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Newsletter

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**Welcome to the Friends Newsletter for 2024 -
packed with news and items of interest for
the discerning local historian**

*Cover photo: a resident reads up on the history of
his parish*



A FULLER YEAR

EDITORIAL

The evenings are drawing in and the leaves are beginning to fall so it must be time for another Friends Newsletter. This is where we traditionally review what the Centre and the Friends have been up to in the preceding year, and I'm happy to report that this time there has been more to report on.

The Seminar series started again last October, and was available both in person and online. This issue contains reports on all of the papers. (The seminar season has already restarted for the 24/25 season, and this time we are sharing the space with Urban History. You'll find some seminars are on Thursday and some are on Friday. Again they are available online - details on the [Friends website](#).)

We hosted another successful Hoskins Day in the summer, and were heartened by the increased number of attendees. There are reports on the two supporting papers and the main event to enjoy in this issue.

Finally we wrapped the 'Newsletter' year up with a trip to the 'Fenland Study Centre' in Spalding. See page 11 for an account of the development of the centre and ambitions for its future.

Besides these reviews of the Friends year, the Newsletter contains its normal eclectic mixture of news and items. Plenty to keep you inside by the fire this Autumn...

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Chair's Report

Michael Gilbert - Chair

This is my last report as Chair of the Friends and it is pleasing that we are continuing to grow and develop as a group. The past five years have been exceptionally challenging both for the Friends and for the Centre and could have led to our demise. In 2020 we had the double hammer blow of Covid and the closure of our spiritual home in Marc Fitch House. We had to curtail our in-person activities for a number of years although successfully moving online with the provision of talks, lectures and even a virtual

Hoskins' Day. The loss of Marc Fitch House was a particularly sad event with the challenge of maintaining the Centre's unique character during the move to the Attenborough Building on the main campus. This combined with the financial difficulties faced by the university, and academic institutions in general, have placed the future of the Centre at risk. It is a tribute to Angela Muir and Richard Jones that it has been able to weather these storms and to continue to provide high quality local history teaching and research.

These trials have inevitably brought the Friends and the Centre ever closer together. We have been instrumental in helping to set up the joint Centre for Regional and Local History and Centre for Urban History libraries in the Attenborough Building. We have been able to run a series of events for members including, most recently, the Study Day at the Centre for Fenland Studies in Ayscoughfee Hall Museum, Spalding in September. We are planning another Study Day at Naseby in spring 2025. This year's Hoskins' day was particularly successful bringing together a number of speakers including Colin Hyde and Pam Fisher as well as our Hoskins' Day lecturer, Professor Corinne Fowler. It was well received with double the attendance from the previous year. The placement programme has continued with the Friends facilitating opportunities for students and researchers, so far successful placements have been found for three MA and Undergraduate students. Work on the programme is continuing with three organisation offering placements in 2025 (SGS, Spalding; Delapre Abbey, Northampton and St Mary Magdalene Church in Newark). Through our website and social media engagement we are attracting considerable interest from outside the membership and providing a hub for sharing local history news and information. A final optimistic point to note is that the Friends membership is continuing to grow.

Inevitably, there will be difficult times ahead and with falling numbers and financial challenges the future of the Centre may continue to be at risk. Along with that the future role of the Friends must be discussed. I believe we must be more than just an alumni group for the university and embrace a wider role in supporting study and research into local history. This would include inviting and even encouraging membership from outside our normal catchment of the Centre. Our

membership has a wealth of knowledge on all aspects of the discipline and I am sure can offer much more in terms of supporting students and publishing research material. The support of the Friends is a valuable asset to the Centre.

Finally, I would like to thank everybody for their support for the Friends over the past five years. It has been a pleasure and privilege being the Chair of the body and it is pleasing to be able to leave in a robust state for the future. I would like to wish the Friends and my successor my very best wishes.

Michael Gilbert

Centre Report

Dr Angela Muir - Centre Director

Greetings once again, Friends! The Centre for Regional and Local History has had another eventful year, and again we have gone from strength to strength. Although like most universities in 2024, the University of Leicester is facing significant financial challenges, CRLH appears to be weathering the storm reasonably well. As always, the ongoing support of the Friends has contributed significantly to our continued success.

Last year, at long last, we finally relaunched our seminar series after putting it on hold during the pandemic, and leaving it suspended during our move from Marc Fitch House. Most of our speakers were new CRLH members and doctoral students who showcased their work on a range of topics from Black British History to ghost stories and the landscape. It was great to see so many Friends in attendance, both in person and online. For various practical reasons, this year's seminar is hosted in partnership with our colleagues in the Centre for



Urban History with whom we often collaborate. As a result, this year's seminars will alternate between Thursdays and Fridays, with all offered in person in Attenborough 101 and online via MS Teams, too. The Friends are always welcome to attend, and join us for a tea or coffee before or after as well.

Many of you will recall our process of applying for Centre status in the summer of 2022, which all research centres were required to do. Following that process we were given the status of 'development centre', and told there would be a subsequent review after two years. That time has now passed and we do not have an update on next steps, if there are any. Our plan for now is to simply carry on with our work supporting histories of peoples and places in Britain and around the world from a range of interdisciplinary perspectives, confident in the knowledge we have carved out a meaningful space for ourselves that builds on our well-established legacy. We stated as much in an end of year report submitted to the College this summer, and they seemed pleased with it as they have allocated us a small budget for this academic year (which is noteworthy given the limited funding available across the University).

CRLH is in a fortunate position compared to many other Centres across the University because we are in possession of healthy endowment funds established well before I joined the Centre. These have enabled us to support the research activities of colleagues in the Centre and in the School of History, Politics and International Relations when little to no other research funding has been available. We have also helped fund research trips for masters and doctoral students in History working on topics related to regional and local history, and histories of the family. We were also able to host a small Christmas social last year, which brought colleagues into our library and seminar room where we could show off some of our resources

and encourage colleagues to use or spaces for their own related research. Activities like this allow us to raise the profile of the Centre within the College and University, which I think has been quite effective.

Last year I also reported on an anonymous bequest made to the Centre. One of the main activities we have funded through this are three MA studentships in local Black British History in partnership with the Black Cultural Archives (BCA) in London. These studentships will run concurrently, and are named after Len Garrison, the founder of BCA and alumnus of the Centre (he completed his MA in English Local History in the 1990s). We had hoped to launch these for the 2024-25 academic year, but due to various administrative delays we have decided to recruit for 2025-26 instead. Each of the students will complete the MA (Local History Pathway) starting next autumn. As part of this, they will take the Heritage Placement module, which they will take up at BCA and complete projects related to local Black British History. They will then complete their dissertations on a related topic. Thanks to the generosity of the anonymous donor, we will be able to offer funding for tuition,

research expenses as well as a small bursary towards living expenses. We are extremely excited to see what these students produce from their research!

As always, we continue to be extremely grateful for the support and commitment of the Friends. You contribute immeasurably to the vibrancy of the Centre and its research culture, and I encourage you all to attend of our seminars, either in person or online. Please do get in touch with me if there are any activities you would like CRLH to support or be involved with. I truly believe that it is people who make a research centre like ours thrive, and for us, the Friends are an integral part of that.

Angela Muir



HOSKINS DAY

ATTENBOROUGH BUILDING, LEICESTER, JUNE 1

Once again we held Hoskins Day at the Centre's home in the Attenborough building. We had better attendance and better refreshments, the space is really beginning to feel like home. Another feature was a couple of special tours of the David Wilson Library. We continue to have supporting papers as well as the 'main' event. We were happy to have contributions from the East Midlands Oral History Archive and the Leicestershire Victoria County History project. Hoskins encouraged us to get 'mud on our boots', and our first and last papers both invited us to go walking.

COLIN HYDE Walking through the Past

Our first paper was delivered by Colin Hyde (of the East Midlands Oral History Archive), and took us on a journey to explore 220 years of guided walking trails of Leicester.

The earliest example was produced by Susannah Watts. Described as 'A gifted linguist', Susannah relied upon her earnings from writing and translation work in order to supplement her family's income. Part of her output was the 1804 'A walk through Leicester', (a facsimile of the 1820 second edition is available online). The tour started in the Gallowtree Gate and proceeded in an anti-clockwise direction around the town walls, taking in what is now Victoria Park in order to admire the view, before returning to the town centre to finish at the market place. Colin remarked that, as much as Leicester might have been expected to be transformed over this period, that a walk compiled nowadays might make use of much the same route, with Watts's guiding drawing attention to features that still exist.

The next guided walk appeared some 100 years later. 'Leicester and Neighbourhood' was produced in 1907 to mark the visit of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. The book contained walks around 'modern' Leicester, 'ancient' Leicester, and excursions to Leicester's neighbourhoods. The modern Leicester tour unsurprisingly highlighted places of technology and education, some of which still remain, but many are now gone.

Next in the list was a 1935 booklet named 'A Day out in Leicester', produced to serve the needs of visitors to the city, and started its tour at the Midland railway station. This wasn't entirely a 'walking tour' as it invited its reader at several points to take advantage of the 'electric car' to move between places of interest, which included the many statues that could be viewed.

We had to wait until after the war until the next contribution to the genre. This came in the form of 'The City of Leicester - a Guide to Places of Interest in the City' by Jack Simmons, published in 1951. The walks that this book featured all started at the Clock Tower, and routes were suggested that took in the centre and the suburbs. This suggested locations that were not in the earlier tours, including Everards Brewery,



Susannah Watts

the eighteenth-century Friars Lane area, and the Offices of Leicestershire County Council. The work is also notable for discussing the likely burial place of Richard III.

In 1960 Nikolaus Pevsner's *Buildings of England* series published a volume on Leicestershire and Rutland, which included 'perambulations' of the city centre. Pevsner was no great lover of Victorian architecture, however, as was apparent in the First edition of the book. By the second edition he had had a slight change of heart, and found more in the way of sights to recommend.

The year 1972 saw the arrival of the world's first environmental town trail. The 'Leicester Town Trail' was the work of geographers who were keen to attract attention to the urban environment. They worked together with the Planning authorities, and were keen to highlight conservation. The trail they produced, however, was still similar to its predecessors in terms of the routes it described, but the emphasis on what participants should look at had changed. This trail was only ever published in the 'Town and Country Planning Association's Bulletin of Environmental Education (BEE)', but went on to serve as a



template for similar endeavours elsewhere in the country. This period saw the production of several themed trails that took in different aspects of the city's history.

1984 was the 'Festival of Architecture and British Heritage Year'. In Leicester this was marked by the production of 'The City Trail - Explore the Corners of Leicester'. Terracotta plaques depicting foxes were installed on buildings, with brass roundels set into pavements, to help guide followers of the trail (some of which can still be seen). More trails have since appeared taking in different aspects, these include a 'knitting trail', a new 'environmental trail', and a trail taking in the building stones of Leicestershire.

Modern technology has made an impact in that some apps were produced to guide Leicester walks, but these have already become obsolete. Other online tours have appeared which can be downloaded and printed (and no longer rely on dedicated apps). More than 350 heritage panels have also been installed, which are linked by themes to create a trail (see [Heritage Panel Project - Story of Leicester](#)).

PAM FISHER Blue dogs, basketry, board games and bells: The VCH in the 21st Century

The second paper was presented by Dr Pam Fisher and was all about the Leicestershire Victoria County History.

The Victoria History started its work in 1899 and had the aim of researching the history of every settlement. As we know, there never can be a definitive history of anywhere, and so the project has evolved quite a lot since its early days.

The early output concentrated on the Lords of the Manor, on the history of the church and the advowson. The project was reinvigorated after the second world war and the work was devolved to the counties that the volumes were covering. W G Hoskins took charge of the volumes for

Leicestershire and he realised that people had wider interests so far as the history of their counties were concerned, with an emphasis far more on social history.

The Leicestershire project ran out of money in 1964 and went into abeyance. In 2008, however, the Leicestershire VCH got a big Millennial grant and relaunched the project with a new approach. This time historians would be working directly with communities to produce their own histories.

The new works produced by the group aimed to be much more accessible. The iconic 'big red books' continued, but their subject matter expanded to include boundaries, land ownership, economic history, social history, and local government. But other individual projects were established, with different and more accessible products at the end of them.



Between 2013 and 2017 the Charnwood Roots project involved over 600 volunteers helping to research the history and archaeology of 35 towns and villages across the Charnwood Forest area. The information they collected was presented in an online database accessible to all.

Moving on, the project turned its attention to producing smaller individual works concentrating on particular parishes. These are similar in subject matter to the big red books but written in a more approachable style. Four works have so far been produced. Lutterworth is the latest, and this was preceded by works on Ibstock, Buckminster and Sewstern, and Castle Donington. It is features from these works that gave the title to Pam's paper.

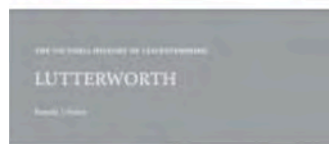
The 'Blue Dog' belongs to the history of Buckminster and Sewstern. Buckminster was an 'estate village'. Seventeen houses in Cow Row and thirty five houses in Bull Row were built by William Manners and were let to tenants who worked on his estate in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. William Manners also had parliamentary ambitions, and the pub named the Blue Dog in Sewstern was connected to his political career. There were many pubs named the 'Blue Something' in this area, all reflecting Manners's affiliation. The pub in Sewstern was actively used to recruit supporters, there even being a promise of a house in Buckminster in exchange for such support.

The basketry in the title belongs to a settlement on the opposite side of the county, Castle Donington. Located on the River Derwent, the catching of eels was a large concern of the village and had been for some time. Pam showed a slide of a woven eel trap form the ninth/tenth century. This feature was reflected in part of the settlements agricultural land being dedicated to the growing of osiers, from which the baskets were constructed.

Board games make an appearance in Lutterworth where records reveal a publican being fined in the 1560s for allowing people to play board games in their premises (this doesn't seem to have been 'Monopoly' or 'Cluedo' – but something that involved a 'shovegroat' table.

Finally our journey took us to Ibstock, where we touched on what provides a common soundscape for so many of our villages – the sound of the church bells. Villagers made a surprising discovery when they came to rehang the bells in this village. There was a bell cast in 1632 which was dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Who knew about this? Who gave the order for a dedication so dangerously at odds with the protestant religion? This is something we might never know.

After this taster of the current work of the VCH we were invited to examine the four books and purchase them for ourselves at a stand set up in the upstairs social space.



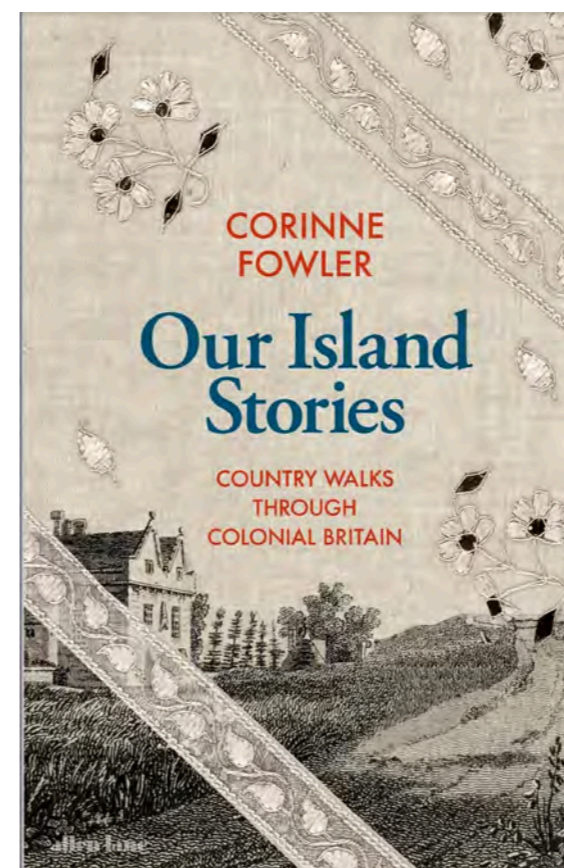
CORINNE FOWLER

Landscape History after Hoskins: Country Walks through Colonial Britain

The University of Leicester's own Professor Corinne was our keynote speaker, basing her paper on her recent book *Our Island Stories: Country Walks through Britain*.

Corinne started her talk by telling the audience what a big fan of Hoskins she was. She had also long had an interest in National Trust houses and their colonial connections. These big houses were important regional hubs of power and imposed patterns on the countryside in the form of hedges, fields, and roads. She reiterated Hoskins's point about the importance of railways as a feature of the landscape – comprising the biggest earthworks since the Roman period. Around the railways all sorts of related infrastructure grew up – hotels, shops and so on. Professor Fowler observed how the railways were made possible by colonial wealth.

The book describes a number of walks that we can ourselves enjoy. It is a walking book as much



as it is a history book, with a bit of nature book included. There is a big underlying theme, however, and that is the relationship of the landscape and our colonial past. Corinne had companions for all of the walks, from diverse areas of life, and the ten locations for the walk were mostly chosen by these companions. This might have seemed a bit like putting a pin in a map, but it was surprising how fertile this approach was.

The whole area of the relationship of colonial history to the British landscape has become rather toxic. Corinne herself, through her work with the National Trust, had become a victim of the culture wars, being seen as a 'hate figure' by some of the supporters of the minority 'Restore Trust' group and others trying to freeze historical interpretation. This book is Professor Fowler's response – and her attempt to detoxify the subject.

The walks cover Britain from Jura to Cornwall, and the locations have connections to all forms of colonialism: the East India Company, slavery, and colonial rule. The aim is to widen up to a larger history that encompasses the villages, hedgerows and hamlets that these walking routes pass. The ten walks are as follows:

- The Sugar Walk – Jura and Islay
- The East India Company Walk – Wordsworth and the Lake District
- The Tobacco Walk – Whitehaven
- The Cotton Walk – East Lancashire
- The Wool Walk – Dolgellau and the Americas
- An Indian Walk in the Cotswolds
- The Enclosure Walk – Norfolk and Jamaica
- The Bankers Walk – Hampshire and Louisiana
- The Labourers Walk – Tolpuddle and British Penal Colonies
- The Copper Walk – Cornwall, West Africa, and the Americas

The intention was to concentrate on the traditionally neglected subject of colonial history, but also to look at the equally neglected area of labour history too. Whether the area walked is

rural countryside or a mill town, these two subjects are intertwined.

Professor Fowler first concentrated on the Enclosure Walk as a means of illustrating how the book approached these subjects. The location of this walk is near Bungay on the Norfolk/Suffolk border and it brings our attention

to the slavery history of enclosure, relating the landscape to imperial wealth, land ownership, and legal and political power. This is the story of the Earsham Hall Estate, and the enclosure of Outney Common. The estate at that time belonged to



Earsham Hall

Sir William Windham Dalling, who was son of Sir John Dalling who had been the Governor of Jamaica. Sir William also inherited the Castle Donnington plantation in Jamaica from his father, along with its slaves, and continued to be a vociferous opponent to abolition.

The eighteenth century had seen an intensification of the enclosure movement, this in turn drove the shift from a rural population relying on subsistence agriculture to a reliance on wage labour as villagers were denied access to the resources of the common lands. This chronology is well known to most



Dolgellau

students of local history, but what is less appreciated is the arrival of colonial wealth being a driver and an enabler of this process. Enclosure was expensive.

As soon as Sir William inherited the estate, he set about expanding it, and in 1818 petitioned to

buy and enclose land. A lot of this land was part of Outney Common, but by the 1840s the common land had disappeared. It was a habit of would-be enclosers to describe the land that they were targeting as being 'barren wasteland', a description that was often accepted despite the evidence that opponents to the petition might produce. Here, as elsewhere, the petition was successful and Dalling, and his co-petitioners got their way.

The local population lost all the rights they had previously had to the food and fuel and building materials that they had enjoyed from the common land.

A few people got some compensation for this loss, but the newly enclosed land became private. Henceforth the collection of wood and other resources was strictly forbidden, and this greatly annoyed the neighbouring Duke of Norfolk who had previously enjoyed such rights. To Corinne, this illustrated the way in which the new colonial wealth could 'leapfrog' the more traditional high-s t a t u s landowners.

A lasting legacy of this particular enclosure was the stopping up of many rights of way across the estate. To this day locals have to 'take the long way round'.

Corinne looked at another walk to illustrate another

of the lesser-known connections of colonialism to local history. The purpose of the Wool Walk was to show the connection between the increasing prosperity of the town of Dolgellau in Snowdonia and its role in clothing the slaves of the Americas. The town fell on increasingly hard times after

abolition, when its cloth no longer had the ready transatlantic market.

The Tobacco walks also illustrated a less famous colonial connection. This route has its destination as Whitehaven on the Cumbrian coast. A port town near a coal t o w n unsurprisingly much of its early growth centred around the shipping of coal to Ireland. Whitehaven also developed an Atlantic trade in the eighteenth century however. It had an inner



Whitehaven harbour

harbour for the shallow drafted coal vessels and a deep harbour for the ocean-going ships. Unknown to many nowadays, it was the third largest tobacco port in the country, shipping the leaf in from the plantations of Virginia and Maryland. It also participated in the slave trade for some of its existence. Many industries sprang

up in the town, clay pipe manufacturers, snufferies, glass works and iron works. Although now a town of faded elegance, it's one-time prosperity can be seen in the Georgian townhouses. At that time there were many people living in the town of African origin, although that population is no longer visible in the town.

We had visited just three of the ten walks in the book, but had seen some of the unexpected ways in which our colonial history affected these areas in sometimes unexpected ways.

With this on our mind, we retreated upstairs to enjoy sandwiches and cakes and have a chat.

Mandy de Belin

The Centre for Fenland Studies

In September the Friends enjoyed a trip to the new Centre for Fenland Studies - here is a description of the project

Spalding Gentlemen's Society with Ayscoughfee Hall Museum opened the Centre for Fenland Studies in June 2024. The Centre will bring together local historians, local history groups, heritage organisations and academic institutions with an interest in the Fenland region and has a number of specific aims.

Ayscoughfee Hall, Spalding

It will provide a focus for research into the Fenlands and will make that research available to academics and local historians. It will support

local engagement across the region in order to promote an appreciation and understanding of the region. Finally, it will run community-based projects to help access the hidden heritage of the Fenland.

South Holland District Council have been able to provide a research room on the first floor of Ayscoughfee Hall Museum. It includes a reading room for visiting researchers that holds the Spalding Gentlemen's Society local history book collection as well as a local and national map collection. It is intended that this will be augmented by a collection of local prints as well



Ayscoughfee Hall

as access to online source material. By arrangement there will also be access to other material, such as the pamphlet collection, currently held in accessible storage offsite.

Centre for Fenland Studies

Initially individuals and groups will be able to visit the Centre (from July to December 2024) by calling 07831 323062 or emailing fenland@scsac.org to book a time. The details will also be on the Spalding Gentlemen's Society and the Fenland Heritage Network websites. From 2025 the intention is for the facility to be available during Ayscoughfee Hall's normal opening hours (Wednesday to Sunday between 10:30 and 15:30). However, if you require access to specific documents held in storage, it will be necessary to contact us in advance to make sure they can be made available.



As noted earlier, the purpose of the Centre is to promote the study of the region and to improve understanding of all aspects of Fenland life. Although based in Lincolnshire the collection contains material on all three counties of the region. It is available to anybody with an interest in researching any aspect of Fenland life

including family history, buildings, landscape, churches, farming or industry. This can be individuals, schools, academics or local history and heritage groups.

Projects...

In addition to individual research, we will be running a number of projects from the Centre. The first will be preparing two 'short' Victoria County History (VCH) volumes on the history of Spalding covering the period pre and post 1710.



The 1732 Grundy Map of Spalding

VCH was founded in 1899 as a national project to write the history of every county in England. At its inception, the project was dedicated to Queen Victoria, which is how it derives its name. Lincolnshire was planning to produce three volumes but only published Volume II on religious houses in 1906 and then ran out of money! Efforts have been made to restart VCH in the county but without success, until now. We are fortunate to have the support of the University of Lincoln, Lincoln Records Society and the Institute of Historical Research with the project but the real strength is the number of local volunteers prepared to carry out the research and write up. Currently the group meets every month in the CFS to share the groups discoveries and to study together some of the incredible source material held in the CFS and the Spalding Gentlemen's Society. The date of two further meetings have been finalized. On Friday 11th October the group will meet in the CFS at 11:00 to look at some of the incredible early maps associated with the area such as the fourteenth/fifteenth century Pinchbeck Map and the 1732 Grundy map of Spalding. On Friday 8th

November the research group will meet to walk around the historic sites and buildings of Spalding, stopping at Spalding Baptist Church for refreshments and to hear about the history of the Baptist movement in the town.

The VCH volumes are obviously focused on Lincolnshire with the aim of providing a long required definitive history of Spalding. To actively engage with the other counties across the Fenlands we will also be running a 'churches' project. This will look at the history and social importance of some of the splendid churches



Fenland Churches

across the region. These will include fine examples such as St Mary's in Whaplode (Lincolnshire), the cathedral-like St Clement's in Terrington St Clement (Norfolk) and St Wendreda's in March (Cambridgeshire) with the magnificent angel roof. The project will not just look at their modern appearance but how they were built, how were they funded, and by whom,

who were the builders and what their role was in medieval and early modern communities.

To support the projects, we will be running a programme of history and heritage workshops from the Centre covering a wide range of topics. These will be led by experts in their fields and will include studies of the history of the region and its landscape, society and economy. There will also be sessions on how to find and interpret source material as well as the professions of the time.

If you want to be involved in any of these projects or just to come along to the workshops just contact us on the telephone number or email address above.

Michael Gilbert/Sue Hughes

Historical Highlights of Hillesden

Hillesden is a small village (approx. 175 inhabitants) situated in North Buckinghamshire. It is accessed via a 'dead end' lane – if you weren't going there you might never find it. Having said that, it boasts many miles of footpaths and bridleways and this makes it a popular destination for dog walkers, hikers, and cyclists from Buckingham and other nearby towns and villages. (It was particularly well-visited during the pandemic when trips outdoors were so limited).

Last year the parish council decided it wanted to spend some money on presenting the history of the village to its wider public, and so commissioned an 'interpretation' board. I was delighted to revisit the story of my home settlement, and found that some new research

had appeared since the last time I looked, expanding my knowledge.

Although now very small, Hillesden has a lot of history, including an Anglo-Saxon boundary charter, a famous church (known as 'the cathedral in the fields') and a civil war siege. There was plenty of material (too much!) to use to populate the interpretation board. We fixed on an A0 size and quite a lot of text because we expected that most visitors were returners rather one-offs, and could take the opportunity to absorb the information a piece at a time rather than all in one session.

In true village style, researching, designing, and producing the board took far less time than the subsequent discussion between the PCC and the county council about who actually owned the land outside the church that was its planned

location. The board was eventually erected in August this year (and we had a barbecue to celebrate).

During the meetings and discussions surrounding the panel production the subject of the 'village tunnel' came up. I had heard the rumour of its existence before and, like all the other stories of village tunnels I'd heard about, had tended to dismiss it. However, I was presented with incontestable video evidence of a thirty-metre brick arch tunnel, collapsed at each end and so originally longer. This had been used by the network company when they laid the fibre optic broadband cable for the village. The tunnel skirts the west side of the churchyard, then wraps around to run along the south side. What on earth was its purpose? We could discount a civil war connection, the Royalist Garrison had not had enough time to



finish defensive earthworks, leave alone an 'escape tunnel'. There are accounts, however, of some very fancy formal gardens at the second Hillesden House adjacent to the church (the first one was burnt down after the siege) in the early 1700s. The House was then the home of Justice Alexander Denton, and had some local renown. Features included a substantial water feature known as a 'canal'. The church, and the site of the neighbouring house and gardens, are atop a hill with no immediately obvious water source. My current theory is that the tunnel was constructed at this time to service these features. If anyone has

expertise in this area and has any other theories, please let me know!

Mandy de Belin

Centre Seminars

We are very happy to report that the centre seminar programme resumed in October 2023, after its pandemic hiatus. Here are some reports of the proceedings:

Black Lives in British Archives

Chloe Phillips and Gaverne Bennett

Chloe Phillips is in the second year of her PhD on Black lives in Cornwall. She is a recipient of a Future 100 scholarship from UoL.

Chloe worked at Kresen Kernow (Cornwall's new archive centre) for 10 years and, in 2020, lead a project on Black Histories.



Chloe's talk asked two questions:

What can original archive materials reveal about the everyday lived lives of Black people in 18th and 19th century Cornwall?

How typical are Cornwall's archives?

Chloe created a database of every mention she could find – ca, 7,000 people, lots of which turned out to be white. The database was eventually whittled down to 300. (She thanked the Friends for some funding).

Racial descriptors: names were not very helpful; place of birth also not helpful because of the Cornish diaspora.

Physical descriptions and photos were found but also proved problematic.

Her initial findings showed widespread distribution across Cornwall. 41% of occupations were not known, 25% sailors, 13% servants, 13% children. Other jobs included boxer and musician.

Chloe's slideshow included some examples of documents and photos.

Gaverne Bennett is also in the 2nd year of a PhD, and is researching The Black Cultural Archives in Brixton; he has a GTA scholarship.

The full title of his research is *Black lives in the Black Cultural Archives: collective memory and the politics 1981-2021*

The founder of the archives, Len Garrison asked the question "Where are our heroes, martyrs and monuments?" The archive was his response.

Gaverne worked on a poster on Black history for the *Guardian* and discovered the archive.



His research questions are:

Was there opposition?

How was Black Culture defined?

What decisions were made about the space?

What are the processes for deciding what was included in BCA exhibitions and its collection?

Mary Bryceland

946
Hillesden first appears in the historical record. A boundary charter delimited a large estate encompassing Hillesden and Chomede that King Edward granted to his loyal servant, Archbishop. The estate had been previously cleared from forest and had probably existed for at least a hundred years before the grant.

1086
The Domesday Book records a large grant of 30 tithes in Hillesden to Walter Giffard. Walter was the abbot of Wilton, of Normandy and English nobleman at the battle of Hastings. He was rewarded with a feudal barony, owned in Long Garton, of which Hillesden was a part. (A 'tith' is usually taken by the cleric or his tenants.)

1150s
Walter Giffard's grandson (Walter Giffard, second Earl of Buckingham) founded Narberth Abbey in Long Garton. He endowed it with many churches, including Hillesden church together with about 100 acres of land. From then on Hillesden had two manors: Hillesden manor and the Rectory Manse belonging to Narberth Abbey. The Abbey was dissolved in 1538. Later, its holdings, including the Rectory Manse of Hillesden, were used by King Henry VIII to found Christ Church College in Oxford.

1493
Narberth Abbey rather neglected Hillesden Church. While collecting the tithes that the villagers paid for the upkeep of the building and provision of a minister, they let the building fall into disrepair. A vicarage called the Abbey to account over these neglect. It is not certain whether the church was rebuilt by the Abbey or by the then Lord of the Manor, Hugh Conway, but it is from this time that the splendid church you see today dates.

Hillesden Parish
Hillesden Manor was granted to the Denton family by Edward VI in 1547 and they held it for the next two hundred years. They also leased the Rectory Manse from Christ Church and so controlled nearly all the lands of Hillesden.

Hillesden House
The manor house had been built by Hugh Conway in the 1490s but met an untimely end during the First Civil War. Hillesden was situated in between Royalist headquarters in Oxford and Parliamentary strongholds in Aylesbury and Newport Pagnell. The then Lord of the Manor, Sir Alexander Denton, was a staunch supporter of the King, but that did not stop a parliamentary garrison briefly holding Hillesden House in January 1644. They could not keep it and were replaced by a Royalist garrison in February. After losing his castle to the garrison, a resident of Denton appealed to the parliamentary forces for relief. An initial attempt to take the house failed, but in March 1644 a force of around 2000 under the command of Colonel Oliver Cromwell besieged the garrison. After some initial action, during which the Royalists retreated to the house and the church, the garrison surrendered. Around 30 soldiers (very likely foreign mercenaries) were put to death, while the remainder were marched to Padbury. The Parliamentary forces were in possession of Hillesden House, but on hearing a rumour that Royalist forces were approaching from Oxford, they burnt it down and retreated.

1644
Sir Alexander Denton was taken prisoner and died later that year in the Tower of London; it is said of a broken heart. As well as the destruction of his home, he suffered the death of his eldest son, John, who was killed in action in August 1644. His second son, Edmund, inherited the manor and rebuilt a smaller house on the same site next to the church in 1648. The gardens and grounds of this manor were much admired in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but this house was demolished in the early side of the nineteenth century.

1652
The Dentons tried to restore their fortunes by 'enclosure'. Hillesden had previously been farmed in four open fields, divided into strips that were distributed throughout the fields. Cropp were raised with fallow to maintain the fertility of the land. It had been found that medieval clay land could be more productively be used for sheep and so Hillesden was divided into a number of smaller, enclosed fields for the purpose of raising stock. This led to the shrinking of the village, as evidenced by the deserted settlement remains between Church End and The Barracks that can be seen in aerial photographs.

1740
The direct line of male Denton heirs died out. Judge Alexander Denton left the manor to his son's son, George Chesbrough, who changed his name to Denton. George left the manor to his daughter, Elizabeth Gorb, who was the mother of the famous agriculturalist 'Coke of Norfolk'. After inheriting Hillesden, Thomas Coke sold it in the early 1800s. From the mid-nineteenth century (when the village had belonged entirely to the Dukes of Buckingham and Chandos, and Christ Church College) village lands went into the hands of more and more individual freeholders.

TODAY
Agriculture in Hillesden has come full circle. From medieval arable to early modern sheep pasture to Victorian dairying, the late twentieth century saw arable becoming predominant once again. The twenty-first century has seen the last sheep farm, being converted to arable and poultry.

1959
Hillesden had its biggest beach with celebrity 'Narberth' (possibly the older house in the village) was then owned by Thos Hook. Her daughter (Elisabeth Jeanne Scott) had her marriage to tennis star Johnnie Ray dissolved at Hillesden Church with the event covered by Paul News. Thos gave Narberth to Jane and Johnnie but they sold it soon afterwards (apparently to Thos's annoyance). The Church also stored in some 1960's BBC Easter broadcasts, when the great actor Sir John Gielgud was filmed reading there.

Tommy “What a life” Hatton

Simon Dixon, Associate Director for Community Heritage, David Wilson Library, University of Leicester.

Friends, university staff, students and two of Tommy’s grandchildren gathered in the Digital Culture Studio at the David Wilson Library to hear Simon’s talk on the life and passions of Tommy Hatton. Simon expressed his thanks to the Hatton family for giving him access to family history records for his research and their presences and contribution to the seminar was much appreciated by the attendees.

Born in Grafton Street, a somewhat better-off area of Hulme, Hatton was one of a large family orphaned at an early age. Educated at the Blue Coat School in Oldham, he excelled at his studies as evidenced by his school prize for mathematics. Leaving school in the late 1890s, he got a job at the Symington corset factory in Leicester but by 1900 he was working as a clerk at Lennards’ shoe factory in Leicester. Leicester was at this time a national centre for boot and shoe production and Lennards prospered, expanding their business by opening a chain of retail stores. Perhaps adopted as a protégé of Samuel Lennard himself, Hatton was quickly promoted to Factory Manager and then to Director in 1903.

In 1910 he left Lennards to set up his own business, T Hatton & Co., actively recruiting staff via the Leicester newspapers well into the war years. The shoe and boot trade prospered during the war, though leather supplies and labour were in short supply, and his business prospered even during the economic slump of the early 1920s, making 3,000 pairs of ladies’ shoes a week. In line with his promotions and business success, he and his family moved around the Leicester area to successively larger houses. In 1918 he purchased the substantial Anstey Pastures, a 27-acre estate with parkland and pleasure grounds.

In 1926 he retired from the business, sold his interests to his business partner, and followed his personal passions and directed his drive and energy into a series of ill-fated ventures.

Earlier, in 1924, Hatton achieved local and national fame when he led a campaign to turn the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley from April to October of that year, into a permanent

exhibition of British “Imperial character”. He proposed that the Wembley site be renamed “Imperial Park” and the remainder of the 200-acre used for sporting activities (including football and boxing) and military tattoos. His proposal was picked up by the national press and gained some support but the campaign collapsed when the exhibition closed after making a significant financial loss.

His next scheme was to set up a greyhound racing stadium in Leicester and Long Eaton. Stadiums first appeared in California and quickly spread to England with the first tracks at Belle Vue in Manchester (1926) and White City in London (1927) where Hatton raced his own dogs. The Leicester stadium opened in May 1928 and attracted a crowd of 10,000 on the first night but its popularity soon declined and by the end of 1928, a dirt track was added inside the greyhound circuit for speedway racing. Hatton’s Leicester Stadium company was liquidated and he sold Anstey Pastures and downsized to a house in Stoneygate.

Hatton next embarked on a spectacular but short-lived stint as a boxing promoter for Reggie Meen, the 1931-2 British heavyweight title. In 1929, Hatton set up a match with the Canadian Larry Gains in February 1933 in front of a crowd of 40,000 at Granby Halls. He next arranged a fight for Meen at Wembley but this was a ‘perfect blunder’ as it was scheduled the day after another fight; poor summer weather meant it was postponed at short notice; and Meen was knocked out in the second round.

However, it is not Tommy Hatton the promoter of sporting passions but Thomas Hatton the bibliophile that is of significant relevance to the study of local history at Leicester. In 1921 the Vice-Chairman of the Council of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland University College, Dr. Ashley Clark, was fundraising and seeking stock for the new library, which held 5,000 volumes at that time. Hatton had by then accumulated a significant collection and this came to the attention of Harry Peach who was involved in the founding of the College and later donated his own book collection to the library. Peach brokered a deal with Hatton who wrote a letter in 1920 to the College offering his collection to the College library. In it he explains his rationale for his collection – to assemble a

“country-house library” with co-ordinated binding of volumes in glazed kid.

This donation was so significant that a detailed description of the collection appeared in the Leicester Daily Post. The collection included county sets with extensive collections on the town of his birth, Manchester, and his adopted home, Leicestershire.

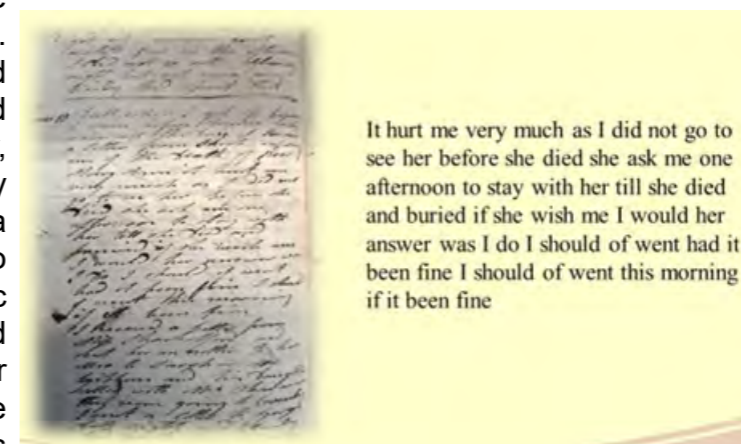
The University College library now had a significant topographical collection but with a focus on preparing students for Oxford University exams, it had no students or staff working on local history. The first Professor of History specialised in south-east Asian history and the collection was little used until W.G. Hoskins began his evening classes on the antiquities and archaeology of Leicestershire in the 1930s. With the establishment of the Department of English Local History in 1948, the collection finally came into its own and the university provided the library with £750 to develop the English Local History collection. This collection now has over 37,000 volumes.

Hatton’s generosity was acknowledged, if somewhat briefly, by the appointment of Hoskins to the Hatton Chair of English Local History when he returned to Leicester in 1965, a title held by

‘We did not go ...’. Domestic sociability in early 19th century Lutterworth

Denise Greany

Denise’s talk illuminated the diary of Anne Shackelford, written in 1829/30, a widow living with her brother in Lutterworth, Leicestershire, in the early nineteenth century, describing close family relationships. The phrase ‘I/we did not go...’ is repeated 106 times in the diary, seemingly characterising a sociability restricted to an enclosed domestic sphere and supporting other accounts of separate female and male lives at home or in the wider world. Ideas about female sociability have been well rehearsed in



his successor Alan Everitt from 1968 to his retirement in 1982.

Hatton had many passions but the greatest love of his life were the works of Charles Dickens. He avidly collected rare editions - “the first of the first edition” in paper covers. He produced a monograph on Dickens’s Pickwick Papers, bibliographies of Dickens’s work and delivered lectures on Dickens in the USA. He sold his Pickwick Papers collection in New York for £3,260 but said he instantly regretted doing so.

A colourful character who chased ill-judged schemes but a provided us with a solid foundation for local history studies, Hatton left Leicester for the south coast in 1938 but was buried back in Leicester at Gilrose Cemetery in 1943.

Karen Donegani

the historical literature, and the notion of separate spheres has been extensively challenged. There have been very few studies of the 1820s, most of which have concentrated on the elite experience. Denise’s study explored middle class provincial society, a public world where some historians have suggested that ‘everybody knew everybody else’.

However, on close analysis, the phrase ‘I/we did not go’ is in fact more indicative of choice and agency rather than isolation or constraint. Anne travelled extensively by private and public transport. Visits extended over a 15 miles radius, a mobility that was common to other widowed but also married friends, who pieced together journeys from a multi-modal transport system. Anne’s home was a much visited venue in the town. She

did not always return the calls she received, which may have indicated social status, for example Mrs Spackman's invitations were often refused. Her brother's travel was motivated by economic or business activity, although Anne accompanied him on many occasions and was engaged in the economic activity that resulted.

Most of Anne Shackelford's social interactions involved support for the sick and dying. The sickbed dominated visits, all of them informal calls; reciprocal visits took place besides illness, and visits occurred within long-term friendships. Visits to Anne's close acquaintances, Mrs Bond and Mrs Kinsey, for example, played a prominent place in her schedule even before they became gravely ill. The calls allowed minute surveillance of illness, the houses of the sick forming an arena of social interaction. Visitors often overlapped and attendance would diminish close

to death, which became a very private experience, attended by real or surrogate kin. The terminology of physical illness dominated Anne's descriptions of her emotional life, for instance when she described her response to her son's visits to the Inn making her 'uncomfortable' or 'poorly'.

Denise concluded her talk noting that there was a significant relationship between sickness and informal sociability, the sickroom being crucial to social interaction.

Denise Greany has published this work in *Midland History*, 2023: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0047729X.2023.2174793>; and her MA dissertation was awarded the Professor Phil Batman Family History Prize for 2022.

Phil Batman

The Left Behind. Convict transportation in the early 19th century: its effects on wives, families and communities

Judy Somekh

By a lonely harbour wall, She watched the last star falling

As that prison ship sailed out against the sky, For she lived in hope and pray

For her love in Botany Bay, It's so lonely 'round the fields of Athenry

European colonial powers used convict transportation extensively. The number of British convicts peaked in 1834 (incidentally the year of the Poor Law (Amendment) Act), when approximately 7000 convicts were transported per year. Sentencing patterns at the Old Bailey illustrate the importance of transportation as a punishment up to the 1840s, when imprisonment became more commonly used by courts.

Most convicts never returned, and 70% were single (although data tends to be unreliable, e.g. one bigamist describing himself as single!). There is little published research on those left behind, except by Australian historians who mostly focus on Irish convicts; it is possibly easier for Australians to talk about the families

of Irish convicts because they feel a sense of a common cause. The willingness to address the issue of the 'left behind' only in relation to Irish families suggests that penal transportation was an aspect of the downside of Empire that British history has so far failed to address.

Judy addressed three research questions in her study, namely the law relating to the civil status of those left behind; official policies towards them, i.e. how the law was applied; and how they were perceived by others. An important source for her research was petitions to the Home Office which contain a lot of information about families and local communities. (These are held at the National archives in Kew and are available online - HO17 and HO18.) In relation to the law, Blackstone's publication of 1776 is informative. Husband and



wife were regarded as one person in the eyes of the law, except where a husband has 'abjured the realm or is banished'. This principal was modified in subsequent legal cases and the principle held that a woman remains married, which meant that she had no independent civil rights and any property she owned was regarded as actually belonging to her husband and could be forfeited. The chains of matrimony remained unbroken; in other words, transportation affected not only the convict but also his wife.

The Poor Law records reveal that many women left behind were forced to return to their place of settlement. The settlement laws would appear to have been strictly applied, all rules working against the wife, although much more research would be needed on settlement examinations in local archives to get a clearer picture on this. Attitudes amongst communities towards 'left behind' wives could vary. Examples contained in Home Office petitions show a high level of community support for some wives. On the other hand there are examples of discrimination, as in the case contained in Poor Law records of a

clergyman who urged the authorities to drive a woman from his parish because she might in the future claim poor relief.

Up to now historians have differentiated convict transportation and slavery on the basis that only slavery removed the civil rights of whole families, but Judy's research suggests that in some respects the two were more closely aligned. The Fields of Athenry (a verse quoted above, and sang to this day at Irish sporting clashes) tells the story of a young man who is caught stealing corn during the Irish Famine and who is deported as punishment. A quotation from the Guardian in 2019 is a poignant reminder of the effects to this day of transportation on those 'left behind': 'My dad made me feel safe and protected and like a proper family. His deportation caused catastrophic heartbreak in my family.'

Phil Batman

Local histories of religious minorities: perspectives from 18th-century Wales and late 20th-century England

Dr Zoe Knox and Dr Angela Muir

In the first talk, Dr Muir spoke about her research in the records of the Welsh Court of Great Sessions and the evidence they provide for the existence and growth of non-conformist religious groups in 18th Wales. This period is often overlooked by historians as 19th-century records provide a larger and wider body of evidence, especially on key personalities and religious buildings.

Great Sessions records provide glimpses of a Jewish community in Swansea and the surrounding area from the mid-1700s. Pre-trial depositions offer detailed "against the grain" records of the experience of Jews in the context of their local community and documents their encounters with the legal system.

A case from 1762 tells of a case of perjury raised against Abraham Nathan of Cowbridge who was said to have falsely accused a man of pointing a gun at him. He was bound to appear at the next

session of the Court along with David Michael of Swansea, residing some distance from Cowbridge. David Michael, variously described as hawker and a silversmith, was a prominent individual in the Jewish community, providing his house as a place of worship from the 1760s until a synagogue was built in 1818. He was later a JP and Mayor.

A second case, of 1784, concerned Benedict Moses, described as a "travelling Jew". Twenty miles east of Swansea a man attempted to steal from him and assaulted him. Moses sought help from the local community and the legal system and the assailant was found guilty and transported to Africa. We do not know why Moses was attacked – whether because he was Jewish or because a hawker or for some other reason. Depositions often provide us with additional information - Moses signed his deposition in Hebrew, wrote with a sophisticated hand and was paid £10 for his time and for the cost of a translator. It is likely he was seen as an outsider but the community and courts supported him.

Most of the cases involving Jews concerned theft from their shops. Dr Muir provided several

examples which show that Jewish women were economically active in Swansea during this period. One case involved a boy who attempted to sell stolen goods to David Michael's wife, implying the Michael's business was a family affair. In 1827, an Excise Officer at an inn realised his watch was missing – this was found in the pawnshop of Catherine Cohen – possibly but not proven to be a Jewish woman.

Dr Muir's conclusion was that fragmentary evidence allows us to hear the voices of the individuals and the aggregated evidence suggests there was an active Jewish community in Swansea many decades before the opening of the synagogue in 1818.

Dr Zoe Knox then presented a summary of her research in a talk entitled "Christian activism across the Cold War Divide: Keston College and religious minorities behind the Iron Curtain."

The Keston Institute (Keston College/Centre for Study of Religion in Communism) was an influential research organisation which acted as a conduit for the passage of information from religious minority groups in the Soviet Union to politicians, journalists, and others in the West. Dr Knox's research aims to map the networks established by Keston College and assess its impact.

Keston College was established by the Rev. Canon Dr Michael Bordeaux (1931-2021) who read Russian at Oxford before moving to Moscow University in 1959. Whilst in Moscow, he encountered two Ukrainian women who were looking for someone to "be our voice and speak for us" by smuggling publications recording the persecution of their religious community to the West. This request defined this work of Keston which focused on the experience of ordinary believers, foregrounded the suffering of ordinary people, gathered evidence from anywhere then cross-referenced and corroborated it.



Rev. Canon Dr Michael Bordeaux

In 1969, Bordeaux set up the Centre at Chislehurst 1969 and in 1974 it was renamed Keston College. A team of around 12 researchers with a wide range of language skills published the Keston News Service which offered up-to-date knowledge about religious life in Soviet Bloc; two periodicals widely distributed to church groups; books published by staff and associates; and an academic journal, *Religion, State and Society*. These publications were mostly based on *samizdat*, self-published, clandestine literature smuggled out of the Soviet Bloc. Keston's researchers were the first to rely on this material and they developed a defined process for analysis, corroboration, and the selection of "targets" such as media and political figures to send their publications to. Staff went on

high-profile speaking tours in the 1970s and 1980s and were treated as reliable sources for interviews, quotes, and briefings. The Soviet Union denounced the organisation and its publications.

Dr Knox assessed the impact of the Keston College as significant in changing the way we understand religion. They

focused on evidence of vibrancy of spiritual life and the revival robustness of religious communities. It is debatable whether they exaggerated religious resurgence to show a skewed picture of the USSR though they tried to portray their work as apolitical to stop people saying they were funded by the CIA. Their contacts were with groups which documented, published, and smuggled out their literature – those with more money and other resources.

For some campaigns, Keston highlighted individuals such as "Aida of Leningrad" a campaign focused on one woman selected for her faith, age, and gender. Literature for this campaign was smuggled out via Poland to Keston College who galvanised western Christian campaign groups who asked the government to raise the case with their Soviet counterparts and raised funds for the church groups in the USSR.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, donors and campaigners in the west could now contact and donate to religious groups in ex-USSR countries directly. So Keston's funds declined, staff were laid off and the premises lost. The Keston archive was relocated to Baylor University, Waco, Texas.

In summary, Dr Knox drew attention to the key theme of the Keston researchers - the experience of real people in religious minorities in the Soviet Bloc and the role of Keston as "an important switchboard" for channelling information coming into the West.

Karen Donegani

Haunting the rural mega warehouse: landscape aesthetics and a seasonal ghost story.

Dr Rosemary Shirley, Associate Professor of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester

In a fascinating and thought-provoking seminar, Dr Shirley encouraged attendees to think about the way developers, planners and the public view the huge distribution warehouses being built in the rural landscape. This is particularly pertinent to the Midlands - the "golden triangle" for distribution companies as 90% of the UK population live within 4.5 hours travel time - the time HGV drivers can drive without a break.

Once these large structures are built, there is often an intentional process of camouflage and concealment. Exterior cladding is in different shades of colours that appear to make the building disappear or merge into the horizon or the local planting. Morrisons' warehouses are "Willow Green" with different shades of green but others are grey, blue, or brown. This is not a new approach – electricity pylons, power station chimneys and phone masts have all been camouflaged in the past. Land around the warehouses is often landscaped with grassy mounds blocking part of the view of the building from roads and drone footage used for marketing shows us the roof and the car parks but little detail of the entrances, windows, or interior.



This approach is also disorientating – like Norman Wilkinson’s dazzle painting used as ship camouflage in WWI, and to some extent in WWII, to make it difficult to work out a ship’s range, speed, and heading. Romantic painters also used disorientation techniques - see Caspar David Friedrich’s *The sea of ice* above.

The result is that we are ill-informed about what goes on inside these buildings. What are they distributing? Who works there? What does it look like inside? The generic names of the buildings, unconnected to the local area, do not “ground” them in the landscape so we have Mercia Park rather than Stretton on le Frith Park.

Dr Shirley is exploring the view that the countryside is the front-line of landscape transformation, more volatile than cities. Warehouses, wind turbines and other large structures will never be sited in towns and cities. We should think of them as lasting components of the rural landscape.

For people living in or travelling to rural areas to work, warehouses are real – a new form of rural occupation with echoes of the rural industrial

past. Nineteenth-century textile mills had clocks and machinery that logged the workers’ working hours. Motorola wearable terminals track the movement of staff in mega warehouses. Plough lines still evident in the surrounding fields reminds us that rural agricultural workers, sometimes seasonal migrants, harvested and picked just as warehouse workers, often migrant and seasonal, pick goods from long lines of shelves. As fruit pickers were replaced by machinery, warehouse pickers being replaced by robots.

The rural landscape is not static but a landscape of innovation. Mega warehouses, which may be transitional and disappear in time, have their place for now.

In the second part of the seminar, Dr Shirley demonstrated how creative writing can help to explore these themes as per Dickens, BBC ghost stories, and the works of M.R. James. You had to be there on the day to appreciate her mega warehouse seasonal Ghost Story.

Karen Donegani



The Demerara Revolt, 1823: a collective profile of the insurgents

Professor John Coffey, Professor of History, University of Leicester

British Guiana was a British colony on the northern coast of South America. Ceded by the Dutch in 1815, it remained under British control until 1966 when it became the independent state of Guyana. Professor Coffey explored the events of a short-lived revolt of enslaved people working on plantations in the Demerara region in 1823 and discussed why this

revolt became a game-changer in the move towards the abolition of slavery in the British colonies.

The landscape of the east coast of Demerara was divided into strip plantations, each a quarter of mile wide, running east from Success, the estate owned by John Gladstone, father of William Gladstone, to Bach Adventure and Douchfor. Le Resouvenir, the estate adjacent to Success, was unusual as it had a non-conformist missionary chapel close to the plantation buildings whereas most missionary chapels were

in towns. The resident missionary from 1817 onwards was John Smith of Rothwell.

The revolt was planned on Sunday after chapel by rebels who were lightly armed and did not intend to shed blood. The next day, around 4,000 to 5,000 rebels took control of over 30 estates and put the plantation managers into stocks. The revolt was crushed by the colonial militia by Wednesday evening. Summary executions continued to Saturday and trials and executions were held during the following months.

Published research into the events and impact of the revolt include Emilia Viotti da Costa’s very detailed analysis of events in *Crowns of glory, tears of blood* and Thomas Harding’s *White debt* which presents a different viewpoint. In recent years, statues and art work portraying key players in the revolt – the carpenter and Deacon Quamina and his son Jack Gladstone from the Success plantation and Amba, one of the comparatively few women mentioned in historical sources – have been erected or displayed in Guyana as part of a wider reconstruction of the lives and voices of the rebels.

The causes of the revolt were a mix of long-term disaffection mixed with short-term factors, some of which were not present in other slave revolts in the Americas in the 1820s. The presence of the non-conformist mission is seen as a key factor. Most of the insurgents were converts to Methodism and most of the leaders were active in the chapels, with roles described as Deacons, Preacher, Teacher, Hearer and Sexton. There is evidence that Chapel-goers felt persecuted for their religious adherence and for attending chapel. The British government supported the work of the non-conformist missionaries but the support of the Methodists for the abolition movement introduced an element of risk. The Minister John Smith was accused of inciting the revolt by “recklessly reading the Bible” to slaves and found guilty though he had no direct involvement in the rebellion. He was given a death sentence with the opportunity for reprieve by the King but by the time a royal reprieve arrived in the country in February 1824, he had died in prison.

The “Missionary Smith” became the “Rothwell Martyr” - a non-conformist martyrdom which fed into the call by the campaigner Elizabeth Heyrick

of Leicester and others for immediate not gradual emancipation.

Few women rebels are listed in the historical sources. However, it is likely some influenced events. The wife of Quamina and mother of Jack Gladstone, leaders of the revolt, worked at the estate house and would have had access to newspapers and discussions on the abolitionist movement activities. The debate over the abolition of slavery in Britain was widely reported in colonial newspapers and this raised expectations and hopes for emancipation

Professor Coffey is researching the profile of the rebels to see if there were other factors that influenced this revolt. The population of British



Guiana was in decline, unlike in other US/West Indies, and the colony was seen as the “Wild west” of British colonial plantations. However, historical sources are particularly rich and varied. Printed leaflets named the insurgents, trial reports were published in Demerara and in Britain, and were discussed in Parliament. Colonial newspapers published public notices, editorials and letters including a letter which claimed to provide an accurate list of the biblical passages Smith read to the congregation chapel. Missionary archives in the UK include John

Smith's letters and a journal. Professor Coffey is also looking at sources not previously used by other historians of the revolt - John Gladstone's papers at the Gladstone Library, Hawarden and the very detailed colonial slave registers of the 1820s along with the Wilberforce Diaries Project which has already looked at over 4,500 letters and hundreds of Wilberforce's speeches.

Work on a collective profile of the insurgents, shows that many of the "principal men" (named by Jack Gladstone and the colonial prosecutors) were skilled craftsmen. Of the principal men, all except one were craftsmen - a cooper, a boilerman and several carpenters. All except one were active in the mission chapels as sexton, teachers, deacons. The wider list of insurgents show two generations were involved - the elders

in their 40s and 50s who were old enough to have been adult leaders in Africa before transportation and had been in colony for over 20 years, and a younger generation in their 20s. A more general list of insurgents killed during the revolt contains many more field workers than craftsmen - in total, an estimated 100 or so insurgents died during or after the revolt.

This comparatively short-lived revolt captured the imagination of people in Britain because of the charges brought against John Smith. It changed the narrative of British colonial slavery and the abolitionist debate because Nonconformist Christians were shown to be oppressed by barbaric British colonist planters.

Karen Donegani



Repeated returns: considering the back stitch methodology in place-based artistic research

Dr Joanne Lee, Senior Lecturer and Fine Arts Course Leader, University of Sheffield

Informal uses of space are an invaluable source of inspiration for artists. With a fascinating collection of photographic works to accompany her talk, Dr Lee described her work as part of an ongoing multinational art project looking at the informal use of post-industrial landscapes.

Art and design projects often have a complex research methodology. Artists need to roam rather than staying firmly on plan and to work without knowing where they are heading to stay open minded and spontaneous. Research does not define their findings but helps them explore, collect, and interpret what they find. Interpretations are not static and may change over time.

The back-stitch analogy refers to the approach adopted by the Returns Project which brings together four artists investigating the abandoned Spode Potteries site and the wider Stoke-on-Trent area. The back-stitch method comprises a solid, continual line of research going on unseen with public gatherings - the top stitch - held at intervals to share the artists' work and listen to feedback from local communities. The backstitch also involves 'going back in order to come forward' which references the artists' repeated re-imagining and revisiting of their own work and their critique of published academic research. This approach resists grand assertions and allows artists to both engage with the past and encourage futures.

The project commenced in 2012, a few years after the Spode factory site was abandoned. Each artist branched out to interpret the site in a different way but they came together to bring their work to a wider audience. They provided for dialogue and engagement with the public rather

than just an 'art show' and gathered viewpoints which fed back into their work. So diverse project outcomes were secured back onto the solid line of research because this approach pulls everyone back together again at intervals. Other post-industrial sites such as the Ibstock and Sheffield brick manufacturing sites have also been explored for comparison.

Andrew Brown explores sound-walking in post-industrial sites, wandering and listening to the sounds of the past in the present. Joanne Lee walks in widening loops around the sites, looking, re-looking and photographing everyday things and becoming aware of the meaning of cultural artefacts to different communities. Danica Maier took abandoned ceramic decal patterns and reorganised them using plinths and frames. She also scours second-hand shops in the area for ceramics and challenges what is an art object. Christine Stevens uses clay as an interface between humans and the material world, creating new objects by letting the clay collapse before it is fired and creating a 'listening pot' as a vehicle for communication, working with refugee groups to explore what they have been forced to leave behind. The collaborative outcomes were temporal, spatial, acts of



reflection showing how small, everyday things can link to big issues just as a faded advert in the window of a closed shop links to the decline of industries and the growth of global capitalism.

Karen Donegani

The final seminar of the 2023-24 seminar series featured a PhD Showcase of 'Case Studies in English Settlement Morphology'.

A machine for farming: village plans, farming choice and cultural identities

Paul Shaw, University of Leicester

Paul is researching the difference between English and Scandinavian settlements, focusing on the Trent and Wreake valleys. He argues that in addition to documentary and archaeological sources, the landscape itself is a key evidence marker of cultural identity. Food and diet preferences influence farming choice which alter the landscape to form a unique landscape terroir. But farming choice is also affected by the environment, the local economy and available technology.

It takes more than a couple of farms to make a grid pattern settlement - thorps are small and usually linear - but where planning affected

settlement development, some decisions had to be made: Where to farm? Where to live? What to grow? How to grow it? Using the architectural theories of Le Corbusier and Louis H Sullivan, Paul concludes that a village is a machine for farming.

A simplified view is that at the end of the early medieval period the English chose to grow wheat and use animals for traction whilst the Scandinavians chose pastoral farming. Researching 128 settlements close to the River Trent and 96 close to the River Wreake show that there is no 'gold standard' for where the Scandinavians chose to settle. Church dedications and placenames are a useful proxy for research as are early plans (e.g. enclosure maps).

This research identifies -by settlements clustered around streams, facing the water, which expand

along the stream. -tun settlements are more complex. There is a clear demarcation in the Wreake valley but not in the Trent settlements. Some villages have unusual plans - ladder villages such as Collingham - with wide and long main streets and multiple cross streets which probably grew and evolved over time. Sutton-on-

Trent has 'holmes', four grazing lands which influenced its grid pattern – a pastoral grid village. North Muskham has an English name but was held by the Scandinavians.

Karen Donegani

Tracing the origins of settlement morphology and landscape character within the Hundred of Willey, Bedfordshire

Matt Tuohy, University of Leicester

Matt is researching the variability of settlement forms across the Hundred of Willey and Half-Hundred of Bucklowe (merged in post medieval period) in north Bedfordshire, an area in the Central Province, on the edge of the Midland hills and the Fens.

Using a wide variety of sources, including 18th century maps, he is mapping roads, settlements, rivers, woods, turnpikes and other features.

The River Great Ouse crosses the Hundred which is an island of non-Forest Law land in an area of Forests. It is possible it was subject to preferential deforestation. The Hundred lacked towns and markets in medieval times, with only modestly-sized Harrold and Odell, and the main market towns included Bedford some distance away.

Matt has identified distinct settlement pattern zones, north and south of the Great River Ouse

and a smaller zone to the east. The southern zone includes a large proportion of 'Ends and Greens' including Sterington which has four ends, a central cross road, interconnecting loops of roads and adjacent woodland. Similar settlements are to be found across other Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire Hundreds. He identified two types of 'Ends' settlements – those with Ends located a distance from the "parent" village and those with Ends which are part of village nucleus (but are named Ends). The eastern zone has dispersed settlements with straggling linear settlements. The northern zone has a variety of forms including nucleated villages and larger scale linear settlements similar to those in Northamptonshire, but few Ends.

The River Great Ouse forms a border, dividing the Hundred in terms of settlement pattern but other factors to be researched include manorial power, location relative to woodland and gravel, land drainage, date of settlement and the survival of wastes.

Karen Donegani

For the Autumn 2024/Spring 2025 seminar series, we are joining forces with Urban History. Some will be on Thursday, and some will be on Friday - see <https://www.englishlocalhistory.org/wp/centre-for-regional-and-local-history-centre-for-urban-history-autumn-2024-seminar-series> for details. As a taster here is a report on one of last year's Urban History seminars:

Becoming Ipswich: a Story of Urban Emergence in the Early Middle Ages

Dr Brandon Fathy (University of Reading)

Starting with an original research question 'Who founded Ipswich?' Dr Fathy's presentation explained how he used archaeological evidence to explore the early years Ipswich and refine his research to address the question 'How did Ipswich emerge?'

Ipswich (Gipeswic) is unusual in being a town with continuous urban occupation since the 8th century, starting as a settlement with urban characteristics rather than evolving from a hamlet or village. It then evolved and grew without interruption from a wic to an early modern port town.

Archaeological digs have found only two buildings from the seventh century, the purpose of which are undetermined, and two large barrow cemeteries with continental grave goods. Eighth-

century archaeology shows small enclosures, a metalled road and high density of large plots and wells, a pattern different to other settlements in the region. There is evidence of a developed urban settlement by the ninth century, with industrial-scale crafting, primarily Ipswich Ware; a significant volume of European-made goods; and evidence that the town imported meat from the agricultural hinterland.

In considering how the town grew, Fathy concludes that it was not 'founded' as a top-down exercise but that growth was initiated and driven by complex relationships and interactions. He proposes that Ipswich started out as a summer beach market, similar to Moels in Cheshire. Seafaring traders could beach their boats, so there is no sign of piers but plenty of evidence of traded goods from Europe. This is a more complex way of explaining the growth of a settlement so he provided two examples of how interactions and relationships brought about change and growth.

The Buttermarket Cemetery site dig found over 100 inhumations from the seventh century alongside evidence of eighth-century buildings and metalled roads on top of the grave sites. Fathy proposes that this change of use was not the result of top-down development, rather from the relationships between people, the landscape, and the environment. The outcomes are the features that we see as 'urban'. Rather than the legitimate power of kings, growth and change came from the interpersonal power and interactions which influence the actions or behaviours of others.

A second example is the development of the Franciscan Way, surveyed in the 1980s. In the seventh century the site contained a well; during

the following century flood control channels were dug close to the road; and in the ninth century pits were dug to take blacksmithing slag. Fathy's model of interactions suggests that the river flooded; humans dug flood control channels which diverted travellers who tread the grass and created a "desire" path; traders set up shop next to this pathway and supported maintenance and improvement to the path to enable ready access by customers. Again, this was not a top-down approach to the development.

Fathy's model suggests that early Ipswich was a seasonal assembly and market place which, added to the presence of seafarers, saw a high density of interactions, and became a reliable place to visit to trade. Urban behaviour requires repetition and expectation – seafarers will come if they are sure there will be an opportunity to trade and people will settle in the area if they are confident, they can trust landowners and kings to provide domestic security and a regulated market.

This model reminds us that a town is not just a permanent population in a space. It is a complex system of food webs, behaviours, interactions, relationships, culture, products, storage, trade, distribution, and consumption. It is a more complex message to convey – one which he proposed to address through narrative storytelling.

Karen Donegani



Centre News

In her Centre Report, Angela told us how CRLH funds had been used to help with projects across the wider University. Here are some highlights of the uses they've been put to:

- CRLH funds were used to hold a wide-ranging research workshop, *Regional and Local Identities in Drinking Cultures*, with 16 registered delegates from across the UK and Republic of Ireland. Work-in-progress papers explored historical, sociological, and anthropological perspectives on drinking cultures in England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, the United States and Mexico.
- Funding from the CRLH supported a 21-day research trip to Malawi to collaborate on a writing project with a Malawian early career scholar to plan a project on Malawian historical figure, John Chilembwe.
- Funding enabled the employment of an archivist for six days to review the listing of WG Hoskins' archive, and to bring it up to current standards of description.
- Funds from CRLH enabled field work for this collaborative project investigating Gloucester services as a new hyper-local and trans-local petro-landscape.
- Funds were used to enable the presentation of a paper on the practice of female shaming on-line in the US and in-person in Manchester.

Professor Christopher Dyer (Emeritus)

Publications. Articles and chapters

'A simple food with many meanings: bread in late medieval England', *Journal of Medieval History*, 49 (2023), pp. 631-50.

'Why should historians of early towns also study the countryside?' in S. Gearty and M. Potterton (eds), *Town and Country. Perspectives from the Irish Historic Towns Atlas* (Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, 2023), pp. 235-55.

'Middlemen and intermediaries in medieval village society', in J. Escalona, A. Carvajal Castro and C. J. Perez-Alfaro (eds.), *Conflict, language, and social practice in medieval societies. Selected essays of Isabel Alfonso, with commentaries* (Turnhout, 2024), pp. 245-50.

'Settlement and society in a Warwickshire medieval village: Compton Scorpion', *Transactions of the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society*, 125 (2023), pp. 41-56.

(with M.Lewis), 'Bretford Warwickshire. New insights into a medieval new town', *Transactions of the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society*, 125 (2023), pp. 57-64

Book reviews

M. McKerracher and H. Hamerow, *New Perspectives on the Medieval 'Agricultural Revolution'*, in *Medieval Archaeology*, 67 pt 2 (2023), pp. 508-10.

Richard C. Hoffmann, *The Catch. An Environmental History of Medieval European Fisheries*, in *Medieval Archaeology*, 67 pt 2 (2023), pp. 527-8.

D. Hinton, *Archaeology, Economy and Society*, in *Medieval Archaeology*, 68 pt 1 (2024), pp. 200-1

Lectures, presentations etc

Le porc anglais (The medieval English pig), Flaran conference, Sabres (departement des Landes), October, 2023

Robin Hood at Cleeve Prior, Bidford Historical Society October 2023

From slavery to freedom, Worcestershire Historical Soc Nov 2023

Revealing Warwickshire's past: the importance of Burton Dassett Southend, Warwickshire Local History Society, Jan 2024

The importance of tree ring dates for our understanding of the past, Vernacular Architecture Group winter conference, Jan 2024

The importance of Burton Dassett Southend: combining history and archaeology, Banbury Historical Society, March 2024

Carpenters in the middle ages: an important craft in need of a history, Wealden Buildings Study Group, March 2024

How do we know about Worcestershire peasants in the middle ages, and what do we know? Worcestershire Historical Society, April 2024

Centre News

Professor Keith Snell (Emeritus)

Keith Snell has mainly been drawing and painting, especially in Wales, Liverpool, the midlands, fenland and London. A related website will soon appear. He is completing a book on Africa, has been working with a Californian film company on a film on nineteenth-century peasant life, on various projects about the history of loneliness, and as an honorary editor of *Rural History*. Recent publications include:

'The history of loneliness: what we know so far' (with Fred Cooper et al). <https://bci-hub.org/documents/history-loneliness-what-we-know-so-far> (2024).

'Parishes, pandemics and paths to take: post-Covid-19 historical options', *Family and Community History*, 25:1 (2022).

Dr Juliet Bailey (Honorary fellow)

Publications:

Juliet Bailey, Alister Sutherland & William Farrell (2024) 'Views of England and Wales: A New Online Collection', *Midland History*, 49:1, 117-119, DOI: [10.1080/0047729X.2023.2299036](https://doi.org/10.1080/0047729X.2023.2299036)

Dr Mandy de Belin (Honorary fellow)

Publications:

Thornby Hall: an Illustrated History Guidebook for Thornby Hall (on sale in gift shop)

'Thornby Hall', *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, 77, 2014

Presentations:

Tours of Thornby Hall and Grounds, Heritage Open Day, September 8th 2024.

Joan Thirsk and the porous frontiers of English regional and local history

Professor Roger C. Richardson

The Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 29 November 2023. Delivered via Zoom.

Professor Roger Richardson is a graduate of history from the University of Leicester, where Thirsk supervised his BA dissertation. Thirsk later commented on his PhD thesis (University of Manchester) and collaborated with him on several published works. He is the President of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire and a Professor Emeritus of History, University of Winchester. He is the author or editor of numerous books, chapters, and articles on early modern England and on the study of local history.

This Zoom talk examined Thirsk's work and explored what made her approach to regional and local history so distinctive.

Thirsk did more than anyone to establish academic credentials for the study of English agrarian history during her fourteen years as Senior Research Fellow in Agrarian History at Centre for English Local History at Leicester. Her first published monograph was *English Peasant Farming: the agrarian history of Lincolnshire from Tudor to recent times* (1957). Whilst at Leicester and during her time at Oxford as Reader of Economic History, she edited three volumes of the Cambridge University Press *Agricultural History of England and Wales*, writing around 40% of the text. She later became General Editor of the series, responsible for eight volumes comprising 10,000 pages. She contributed to many agrarian histories and in 1997 published *Alternative Agriculture: a history from the Black Death to the present day*. The importance of her

work was recognised with eight Honorary Doctorates, a CBE and the BAHS Joan Thirsk Memorial Prize for the best book in British or Irish rural or agrarian history (jointly won by Professor Chris Dyer in 2023).

Thirsk brought a new approach to agrarian history, proposing a regional framework and a wider scope which incorporated politics, innovations, marketing, labour, rents, profits, housing, and the impact of changes (including the civil war and the early years of the agricultural and industrial revolutions). But her range was broader than this – she spent 24 years as editor of *Past and Present* and wrote extensively on urban history, internal trade, consumerism, food history and other areas of research.

In 1965, W G Hoskins returned to the Centre from Oxford and Thirsk went to Oxford to take over his post, so they did work as colleagues but her son commented that the families were close and they visited each other in Devon and Oxford or London.

Thirsk was also Hoskins' literary executor – though she did not ignore his blind spots in the obituaries she wrote. Hoskins loved the limelight and became more well-known, bringing local history to the English public in books, guides, TV, and journalism, often conveying the impression that he invented this new area of study. In contrast, Thirsk shunned pomp and ceremony and was better known outside the UK. She loved living and working in London (unlike Hoskins who



hated it) and was particularly interested in the city's relationship with the provinces. She spent much of her career identifying agrarian regions whilst Hoskins continued in his view that local history was a tapestry of localities, the study of which would be diluted by a regional approach. He hated change, modern life, planners and did not trust politicians whilst Thirsk saw change as an ever-present, vitalizing force – she saw the past in the present.

Local history did not define her work but it was central to it. Her work on farming communities and partible inheritance led to a proposal that inheritance practices affected the start of the industrial revolution in rural areas. She included subjects such as the spread of puritanism in the Cambridge Agricultural History series and wrote about regional food patterns, such as the social distinctions in the type of bread eaten in each agrarian region. In contrast to Hoskins, she dealt with inhabited landscapes and was fascinated by interactions between local and regional communities.

She asked questions that male historians did not ask and developed a particular interest in promoting women's history and the importance of women historians. Her 1995 *The history women** was a response to Kenyon's *The history men*** which denied the existence of the writings of women historians. In it she drew attention to the work of Knowles, Trotter, Pinchbeck, and others and developed Thirsk's Law – pioneering women historians develop new areas of historical research but as are "muscle out" as men take over.

Professor Richardson then considered what made Thirsk a very different historian to her contemporaries. She was an accomplished linguist, commencing her BA studies on a European languages course, which allowed her to adopt an international approach to local history. Her works included a 1976 essay on the European customs of inheritance and her last book was on the influence of Moorish history on English economic and social history. Her early



work as a linguist also made her sensitive to words and meanings - it also led to war-time work in encryption at Bletchley Park, work that necessitated rigorous attention to detail with an eye for hidden meanings and a good dose of curiosity. Thirsk was curious about everything, from academic research to dressmaking, gardening, and cooking. Thirsk always adopted a people-orientated view of history. She did her doctorate under RH Tawney who promoted a humane approach and a belief in the present value of studying the past. Her first academic post was in sociology at LSE – this broadened her range and introduced her to social science questions, methodologies, and presentation of data.

Her approach stands out in the field of regional and local history and her legacy is to challenge local historians to go beyond passively collecting local details and should link detailed findings to wider local and regional contexts. She thought local history was at the cutting edge and should be in the mainstream of historical research.

Many Friends attended this event and some contributed their memories of Thirsk, including the day she came to Leicester earlier than required to deliver the Hoskins Day lecture so that she could buy Melton Mowbray pork pies from the market to take back to Kent. She supervised or commented on several theses and used her international contacts to help Leicester researchers pursue their research outside of the UK.

*J. Thirsk, 'The history women,' in *Chattel, Servant, or Citizen: Women's Status in Church, State and Society*. Ed. M. O'Dowd and S. Wichert. (Belfast, 1995), pp.1-11.

**J. P. Kenyon, *The history men: the historical profession in England since the Renaissance*. (London, 1983).

Karen Donegani



Richard Stone shares the story behind a Pre-Raphaelite painting

In the mid-19th century, Ford Madox Brown imagined a gathering to celebrate Edward the Black Prince's 45th birthday on 15 June 1375 at the Palace of Sheen in Richmond, upstream from Westminster in what was then rural Surrey. First exhibited in 1851, 'Chaucer at the Court of Edward III' is a large painting [12ft 6in x 9ft 6in] now in the New South Wales Art Gallery, Sydney. A smaller copy [4ft 8in x 3ft 8in] is in the Tate, and there is a much smaller watercolour in Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, which also has a collection of preparatory sketches of medieval clothing made by Madox Brown from various sources including Camille Bonnard's

Costumes Historique, evidence of the artist's efforts to ensure period accuracy. Masterfully composed, the painting is notable for its realism and portrayal of natural light, exemplifying the Pre-Raphaelite principle of 'truth to nature'.

Geoffrey Chaucer, modelled on Dante Gabriel Rossetti, stands at a lectern reading the 'Tale of Custance' by his friend and fellow poet John Gower, a story thought to be the inspiration for 'The Man of Law's Tale' in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. John Gower himself is pictured in the bottom right-hand corner, in conversation with the court historian Jean Froissart, who is taking notes with his back turned to us. An ageing Edward III

Alice and the King

sits on a canopied throne, his grandson, the future Richard II at his feet. To his left, his ailing son Edward the Black Prince with his wife Joan, the 'Fair Maid of Kent'. On the king's right is his mistress, Alice Perrers. Prominent on the tabard of an attendant are the coat of arms adopted by Edward in 1340, quartering the three lions [heraldic 'leopards'] with the gold fleur-de-lys of France, to emphasise his somewhat tenuous claim to the French throne.

Alice Perrers' background is obscure. In his *Chronica maiora* Thomas Walsingham, a monk at St Albans Abbey, claimed 'She was a shameless, impudent harlot and of low birth, for she was the daughter of a thatcher elevated by fortune. She was not attractive or beautiful but knew how to compensate for these defects with the seductiveness of her voice'. While generally considered a reliable source Walsingham was a prominent critic of the royal court and St Albans Abbey lost a legal battle to Alice over land, so there is ample reason to suspect bias in his account. Alice was probably born around 1348 and to have married Janyn Perrers, a jeweller, c.1360 who died in 1364 [Ormrod, W. M. Who was Alice Perrers? The Chaucer Review, 40, 2006]. At some point she had joined the household of Queen Philippa.

Following a heavy fall in 1358 while out hunting with Edward, the queen suffered poor health, partially bedridden and unable to accompany the king on his official duties. After the accident, the royal households had merged bringing Edward into close contact with the queen's maids and ladies-in-waiting. Alice caught his eye and became his mistress. A son, John de Southeray was born c.1364. As far as we know, Edward's first illegitimate child. Two more children followed, Jane [c.1365] and Joan [c.1366]. Where the children were raised is not known, but it is unlikely they were brought up at court while Philippa was there. When the queen died in 1369, both discretion and protocol were abandoned. Edward showered Alice with gifts including castles, manorial estates, even some of Queen Philippa's jewellery. In 1372, at a tournament held at Smithfield, Alice appeared at Edward's side dressed as 'The Lady of the Sun'.

Inevitably, there was envy coupled with suspicion about Alice's power over an increasingly frail king. In 1376, Alice and others in a tight knit court circle controlling access to

Edward, faced charges of corruption before the so-called 'Good Parliament', who insisted an independent council be set up to advise the king. Alice was exiled and her property confiscated. However, within four months, John of Gaunt, effectively now ruling England, secured a pardon for Alice, the restoration of some property, and her return to court. Rumours circulating that Alice had secretly married Sir William Windsor threatened her position with the king, but Edward accepted her denial. As the King's Lieutenant in Ireland, Windsor spent much of his time abroad and the couple had managed to keep their relationship under wraps. In January 1377, Alice's illegitimate son John married Maud Percy, a royal ward, heiress of the earl of Northumberland, and was knighted by his father.

The king died aged 64 at Sheen Palace in June 1377, probably from a stroke. He was succeeded by his 10-year-old grandson as Richard II. Alice was soon under attack by the new court circle. When parliament met in October 1377, she was once again tried and found guilty of corruption, required to forfeit her lands and be exiled. William Windsor successfully appealed the sentence of exile on the grounds that she was indeed his wife, a fact invalidating Alice's trial as a legally independent woman. As a result, she was released in William's custody, and her property transferred to him. Windsor died in 1384. He had set up a trust leaving land to ensure continuing support for Alice. However, control of the trust was vested in a nephew who refused to go along with the plan, forcing Alice into a protracted legal battle that remained ongoing when she died, either late-1400 or early 1401.

What to make of Alice Perrers? She has been suggested as the model for Chaucer's 'Wife of Bath'. According to Thomas of Walsingham, Alice took the rings from the dying king's fingers before leaving him alone with a priest. As a hostile witness we must question his account, and Froissart tells us Edward's last moments were spent with his surviving sons, John of Gaunt, Edmund of York and Thomas of Gloucester at his side. Few commentators at the time and many since have had little to say in Alice's favour. She has been depicted as a manipulative seductress who exploited a king losing his grip on reality towards the end of his life. When Alice became Edward's mistress, she would have been no more than 14 or 15 and

already widowed. Edward was around 50. Was she an abused naïve child? Or a flirtatious coquette? If she was chosen by Edward to be his mistress, she would have been powerless to refuse. Perhaps Philippa suggested her for the role of companion with benefits? Alice's relationship with the king was clearly close. He singled her out solely for her personal qualities, not for her status. Edward always insisted that Alice be treated with respect. After the birth of their first child, the king remained faithful. Alice wasn't dismissed or paid off as might be expected, she returned to court. She comforted one of this country's greatest monarchs in his later years. If Alice and Windsor did marry, was it disloyalty, a love match, or a sensible

precaution? We should remember these were tough times for women. Alice's influence with the king made her unpopular at court. She would have known how exposed her position was once the king was no longer there to protect her. Acutely aware of her vulnerability, she may have married Windsor to safeguard her future. Whatever the truth, we are dealing with a woman of exceptional character, a pivotal figure at a court splendidly brought to life in Ford Madox Brown's painting, and one whose role and reputation may be overdue an element of sympathetic non-judgmental reassessment. Most importantly taking full account of the period context.

Anarchy in the UK

Richard Stone turns his attention to quite a different subject

Anarchy, literally 'absence of a ruler', was not a new idea but Pierre-Joseph Proudhon's 1840 essay *What is Property*, gave it the impetus of a modern philosophical underpinning. Proudhon was following in the footsteps of William Godwin, who argued in *Political Justice* (1793) that human progress was held back by political structures and social conventions. Essentially it was a Utopian vision: if people were free to organise themselves the innate reason and goodness of humanity would prevail. As the 19th century progressed, anarchism as a political and social movement gained adherents. Among the more extreme elements, violence or 'propaganda by the deed' became increasingly seen as the only way to effect change. Alexander II of Russia survived half-a-dozen attempts on his life before his luck ran out in 1881. Anarchist terrorism in Europe included bank robberies and bombing of restaurants, as well as attacks on government officials and members of the aristocracy. French president Francois Sadi Carnot was assassinated in 1891 by Italian anarchist Sante Geronimo Casserio. Empress Elisabeth 'Sisi' of Austria, was stabbed to death in Geneva by another Italian anarchist, Luigi Lucheni.

Anarchism as a movement never gained the same traction in the UK as it did in mainland Europe, but a number of anarchist organisations were formed, mostly under the guise of socialist or working men's clubs. In London they included the Autonomie Club in Windmill Street, and the International Working Men's Club, and Jubilee Street Club, both in Whitechapel. Closer to home was the Socialist Club in Goodall Street, Walsall.

In January 1892, railway clerk Joseph Deakin, a member of the Walsall Social Club, was in London after returning from an International Workers' Conference in Brussels. He paid a visit to the Autonomie Club where he met a man called August Coulon. Coulon would turn out to be an *agent provocateur* in the pay of Special Branch. When Deakin was arrested later that evening, he was carrying a cigar box and a flask of liquid which he was unable to explain. It is highly likely these had been given to him by Coulon. Deakin was charged with possessing bomb-making equipment although the liquid turned out to be chloroform. A conspiracy was alleged, and further arrests followed in Walsall. Victor Cails, a French national, and Frederick Charles were detained at the socialist club. Also arrested in Walsall were William Ditchfield, John

Westley, and an Italian, Jean Battolla. All were charged with planning to make explosives. Fred Charles was found to be in possession of bomb-making instructions (in French) and some potential components were discovered in the socialist club cellar, but no bomb.

A manifesto said to have been written by Victor Cails, *The Means of Emancipation* included the following lines:

Let us occupy ourselves with chemistry and let us manufacture promptly

Bombs, dynamite and other explosive matters: much more efficacious

than guns or barricades to bring about the destruction of the actual state

of things and above all to spare the precious blood of our comrades.

Courage companions. Long live anarchy.

Deakin was tricked into believing Charles and Ditchfield had admitted guilt and confessed to planning to make explosives to be used against the Tsar of Russia.

The case was heard at Stafford Assizes in February 1892. Huge media attention made a fair trial difficult. All the accused pleaded 'not guilty' and claimed evidence had been planted. Charles, Cails, and Battolla were convicted and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment.

Deakin received a five-year sentence to be served at Parkhurst on the Isle of Wight. Ditchfield and Westley were acquitted.

Anarchism did pose a real threat. In February 1894, Martial Bourdon, a Frenchman and a member of the Autonomie Club, was killed when a bomb intended for the Royal Greenwich Observatory exploded prematurely. And in 1910 a group connected to the Jubilee Street Club in Whitechapel shot three policemen and wounded others during a raid on a jeweller's premises. Rounding up those involved led to the Siege of Sydney Street the following year.

To return to Joe Deakin, at Parkhurst he became a prison librarian, and used his time to improve his education. Leading socialists William Morris, George Bernard Shaw, and Sidney and Beatrice Webb were among sympathisers who gave him assistance. In Walsall, meetings and demonstrations were organised to try and have the sentences overturned.

Deakin was released on Christmas Eve 1895, having earned one year and 89 days remission, and returned to the home he shared over a milliner's shop run by his sisters Lucy and Elizabeth, at 238 Stafford Street, Walsall. He found work as an auditor and also helped out with paperwork in his sisters' business.

Joe Deakin continued to be politically active until his death in 1937 and was influential in the Walsall Labour movement and local Trades Council.

In 1989, a Blue Plaque was put up by Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council at his former home, 238 Stafford Street.



Friends news

Highlights of what Friends have been up to in the past year.

Phil Batman

Winners of the Phil Batman Family History Prize for 2023:

Octavia Hamilton, University of Exeter, Prize for Undergraduate dissertation (£300): *The Global Invisibility of the Armenians: Distance of Time and Space on Traumatic Memory*

Morag Peers, University of Strathclyde, Prize for Postgraduate dissertation (£500): *Scottish Passports: Who were the people who applied for passports in Edinburgh and Glasgow between 1858 and 1863? A Genealogical Study*

Publication

Our Ethel, published by the Book Guild, June 2023: Historical fiction; crime set in 1950s York. (Recommended by the Newsletter editor!)

Mary Bryceland

Presentations:

Greater Wigston Historical Society, afternoon lecture June 2024: 'The men who didn't return: research into the ten men named on the WW1 memorial at South Wigston Methodist Church, Leicestershire.'

Friends of the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland, September 2024: 'Three Victorian women in Leicestershire: based on research with FACHRS.'

Paula Aucott

Publications:

H. Southall, & P Aucott (2024) 'Naming the parts: Identifying key features within the urban landscapes of England and Wales circa 1900' in W. Duży (ed.) *Modelling the City. Formal Ontology and Spatial Humanities*, (Routledge, London), Chapter 3, pp. 46-64. DOI: [10.4324/9781032695891-6](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781032695891-6)

A.J. Suggitt, C.J. Wheatley, P. Aucott, C.M. Beale, R. Fox, J.K. Hill, N.J.B. Isaac, B. Martay, H. Southall, C.D. Thomas, K.J. Walker, & A.G. Auffret (2023) 'Linking climate warming and land conversion to

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Presentations:

P. Aucott and H. Southall 'The use of ontologies and controlled vocabularies in the Vision of Britain system'. *Domain Ontologies and Beyond* conference organised by the Historical Ontology of Urban Space project, 08/09/2022

P. Aucott and H. Southall 'Disseminating Census Data: Experiences of A Vision of Britain through Time'. *Disseminating Census Data: Learning from Experience workshop* organised by University of Western Ontario, 16/02/2022

H. Southall and P. Aucott 'Categorising places and administrative units in Great Britain'. *State of the Art* conference organised by the Historical Ontology of Urban Space project based at the Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, 28/04/2020

Dave Fogg Postles

Publications:

'*Fidei laesio* and debt revisited: the Lichfield consistory court, 1464-1478', *Continuity & Change* (currently on First View)

'Class and economic relationships in late-Victorian Leicestershire', *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* 97 (2023), pp. 177-91

'Medieval English villagers "sense of law" revisited and legal reasoning in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries', *Reading Medieval Studies* xlix (2023), pp. 107-31

Currently researching to publish an economic and social history of Loughborough in the late nineteenth century, focusing on the built environment and provisioning for the urban population.

Richard Stone

Book review:

'Eighteen: A History of Britain in 18 Young Lives' Alice Loxton [MacMillan] for *Aspects of History*, Issue 23, August/September 2024, p.93.

Presentations:

The Lindisfarne Gospels and the Book of Kells' Burton and South Derbyshire College [20 March 2024]

'Historic Midlands Routeways' Mid-Trent and Mercia Historical Association [26 March 2024]

'The Reign of King Stephen' Missenden School of Creative Arts [20 April 2024]

'Frank Lloyd Wright' Missenden School of Creative Arts [12/08/2024]

'The Godwin Dynasty' Missenden School of Creative Arts [13/08/2024]

A new video is posted every Friday on youtube.com/@HistoryRich

Ismini Pells

Ismini has produced a second son, Teddy, born July 2024. She has also been elected president of the Cromwell Association.

The East Midlands Oral History Archive

The East Midlands Oral History Archive (EMOHA) was established in 2001 when the Centre for Urban History, in partnership with the Record Office for Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland (ROLLR), applied to the then Heritage Lottery Fund for a three-year project to preserve up to 1,000 oral history recordings that has been created in the previous 20 years or so. Since then, many new collections have been added and the Archive now contains a wealth of material relating to many aspects of modern local history. This article looks at why EMOHA was started and what it has achieved since 2001.

In the early 1970s, the University of Leicester played an important part in the creation of the Oral History Society through the support of Prof. Jim Dyos. In the mid-1970s, an oral history project was started in the History Department by Dr Adrian Bailey, but none of the recordings have survived (although a huge photo collection has). The formal collecting of oral histories in Leicester started in 1982 when Ned Newitt, studying for an MPhil at the University, got funding from the Manpower Services Commission for a year's sabbatical with BBC Radio Leicester. This gave Newitt the impetus to start the 'Industrial and Social History' oral history project. Around the same time, Market Harborough Museum started recording oral histories of changing agriculture in the Welland Valley, along with memories of housing and shops Market Harborough. In 1986, the Mantle Oral History Project was started in Coalville.

Newitt was interested in working class histories, particularly labour history and housing, and the

early recordings he made reflect this. Shirley Aucott took over in 1985, and her interest in women's history and the health services is also reflected in the collections, although a wide range of other subjects was also covered. The name of the project changed to the Leicester Oral History Archive (LOHA) at the end of 1985. The LOHA closed due to lack of funding in 1990, but the gap was filled when Leicester City Council started the Living History Unit in 1993. Between them, these four projects – Coalville, Market Harborough and the two in Leicester - created around 1,000 recordings, and it was concern about their long-term storage that led to the creation of the EMOHA in 2001.

Managed by Cynthia Brown and based in the Centre for Urban History, the EMOHA digitised and catalogued all the 1,000 recordings in its first three years, as well as doing community outreach and educational work in schools. In addition, it took on the preservation of BBC Radio Leicester's archive, which had been deposited in the ROLLR when the station started digital broadcasting. This was a huge amount

of material that is still being worked on in 2024.

Heritage Lottery funding ran out in 2004. It had been hoped that more funding would be available from the Heritage Lottery to enable EMOHA to assume a regional brief befitting its name, but this didn't happen. Colin Hyde stayed on as a member of the Centre for Urban History, and EMOHA continued with funding from a variety of projects until 2018 when it became the Midlands Hub of the British Library's Save Our Sounds project, which covered the UK. This project, and the subsequent Sounds for the Future project (also funded by the National

Heritage Lottery Fund), were carried out in partnership with the University's Archives & Special Collections. The projects enabled EMOHA to obtain high quality digitisation equipment and maintain a small preservation team for six years. While this funding has now



Cleaning mould off a cassette

come to an end and more project funding is being sought, the work done by these projects has been hugely important for the development of the Archive. Many thousands of old recordings have been preserved, their details are on an online catalogue, and they are available to be listened to in Archives & Special Collections. Around 700 of these recordings can be listened to online. At the start of 2024, the EMOHA moved into Archives & Special Collections, who now host all the digital audio files and can offer support for the preservation work.

The work of the past few years had been so intense that it has been difficult to take a moment to step back and reflect on the new material that has been added to the Archive from across the East Midlands and how this might be used. This is important, as there is no point in preserving all this material if people don't know about it and don't use it. With the help of volunteers and student placements we have created several web exhibitions that use short extracts from the recordings, and this is a useful way of encouraging people to engage with our collections.

The interviews recorded in the 1980s covered early 20th century working class lives in both urban and rural locations. Changes in health provision, agriculture, work, transport etc. were

all looked at. Migration into Leicester during the depression of the 1920s/30s was recorded, and the theme of migration continued into the 1990s with projects looking specifically at migration from the Caribbean, and the development of South Asian dance and music in Leicester. Thanks to several projects in the past two decades, we now have many more memories of people who were expelled from Uganda in 1972.

In EMOHA's early days, as well as many general interviews, we interviewed people about being a teenager in the 1950s/60s. Almost 20 years later, one of our recordings of a former Mod became the catalyst for a hugely successful exhibition at Leicester Museum about Mod culture and 1960s fashion. This sort of thing doesn't happen often, but it's nice when it does!

We have over 140 collections that include recordings about coal mining, the Great Central Railway, housing estates in Nottingham, people living with disabilities, the partition of India, urban neighbourhoods across Leicester, villages across the East Midlands, a modelling agency, the history of South Asian radio broadcasting,



EMOHA's Digital Audio Workstation



Outreach – listening to sounds on our audio post at Melton Library

and many others – it's a long and fascinating list. We have also started to accept collections of music, and a major wildlife collection, which includes a remarkable recording of seal pups at Donner Nook, Lincolnshire.

Thanks to the Sounds for the Future project, we have been able to preserve around 300 recordings that were made in Northamptonshire in the 1980s (just as in Leicester, this project was funded by the Manpower Services Commission). These are high quality recordings that contain some excellent examples of Northamptonshire accents and many memories of rural life.

For all the valuable preservation work done by the EMOHA team, there are still issues with making these recordings available. In a perfect world, we would put them all online and no one would have to visit the University to listen to them. However, each recording that goes online must be checked to see if references are made to third parties and that GDPR regulations have been adhered to; this takes a long time, especially if the subject matter is sensitive. Even recordings that are available to be listened to on-site will have had a risk assessment made, and some recordings are only available in a redacted form.

Fortunately, almost all our recordings are available to be listened to. Recent visitors have been listening to memories of ex-military people taking about service overseas, the 1984 miners' strike, migration from Uganda in 1972, and notable members of Leicester's Caribbean communities. Thanks to all the work described above, we can listen to recordings that were made more than 70 years ago, containing memories that stretch back to the 1890s. Our goal is to make sure that these recordings will be available for another 70 years, at least, and will contain memories covering the whole of the 20th century into the 21st century. We already have two collections of memories of the Covid-19 pandemic!

For more information visit EMOHA's website at <https://le.ac.uk/emoha>

Colin Hyde



Outreach – introducing young people to tape, cassettes and minidiscs



News from the

Victoria County History

The Victoria County History remains active in Leicestershire, with the current focus on the town of Loughborough. This research, from primary sources, will lead to a 'Big Red Book' of c.180,000 words, providing a reference volume that will tell the story of Loughborough from the first settlers to the date of publication.

There will be two interim paperbacks. Pam Fisher continues to work on the first of these, a social and cultural history of Loughborough since 1750, and has begun working in parallel on our second, an industrial history of the town over the same period. This approach will ensure that the first book will be informed by the impact of changing employment patterns and will also ensure that we have identified the owners of the major factories and other businesses, who may have served on the town's elected boards or later town council. Much of this work is being financed by a bequest, and the Trust is very grateful to the donor, to the Centre and to the University for its support of this work. The draft text for the first of these paperbacks will be sent for peer review in the coming year.

Visits form an essential part of the research. VCH histories need to combine documentary evidence with information gleaned from an assessment of the landscape and of the location and form of buildings. Visits have been made to the campuses of Loughborough University and Loughborough College (the former Technical College) to understand the history of their buildings, to the Grammar School and High School (girls' grammar) to see the buildings and their locally-held archives, to the Catholic church, also to see a locally-held archive and to see inside the church, and to other churches (including Trinity Methodist, Emmanuel and the

original convent chapel). The superb collection of old photographs and local newspapers held in the local studies section at Loughborough library, and their collection of printed ephemera have also been the focus of several visits.

Two online blog-posts have been published, setting out the story of Loughborough's two workhouses (of 1749 and 1838). These are on third-party sites, which we hope will make our work visible to a wider audience. There is a surprising amount of information available about the 1749 (parish) workhouse, including the names of some of the people involved in its building. You can find the post at <https://lahs.org.uk/blog/loughboroughs-first-workhouse>. Information about the second workhouse, for Loughborough Poor Law Union, has been published at <https://lynneaboutloughborough.blogspot.com/2024/08/loughboroughs-second-workhouse.html>

Other research has looked at the provision of working-class housing, by builders and private investors before the First World War and by the town council thereafter. It's interesting to see how land was parcelled up into plots in the 1880s, each plot being sufficient to accommodate (on average) four houses, and how some investors still owned a block of four properties in 1910. The council worked with local builders and employers in the 20th century, overseeing the erection of houses for people moving to the town to take up jobs in Loughborough's factories as they expanded, and to ensure a fair allocation of work between Loughborough's building firms.

The earlier history of Loughborough is not being neglected. Andrew Watkins is presently working

under contract to produce a history of farming in Loughborough in the medieval period, and volunteers working with Pam Fisher are transcribing probate inventories for later analysis of early-modern farming practices in the parish.

We were especially pleased to have been invited to deliver a brief presentation immediately before the 2024 Hoskins lecture, where we picked interesting snippets from each of our four paperback books (Castle Donington, Buckminster and Sewstern, Ibstock and Lutterworth). Talks have also been delivered in Cosby (on Lutterworth) and Castle Donington (on, and in, St Edward's church). We also had a stall at the University's Heritage Hub event in March.

The Trust is currently investigating grants to advance research in other parishes, to take forward the work done within the Charnwood Roots project, and we hope this will also help in a wider appeal for funds.

We will end this round up with an extract from a letter to the Home Secretary (Lord John Russell) in May 1839, when Loughborough property owners feared that Chartists meeting in the town might resort to violence:

'My Lord, We, the undersigned inhabitants of Loughborough being duly authorised to represent the intentions of an association of special constables and other respectable inhabitants who have agreed to embody, arm and organise themselves for their mutual defence and the protection of life and property in this neighbourhood, respectfully request that your lordship will be pleased to forward to us immediately, directed to Mr Thorp, Bulls Head and Anchor Hotel, Loughborough, sufficient fire arms to effectually arm 150 men ... It is the wish of the body we represent that we should be at least supplied with 100 muskets and bayonets, 100 brace of pistols and 50 cutlasses ...' (TNA, HO 40/44, f. 267).

It appears their request was answered in the affirmative, although whether they received the quantity of weapons they mention is not known.

Pam Fisher



Tales of student Funding

Postgraduate students at the CRLH have been happy to receive funding this year from the Hoskins Duffield fund (and in some cases from the Friends too). Here they share how this funding has furthered their researches.

I have been delighted to receive grants from the Friends of the Centre of English Local History and the Hoskins-Duffield fund to aid me with my PhD project. The additional funding has greatly facilitated my research by enabling me to purchase online subscriptions, as well as to visit The National Archives and British Library.

My PhD project with the University of Leicester explores Black histories of Cornwall before 1900 and has involved in-depth archival research. Prior to beginning the PhD, I worked for Cornwall's archive service for thirteen years, so I thought I was well versed in how to approach the project and what sources would be useful. However, tracing these lives has involved more in-depth research than I could have imagined, and has, so far, necessitated several trips to London from my home in Cornwall, particularly to explore records held at The National Archives. I have also made good use of websites like Find My Past, Ancestry and the British Newspaper Archive, all of which have been vital in piecing together these stories.

So far, I have carried out research into the earliest references from Cornwall (dating back to around 1566), as well as the Black servants who lived in scattered country houses in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. I have recently completed a lengthy chapter about Black sailors in Cornwall, which focuses particularly on the period 1740-1840, when the port of Falmouth was vital for transatlantic trade and communications, as it was also home to the packet ship service. The Admiralty records held at The National Archives in Kew were particularly useful for this chapter. One historian has

described the Royal Navy's 'mania' for record keeping, resulting in the survival of literally hundreds of thousands of ships logs, musters and pay books. These often filthy, largely untouched, volumes make it possible to trace sailors' lives. They usually record place of birth (although not skin colour, which has to be verified using additional sources like parish registers), previous and sometimes subsequent ships, pay and allowances, and sometimes wives and mothers to whom pay was allotted. Some records contain details of how much tobacco they purchased, and who had succumbed to venereal disease! Later volumes contain physical descriptions and, where log books survive, it can be possible to trace exactly what the crew of a ship were doing on any given day, and where they were in the world.



These admiralty records literally get under your skin!

It is well established that Black sailors served in the Royal Navy, and this research has enabled me to make connections to Cornwall. The admiralty records meant I could trace Christopher Stokes, who was born in Barbados but married in Fowey in 1788, through no less than six Royal Navy ships before he was fatally wounded aboard the *Veteran* at the Battle of Camperdown in 1797. I could also follow the career of Juba Hope, born in Sierra Leone, who married and had children in Falmouth while working for the packet ship service. I was able to trace him to his untimely death at sea at the age of 32, when the captain reported that the crew

"[c]ommitted the body of the deceased to the deep with bedding & hammock and read the Burial Service' eight hundred miles from Barbados.

Piecing together these stories has involved hundreds of fragmentary archive sources and the grants I have received have made it possible for me to pursue and, to an extent, recover them.

Chloe Phillips

The Hoskins Duffield Funding enabled me to visit The National Archives in Kew in May 2024 to collect primary source material for my study of how intimate violence and murder was presented in the Oxford Circuit from 1820-1880. Due to this, my research was focused on collating Oxford Circuit Assize records, primarily focusing on depositions along with a few indictments and correlating newspaper reports of those cases.

The funding provided enabled me to gather 25 cases involving the murder of an intimate partner (male or female), most of which also included violence against the female partner prior to the death. Although I had previously completed preliminary research at the archives, this trip enabled me to hone my skills in efficiently working through many boxes of deposition materials, finding many more relevant materials than I had done on my initial visit. These materials were much more varied too, with 8 of the cases of intimate violence/ murder found on this trip being cases involving a wife who killed their husband. This has allowed me to focus my discussion on intimate violence and murder without expanding it wider to subjects such as rape, which was also developing throughout this period. Whilst the history of how crimes such as rape were presented is an important subject, by having this focus on intimate violence and murder, the study has been able to delve deeper into subjects such as how intoxication and the use of a weapon changed the presentation of a defendant and/ or victim.

Furthermore, due to The National Archives having access to the British Newspaper Archive,

I was able to find correlative newspaper reports from within the Oxford Circuit region to the cases I found on this trip. This has proved to be especially useful as newspapers have since become the core focus of my discussion regarding the emergent press focus on intimate violence from 1830 onwards. Although the British Newspaper Archive can help find certain cases and wider discussion on intimate violence, the cases found on this trip has allowed me to develop a discussion that can draw comparisons between depositions and newspapers. Despite what was recorded in depositions not always being what was said, as well as newspapers omitting information and being somewhat sensationalised, having both primary sources available to draw comparisons and differences has enabled the study to have an improved depth.

Without the funding for this trip, my deposition materials would not be as substantial or as focused in the period as they are now, meaning I would be unable to make arguments that have solid backing. My period of focus for my initial trip to the archives was over a much larger area (1780-1890), and, whilst that trip was beneficial in understanding the available source material, this visit was essential in helping me collate the strong primary source material I have now.

Benjamin Carey

As a self-funded PhD student, I was very pleased to be awarded a grant from the Hoskins-Duffield Fund this summer to assist with my research.

My research is a study of the juvenile emigrants sent to the British colonies by Reform schools and other institutions in the mid-nineteenth century. Researchers, and organisations such as the Child Migrant Trust, have rightly focused much attention on the mass migration of children from British orphanages in the period after 1870, but there has been relatively little attention given to the migration of smaller groups of children in the period before this, and its potential links to the system of convict transportation in the first half of the nineteenth century. My study will focus on the period 1845 to 1875 and look at how

'juvenile delinquents' were used to 'repackage' convict transportation as an aspiration during this period.

Part of my award was used to fund my attendance at the biannual conference of the Children's History Society held at Newcastle University in July. The theme of the conference was 'Children's Worlds through Time'. An important discussion among historians has centred on the emergence of childhood as a specific phase in the life cycle and of a child's world as a protected space, isolated from the concerns of adults. Much of the discussion at the conference centred around the reality of children's worlds in different social and cultural settings. For many children, particularly those who had fallen foul of the emerging youth justice system, there needs to be a much more varied and complex understanding of the world of children and adolescence and its historical context. I was able to attend workshops led by some leading historians in this field of childhood and to learn about some interesting new research developments which will be invaluable for my own project.

I was also able to use the award to fund a research trip to the Surrey History centre at Woking, where I spent a fascinating week looking at the records of the Philanthropic Society. This was one of the first Reform schools, originally set up in 1788, the same year as convicts began to be sent to the new penal colony of Botany Bay, to house children of criminals and children 'at risk of criminality'. By the 1840s this institution had changed, becoming a 'farm' colony with an emphasis on agricultural training and the goal of sending young boys as agricultural labourers to the colonies. The Society's records, and especially their admission registers, contain a wealth of information about the children, their family backgrounds and subsequent histories. I was able to take over 2000 photographs of archives relevant to my research which I will be able to use to develop a database of child and adolescent migrants, their families and life courses, which will be a vital part of my research.

Judy Somekh

My research is about protest and particularly about the taking part in activism to deliver as loud a message as possible in support of a cause. My emphasis goes beyond any ideological commitment to explore what I term the physical dynamics involved in how protest manifests itself and develops. The key elements which contribute to successful (and unsuccessful) activism include emotions, symbolism, visibility, solidarity, individual and collective identity, the occupation of place and space, physical effort, and the art of performance. Much of what I explore takes place within localities, albeit generally within a wider national context. My approach involves case studies of protest movements (Suffrage, Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp, Women's Liberation Movement) which involved a network of local, regional, and national groups. I hope to give a voice to those involved in activism through archive research, as well as through an analysis of oral histories, most (but not all) of which are available online.

To understand the dynamics of protest movements I have, to date, consulted materials relating to Greenham Common and Women's Suffrage. The Hoskins Duffield Funding has primarily been used to support archive visits, although a small amount also allowed me to attend a conference in Manchester celebrating the feminist activist text *Beyond The Fragments* and its continued influence in informing women's radical organisation and protest.

My archive visits have, initially, been to London (LSE Women's Library and MayDay Rooms), Cardiff (Glamorgan Archives), and Manchester (John Rylands Library). Many Greenham Common records, including the personal records of activists, correspondence, newsletters, diaries, and press cuttings, are held in London. The Glamorgan Archives hold specific records relating to the 'Women for Life on Earth' march which precipitated the Women's Peace Camp at Greenham, including press releases, correspondence, photograph albums, flyers, press cuttings on local women, and a number of diaries with personal recollections of the physicality involved in marching in the summer heat. Such was the perception of women's frailties that a leading (male) CND member commented that they would never make it because women were 'always the first to drop out of Aldermaston marches'!

On Women's Suffrage, the LSE Women's Library collection features the personal papers of activists, records of local and national suffrage organisations, demonstration flyers and photographs, oral history interviews, and ephemera such as banners. There is also a 'Diary of the Law-Abiding Suffragist Pilgrimage in July 1913', which gives an insight into the protest tactics of non-militants. The John Rylands Library has an extensive collection of newspaper reports of protest activity, much of which is likely to be inaccessible to researchers in future because of the crumbling condition of the material. The materials I consulted are beginning to be incorporated into my written research and the Hoskins Duffield Funding has been invaluable in supporting archive visits.

Dave A Coppock

Book Reviews

Historic Building Mythbusting: Uncovering Folklore, History and Archaeology

James Wright (Cheltenham, 2024)

Every village I've lived in, and quite a few others I know about too, have had the story that there is some sort of secret tunnel there. Usually this links up the church and the manor house or some other pair of significant buildings, even though they are often quite some distance apart. I have always been fairly sceptical about such stories – and at last there is a book that tells me that I'm right to be so.

James Wright is a buildings archaeologist and has had a 'medieval mythbusting' blog for quite some while. He has now produced a book on the subject. He visits some of the best-known myths, investigates the truth behind them, and speculates as to how these stories have grown up in the first place.

First up are the secret tunnels. James starts in his hometown, Stone in Staffordshire, where he grew up with tales of the tunnels linking the site of the priory to Aston Hall, some 1.8 miles distant as the crow flies. Tales of tunnels can be traced back to 1719 and an antiquarian account of a visitor to the priory ruins finding a vault leading from the cellars that was almost half a mile in length. The connection with Aston Hall appeared in a nineteenth-century narrative, and had much to do with the catholic connections of the Hall. James questions the likelihood of the vast engineering project that would have been required to build such a tunnel being carried out without leaving physical or written evidence.

Besides this is the question of what possible purpose such a structure would serve. We are then taken on a tour of other notable 'secret tunnels'. These included caverns beneath a 'crumbling country estate' in Burton-on-Trent where the Knights Templar supposedly hid their treasure when they were disbanded. Other examples were a tunnel linking St Albans Abbey to a nunnery, another linking the cathedral to the castle and a pub in Norwich, and one that linked Canterbury Cathedral to a town brothel. These three all illustrated the poor reputation that pre-Reformation churchmen had. The town of Guilford has a legendary network of tunnels underneath it, and the best efforts of a local expert have been unable to disprove its existence. People want to believe in tunnels, have often had these stories handed down to them by parents and grandparents, sometimes by people whose friends of friends, or relations of relations had 'direct personal experience' of them. Rejecting these accounts might seem like betrayal on some level.

The next myth to be investigated is the military nature of British castles. In popular imagination all castles were fortresses, and their structure – where it survives – is explained in these terms. A 'mature' examination of a medieval castle might consider the social, political, and cultural reasons behind its construction rather than just the

marital, but too often the heritage industry relies on the display of arms and armour in an attempt to bring a site to life.

Closely related to the limited interpretations of castles is the myth of the spiral staircase, and the belief that they were designed to favour the defending swordsman. The author finds absolutely no evidence to support this story, despite the willingness of the heritage industry to repeat it. He had already argued about the historical rarity of castle sieges in the previous chapter, and if invaders had penetrated as far as the staircases, the game was pretty much up anyway. There was also a large number of anticlockwise spiral staircases to account for too! More likely than a military purpose was the connection of spiral staircases to high-status, and possibly female, space with a castle.

Next up are masons' marks. Three aspects of these are considered: pentagrams, marks as 'mason signatures', and obscene carvings left behind by masons-with-a-grudge. Was the pentagram always regarded as an apotropaic symbol, there to protect us from evil spirits? Or does that interpretation owe more to nineteenth and twentieth-century fantasies? It also had numerous mathematical applications, and was it possible that these were of more interest to medieval stonemasons? The author suggests that the six-petalled rosette in particular provided a simple way in to understanding the geometry common to medieval buildings.

The existence of masons' 'banker marks' is also the subject of some scepticism. There are several reasons why it is found unlikely that stonemasons all had individual marks with which they signed their works, and which were passed down through the generations. This, the author argues, has more to do with more recent practices than with medieval ones. The notion of a centralised register of unique marks goes against the knowledge of how great building projects operated, attracting workers from wide geographical regions. It was more likely that marks were allocated on a 'per-project' basis.

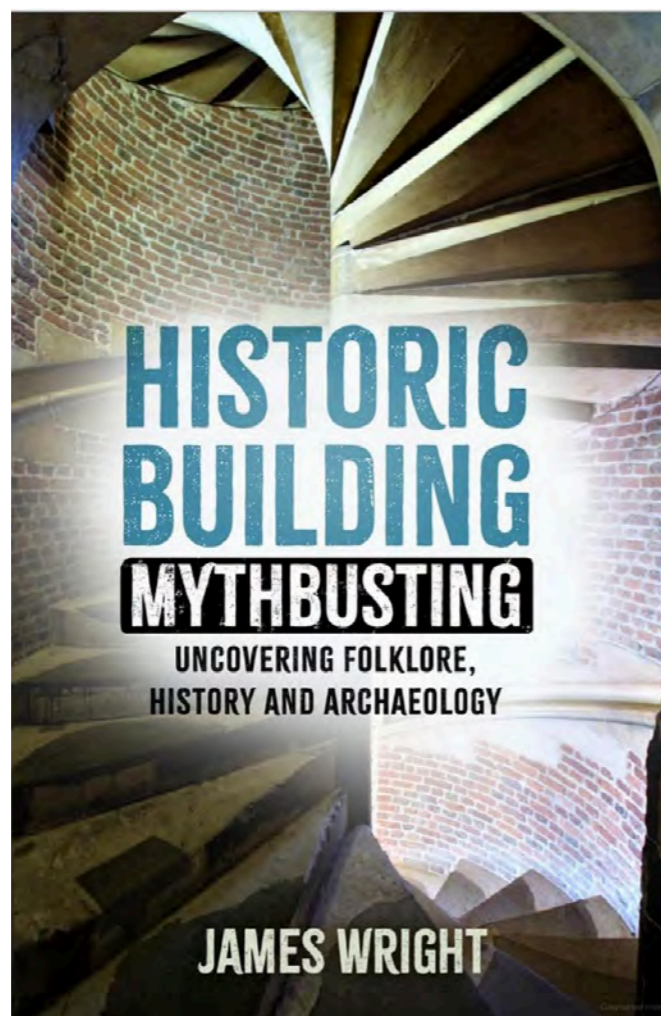
James finally debunks the notion that the ruder and cruder images and carvings that can be found in our sacred buildings are a result of stonemasons' revenge. It is a popular belief that such carvings appeared without the knowledge or permission of the clergy. They were indicative of some form of payback, of a base humour, or

symbolic of the survival of pagan fertility cults. There is, however, no evidence of outrage at the appearance of such images, no cases against errant masons, and most such carvings are very obvious. It is more likely we have somehow lost contact with the medieval catholic church, and how the obscene and profane, and a ribald humour, fitted in with the sacred.

Similarly, short shrift is given to stories of the reuse of ships' timbers in numerous medieval buildings (for reasons of both practicality and logistics) and the claim of so very many pubs that they are the 'oldest in England' (very many of them can be traced no farther back than the 1700s). Slots in inner church walls weren't there so that lepers could watch the mass and there is no evidence to support North doors being the exit for the devil. Arrows weren't sharpened on stonework leaving behind tell-tale incisions. But before we dismiss James as a complete killjoy so far as colourful tales accompanying building history is concerned, there is one area where he does propose a mystical explanation, and that is of burn marks on old timbers. Where these distinctive 'teardrop' shaped marks have been detected they have often been given a mundane explanation, usually an accident due to candles being burned too close. But experimental archaeology has disproved this theory; showing it was impossible to reproduce these marks with beeswax or tallow candles or rushlights. Coupled with the fact that many of these marks appear in locations where there would have been no need of candles – like the back of doors – clearly some other explanation was required. While the author admits that there is no documentary evidence to support it the most likely explanation is that these marks were made as a protection against evil or bad luck, or more specifically as a protection against the ever present threat of fire.

To summarise, this is a fascinating and very readable book – but I'd recommend caution in using it to puncture too many people's fondly held historic building myths, it might not make you popular. And as another aside, my current home village, Hillesden in Buckinghamshire, DOES actually have a tunnel! (more about that on page 14).

Mandy de Belin



The Mysterious Case of the Victorian Female Detective

Sara Lodge (New Haven and London, 2024)

I was drawn to this book because the current subject of my research, Ashe Hall in Derbyshire, was associated with a scandalous divorce in 1875. It seems where there was a need to prove adultery (the only grounds for divorce permitted then), there was often the need for a private detective to furnish evidence, and many of these detectives were female.

The whole notion of the detective – whether male or female – was a Victorian invention. A tiny detective branch was formed at Scotland Yard in 1842 in recognition of the need to go above and beyond the highly visible, ‘preventative’ policing that had already been established. There was, for many years, the author notes, a yawning gap between the reality and the expectations of detectives being built by popular fiction. Women were involved from the beginning. The 1840s provide several examples of female ‘searchers’. They were often the wives of policeman and might have other, more domestic, duties within a police station, but they had an important role in searching,

and questioning, female prisoners. Sometimes their skills were utilised outside the station, where there was a need for a female operative to go ‘undercover’ to apprehend wrongdoers. This role was not confined to the capital, many provincial towns had female ‘searchers’ too. These women were effectively occupying the detective role without being recognised, or rewarded, as such. In the 1860s, fictional female detectives began to appear in novels and in plays, and were extremely popular (the author has traced the earliest fictional female detective to 1840). This in turn encouraged the newspapers to report on the doings of real-life lady detectives. There were several types of cases where the police required a woman to go

into spaces where only women could go. These women could, for example, be used to find and arrest back-street abortionists, but they were also effective in seeking out the fortune-tellers that preyed on the hopes and wishes of female customers.

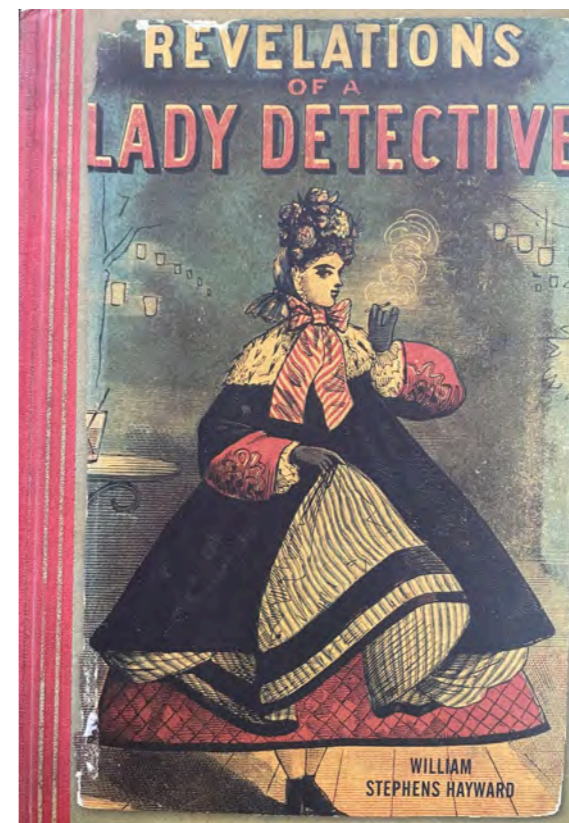
In addition to the women employed indirectly by the police, there were also private detectives. The Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857 had brought divorce within the reach of many more people, able to pursue an action through the civil courts. The only recognised grounds were adultery (for a man) and adultery and cruelty (for a woman). The search for proof for grounds for divorce gave rise to a number of private detective agencies offering such services. Unsurprisingly, women proved very adept at that job, because of their access to female spaces. Sometimes they would pose as servants and so be able to

observe indiscretions for themselves. The author also informs us that some of the less scrupulous agencies would offer a ‘honey trap’ service to catch some unsuspecting husbands. There was little gender solidarity on display. Women detectives were as likely to be seeking evidence of wives straying as husbands.

Dr Lodge gives an account of the many nineteenth-century dramas that feature female detectives as lead characters. This highlighted the actor’s ability to adopt disguises, very often that of a boy or man, or act the role of a lady or even an ageing servant. These skills were as valuable for a detective as they were for an actor, and so some actresses ran or worked for private

agencies as well as spending time on the stage.

The dramas often featured their heroines being accomplished in a number of traditionally masculine skills such as shooting, fighting, and even swearing (within reason). I was reminded of some recent films and television series featuring brave and plucky Victorian females, outwitting male antagonists (Enola Holmes springs to mind). These have sometimes been condemned as ‘woke’ anachronistic nonsense, so it gave me some pleasure to realise that these dramas are surprisingly true to their period. Real Victorian lady detectives might not have been quite as dashing or ingenious, but neither were there many real-life Inspector Buckets or Sherlock Holmes.



A lady detective shows her ankles and smokes!

Dr Lodge also spends some time looking at American lady detectives. The civil war in the

1860s gave rise to another strand, the female spy and female fighter, contributing to Unionist victory. Some of this was pure fiction, but some had some basis in fact, however tenuous, such as Kate Warne’s reputed smuggling of Abraham Lincoln through Baltimore on his way to his inauguration to evade a rumoured assassination attempt.

This book is an entertaining read and contains many examples of the exploits of female detectives taken from contemporary newspapers and court cases, as well as descriptions of the novels and plays in the genre. I would be a rich resource for anyone planning more films or dramas about plucky Victorian heroines.

Mandy de Belin

Battle of Naseby

Friends with an interest in Civil Wars history have the choice between a Naseby ‘banquet’ or a Naseby ‘brunch’ next Spring.

Oxford University Continuing Education is hosting a weekend course **Naseby: The Memory of a Battle in a Changing Landscape** on 22nd – 23rd March, 2025. This will comprise a day of papers at Rewley House in Oxford on aspects of the battle, followed the next day by a coach trip to Naseby and an expert guided tour hosted by the Naseby 1645 group. For details, and to book, see <https://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/courses/naseby-the-memory-of-a-battle-in-a-changing-landscape?code=O24P135HIR>.

A few weeks later, on April 5th, the Friends are hosting a day trip ‘Peace and War’. The morning is spent at Thornby Hall, now a Buddhist Centre, and features tours of the house and grounds and an optional meditation session. After lunch we go to the adjoining village of Naseby and enjoy a guided tour, again provided by the Naseby 1645 group. Booking details will be available in the new year.





2024 AGM

Minutes of last year's AGM and Treasurer's Report in advance of this year's AGM

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Friends, held on Tuesday 21 November 2023 at 19:00pm by Zoom

Present: Michael Gilbert, Karen Donegani, Mary Bryceland, John Parker, Jeremy Lodge, Mandy de Belin, Andrew Wager, Freda Raphael, Elaine Brown, Noel Tornbohm, Penny Champion, Philip Ramsey, Bill King, Yvonne Cresswell, Sue Hughes, Heather Flack, Graham Jones, Trixie Gadd; Rachael Jones. For part of the meeting: Phil Batman; Keith Snell.

Apologies: Sue Ruffitt, Margaret Hawkins, Anne Coyne, Pam Fisher, Sylvia Pinches, Dorothy Halfhide, Robert Mee, Angla Muir, Carole Perkin, Tony Perkin, Ann Stones.

Minutes of the AGM held on 14 November 2022

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

Matter arising not covered elsewhere in the agenda

None.

Chair's report

This can be viewed in full in the [2023 Newsletter](#)

Michael Gilbert commented that we "are not in a bad place" considering the loss of Marc Fitch House and the effects of Covid. The Friends has survived, increased in size, and is still holding events. We are now finding placement opportunities for students from the School of History. This included Sue Hughes (MA course) who did a placement at the Spalding Gentlemen's Society, together with an undergraduate. We are working with Dr James Moore at the Centre for Urban History. If anyone can suggest further places willing to take students please get in touch.

Hoskins Day: good speakers but a relatively poor turnout, only 25, despite a lot of publicity. Hoskins Day 2023: the speaker will be Prof. Corinne Fowler. Zoom talks have been continuing – suggestions for speakers are welcome. The visit to Wallingford had also gone well.

Treasurer's report and annual accounts

Karen Donegani gave the report which had been circulated prior to the meeting:

"A summary of the draft, unadopted accounts for the year 2022-23 is provided on the AGM page of the Friends' Website. Printed copies have been sent by post to those members we cannot contact by email.

The year-end value of the Friends' total assets (including investments at market value on 30 September 2023) is £33,577.94, a decrease of £876.03 (2.5%) of the opening balance. This decrease reflects ups and downs of the stock market. Money in the bank remains stable at £23,251.94 compared to £23,382.39 at the start of the year.

Hoskins Day costs were much reduced this year while the Queen's Mill Burnley Study Day

incurred a small loss. Administrative, AGM and newsletter spending is mostly on printing and postage. We anticipate printing and postage costs will be reduced during the current year (2023-24) as changes to our constitution approved at the last AGM mean that we may now notify members of the AGM by email where possible. The number of requests for student support rose significantly compared to the previous year and over £2,000 was paid out. We continue to validate and review every request and focus on providing grants to offset research costs.

Changes were made during the year to our bank and investment accounts. We now have online banking facilities on our Natwest current account. We closed our CAF Gold Current Account, moving the balance to the Cambridge and Counties Bank to avoid CAF charges and take advantage of much better interest rates. We also moved our investments to a new Charities Aid Foundation ethical investment fund which promises better returns.

Our financial position is sound, and we can meet any financial obligations for the coming year. In view of our lack of contractual commitments, we do not have a reserves policy at the present time.

I would like to thank our Independent Examiner, Paul Shipman, for agreeing to review these accounts on behalf of the Friends."

Karen Donegani commented that the accounts had now been signed off by Paul Shipman, the independent auditor. In summary there is the same amount in the bank at the end of the year as at the start despite paying considerably more in grants to students. The amount of student support provided increased from £500 last year to over £2000 this year – something the committee feels is very important. We are working with the Centre staff to spread the message to students. We are also providing slightly larger grants; increased from £200 to up to £500. These support, for example, research trips. All the applications are vetted to ensure that they are within the remit of regional & local history and are for a specific purpose; such as travel costs, or subscriptions.

We are working to reduce costs, for example the committee now meets via Zoom so there are no travel expenses. Something that will make an impact in the future is a change to the Constitution which was made last year meaning that the AGM notice and papers can be sent out electronically to those members on email which results in reduced printing and postage costs.

The Newsletter was also produced digitally and is on the website; again saving costs. Print copies were sent to members who have not provided an email address – about 10% of the membership.

There was a mixed performance on the financial markets: interest rates increased which was good for savings, but the stock market did less well which impacted on the investments. Total assets are slightly up on last year. The move, this year, to online banking has meant that we can now pay bills electronically rather than writing cheques.

Membership is 177, and has increased slightly, despite the sad loss of members through death, or ageing.

A member asked how to check whether their subs had been paid – Karen is happy to answer inquiries via e-mail treasurer@englishlocalhistory.org.uk

Penny Champion asked whether there is a policy on the size of reserves – is there a closing balance that we aim not to go below? Karen replied that we have no contractual commitments other than a subscription to BAML, and to our internet providers, so there is no need for a reserves policy. The committee had discussed whether to limit student grants to no more than our income although we did go slightly over this year. The committee will

always consider grant applications even if it means taking money from capital sums.

The approval of the treasurer's report

Proposed by John Parker, seconded by Penny Champion. Approved unanimously.

Election of officers and committee

Thanks were given to Robert Mee who was treasurer and had remained on the committee – he has now stood down. Also to Andrew Wager who was a former secretary and who has also stood down from the committee.

The following list of nominations was shared on screen:

Officer	Standing	Proposed	Seconded
Chair	Michael Gilbert	Karen Donegani	Mary Bryceland
Secretary	Mary Bryceland	Michael Gilbert	Mandy de Belin
Treasurer	Karen Donegani	Michael Gilbert	John Parker
Membership Secretary	Karen Donegani	Mary Bryceland	Michael Gilbert
Editor of the Newsletter	Mandy de Belin	Mary Bryceland	John Parker
Programme secretary	Vacant		
IT coordinator	John Parker	Karen Donegani	Michael Gilbert
Committee	Anne Coyne	Karen Donegani	Mary Bryceland
Committee	Jeremy Lodge	Michael Gilbert	Mandy de Belin
Committee	Linda Harrison		
Committee	Vacant		
Committee	Vacant		
Committee	Vacant		
Student Representative	N/A		
Student Representative	N/A		
Centre Representative	N/A		

The secretary reported that nominations closed 7 days before this AGM but people could be co-opted to the committee. Michael suggested that those considering co-option should contact committee members and the matter would be discussed at the next committee meeting.

It was agreed that the officers and committee could be elected en bloc.

Proposer Seconder: Noel Tornbohm

All in agreement.

Appointment of the independent examiner

Paul Shipman had agreed to continue in this role and was reappointed.

Any other business

Graham Jones congratulated Mandy de Belin on the Newsletter which was “a stunner”.

Comments were made on the strengthening of the Centre through the appointment of Associates. It was not known how many students were following the MA pathway.

Trixie Gadd asked whether Hoskins Day could be a hybrid event – in person and online.

Mary said that the committee had made it an in-person event this year to encourage people to have a look at the Centre in the Attenborough buildings. The committee would bear this in mind. Graham suggested that perhaps a recording could be made available.

On 14th December there will be Christmas Quiz, via Zoom, at 7pm. Look out for publicity.

Friends of the Centre for English Local History
Registered Charity no. 1073528

Receipts and Payments Account for the year to 30 September 2024

	2024	2023
	£UK	£UK
Receipts and payments		
Receipts		
Donations	1,815.00	1,725.00
Dividends & Interest	1,097.22	881.08
Publications & 2nd hand book sales	115.40	78.30
Hoskins Day tickets	0.00	20.00
Study Day tickets	570.00	455.00
Total	3,597.62	3,159.58
Payments		
Student Support	714.62	2,149.36
Admin/IT costs	201.08	348.75
CRLH Library support	159.54	0.00
Publications	168.00	0.00
Newsletter	181.19	138.16
AGM Expenses	40.60	58.91
Hoskins Day costs	38.21	44.14
Study Days costs	531.51	550.51
Total	2,034.75	3,289.83
Deficit/surplus (receipts less payments)	1,562.87	-130.45
Excess of income over expenditure		
Opening funds at 1st October 2023	33,896.97	31,841.34
Deficit/surplus (receipts less payments)	1,562.87	-130.45
Re-valuation investment assets at cost	0.00	2,186.08
Closing funds at 30th September 2024	35,459.84	33,896.97

Breakdown of closing funds at 30th September 2023

Bank balances	Cash	0.00	47.16
	Natwest Bank Current Account	4,059.37	3,259.44
	Cambridge & Counties savings account	20,755.44	19,945.34
	Sub-total	<u>24,814.81</u>	<u>23,251.94</u>
Investments	Investment Assets at cost:		
	IFSL CAF ESG Income and Growth Fund <u>at cost</u>	<u>10,645.03</u>	<u>10,645.03</u>
Total funds (Bank balances plus investment assets at cost)		<u>35,459.84</u>	<u>33,896.97</u>
Closing assets at 30th September 2024			
	Bank balances	24,814.81	23,251.94
	<i>Market value of investments:</i>		
	IFSL CAF ESG Income and Growth Fund	11,695.15	10,326.00
	Total	<u>36,509.96</u>	<u>33,577.94</u>

Karen L. Donegani (Treasurer)
9th October 2024

**Friends of the Centre for English Local History
(Registered Charity no. 1073528)**



**FRIENDS OF THE CENTRE FOR ENGLISH LOCAL HISTORY, HYPIR Post Room,
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