction and lived experience of twentieth-century motherhood), much less the local historical work undertaken by those who prefer other labels. Indeed it could be argued that the extent to which techniques and approaches pioneered by local historians have entered the bloodstream of the historical profession more generally is a symptom of success rather than failure. Similarly, while some fields of local history may continue to be relatively insular in character there are others—the local history of religion in the modern period, for example—which have for years relished international links and comparisons.¹⁷ It is important to recognise that the suggestion that in order to achieve the highest grading in the RAE it is necessary to have an international dimension to one's published output is a straightforward misconception.

Another query must rest against the role ascribed to theory, and to the new agendas in social and cultural history within the mainstream academy. Here the Sheerans appear to suggest there are three kinds of historians: mainstream academics fully aware of the theoretical ferment within their discipline and actively engaged with it in their historical writing; life-long learning academics probably aware of theoretical developments but eschewing engagement in favour of traditional empirical practice; and popular local historians at most only dimly aware of theory, for whom the cry 'We do not know and do not care what we mean by local history, but we are all determined to get on with it' is as good now as it was in 1959.¹⁸ One is irresistibly reminded of Messrs Cleese, Barker and Corbett impersonating the British class system, but is this an accurate representation of the situation? Leaving aside the caricature of the other two groups, when we look at the mainstream academy we find a far more variegated picture than the one implied here. There are indeed many historians whose work deals primarily with the new agendas—and there are very many whose work does not. History departments whose work is judged to be of the very highest quality in the RAE continue to be happy to submit excellent traditional scholarship, including scholarship in empirical and narrative modes, alongside that pursuing new agendas. My own recent experience in examining doctoral theses across a range of universities suggests that this variegation is likely to continue into the future. Much the same can be said about the role of theory. While there might realistically be said to have been a

genuine conflict—even ‘crisis’— within the historical profession in the 1990s over theory,¹⁹ the same is not really true today. Some historians adopt a postmodern identity (or rather one of the multiple versions of such an identity) and others consciously reject it: both flourish within history faculties in British universities. Writing in 2005 Callum Brown noted that ‘historical scholarship in both modernist and postmodernist mode proceeds apace’. He also recognised ‘cherry picking’: a situation in which some postmodern methodology has been adopted by historians who do not consider themselves to be postmodernists and would never wish identify themselves as such (a phenomenon with which local historians are only too familiar).²⁰ If 1948 no longer provides a paradigm for the development of local history in the twenty-first century then neither, I would suggest, does 1999.

Of course if the analysis is found faulty then the conclusion will tumble with it. If ‘modernist’ history writing still has a respected place within the academy, the adoption by local historians of postmodern perspectives can hardly be regarded as an essential prerequisite for such respect. However, it appears to me that a more fundamental concern with ‘No longer the 1948 show’ emerges from attention to the form in which the article is conceptualised and written. As we have already noted, the Sheerans claim that ‘empiricist and largely narrative accounts of the history of place are failing to survive in today’s academic world’; and yet it is difficult to envisage a more empiricist and narrative form than the one they themselves adopt in order to persuade us to do something different. Their account of the interwar heyday of ‘The Great Tradition’ is a little gem of narrative history, the attempt to portray the truth about academic local history by quantitative analysis of HESA statistics seems like positivist empiricism of the purest kind, and Sir Geoffrey Elton himself might have smiled both on the attempt to delineate the field by a survey of articles in *The Local Historian* and the general analytical structure of the third discourse. There is no overt reflexivity about the Sheerans’ attempt to reconstruct the actual state of local history as a discipline and inscribe it in the pages of a journal.²¹ In ‘Reconstructing Local History’ our authors expressed the view that ‘historians do not discover truths; they write narratives, even though they might portray this as analytical writing’.²² Readers of ‘No longer the 1948 show’ would do well to bear this in mind.

Where does this leave us with respect to the inferred agenda for the future of local history? Despite the critique I have offered above, I remain of the view that there is much to welcome especially in the emphasis on a more self-critical and rigorous approach to our own work. As I argued at the outset, and others have argued elsewhere, there remains plenty of room for an engagement between local history and some of the theoretical ideas and methods which might be classified as postmodern.²³ Local historians who feel inclined to follow such a path should be encouraged to do so. We should all follow their work with interest; we might well follow it with profit. We should only do so, however, for the prospect of enriching local history as a discipline, not in pursuit of the mirage of approval from other parts of mainstream academia.

Moreover, we should applaud equally those local historians whose interests take them in a different direction and along more traditional paths. No consistent postmodernist, it seems to me, could argue otherwise. If we are concerned about the prevalence of naive empiricism among the ranks of local historians our concern should surely be with the naivety, not with the empiricism. Surely, too, nobody could dispute that local historians should seek to be adventurous in their pursuit of new avenues for thinking and research and inclusive in their engagement, both with all sectors of society and with the practitioners of local histories beyond our own shores. Again, however, this needs to be pursued for its own sake as an enrichment of our own study and discipline, not as some kind of lifeline without which local history is doomed to perish. Indeed, I am tempted to argue, given the demographic projections

for Britain over the next three decades, that a subject with a proven attraction for older adult learners has a bright future ahead! Eventually the political agenda might even catch up. Certainly, given the calibre of the students I have been privileged to teach and the colleagues in various spheres with whom I have engaged over the last few years, there is no evidence of a lack of intellectual vitality in the discipline. Without doubt there is at present a serious crisis in state-funded lifelong learning—but reports of the death of local history are greatly exaggerated.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

- 1 G. and Y. Sheeran, 'Reconstructing Local History', *The Local Historian [TLH]* vol.29 no.4 (1999) pp.256-262
- 2 G. and Y. Sheeran, 'Discourses in Local History', *Rethinking History* vol.2 no.1 (1998) pp.65-85
- 3 See, for example, 'Reconstructing Local History: Readers' responses to the Sheerans' article', *TLH* vol.30 no.2 (1999) pp.124-126 and vol.30 no.3 (1999) pp.187-189
- 4 A moderately accessible introduction to the philosophy and some of the practices of postmodern history writing can be found in C. G. Brown, *Postmodernism for historians* (Longman, 2005). Examples of the use of postmodern techniques that may be of interest to local historians include J. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Virago, 1992); P. Joyce, *Democratic Subjects: The Self and the Social in Nineteenth-century England* (Cambridge, 1991); C. Steedman, *Master and Servant: Love and Labour in the English Industrial Age* (Cambridge, 2007) and C. G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain* (Routledge, 2001) especially pp.58-144. For a brilliantly written rejoinder, at least to the more exaggerated claims for postmodern history, see R. J. Evans, *In Defence of History* (Granta, 1997)
- 5 For some valuable reflections on these possibilities, especially in the context of lifelong learning, see M. Chase, 'Stories we tell them? Teaching adults history in a postmodern world', *Studies in the Education of Adults* vol.32 no.1 (April 2000) pp.93-106
- 6 In some respects they may, along with other historians, have anticipated them. Discourse analysis (a key component of postmodern methodology) was certainly used by historians prior to the postmodern debates and can be found, for example, in the treatment of wills in M. Spufford, *Contrasting Communities* (Cambridge UP, 1974) pp.319-350.
- 7 G. and Y. Sheeran, 'No Longer the 1948 show' – local history in the 21st century', *TLH* vol.39 no.4 (2009) pp.314-323
- 8 *ibid.* p.315
- 9 cf W.G. Hoskins, *The making of the English landscape* (Penguin, 1955) pp.298-300
- 10 G. and Y. Sheeran, 'Discourses in Local History', pp.69, 75-76
- 11 G. and Y. Sheeran, 'No Longer the 1948 show', p.317
- 12 *ibid.* p.321
- 13 *ibid.* p.318
- 14 *ibid.* p.315
- 15 *ibid.* p.322
- 16 P. K. Monod, *The Murder of Mr Grebell: Madness and Civility in an English Town* (Yale UP, 2003) E. Duffy, *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village* (Yale UP, 2001)
- 17 See, for example, *European Religion in the Age of Great Cities* (Routledge, 1995)
- 18 Comment made at the Standing Conference for Local History in 1959, referenced in the Blake report and quoted in J. Beckett, *Writing Local History* (Manchester UP, 2007) p.188
- 19 See, for example, Chase, 'Stories we tell them?'; L. Stone, 'History and Postmodernism', *Past and Present* no.131 (1991) pp.217-218; P. Joyce and C. Kelly, 'History and Postmodernism', *Past and Present* no.133 (1991) pp.204-213
- 20 Brown, *Postmodernism* pp.10, 176
- 21 For a thoroughgoing attack on such writing see G. and Y. Sheeran, 'Discourses in Local History', pp.77-78
- 22 G. and Y. Sheeran, 'Reconstructing Local History', p.256
- 23 Chase, 'Stories we tell them?'; A.J.H. Jackson, 'Local history and local history education in the early twenty-first century: organisational and intellectual challenges', *TLH* vol.38 no.4 (November 2008) pp.266-273

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‘No longer the 1948 show’: local history in the 21st century— readers reply

Editorial preface: In the November 2009 issue of *The Local Historian* an article by George and Yanina Sheeran, “No longer the 1948 show”—local history in the 21st century’, sought to analyse the problems facing the subject, both internal and external. The authors suggested that a lack of engagement with theoretical discourses in history, and a failure to adapt to contemporary conditions, are among the evident weaknesses. I invited readers to respond to the paper, and several have taken up that invitation. One substantial paper was submitted—that by Mark Smith (see previous article). Others wrote more informally and below are published [edited] extracts from their replies. If you would like to contribute to this debate, please feel free to send comments (preferably by email to agrosby@waitrose.com).

Jim O’Neill (Hoylake)

I will say that the Sheerans certainly got one thing right: ‘We have undoubtedly written a gloomy analysis and one that will probably exasperate some readers’. Well, yes, and possibly therein lies the reason for writing it. I know of one local ex-reporter who used to write inflammatory letters to the paper that employed her purely to make sure that the letters page kept going! I also hope that nobody other than professional local historians and local history tutors, and certainly no prospective students, ever get to read it, otherwise we are all destined for a visit to the nearest JobCentrePlus, as they are called in these days of political correctness.

Having had a good moan, and that’s often not a bad thing, it would have been more productive for them to have at least attempted to suggest some ways to solve the problems that they list, rather than just rubbishing the good points put forward in the earlier articles. Even, dare I say it, they could perhaps celebrate some of what is right in local history today? The fact is that the community sector is still growing despite the little financial blip that this country has recently gone through and I see no reason why that growth should stop.

They seem to have done their research thoroughly enough, so maybe (in less than ten years) they could write something a bit more uplifting and less demoralising, to help us all on our way? I am also left wondering what they had imbibed before they penned the totalling baffling digression into ‘globalisation’.

John T. Dunne (Leeds)

I read the articles in the November issue of our journal with great interest and an occasional indrawing of breath! May I offer just one comment relating to the piece by George and Yanina Sheeran? I am concerned with the distinction between academic and popular local history. My complaint is that the authors do not really attempt to define what they mean by these concepts. In fact I believe they fail to explain sufficiently how they see the difference between them. They quote the description of popular local history in the Blake report as being ‘pursued for reasons of personal satisfaction’. But this merely distinguishes between the ‘salaried’ and the ‘unsalaried’ historian and says nothing about the quality or purpose of the work itself.

Perhaps I should explain where I come from? My training was in philosophy and theology and only in retirement have I been able to devote time to a life-long interest in historical research and writing. I am therefore no professional historian. But I like to think that, together with so many others with similar interests, I try to work to good professional standards. So how do I and my non-professional colleagues fit into the academic and popular local history divide? Some obvious questions might be asked. If a professional academic historian writes local history, is this academic local history even if written in an accessible non-academic style? And if a non-professional writes in an academic style, is this popular local history?

Lest I should seem to be entirely negative let me make a suggestion. To me the term 'popular' has certain pejorative overtones. Is there not just a hint of dumbing down, or the implication of certain laxity in scholarship? Could we abandon the term 'popular'? I think what we are really seeking is some way of conveying the idea of presentation and accessibility rather than popularity. Should we not understand the difference between academic and popular local history as being one of style and presentation rather than of quality or origin? I suggest that the term 'academic study' be used for one written in the normal academic style, whether by a professional or non-professional historian, and intended mainly for an informed readership. The 'popular' or 'accessible' study is also based on sound scholarship and balanced judgement but is presented in a way that is accessible to the general reader. To replace the term 'popular history', the phrase 'haute vulgarisation' comes to mind. But can anyone think of a good English equivalent? Just a suggestion!

Peter Christie (Bideford)

The Sheerans' article on local history in the twenty-first century was stimulating reading but I would like to follow up on two of the points they make. They complain that most local historians are 'ageing white adults' who research 'Anglo-centric' topics. Speaking as someone who lives in one of the least ethnically diverse areas of Britain it is difficult to see how I could study different local ethnic groups. The only ones that exist[ed] are/were very tiny and have left few records, a situation that might well apply to many rural areas of the UK. My own researches into the North Devon Journal 1824 to date have revealed a handful of references to non-white people and even a 2003 county-wide booklet on black people in Devon was noticeably short.

My main cavil with the article, however, is its negativity about 'the viability of popular local history'. For some reason the Sheerans appear not to have noticed the astonishing rise in family history over the last few decades. As one instance I can quote the Hampshire Genealogical Society. In 1974 I was one of its founding members and became its first editor. The latest edition of their journal shows allocated membership numbers have reached to around 13,000, a pattern that I am sure has been replicated in the multitude of other societies that now cover the whole of the U.K.

Admittedly many of these family historians have only scratched at the surface as yet but I have noticed in my own local record office that these very keen researchers are often now progressing to records other than the basic census/parish registers/wills. Because of this development there is an enormous upwelling of interest in the local history of place, something we should be aware of and welcome with open arms, and how many local historians have had cause to thank the family historians for making the censuses etc easily available?

In the same copy of the Hampshire magazine there is an article written by a doctoral research student which includes the comment 'family historians and local academic

historians are often to be found researching in similar records, but their results are now always easily available for each other'. We need to investigate how to bridge this perceived gap. Does, for example, *The Local Historian* advertise in the many family history magazines available in newsagents? Do we contact such societies when TLH publishes a 'local' article and send them a copy of the article, which they might care to republish in their journals, if only to publicise what we do? I am sure other readers could come up with other ideas to help spread the word.

[**Editorial note:** yes, we have advertised extensively in family history journals and no, we don't send copies of articles but that is a very interesting idea – thanks, Peter]

David Smith (Gloucester)

Please do not print any more turgid twaddle such as the article by the Sheerans. They seem to assume that local history can only happen with government funding. This is not so, and there is plenty of excellent research and publication being done by self-funded private individuals and societies, as the BALH annual awards testify. There are so many misconceptions in their piece that time does not permit me to cover them all. Let a couple of examples suffice.

They seem to assume that every anniversary should generate research. Did they expect all historians, whatever their chosen topic, to down tools in 2006 so as to write articles on slavery in time for 2009? And as to inclusiveness, must the person interested in the changing rural economy of Shropshire in the 17th century abandon this topic in order to investigate black immigration to Liverpool, just to satisfy the Sheerans' views on politically-correct subjects to research.

What exactly do they mean by 'discussion and analysis are rarely underpinned by theoretical perspectives'? Do they want all research to support some transient phantasm such as 'the Marxist view of history', whatever that might be? Surely research requires that results are determined by what the documents reveal and by comparison with other relevant work. Coming to research with a pre-determined idea of what you want to find is a recipe for bad history, as it is for any other form of research. By contrast, Kate Tiller's article was a breath of fresh air: well-written and sensible. If we must have more soul-searching about the state of local history today, let's have more Kate and no more Sheerans.

Rosemary Hall (Coventry)

I wonder if, as a very amateur local historian, I could venture to comment on the fascinating article in the November issue of *The Local Historian*, on the discipline of local history? One of the strengths of local history, it is claimed, is that it offers a welcome to the amateur, as well as to the professional historian. George and Yanina Sheeran challenge that view. They state that 'local history classes and courses attract a large proportion of middle-aged to elderly members'. This would appear to be true—and to challenge the assumption that local history has the virtue of inclusivity. Of course, one could argue that, as the proportion of the population over fifty continues to increase, we should be congratulating ourselves on appealing to such a demographic group.

However, is it not inevitable that many local history enthusiasts are late-middle aged or elderly? They love local history for its own sake. It retains the values of all disciplines which form part of a liberal education. Young people struggle with their A-level coursework. People in their twenties struggle to combine a hectic and exhausting working life with raising a family and studying for professional qualifications. As the market place becomes more competitive, workers come under increasing pressure to

obtain more and more qualifications—vocational qualifications. I remember that I felt under pressure to do this when I was working as a subject librarian. It was pointed out to me how a teaching certificate would enable me to improve my vocational skills. Yet I knew that what I really wanted to study was local history. I realise that I felt a great sense of liberation when I was able to do so!

Local history appeals to those who hold dear the values of traditional liberal education. Should we not challenge the views of those who hold the ‘instrumental’ view of education, which values education solely or mainly for its economic worth? Yes, we may be able to get a little money for a project, by claiming that local history can contribute to social cohesion, but local history is valuable in its own right. It will never be able to compete with business studies as a vocational subject. There is nothing wrong with trying to widen the appeal of local history, for instance by catering for different age groups. How could we market local history to broaden its appeal? We could ensure that it is integrated into more conventional undergraduate courses, but I have my doubts about this. Theoretically, perhaps, ‘mainstream’ history should come first, and local history afterwards, as an MA. Moreover, I remember how, when my disillusionment with conventional history was at its height, my love of local history continued unabated. We might lose some local historians if it was too closely associated with undergraduate study.

But there are other ways, surely, of encouraging young people to develop a love for local history. How did I come to love it? I can identify an important influence—visiting the splendid exhibitions organised by the Essex Record Office at Ingatestone Hall. They covered themes such as Essex towns, or particular periods, and the illustrated guides which accompanied them were superb: popular history at its best. The ERO also encouraged A-level students to undertake projects using original documents. Only a few school pupils will have time to participate in community projects, but receptive young people can always have their imagination kindled. The authors write of local history ‘practitioners and students [being] largely ageing white adults, who pursue a curriculum that is almost wholly Anglo-centric as a result’. There is some truth in what they say. But I think it is misleading to assume that ‘popular’ local history avoids issues of identity. I give some examples: a recent Coventry History Association booklet on Alice Arnold, the city’s first female mayor, addressed the issues of her identity as an unmarried working-class woman, and how this influenced the perceptions of her held by others ... and her opportunities to engage in political activity. The Herbert, our local museum, has a film about the recent history of deaf people, a sort of oral history project. This might come under the ‘inclusivity’ label, but it is also local history. It also held an exhibition, ‘Coming to Coventry’, on migration to the city, as part of Black History Month. I think we may not be defining ‘local history’ widely enough.

John Virgoe (Lancashire)

The article by George and Yanina Sheeran I found both confusing and sometimes illogical. The initial three pages summarising some recent articles on the way the subject has developed provided a good introduction and reading list. But after considerable criticism of the way the subject is currently practised, they seemed to come to the conclusion that perhaps it’s not so bad, and academic local historians just need to become political poodles if they are to get future funding.

But why should local history be theoretical? History is largely an empirical subject, and does not lend itself readily to theoretical analysis in the scientific sense. That requires the accumulation of data, the development of a hypothesis which tries to make a general statement that satisfies the needs of the available data, the collection of further information and the testing of the hypothesis by more studies and, if it still

holds good, that leads in turn to the proposal of a theory or—if it fails—to the abandonment of the hypothesis. 'Theoretical' historians seem to start off with an idea, into which they then try to fit their research findings while at the same time minimising the evidence that doesn't agree with their postulate. A good example is Kusssmaul's work on marriage seasonality, trying to fit the time of year when people got married into the type of agriculture carried on in a particular region.¹ This concept is of some interest, and it is a useful idea, but it is hardly a theory and certainly not general in its application. The study of marriage is more complicated than that, and because it involves people (who don't always act rationally, unlike natural phenomena) the 'theory' often breaks down. So let's stay empirical, try to find some broad general conclusions behind our findings, but don't call ourselves theoreticians. The best that historians can come up with is a hypothesis.

The globalisation of local history seems to be a total contradiction in terms. One of the attractions of local history for many people is that they identify with the place that is the subject of their research. Indeed, is not most history local? Every battle is a local event, and it is only when it is put into the context of events leading up to it and its impact on the outcome of a war that it becomes anything else. Perhaps even the term 'local historian', as applied to individuals, is unhelpful and is best reserved for the titles of journals such as *The Local Historian* and *Local Population Studies*, where papers with a high element of historical research based largely on local studies are published.

Another point in the paper which bothered me was the apparent emphasis on ethnic matters. They are largely of importance in the post-war period (with the obvious exception of slavery) and are surely mainly a field for the social historian rather than the local historian. I also felt there was a degree of implied ageism and racism in the paper, with a number of references to local history being the pursuit of 'largely white adults' of 'mature' years.

One can also ask 'What is history'. Some of the activities which Kate Tiller reports in her various papers seem more like local studies than local history. Surely a degree of separation in time from events is necessary to put them in perspective. I grew up in the 1950s but I would not consider myself to be in any way qualified to write a history of that decade, for the simple reason that I was there and cannot be impartial. Indeed, the preoccupation in both papers with the 20th and 21st centuries is, I believe, unhelpful. Different people are interested in different periods of history, and there must be opportunities for them to pursue their interests throughout the whole of recorded time.

It seems to me that the major problem which neither paper addresses in detail is the place of history in total in the educational world. It has been considerably reduced in secondary schools and drastically changed in both secondary and tertiary education. The grammar school that I attended spent the first five years moving from the Palaeolithic to the start of the 20th century, with concentration on the period 1688-1914 for GCE. This means that today I have a general appreciation of the sequence of events throughout our nation's history, which the modular approach does not give. It is rather like learning about London by riding on the tube and coming out of the dark at certain stations before going underground again.

There is also criticism that people have been interested in local history 'for personal fulfilment rather than vocational advancement'. I would question whether history is a vocational subject (except for teachers and academics and a few rare exceptions like the editor of *The Local Historian*) but it is of value in both developing rational thought for the young, and providing an intellectual pursuit for those 'largely white adults' of 'mature years. I see nothing wrong with that state of affairs. I also believe it is highly desirable that academic historians should not kow-tow to politicians and their

accountants, who know the price of everything and the value of nothing. The academics should maintain their traditional place of academic freedom.

The distinction made between the academic and the local, usually amateur, historian is also unhelpful, like the old distinction between gentlemen and players in cricket. As one with some training in historical research, but whose studies have carried out without financial reward (and therefore an amateur in the true meaning of the word) I feel that I occupy the middle ground. There is good and bad history and both can be produced by people who are paid to study history and those who do it for fun. All history should be readable, as jargon-free as possible, and still retain academic rigour.

The most important concern for local history is the decline of extra-mural and WEA classes based around the study of localities, since this is the way that many people (not all of them elderly, middle class and white) become interested in history in the wider sense, and sometimes progress to the academic world. Whether such classes should have some quasi-theoretical basis or be concentrated on the 'history' of the late 20th or 21st centuries are, I believe, minor considerations.

1 A. Kussmaul, *A general view of the rural economy of England 1538-1840* (Cambridge UP, 1990)

'What is local history': Anthea Jones (Cheltenham)

Are the doom-sayers on the future of local history arrogating too much to their sense of what local history is? The editor of *The Local Historian* rashly invited responses to the two articles in the November issue on what might be titled 'Whither local history?'. The first question prompted for this reader by George and Yanina Sheeran's article is 'How can they justify the idea that local history is a discipline'? Isn't it just one method of thinking? There are at least four ways in which historical material can be conceptually arranged. It can be by theme, such as gender, or black history; it can be by idea or theory, such as the exploitation of the proletariat; it can be by a person or by people, such as the biography of a politician or analysis of social relations; or, crucially in this context, by place—what material can be brought to bear on Preston or Margate or Gloucestershire?

The last-mentioned tool, organisation by place, makes use of the same skills as any other historical enquiry, but in fact is in some ways more difficult than at least two of them. The history of a place or region is not easily written from the published work of other authors, but has to rely on original research. There are limited resources available, and the best has to be made of what exists. Often history is written from an example here, an example there, put together to show that the gentry were rising, or declining, or the election was won by reaction to the past or idealism about the future. A contrary example can invalidate the general applicability of an argument, but not establish the opposite case. The same is true for the experience of a particular place, or for that matter a region.

There is a strong tendency to overlook the variety of interests represented in what these two authors call the 'academy'. There are hundreds of individual interests represented in the history department of a university. Isn't locality simply one more? W.G. Hoskins well knew the general attitude to his interest in communities. Vested interests could find many arguments to attack approaches to history that were not theirs. Many were (and are?) hostile to the sort of subject that inspires these two writers: globalisation, ethnicity and so on, but political pressures force some opening of the doors. Hoskins and Finberg both struggled to convince sceptical colleagues that their work could be a 'handmaiden' of national history.¹ Is it any more important to study, say, the hearth tax to find out who paid taxes in late-seventeenth century England, or how many houses there were and how big, across several or many places, or in one particular place where visible evidence can also be used?

Indeed, the academy suffers from a blindness to the concrete or visible. It has affected attitudes to industrial history as well as local history. Could it be that local history is a victim of the same classics-inspired liberal educational attitudes that downgrade the practical or useful arts? The visible is nonetheless a potent source of stimulus and inspiration. Living in a place, seeing it daily, knowing the patterns of roads, lanes, and fields, streets, shops and houses, can they be understood historically? Kate Tiller, who is one of the most successful evangelists for local history, found her visit to Orkney stimulated all sorts of questions and searches for answers, as she described in her contribution to this debate, 'Opinion: 'Local historians can do this for themselves' – a personal view of 2008-2009'.² Isn't this what inspires many local historians? Only architecture almost enters the pantheon of the academy because of the great houses and their architects, and the visible used as evidence.

There are other aspects of interest in the Sheerans' article. It is certainly true that local history societies tend to have an audience of the retired. There are many reasons. As well as the obvious calls on time for people working and with young families, there is another point: young people are not rooted in a place. They have not yet settled, are expecting to move about, and have not yet got the shackles of schools for children or the cost of house-owning to limit mobility. They will come to local history later.

There are many activities pursued in leisure time that are not put under the microscope like local history. Do literature departments in universities worry about the standard or focus of amateur book groups? One of the triumphs of local history is to open up a leisure interest to many people. It need not appeal to the whole population; those who wish can do other things, but for those who take an interest in their locality, it is of huge satisfaction. Very few will wish to pursue the subject much beyond the monthly meeting, but like academic study, for a small number it is life-enhancing, and if it only fills one person in a society with enthusiasm, does it matter? Success depends very much on a few people with enormous enthusiasm. Local enthusiasts can be harnessed to the larger enquiry, as Peter Laslett triumphantly demonstrated with his researches into parish registers. Do the Sheerans attempt to engage a group of unknown citizens in any aspects of the history they find significant?

To conclude, a suggestion. There is a need, it seems to this local historian, for a series of books which deal with widely-used sources not from a methodological point of view, but from a substantive viewpoint. The Local Population Studies Society leads the way with inexpensive books devoted to commonly-used sources which bring together essays on the actual results of research using the sources concerned. Better still, how about a set of regional volumes which make easily available to local historians within those areas some of the results of academic research against which they can measure their findings? It is of doubtful validity to compare, say, Norwich with Tewkesbury (examples chosen at random). But a volume of essays on a number of well-used sources for East Anglia, or for a group of western counties, could be of great assistance in facilitating the development of wider horizons.

1 G. and Y. Sheeran, *TLH* vol. 39 no 4, p.321

2 K. Tiller, *TLH* vol. 39 no 4, p.328

anon (Yorkshire)

The Sheerans ought to lead by example, rather than preaching to us, if they want to convert us to their views. Ten years have passed since their previous article, but where is their exemplary study (of Bradford, perhaps?) which uses the approaches that they advocate. If you look at the published works of Dr George Sheeran what you will find are good empirical studies of a conventional style, mainly on the Victorian middle-class houses and public buildings of the West Riding mill towns.

• REVIEWS •

SUSSEX CLERGY INVENTORIES, 1600-1750 ed. *Annabelle Hughes* (Suffolk Record Society vol.91 2009 xlii+285pp ISBN 978 0 85445 073 2) £20 from SRS c/o West Sussex Record Office, County Hall, Chichester PO19 1RN

Most published collections of probate inventories comprise those of the inhabitants of a particular town or a group of parishes, but this collection is more unusual since it relates to a professional group—the clergy of Sussex. Although these men form a recognisable class they were not all of the same social status, ranging from poverty-stricken curates to genteel and prosperous rectors, and so arguably represent a cross-section of local society. However, whatever their wealth, given their calling and education, much more biographical information is available for them than for contemporary laymen, and this has been meticulously researched and added after each inventory, together with an abstract of any surviving will. The inventories are arranged alphabetically by parish and two maps demonstrate the spread of parishes represented, the collection being skewed towards the Chichester Archdeaconry because many early documents from the Lewes Archdeaconry were ‘cleared out’ at some time in the past.

The inventories of clergy were selected because, unlike those of laymen, they shed light on book ownership, the majority including valuations and sometimes numbers of books, although none actually lists book titles. Two clergy inventories that do list books by title, but fall outside the volume’s time-frame, have been added in an appendix. Some of the will abstracts contain further information—and it is likely that some of the books bequeathed were not included in the subsequent valuation, often a rounded sum ranging from £2 to £100. Given that most appraisers were local laymen such valuations might be considered somewhat arbitrary; however, the inventory of Thomas Holland, vicar of Kirdford (no. 91), reveals that five days later his books were valued at £30 by three other named appraisers, indicating that these men at the least had more knowledge of such items.

Like other published inventories, the 181 transcribed here provide varying degrees of information about changing consumption habits, local farming practices and contemporary buildings. The inventory of Thomas James of Walberton (no. 162) sheds light on valuation practices: featherbeds (mattresses) were valued according to their weight and thus valuations of apparently similar items might vary within the same document. Details in the inventories of clergy houses can sometimes be supplemented by information in various diocesan records but care needs to be taken since clergymen of the same parish did not necessarily inhabit the same house.

The introduction describes the provenance of the documents and explores the uses to which they can be put. Hearth tax returns are examined in relation to room numbers in some of the inventories, but the purpose of the two comparative bar charts is unclear as there is no explanation of the x-axis. There are two very helpful tables: the first, in date order, analyses the inventories by rooms and includes book valuations, total valuations and the presence of stock or crops; the second lists the inventories in numerical and therefore parish order. There is an index of people and places, but not of subjects. This will be a useful volume for local, family, social and ecclesiastical historians alike, not least because it complements the article on Berkshire clergymen’s books by Joan Dils (*The Local Historian* vol.36, 2006).

HEATHER FALVEY

THE PASTOR OF FISH STREET: the journals of the Rev. George Lambert, Congregational minister ed. *John Markham* (East Yorkshire Local History Society no.57 2008 231pp ISBN 978-0-900349-57-3/ISBN 978-0-900349-57-7) no price stated

George Lambert (1742-1816) was pastor of the Congregational chapel in Fish Street, Hull from 1769 until his death in 1816. He started to keep a regular diary in 1780 and maintained it until

shortly before his death. His journals consist of 12 octavo volumes which he described as 'Soul memorials', a narrative of his spiritual life. But he also mentions family incidents, events in Hull, national and international affairs, extreme weather conditions and details of travel. John Markham states that these form a substantial proportion of the extracts that he has selected for this edition, but he has also included extracts which portray the orderly routine of a dissenting minister, giving a picture of Lambert's life and his role in the community.

There are two useful contemporary maps, extensive notes, and an index which appears to cover virtually all of the individuals referred to in the text, and some events and locations (though many seem not to be covered). For example, there is no reference to mob violence at elections; nor to the entry for 9 June 1786 mentioning a servant who went off with a sailor 'who had lately sold his wife'; or to the one on 18 June 1806 referring to 'a large lump of sugar which had for some time hung up in the kitchen', which fell and nearly killed Lambert's wife.

Several entries refer to Lambert's travels (thus, 13 1/2 hours in the diligence from Hull to Leeds, a distance of some 60 miles, in October 1788; ten hours from Hull to Lincoln and 28 hours from Lincoln to London in 1783, 140 miles). Surprisingly the references to Lambert's family are somewhat confusing. No family tree is provided and many details are left in the air. One does not know whether this is because the journal is lacking or whether they have not been included in this edition. Entries in March and April 1785 refer to his eldest son, Samuel, departing for London but there is no indication of why he is going, and no footnote. Likewise, in January 1812 the journal records that 'thro' the badness of [Samuel's] underwriting business his partnership in the house was dissolved, would be gazetted, and that he must be made bankrupt'. Again there is no footnote, though a search in the *London Gazette* would have revealed the names of his partners and the nature and location of his business. Nevertheless, this edition of the journals will be invaluable to anyone researching the history of Hull, and will be useful to a much wider audience. The skill and ability of John Markham are well shown in this excellent publication.

ROGER BELLINGHAM

A LOST FRONTIER REVEALED *Regional separation in the East Midlands* by Alan Fox (University of Hertfordshire Press: Studies in Regional and Local History 7 2009 210pp ISBN 1 902806 97 6) £18.99

As one of his students who was present when Charles Phythian-Adams was formulating the concepts of cultural provinces and regional societies, I am extremely pleased to receive a monograph that tests those hypotheses in detail. The proposition is that regional societies coincided with major drainage basins, so that a watershed often created a frontier between two regions. A complex set of criteria shape those regions, so ideally economic and geographical factors, and the major towns and ports of an area, should be considered. This book is concerned with the Rivers Trent and Witham and the frontier these define, which coincides with the boundary between Leicestershire and Lincolnshire.

Fox starts with a lucid commentary on Phythian-Adams's hypothesis, relating it to his own work. The 'test area', a large part of north-east Leicestershire and south-west Kesteven in Lincolnshire, from Melton Mowbray in the west to Grantham in the east, is described and placed in its historical and geographical context. Of special importance in relation to testing the Phythian-Adams hypothesis is that the high ground along the border of Leicestershire and Lincolnshire produces a major watershed where the Trent and its tributary the Soar in the west are separated from the Witham in east, suggesting that if the hypothesis is correct distinctive regional societies should be defined by these watersheds. Fox divides the area into seven 'landscapes' based on geology and geomorphology, with the county boundary running across heathland.

Part of the hypothesis is that the central areas will be densely populated, the frontier zone less so. The demographic discussion of the 'test area' concentrates on the seventeenth to the

nineteenth centuries, with marriage horizons as one of the parameters in identifying regional societies. However, as these societies originated much earlier and what occurred in the early modern period may have been based on much earlier foundations, perhaps some attention could have been paid to population patterns in Domesday, or the 1381 poll tax returns. The 1676 Compton Census shows that Melton Mowbray and Grantham were the main centres of population, while calculations of population between 1563 to 1811 show that the Vale of Belvoir and the Wreake Valley were consistently sparsely populated—the maps in this section suggest that these areas were actually frontier zones for regions other than those being examined here. Some of the demographic tables are confusing, especially when dealing with change over time but, as the author suggests, there is no easy explanation for these demographic trends. The enclosure of open fields may have been one factor in determining population: although even in 1811 some 26 per cent of the area was being farmed as open fields, much of the enclosure was early, and Fox suggests that early enclosure led to migration from the test area.

A comparison of the levels of poverty shows that 36.6 per cent of households were exempt from paying the 1676 hearth tax, and 3.2 per cent were on permanent poor relief in 1803. However, there are problems in using the hearth tax as an economic indicator, so the former figure may be merely a statistical artefact. The figures concerning poverty are related to the extent of open fields: in 1676 30.8 per cent of exempt households were in open field areas and 36.1 per cent in enclosed areas, and the figures were similar in 1803. The percentage of houses with more than two hearths is used as an indication of wealth, but this is a questionable indicator and without evidence of national trends or comparative data from other regions these figures do not tell us much about the relative severity of poverty. Fox shows that the local economy was mostly agricultural, partly labour-intensive arable but also with sheep on the heaths.

Chapter 5 concerns the crux of Phythian-Adams's hypothesis, that within regional societies are cultural provinces. Every county claims to have its own unique corpus of customs and folk tales, but when these are examined parallel are often found elsewhere (for example the St Valentine's Day customs in Lincolnshire are mirrored in Norfolk). Furthermore, any calendrical customs of an area are likely to be associated with its agriculture, and bear similarity to those of comparable farming areas. Vernacular architecture, another cultural marker used by Fox, was related to the available building materials. The author eventually admits that such evidence is not persuasive. Dialect, however, does have specific regions, even words specific to different villages within the region. This is surely a better cultural marker, and Fox confirms that in his discussion.

Part 3 concerns the mechanics of segregation, asking how the frontier worked on the ground and whether evidence of individual spatial identification can be seen in the sources. Family reconstitution and marriage horizons illustrate this section in great detail, with the addition of probate material and migration patterns. These show that there was a reluctance to cross the 'frontier' to find a marriage partner, and the picture is of an inward looking and fairly static population before 1830, with some 'dynastic families' present in villages for several generations, often inter-marrying with similar families in the home parish or across several parishes. The last section deals with the communications network. Analysis of carriers' networks is used to estimate the influence of the two major towns in the area. A final distinction made between Leicestershire and Lincolnshire concerns the timing of hiring fairs, which may have restrained cross-border migration. In conclusion, Fox suggests that a good case can be made for a frontier between the societies in Lincolnshire and Leicestershire in the eighteenth century, originating much earlier but breaking down to some extent with the coming of the railways.

I found this book exciting and stimulating. As a test of the Phythian-Adams hypothesis it is ground-breaking in its detail, and it made me reconsider the whole question of local identity, how it can be tested, and what spatial areas should be chosen. It also raises specific questions. How did change over time impinge on regional societies? Are marriage horizons a satisfactory way to test for evidence? Would it be better to start with the communications network instead? Finally, something that has always troubled me: how to choose a 'test area'? In defining such an area, and looking at *pays* or landscapes, is there an element of predetermination. Is choosing a 'test area' in reality as restrictive as looking at a single parish? I favour a more global approach.

In reading this book I wanted to know what was happening outside the area, and how other areas related to it. For example, what was the impact or influence of the townships west of Melton Mowbray, such as Sileby, Syston or the Charnwood Forest, where there was early industrialisation? And was there really a *conscious* frontier between the two counties, or is this merely an administrative boundary?

The fact that this book raises questions shows its value. It is written in a clear style, mostly avoids the use of jargon, and is accessible to all local historians. Fox is to be congratulated, and I recommend the book to anyone interested in local history, local societies and how these interact.

EVELYN LORD

YORKSHIRE LANDSCAPES PAST AND PRESENT *edited Margaret Atherden and Tim Milsom* (PLACE 2008 87pp ISBN 978-0-9553424-0-0) £14.99+£1.50 p&p from PLACE Education & Research Centre, York St John University, Lord Mayor's Walk, York YO31 7EX

This collection of eight essays is based on papers presented at a conference organised by the PLACE (People, Landscape and Cultural Environment) Education and Research Centre and the Society for Landscape Studies in York in 2004. The volume is dedicated to the memory of Dr Mary Higham, a speaker at the conference who died the following year. The conference was concerned with landscapes past and present in the historic county of Yorkshire, although the papers in this collection deal mainly with North Yorkshire. There is little on the East Riding, and nothing at all on industrial West Yorkshire or South Yorkshire. Having said that, the papers range widely over the subject of landscape history.

Robin Butlin has contributed a fascinating study on the ways in which North Yorkshire landscapes have been portrayed in the past by artists and cartographers. George Peterken, formerly with English Nature (now Natural England) has written a technical study on forest restoration and management in the North York Moors and Howardian Hills and, also on the woodland theme, Ian Dormor deals with historic woodland management in the Yorkshire Dales. In complete contrast to these, Stephen Moorhouse turns to a methodological theme and looks at interdisciplinary approaches to understanding past landscapes, using examples from North, West and East Yorkshire. Robert Wright's study of the estates and granges of the Cistercian abbey of Kirkstall finds, *inter alia*, that the abbey's relations with its neighbours and tenants were amicable, though some earlier writers had portrayed the Cistercians as unscrupulous land-grabbers. Jane Wheeler analyses the environmental impact of iron-working on the woodlands in parts of the North York Moors between c. 1132-1647, using a combination of pollen analysis, magnetic susceptibility (a technique used to ascertain pollution levels in the past from iron-smelting), excavation, and the analysis of charcoal found at excavated sites to ascertain the tree composition of the trees used. A paper by Andy Howard, Mark Whyman, Keith Challis and Kay McManus summarises recent work on the geomorphological and archaeological landscape of the Vale of York, and a study by a team of six researchers led by W.A. Mitchell of the Department of Geography at Durham University concerns landscape evolution in the Swale-Ure Washlands.

There is plenty here to interest local historians with a particular interest in landscape history. The case studies are full of fascinating insights and the methodologies used are wide-ranging. The volume is in a large format and is extremely well illustrated, and it is such a pleasure to read a volume dealing with landscape history in which every paper is accompanied by crisply drawn, legible maps.

MELVYN JONES

LOCAL HISTORY ON THE GROUND *Tom Welsh* (History Press 2009 158pp ISBN 978-0-7524-4798-8) £16.99

Local history is an interdisciplinary subject. I have just finished reading an article on a local manorial landscape by one of the country's most eminent local historians, very well-known to readers of BALH but who shall remain nameless to save his blushes. And what comes across to

the reader is the wide-range of disciplines that the local historian has to take on board in order to investigate any local subject. In the article in question the writer shows his faultless grasp of architecture, manorial history, historical woodland management, archaeology (both medieval and industrial), transport history, historical ecology and his ability to interpret primary documentary evidence and relate it to the landscape whose nuances he understands perfectly.

Tom Welsh's book is designed to set all those interested in investigating their local landscape on the journey to becoming the multidisciplinary expert that is the local historian—or at least, to set them on the journey to becoming competent field investigators. The introductory chapter, 'Dispelling the Myths', is followed by four that deal with the general issues of becoming a landscape detective (reading the landscape, the landscape hidden in documents, and the use of maps and air photographs) and four more that deal with specific lines of field investigation (the physical landscape, roads and other linear features, suburbia, and villages).

Throughout the book Welsh is at pains to distinguish between the methods and objectives of the archaeologist and the local historian. The archaeologist, to paraphrase the author, is more likely to be concerned with discovering and making an inventory of discrete sites. This may not involve, in the opinion of the author, an 'engagement' with the landscape or a deep understanding of it. Welsh advocates an 'inquisitive' approach to fieldwork by the local historian. This, in his view, involves the local historian in reading the landscape from the physical evidence—the 'hummocks and hollows' that survive everywhere in the British landscape—using imagination and speculation, and the help of appropriate documents, maps and air photographs, leading to informed interpretation.

The book is semi-autobiographical in that the author, in order to underline particular points, periodically describes an event that happened in his personal journey to becoming an expert field investigator. Throughout the book he uses examples of personal investigations that he has undertaken, including one where the clues became apparent as he sat looking through the windows of a bus that had been held up by a traffic accident. The book is equally annoying and inspiring: annoying, because of the number of times he repeats his criticism of archaeological methodologies; inspiring, because of his enthusiasm to get the local historian out into his local landscape, looking, considering and interpreting, and embarking on the journey to becoming the expert whose work is described in the opening paragraph of this review.

MELVYN JONES

MEDIEVAL COLCHESTER'S LOST LANDMARKS *John Ashdown-Hill* (Breedon 2009 191pp ISBN 978 1 85983 686 6) £14.99

Visitors, and those of us who live or work in Colchester, will testify to the wealth of obvious and more hidden historic landmarks within the town. The ever-popular walking tours provided by the town guides are an important service, helping many to understand more fully the complex history of the settlement. Some recently published secondary material is also helpful, but the author of this new book has identified that much of the emphasis for Colchester's popular historians has been on the Roman, Anglo-Saxon and early Norman periods, or the Civil War. The period from the thirteenth- to the sixteenth-century, therefore, seems somewhat neglected. Unfortunately, this neglect has also extended to the loss of some (but, thankfully, not all) of the town's more important historic buildings and monuments. Some of the most notable medieval landmarks have either gone lost or are preserved only as ruins, including the three priories (Holy Cross, originally founded as the Hospital of the Holy Cross, Greyfriars and St. Botolphs). Only the gatehouse survives from St. John's Abbey, and a fourteenth-century town-centre church was demolished as recently as the 1950s.

The main strength of the book is that it provides an understanding of life in Colchester during the mid- to late-medieval period in considerable detail, and in a way that is accessible to a wide readership. In addition, the reader is able to relate the landmarks and places discussed in the book to the town as it is today. Using a variety of referenced primary and secondary sources, the

author gets to grips with the nitty-gritty of medieval life: brothels, animal-baiting, dung heaps, offal and filth dumped in the streets and the Castle ditch, the activity surrounding the inns, markets, abbeys and churches. The reader could easily imagine the noise, hubbub and indeed stench of medieval urban life when taking a walk today along East Stockwell Street in the well-preserved Dutch Quarter.

The primary sources used include Colchester's numerous medieval court rolls and the *Red Paper Book of Colchester*, a medieval document containing a list of men dwelling in the town who swore fealty to the restored Edward IV in 1472. The book also leaves its readers with mystery to solve. The author informs us that the court rolls contain 'references to items called *whirlegigges*', and that sometimes these were to be found in the streets of the town. It appears that although it was an offence to erect a whirlegigge on the highway, this mysterious and apparently unidentified object was a 'recognised feature of the mediaeval Colchester townscape'.

SEAN O'DELL

MALMESBURY BOROUGH *Donald Box* (The Warden and Freemen of Malmesbury 2007 300pp ISBN 9-78055921300) no price given

Where to begin with a local history of an historic town or 'borough'? The author states that his starting-point was a decree in chancery of 1609, and he subsequently worked backwards from this to seek out the origins of Malmesbury borough. As these were early, this approach committed him to covering many centuries until he reached his initial point of interest, and in traditional fashion he then carried his history through to the twentieth century. His intention was 'to demonstrate that a number of local organisations of government have played a significant part in the borough's governance': shire, hundred and tithings, manor, modern county council, parishes, and rural and urban districts. This is carried out in the book's seventeen chapters, which are divided into sub-sections. There is an interesting chapter on the hospital of St John at Malmesbury, later the almshouses and courthouse, and on the corporation school and other charities in the town. The main absence is of a sustained account of the crucial relationship of the town with Malmesbury Abbey. This is clearly set out in the introduction to S. Kelly, *Charters of Malmesbury Abbey: Anglo-Saxon Charters XI* (2005), which also gives an expert review of origins of the town and the spurious charter of Æthelstan to the burgesses.

The book has an attractive cover, 'A Bird's Eye View of Malmesbury, 1647', and contains six coloured reconstruction maps of the town between 1300 and 1850. The ten interesting and relevant photos have reproduced well on the good-quality paper used; explanatory captions are given and the provenance of most of the illustrations is indicated in the Contents. There are also references in the form of Notes and Comments to each chapter, and an index of subjects. The short Index of Persons contains 'only the more significant persons involved in the administration of the borough since the dissolution of the monasteries', and so omits those of the medieval period, the poorer sort and women. The maps are helpful although produced by hand. However, the text is slightly marred by a number of spelling and grammatical mistakes which could have been corrected if it had been proof-read by an honest and critical friend. An outside academic adviser could have pointed the author to a wider range of recent and important studies of Malmesbury history and urban history more generally, and this would have added greatly to its worth. If a second edition is planned these points might be borne in mind. It would also be worth taking on board the forthcoming work by Stuart Brookes (UCL) on *burhs*. Inclusion of the most recent scholarship on the town would add much to the significance of the book as an overview.

A book such as this is very demanding of an author, since a large range of background knowledge and reading is required to set the material in context. A good attempt has been made but not fully carried through. The author, and others following in his footsteps, would find wise advice in David Dymond's *Researching and Writing History: a Guide for Local Historians* (2009).

GILLIAN DRAPER

RECORDING MEDIEVAL LIVES *Proceedings of the 2005 Harlaxton Symposium* edited by Julia Boffey and Virginia Davis (Harlaxton Medieval Studies XVII Shaun Tyas 2009 324pp ISBN 978 1 900289 955) £49.50

Because of the scarcity—or total absence—of records freely available for earlier periods the editors of these multi-disciplinary essays by historians, art historians and literary specialists have gone out of their way to emphasise the difficulties of reconstructing lives in the Middle Ages. Yet their writers have more than risen to the challenge, and in so doing have produced a volume that cannot but appeal to lovers of Eileen Power's *Medieval People*. Admittedly much of the surviving evidence relates to the higher levels of society. Carol Meale concentrates on the widowhood of Lady Isabel Morley, born a de la Pole, who during her long widowhood supervised the building of her husband's monument in Hingham church in Norfolk. Another heiress from the same county, the three times married but childless Anne Harling, who oversaw both the founding of a chantry and the institution of a glazing scheme in East Harling church, is the subject of David J. King's study. By focussing upon his books Livia Visser-Fuchs recreates the mental world of Richard, Duke of York. From a close reading of the will and tomb in the church of Ashby Folville of Ralph Woodford (died 1498), Pamela King uncovers the anxieties of a disinherited Leicestershire landowner. Perhaps the most extraordinary of all is the biography of Thomas Salter, a native of Norwich and then by turns a member of the London Salters' Company, a disillusioned Carthusian monk and a London chantry priest, which Caroline Barron has pieced together from his exceptionally detailed will of 1558.

The book contains two group portraits by David Lepine and Janet Burton, the former making excellent use of wills and inventories to throw light on the piety of late medieval cathedral canons, the latter drawing largely on visitation records to provide 'snapshots' in time of communities of Yorkshire nuns. Medieval writers themselves of course showed an abiding interest in the lives of their predecessors and contemporaries, with chroniclers at the turn of the fourteenth century comparing the characters of Charles VI of France and Richard II of England (Christopher Fletcher) and at a more specialised level Thomas Gascoigne in his *Liber Veritatum* numerous often less complimentary biographies of churchmen and theologians (Mishtooni Bose). Yet other reformers, like the prior of Lilleshall, John Mirk, favoured the epistolary mode, composing his *Marmale Sacerdotis*, a description of a day in the life of an ideal cleric, in the form of a letter to bring home to his correspondent the obligations of a priestly vocation (Susan Powell).

Three essays concentrate upon the physical act of recording. Anne Sutton identifies some of the scribes and scriveners employed by the London Mercers' Company, Pamela Robinson supplies a scholarly analysis of the original manuscript of *The Book of Margery Kempe*, and Pamela Tudor-Craig illustrates the very varied ways authors were depicted in medieval manuscripts. Moving onto the present, in a fascinating article Henry Summerson contrasts the treatment of medieval figures in the original *Dictionary of National Biography* with their treatment in the new *DNB*. Every contributor has shown great ingenuity in extracting human details from often superficially unpromising sources, but surely none so more than Nicholas Rogers, who has discovered memorialised for eternity on brasses in Norfolk and Gloucestershire Sir Brian Stapulton's hound Jakke and Lady Alice Cassy's pet dog Terri. This is a collection to dip into—and enjoy.

CLAIRE CROSS

THE REFLECTION IN THE POND *A moonraking approach to history* John Chandler (Hobnob Press 2009 286pp ISBN 978-1-906978-08-2) £12.95 from PO Box 1838, East Knoyle, Salisbury SP3 6FA

John Chandler, in his latest book, combines depth of knowledge with humour and a light touch. With an elegant readable style this volume ranges in a series of essays—some originally given as lectures, others longer unpublished pieces—through a wonderfully eclectic collection. It is dedicated to the staff of the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre where so much of his research has been centred. The title is taken from the famous Wiltshire moonraking legend and

while the book is mainly about Moonrakers—the people of Wiltshire—there are substantial sections where he wanders far beyond the county boundary.

His chapter on Distillery Farm in Minety, was originally given as a commemorative lecture. Citing a rare nineteenth-century experiment to manufacture mangel-wurzel brandy, he unravels the unlikely scheme, like a detective, and his sources are impeccable. The investigative approach continues in a well-documented seventeenth-century Salisbury ghost story, Mistress Turberville's apparition. He examines a partly-observed cathedral floor slab, revisits all known explanations, discovers a marriage settlement in the record office and then in a wonderful twist, speculates on a possible answer. As he comments, 'today's historian may ... use 21st century technology to reconstruct ... a 17th century conundrum and then propose a solution'.

His chapter, 'Three Pioneers', discusses the diverse characters of the water poet, John Taylor, who travelled by wherry to Salisbury; Richard Jefferies and his antiquarian failure; and, in an affectionate tribute, W.G. Hoskins. For sheer entertainment his 'Moonshine' collection is full of humorous anecdotes taken from his 'Wiltshire Life' and BBC Wiltshire contributions. He argues that, while history is a 'serious business', historians 'should not always take themselves too seriously' and here he combines his enthusiasm for quirky characters and obscure events with the same impressive research. But these brief 'nuggets' are only a part of this fascinating book and his scholarship shines through in the longer essays.

In a 'Sense of Belonging' the author updates and expands part of a report which he initially wrote for Wiltshire County Council in 1993, examining the history and identity of the county and the evolution of community allegiances and boundaries. As a contrast he charts the 'Downward Slope' of the tiny Wiltshire village of Buttermere, a meticulous history of an isolated, rural community struggling to survive in the twentieth century. Perhaps John Chandler's most exciting innovation, one where he ventures well outside Wiltshire, is 'A Landscape Concerto'. An experienced presenter in the early days of Classic FM, he explores the landscape in music, looking at the creative forces which are 'fused together' when a poem is turned into a song. The nostalgia for traditional country life inspired the composer George Butterworth to work A.E. Housman's poems into a song cycle before the Great War. The legends and aura of Tintagel are examined through the writings and music of Tennyson, Hardy, Wagner, Elgar and Arnold Bax, among others. But the culmination is the relationship between Thomas Hardy and Gustav Holst, 'a meeting of minds', where the desolate Egdon Heath in *The Return of the Native* becomes a 'character', providing inspiration for the two men. In 'Decoding Swindon', a paper originally given to the 2006 Swindon Festival of Literature, he rescues what many regard as an 'unlovely town'. Saxon boundaries are equated with twenty-first century roads and housing estates, the main features of the town being laid out long before the GWR arrived.

Finally, asking the question 'What is local history for', he proposes that it is to 'explain ones surroundings and humanise the past'. John Chandler has admirably achieved these aims in his splendid book. There are minor quibbles; I initially found the 'discretionary ligatures' of the typeface an unnecessary distraction. The volume is produced by the print on demand process and the presentation, including some of the maps, is perhaps not of his normal high standard, but these are trifling criticisms of a work where the content is superb. It is comprehensively indexed and the detailed endnotes are a delight, revealing the extent of his research. If his aim is 'to demonstrate the breadth of local history' he surely succeeds. This is a book which should be widely read not merely by moonrakers but by local historians generally.

RUTH NEWMAN

EXMOOR The making of an English upland *Mary Siraut* (Phillimore/England's Past for Everyone 2009 x+198pp ISBN 978-1-86077-597-0) £14.99

For many decades, Exmoor has been well served by historians. Edward Macdermot's *History of the Forest of Exmoor* was published in 1911, a book remarkable for the period in its use of primary

sources and an approach which considered the landscape, social and economic dimensions. In 1929 it was followed by C.S. Orwin's seminal book on the reclamation of Exmoor Forest, telling the extraordinary story of the Knight family of Simonsbath and their recklessly ambitious projects to transform the bleak uplands into richly-productive agricultural land and to exploit what they hoped (quite wrongly) was a wealth of mineral resources. Foolish their schemes might have been, but the massive changes they set in train irrevocably altered the appearance of Exmoor, giving it a highly distinctive landscape in which the remaining high moorland contrasts with improved pasture and many miles of magnificent beech hedges, all enhanced by the superb coastal scenery between Ilfracombe and Minehead. In recent years major investigations of the very diverse and rewarding archaeological heritage of Exmoor have borne fruit in the excellent (and beautiful) publication, *The Field Archaeology of Exmoor* by Hazel Riley and Rob Wilson-North (published by English Heritage in 2001).

Since that date another important research project has been in progress, this time under the auspices of the *England's Past for Everyone* imprint of the Victoria County History. With Mary Siraut as the main researcher, writer and coordinator, the VCH has worked in conjunction with Somerset County Council, the Exmoor National Park Authority, and the Institute of Historical Research, on a wide-ranging investigation which includes a detailed study of eleven parishes in south and central Exmoor, all within the Somerset boundary and covering roughly the area from Dulverton to Simonsbath. One outcome has been this attractive and accessible book, which complements the earlier English Heritage publication.

The present volume is not so much about specific sites, and is more about the social, economic and cultural history of the parishes. It is arranged in a chronological sequence and within that by themes, emphasising the agricultural history of the area, its settlement patterns and characteristics, and the impact of enclosure and attempts at industrial development. A chapter evocatively entitled 'The rise and fall of High Farming 1845-1910' recounts the period after the reclamation of the Forest and before the partial collapse of upland agriculture on the eve of the First World War. The final section deals with Exmoor in living memory, addressing issues such as the conflict between farming and landscape conservation, the challenges of living on the moor, the impact of tourism, and the prospects for the future.

Like others in the series, it is notably well-produced, with very good illustrations (including high quality images of key documents) and clear and highly-effective purpose-drawn maps and artists' reconstructions of buildings and settlements. It is very fully referenced (indeed, how could it not be, with its VCH genesis?) and there is a helpful section on further reading and sources. The book is packed with interesting examples and miniature case-studies, and Mary Siraut has done a masterly job in compressing so much into such a short volume. This is a worthy addition to the EPE series, and reading it made me want to get down to Exmoor again, and follow the Barle once more past Winstitchen and Cow Castle. It is a most valuable addition to the corpus of works about Exmoor, and will be of great interest to all those concerned with upland landscapes and their historical development in any part of the British Isles.

ALAN CROSBY

RECENT PUBLICATIONS IN LOCAL HISTORY

Only books and pamphlets sent to the Reviews Editor are included in this list, which gives all publications received between 1 November 2009 and 1 February 2010. Most books are also reviewed in this or a future issue, or on the BALH website. Publishers should ensure that prices of publications are notified. When addresses are quoted prices usually include postage and packing. Other books should be obtainable through normal book-selling channels and retail prices are quoted. **The Reviews Editor is Dr Evelyn Lord, Book Reviews, PO Box 649, Cambridge CB1 0JW.** Please note that all opinions and comments expressed in reviews are those of the reviewer—they do not necessarily represent the views of the editors or the British Association for Local History.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL STUDIES

East

THE CHARTERS OF STANTON, SUFFOLK c1215-1678 *edited D.P. Dymond* (Suffolk Records Society: Charter Series 2009 ISBN 978 1 84383 4917) £30

LOST COUNTRY HOUSES OF SUFFOLK W.M. Roberts (Boydell 2010 ISBN 978 1 84383 523 3) £29.95

POLLARDS AND PEOPLE A Landscape History of Bulmer, Essex *Philip Rowe ed. Robin Rowe* (Philip Rowe Archive 2009 ISBN 978 0 9548936 1 3) £7.50 from R.W. Rowe, 13 Lime Avenue, Oundle, Peterborough PE8 4PJ

SWAVESEY A pictorial history *John Shepperson* (Swavesey Cambridgeshire Community Archives Network Group 2009 no ISBN) available from SCCANG, Swavesey CB24 4RR

THE TOLL-HOUSES OF NORFOLK *Patrick Taylor* (Polystar Press 2009 ISBN 978 1 907154 02 7) £7.95 from Polystar Press, 277 Cavendish Street, Ipswich IP3 8BQ

London, South and South East

A BRIEF HISTORY OF GEORGE STREET AND ST GEORGE'S HALL *Mary Offord* (Wadhurst History Society 2009 ISBN 978 0 9561768 4 4) £4 from WHS, Greenman Farm, Wadhurst TN5 6LE

THE EARLY TOWN BOOKS OF FAVERSHAM c1251 to 1581 *ed Duncan Harrington and Patricia Hyde* (History Research 2008 ISBN 978 0 9530998 3 2) 2 vols £100+£9 p&p from History Research, Ashton Lodge, Church Road, Lyminge, Folkestone CT18 8JA

THE HISTORY OF FARNHAM PARK *Pat Heather* (Farnham and District Museum Society 2009 ISBN 978 0 90 1638 14 4) from F&DMS, c/o Peter Minett, Tanglewood, Parkside, Farnham GU9 0JP

JAMES JOPP A man of compassion 1795-1872: relieving officer and registrar of births and deaths for the City of London *Peter Buckingham* (Aberdeen & North East Scotland Family History Society 2009 ISBN 978 1 905004 13 3) £7.50+75p p&p from ANESFH, 164 King Street, Aberdeen AB24 5BD

THE PINNERS' AND WIRE SELLERS' BOOK 1462-1511 *ed. Barbara Megson* (London Record Society vol.44 2009 ISBN 978 0 900952 44 9) £25 from www.londonrecordsociety.org.uk

SURREY GAOL AND SESSION HOUSE 1791-1824 *ed. C. Chalklin* (Surrey Record Society vol.41 2009 ISBN 978 0 902978 16 4) £10 from SRS, c/o 130 Goldsworth Road, Woking GU21 6ND

TWICKENHAM, WHITTON, TEDDINGTON and THE HAMPTONS THROUGH TIME *Mike Cherry, John Sheaf, Ken Howe and Ed Harris* (Amberley 2009 ISBN 978 1 84868 804 9) £12.99

Victoria History of the Counties of England: SUSSEX vol.5 pt.2 LITTLEHAMPTON AND DISTRICT *ed. C.P. Lewis* (VCH/institute of Historical Research 2009 ISBN 978 1 90435 619 6) £95

Victoria History of the Counties of England: MIDDLESEX vol.13 CITY OF WESTMINSTER pt.1 *ed. Patricia Croot, Alan Thacker and Elizabeth Williamson* (VCH/Institute of Historical Research 2009 ISBN 978 1 90435 622 6) £95

Midlands

ABEL BUCKLEY WIMPENNY The life and times of a nineteenth century Hayfield mill manager, political activist and social reformer 1844-1905 *John Crummet* (author 2009 no ISBN) £5 from Ron Weston, New Mills Local History Society, High Peak SK22 4LU or Heritage Centre, Rock Mill Lane, New Mills, High Peak SK22 3BN

An analysis of the historic fabric of FIFTY BUILDINGS IN THE CENTRAL AREA OF BROMYARD, HEREFORDSHIRE *Duncan James* (Bromyard & District LHS 2009 no ISBN) details

from Jennifer Weale, Foxholes, Bringsty Common, Worcester WR6 5UN

CATHOLIC WARWICK *Ruth Barbour* (Archdiocese of Birmingham Historical Commission 2009 ISBN 1 871269 27 X) £5 from publisher at Maryvale House, Old Oscott Hill, Kingstanding, Birmingham B44 9AG

EXPLORING WHITCHURCH HISTORY *The growth of a Shropshire town Paul Anderton* (Whitchurch History and Archaeology Group 2009 ISBN 978 0 9564059 0 6) £9.95 from author, 14 Berne Avenue, Newcastle-under-Lyme, ST5 2QJ

HEALTH CARE IN BIRMINGHAM *The Birmingham Teaching Hospitals 1779-1939 Jonathan Reinarz* (Boydell 2009 ISBN 978 1 84383 506 6) £60

MARCHAM REMEMBERED *A village in pictures compiled by Marcham Society* (Marcham Society 2009 ISBN 978 0 9530220 2 1) from Jessica Broad, The Marcham Society, 13 The Farthings, Marcham, Oxford OX13 6QD

STAFFORDSHIRE GLEBBE TERRIERS 1585-1885 *ed. Sylvia Watts* (Collections for History of Staffordshire vols.22 and 23 2009 ISBN 978 0 901719 42 3 and 978 0 901719 52 2) £5 per volume+£6 p&p from Hon Secretary, Staffordshire Record Society, William Salt Library, Eastgate Street, Stafford ST16 2LZ

North

BLEEDING BLISTERS AND OPIUM *Joshua Dixon and the Whitehaven Dispensary Michael Sydney* (Stainburn Publications 2009 ISBN 978 0 9563881 0 0) £14.95 from www.stainburnpublications.co.uk

SEDBERGH *The town in old photographs compiled by Sedbergh and District History Society* (Sedbergh & DHS 2009 ISBN 978 0 9564303 0 4) £10+£1.50 p&p from SDHS, 72a Main Street, Sedbergh LA10 5AD

THE WAR YEARS *Life in Cockermouth and at Moota POW Camp Gloria Edwards* (Little Bird Publications 2009 ISBN 978 0 9551845 4 3) £10 inc.p&p from publisher, High Moor House, Hill Street, Cockermouth CA13 0AU

TRACING YOUR LIVERPOOL ANCESTORS *A guide for family historians Mike Royden* (Pen & Sword 2010 ISBN 978 1 84415 990 1) £14.99

TYNESIDE IRISH 24th-27th (Service Battalions of Northumberland Fusiliers) *John Sheen* (Pen & Sword 2010 ISBN 978 1 84884 093 5) £25

WESTMORLAND HEARTH TAX *Colin Phillips, Catherine Ferguson and Andrew Wareham* (British Records Society 2009 ISBN 978 0 901505 51 2) £35

WRENBURY WILLS AND INVENTORIES 1542-1661 *ed. Paul B. Pixton* (Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire vol.144 2009 ISBN 978 0

902593 79 4) details from Fiona Pogson, Department of History, Liverpool Hope University, Hope Park, Liverpool L 16 9JD

South West and West

THE SHOOTING AT BRANSCOMBE OLD PITTS *Barbara Farquharson and John Torrance* (Branscombe Project 2009 ISBN 978 0 9555644 3 7) £7.50+£2.50 p&p from www.branscombeproject.org.uk or Branscombe Project, Hooken, Branscombe, Seaton EX12 3DP

THREE GENERATIONS IN THE HONITON LACE TRADE *Margaret Tomlinson* (Branscombe Project 2009 ISBN 978 0 9508574 0 8) £7.50+£1.50 p&p details as above

Scotland

EAST LOTHIAN 1945-2000 4th Statistical Account vol.7 Growing up in East Lothian: reminiscences from across the county *ed. Sonia Baker* (East Lothian Council Library Services 2009 ISBN 978 1 897857 37 3) £11.95+£1.80 p&p from Library HQ, Dumbar Road, Haddington EH41 3PJ

THE KIRKYARD OF KINTORE (Aberdeen & North East Scotland Family History Society 2009 ISBN 978 1 905004 16 4) £3+60p p&p from ANESFH, 164 King Street, Aberdeen AB24 5BH

THE KIRKYARD OF KNELLAR *Jean and Jim Shirer* (ANESFHS 2009 ISBN 978 1 905004 15 7) £2.40+50p p&p as above

MINOR BURIAL GROUNDS OF LOWER DONSID (ANESFHS 2009) £3+60p p&p as above

THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR AND SCOTLAND *Robert Ferguson* (History Press 2010 ISBN 978 0 7524 5183 1) £18.99

General

THE AWARDS OF THE GEORGE CROSS 1940-2009 *John Frayn Turner* (Pen & Sword 2010 ISBN 9 78184884 200 7) £12.99

ENGLISH GEOGRAPHIES 1600-1950 *Historical essays on English customs, cultures, and communities, in honour of Jack Langton* *ed. Elizabeth Baigent and Robert J. Mayhew* (St John's College Research Centre, Oxford 2009 ISBN 978 0 95449 756 9)

FROM EAST END TO LANDS END *The evacuation of Jews Free School London to Cornwall during World War Two Susan Soyinka* (Derby Book Publishing 2010 ISBN 978 1 85983 722 6) £19.99

GUIDE TO YOUR ANCESTORS' LIVES *Nick Barratt* (Pen & Sword 2010 ISBN 978 1 8488 4056 0) £19.99

INSCRIBED IN REMEMBRANCE *Gravemarker lettering: form function and recording* *George*

Thomson (Wordwell Ltd 2009 ISBN 978 1 905569 35 9) no price, details from Wordwell Ltd., Media House, South Dublin Business Park, Leopardstown, Dublin 18

LOOTING IN WARTIME BRITAIN *Todd Gray* (The Mint Press 2009 ISBN 978 1 903356 58 6) £9.99 from Stevensbooks, Taddyforde House South, Exeter EX4 4AT

A VICTORIAN GUIDE TO HEALTHY LIVING *Thomas Allison, ed. Anna Selby* (Pen & Sword 2010 ISBN 978 1 84468 076 4) £19.99

CDs

50 YEARS IN BRICKET WOOD *Bricket Wood Residents' Association Gold Jubilee 1959-2009* compiled *Rosemary Wenzelur* (BWRA 2009) from Rosemary Wenzelur, 'Catbells', 27 Ashridge Drive, Bricket Wood, St Albans AL2 3SR

THE GREAT WAR SCRAPBOOK OF LAURA MORSE (Forest of Dean LHS 2009) details from Mrs S. Gordon-Smith, Croft Cottage, Old School Lane, Henry Street, Ross-on-Wye HR9 7AL or www.forestofdeanhistory.org.uk

LETTERS FROM REGENCY SCOTLAND *transcribed Ruth Jennings and Nicola Mills* (Aberdeen & North East Scotland Family History Society 2009 ISBN 978 1 905004 12 6) £7.50+60p p&p from ANESFHS, 164 King Street, Aberdeen AB24 5BD

JOURNALS AND NEWSLETTERS RECEIVED

The more substantial articles in these journals are noted below, but we do not give a full contents list. Most journals are listed alphabetically by geographical location, not title of publication; general journals are at the end of the list.

Bedfordshire & Luton Archives & Record Service Newsletter (no.82 Winter 2010) from BLARS, Riverside Building, Borough Hall, Bedford MK42 9AP *Keeping it in the family*

History in Bedfordshire [Bedfordshire Local History Association] (vol.5 no.2 Winter 2009-2010) available from Ted Martin, 21a The Leys, Langford, Bedford SG18 9RS *A church and village memorials*

Berkshire Local History Association Newsletter (no.96 January 2010) £9 p.a. details from newsletter@blha.org.uk *Caversham Court: a brief history*

Cefn Remembered [Cefn HS] (no.29 Winter 2009/10) £5 from Meurig Owen, Cefn Meiriadog Historical Society, 10 Deans Walk, St Asaph, LL17 0NE *19th century Bont Newydd; RMS Titanic and the 1912 disaster; Gwrych Castle; Menai Bridges; Thomas Telford and Llangollen Canal; pilgrimages to Welsh Churches; St. Asaph Cathedral; Snowdon Mountain Railway*

The Griffin: quarterly newsletter of Chadderton HS (August 2007–August 2009) from Chadderton HS, 18 Moreton Street, Chadderton OL9 0LP

Cranbrook Journal [Cranbrook & District LHS] (no.20 2009) £4 from Cranbrook DLHS, Carriers Road, Cranbrook TN17 3JX *William Eddy's Register; The Standens: finerymen and hammermen; the Tyro-Pedro-Theo mystery; James William King of Angley; boy scouts in Cranbrook; Richard Church; the George Hotel*

The Dunningite [Dunning Parish HS] (Winter 2009/2010) £1.50 from DPHS, The Old Schoolhouse, Newton of Pitcairns, Dunning PH2 0SL *The Dunning Homecoming Event; Kenny Laing's photographs, drawings and plans; William Ferguson of Owen Sound*

Eastbourne Local Historian [Eastbourne LHS] (no.154 Winter 2009) from Michael Partridge, 2a Staveley Road, Eastbourne BN20 7LH *James Peerless, builder 1818-1890; Nice Gels and Hockey Sticks: photographs of Clovelly-Kepplestone 1917-1921; postal history of Eastbourne; Henry Allingham: the Eastbourne years*

Farnham Museum Society Journal (vol.14 no.8 December 2009) from Mrs P. Heather, Tanglewood, Parkside, Upper Hale, Farnham GU9 0JP *National camps; the prelate and the poet*

Forest of Dean Local History Society News (January 2010) from www.forestofdeanhistory.org.uk *Vikings on the Severn*

Fram: journal of Framlingham & District Local History & Preservation Society (5th ser. no.14 December 2009) from editor, 43 College Road, Framlingham IP13 9ER *Witch bottles in Suffolk; I'll pass this way again; Gypsy's Lane; bowling in Framlingham*

Friern Barnet Newsletter [Friern Barnet & District LHS] (no.40 February 2010) £7 p.a. details from www.friernbarnethistory.org.uk *A walk to the shops in 1951; did Friern Barnet have a town crier; growing up in post-war Finchley; oral history project; All Saints Parish Magazine*

Hackney History [Friends of Hackney Archives] (vol.15 2009) £4+£1.50 p&p from Hackney Archives Department, 43 de Beauvoir Road, London N1 5SQ *Lives of the convicts: solving a puzzle in printing; more light, more power: electricity generation and waste disposal in Shoreditch 1897-2009; mayors' medals for local children 1902-1919; Elizabeth and Mary Wilks, campaigners for women's suffrage; the post-war phenomenon of cycle speedway; the changing shape of Hackney's housing 1945-1960*

Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society (vol.17 new ser. 2009) from D.C. Glover, 6 Baker Fold, Halifax HX1 5TX *Prehistoric standing stones in the South Pennines; medieval park of Erringden; the Union Journal or Halifax Advertiser (1759-1760); Escroyds and Akroyds 1770-1935; Halifax Literary and*

Philosophical Society 1830-1964; Joseph Horsfall and Sons; Ralph Fox (1900-1936); Halifax Building Society in the pre-computer age 1953-1966; Benjamin Thomas Sutcliffe (1908-1970)

Hampshire Studies: proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society (vol.64 2009) £10 details from www.fieldclub.hants.org.uk
Investigation of a mound on Broxhead Common; 2000 years of salt-making at Lymington; Iron Age Enclosure at Fir Hill, Bossington; excavations near Cams Hill School, Fareham; early-medieval barn at Bishops Waltham; the Hampshire estates of the Hospitallers; religious practices on the Mary Rose; carving of the early Tudor Renaissance at St Mary's church, Old Basing; Dean Farm Estate at Kilmeston; small towns of North Hampshire 1660-1880; land use in Buckholt; Bingley's History of Hampshire

Huddersfield Local History Society Journal (no.21 Winter 2009-2010) from David Griffiths, 24 Sunnybank, Huddersfield HD3 3DE *Spring Grove School; Grassy Cliff Hospitat; Edgerton Cemetery; the growth of the architectural profession in Huddersfield*

The Herald [Ilkeston and District LHS] (no.1 November/December 2009) from Beverley Kilby, 38 Ilkeston Road, Trowell, Nottingham NG9 3PX *Early newsletters revisited (no.2 February/March 2010) unexpected visit by the lord of the manor; the fastest barber in town? Joe Wright of Ilkeston, 1861-1942*

Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society Transactions (vol.83 2009) from Hon. Secretary, LAHS, The Guildhall, Guildhall Lane, Leicester LE1 5FQ *Ashby Folville to Thurgaston: archaeology of a Leicestershire pipeline; excavations of Roman cemetery at 21-33 Newarke Street, Leicester; medieval drawing of Leicester; a medieval post-mill mound at Manor Farm, Humberstone; ecological and environmental contours of early modern small town: Loughborough 1540-1640; the 19th century boot and shoe industry in Leicester; late Victorian and Edwardian clerical incumbents in Rutland*

Leicestershire Historian [Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society] (no.44 2008) £16 details from above address *Wyverns of Leicester; Thurmaston: an industrial village shaped by framework knitting; tram horses of Leicester; Leicestershire and the London Virginia Company; Hugh Ashton (c1485-1558); adventures of an Edwardian lady parachutist; Leicester Theatre (1800-1835); topographical studies in Leicester and Leicestershire; Leicester Church Congress 1919 (no.45 2009) pleasure and recreation in Bath Lane, Leicester; travels through Quorn's past; Thomas Henry Fosbrooke (1862-1925); working at Joseph Johnson's department store; Leicester Ladies Reading Society; John Martin, quarry manager and talented topographical artist; Dr Elias Travers DD; Thomas Burbidge: last town clerk to Leicester Corporation; Ashby-de-la-Zouch early theatricals; St Hilda's Leicester; Fanny Palmer (1812-1876) railway artist*

Oxfordshire Local History (vol.8 no.4) details from Christopher Hall, Telfer's Cottage, Turville, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 6QL County Council philistines; *Durrell Family and management of the Oxford Canal Company; class distinction, democracy and proper drains: how Witney was civilised 1894-1904*

Rickmansworth Historical Society Newsletter (no.86) £1 from Geoff Saul, 20 West Way, Rickmansworth WD3 7EN *Storm over Rickmansworth 1759; Poor Law pt.1 the almshouses; Rickmansworth from the Watford Observer*

Rutland Record [Rutland Local History & Record Society] (no.29 2009) from Rutland County Museum, Catmose Street, Oakham LE15 6HW *Clerical incumbents in early Victorian Rutland; Venerable Thomas Kaye Bonney 1782-1863; Old Hall Farm and Martinsthorpe House*

Send and Ripley History Society Journal (vol.6 no.210 Jan/Feb 2010) from Norman Carpenter, Ufford, 106 Potters Lane, Send, Woking GU23 7AL *The Tices; memories of war; Domesday Surrey; Collins Van*

The Link [Wessex Newfoundland Society] (no.80 December 2009) £10p.a. from briangalpin@ntlworld.com *The Second World War and Newfoundland; the spirit of 'Yes Minister' in the nineteenth century*

Journal of West Sussex History [West Sussex Archives Society] (no.77 2008-2009) details from Philip.macdougall@btinternet.com special issue: **What on Earth is under Sussex?** *Taking the waters at Brighton 1750-1850; Reverend Charles Wilton and his geological investigations in West Sussex; Gideon Mantell and the Brighton press 1834-1838; Herbert Toms and the geological folklore of Sussex; Edward Alfred Martin and 'the glaciation of the North Downs'; Edmond Martin Venables (1901-1990)*

The Journal of the Whitechapel Society (no.28 October 2009) £3 from Jeremy B. Moody, Gorringe House, 7 Gorringe Road, Salisbury SP2 7HZ *A comparative look at the murders of Elizabeth Short and Catherine Eddowes; Kearley and Tonge: a short history; was Jack the Ripper a freemason?*

Forest Clearing [Wyre Forest Historical Research Group] (vol.3 no.2 November 2009) 50p from WFHRG, c/o Moira Brown, 26 Keats Place, Kidderminster DY10 3EZ *Forest folk; Bayton brewers; life and times of Bill Eaton*

International Journal of Regional and Local Studies (ser.2 vol.2 Autumn 2009) from Dr Philip Swan, c/o Faculty of Media, Humanities & Technology, University of Lincoln, Brayford Pool, Lincoln LN6 7TS *exploring the contested 'Celtic Fringes', of the British Isles; Cornishness and Englishness: nested identities or incompatible ideologies; the periphery fights back: tourism and culture in Scotland 1860-1914; Irish tourism and the construction of national identity 1922-1960; Manx identity and the dynamics of cultural change; Samson in Senghennydd: rough music and rough play in Wales*

Local History Magazine (no.126 Nov/Dec 2009) £3.50 or £22.50 p.a. from Local History Magazine, Doric House, 56 Alcester Road, Studley B80 7LG *Village libraries in North Buckinghamshire in the nineteenth century; Vesta Tilley lives on; history and archaeology: a match made in hell?*