



**AVON LOCAL HISTORY
AND ARCHAEOLOGY**
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AND ARCHAEOLOGY**
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**NEWSLETTER ONLINE
UPDATE**
31 May 2017

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CONTENTS

ALHA items

2017 ALHA summer walks programme

Events and sources

A Forgotten landscape

Know Your Place Somerset

Yate: Henry Blathwayt dress jacket

BALH local history day

S Glos heritage open days 2017

Acton Court

Yatton library refurbishment

Somerset films at Curzon

Marshfield heritage trail

Books etc noticed

Tormarton menagerie

Books sought

B&GAS publications

Commentary and responses

The Bristol (Clevedon?) House

Building as evidence of local prosperity

Joseph Harding of Marksbury

RPM

Can you help?

Gloucs car and motorbike registrations

Election leaflets

Underfall Yard

ALHA SUMMER WALKS PROGRAMME 2017

The rest of this year's programme is below. No need to pre-book, but there will be a £2 fee payable on the day. If you have any queries please telephone the organiser, Mike Hooper, on 0117 9775512, or mobile: 07443 229499.

MONDAY 12th JUNE – VICTORIAN CLIFTON

Leader Professor Peter Malpass – a return for this popular speaker, continuing his exploration of another Bristol suburb.

Walk Although Clifton is mainly known for its Georgian terraces, Peter will show us that the Victorian development is equally as interesting.

Meet at 6:45pm middle of Victoria Square (BS8 4ES) – parking is available in surrounding streets

SUNDAY 9th JULY – OLVESTON VILLAGE

Leader Eric Garrett – local village resident and keen amateur historian.

Walk A walk around a typical small Gloucestershire village but definitely not to be confused with Alveston.

Meet at 1:45pm in the car park near the church. Parking is limited, so please park with consideration and car share if possible.

SUNDAY 13th AUGUST – CLEVEDON

Leader Jane Lilly, historian and local resident
Walk A short wander through the seaside resort's history, from medieval west end to Victorian pier
Meet at 1.45pm at the west end Salthouse car park (BS21 7TY) near the hotel gates on Old Church Road.

EVENTS AND SOURCES

A FORGOTTEN LANDSCAPE PROJECT

Latest at <http://www.aforgottenlandscape.org.uk/latest-news/> . The project offers the opportunity to participate in archaeological investigations at the Toot, **Oldbury on Severn in June and July 2017**: <http://mailchi.mp/157ea1073f79/9ra2vzxib8#archaeology>

KNOW YOUR PLACE WEST OF ENGLAND

Now into Somerset: <http://www.kypwest.org.uk/project-diary/launch-kyp-somerset/> More at [here](#). Congratulations and thanks to all concerned.

CLOTHING YATE EXHIBITION

The way they dressed: discovering the way people in Yate were dressed 1890s – 1980s, at **Yate Heritage Centre until 10 June 2017**: Queen jacket. 'We are also pleased to exhibit the Henry Blathwayt Dress Jacket from the First World War period courtesy of the National Trust **Dyrham** Park and recently conserved with an HLF grant. This is also part of the South Gloucestershire First World War project.' **Yate Heritage Centre**, Church Road, Yate BS37 5BG. Tel: 01454 862200

BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR LOCAL HISTORY

BALH's local history day is on **3 June 2017** in London. The keynote speaker will be Professor Christopher Dyer, whose theme will be 'Local societies on the move: migration and social mobility in the middle ages'. Other speakers include Professor Geoff Timmins and Dr Alan Crosby on 'Housing and local history: research agendas and practical issues'. More details [here](#) .

SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE HERITAGE OPEN DAYS 7 – 10 September 2017

Alison Catlin writes: We are promoting a range of activities across the year in place of the Discover Festival. We would like to continue to promote your Heritage Open Days in South Gloucestershire to highlight the beautiful locations and amazing heritage we have on offer in the area. If you would like to be part of our publicity, please register your event at <http://hosted.southglos.gov.uk/snap/heritage/heritageopendays2017.htm>. The deadline for applications is **Monday 5 June**.

We intend to produce an A5 flyer for distribution in libraries and Council venues, backed by further details on the Heritage pages of the South Gloucestershire Council website. We will also promote Heritage Open Days via social media and the *Active* Newsletter which goes to all library and leisure centre users across South Gloucestershire. We will promote your events as a group to raise the profile of Heritage Open Days across the area; please be aware that this will not replace your own local publicity. We recommend that you also carry out all the publicity that you usually would for any event and also register your event on the national Heritage Open Days website. If you have any questions or need any advice (e.g. with managing your bookings on Eventbrite), please do get in touch. Alison Catlin Cultural Events Co-ordinator 01454 865835, Jane Marley Museums & Heritage Officer 01454 865783.

ACTON COURT

The Acton Court 2017 events programme is now at www.actoncourt.com. Acton Court will open to the public from **5 July to 13 August 2017, closed Mondays and Tuesdays**. You can also book a guided tour of the [House & Grounds](#). For further information, www.actoncourt.com or 01454 228 224.

YATTON LIBRARY

Yatton library closes for refurbishment **until about 14 August 2017**. <http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/services/yatton-library/>

For events at North Somerset libraries generally, see <http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/leisure/libraries/libraryevents/events-libraries/>

SOMERSET FILMS AT THE CURZON

Short films capturing life in Somerset from the 1930s to the 60s.

'The last steam trains carrying waving holidays makers to Minehead, sixties Butlins, Dulverton flood damage in '52, seaside holidays at Dunster beach, village life in war time Somerset, women in orchards harvesting apples and rodeos on Exmoor.' **Sunday 18 June, 1.30pm the Curzon, Clevedon**, David Parker. £6.50/£5.50. For tickets ring 01275 871000, or visit www.curzon.org.uk/film/31360



MARSHFIELD HERITAGE TRAIL LEAFLET

ALHA member **Marshfield & District Local History Society** is planning a heritage trail leaflet explaining the history of some of the village's outstanding clutch of buildings of architectural or historic interest.

BOOKS ETC NOTICED

Not a book but a website, about scandals involving victorian clergy, one of them at **Tormarton**: <https://victorianclericalerrors.blogspot.co.uk/>. Author is Tom Hughes at victorianga@aol.com

BOOKS SOUGHT

Irvine Gray, *Antiquaries of Gloucestershire and Bristol*, B&GAS 1981.

Irene Wyatt, ed., *Transportees from Gloucestershire to Australia 1783-1842*, Gloucestershire Record Series volume 1.

Brian Frith ed., *Bigland's Gloucestershire collections* part 1 (A-C), GRS volume 2.

Brian Frith ed., *Bigland's Gloucestershire collections* part 2 (D-M), GRS volume 3.

Jill Barlow, Richard Bryant, Carolyn Heighway, Chris Jeens and David Smith: *Edward II: His Last Months and Monument*, B&GAS 2015

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COMMENTARY

The Bristol (Clevedon?) house

Julia Elton writes: I really must correct the most extraordinary and wholly inaccurate statement you make about my family and its acquisition of Clevedon Court. Far from buying Clevedon Court in 1821 as you say, it was bought in 1709 by Sir Abraham Elton who had made a great deal of money as an industrialist in Bristol. Although his father was reputedly a road mender outside

Lawson's Gate in the early 17th century, this is a very long way both in fact and time from being refuse collectors in the early 19th century. What do you mean by 'refuse collectors' anyway? By 1821, the family were major Somerset gentry and landowners. The house at this date was lived in by the 5th Sir Abraham Elton, who, far from being 'local branch' was actually the head of the whole family. He owned

most of **Clevedon** and a chunk of **Tickenham** and was instrumental in the development of the town, though not because he needed 'to recoup some of the cost' of Clevedon Court which, I repeat, had been in the family's possession since 1709. And what on earth do you mean by 'third division south of the landowning gentry'? By writing this kind of

Jane Lilly writes: I've enjoyed reading about the origins of the Bristol house in the April update, especially an interesting theory aired as to the inspiration for the growth of the Italianate style of house being a house in Hill Road in **Clevedon!** Sadly, that particular building went up soon after the site was purchased in 1880, when Stuckey's Bank expanded from their first Clevedon premises across the road in number 49. The first plots for the development of Regency Clevedon were measured up in 1821. At East Clevedon Triangle the first houses in that style were erected by William Hollyman. These two, Ilex House and Trellis House, were Clevedon's very first houses built to the Regency pattern. The first house built on The Hill itself was Prospect House, 1 Highdale

Building as evidence of local prosperity

In his presentation to ALHA's 2017 local history day on the origins of **Chipping Sodbury** High Street, John Chandler suggested that building implies prosperity, and that the absence of buildings from a particular period suggests that the local economy may have then stagnated or even declined. In CS the presence of medieval and C18 buildings suggests that the town prospered during those periods, and the absence of Victorian buildings suggests that in the C19 the economy of the town stagnated. The reasoning behind this rule of thumb is that, because building is expensive, someone has to have the means to pay for it. A building will not be erected unless the landowner plans to use it, whether to live in or for business, or reckons to be able to let it for rents paid by tenants who have the means to pay and the confidence to commit to a lease for some years.

It would be interesting to test this rule of thumb on other communities in our area. Can the dating of buildings help us to plot the rise and fall of the local economy in, say,

nonsensical drivel, without even bothering to look up to see whether it is remotely accurate, you potentially reduce the standing of local history and its members whom you purport to represent.

Road, believed to have been built in 1824. It was rapidly followed as houses filled the plots along Hill Road. The first hotel was actually the Royal Hotel, built in 1825 on the site where the Friary stands now, at the seaward end of Hill Road. Again it was William Hollyman who was the developer. He put built two houses on the plot, specifying in the sale advertisement that one could be used as a hotel. Building at the Ladye Bay end of Wellington terrace was continued into the 1860s and 1870s. The Walton Park Hotel was built after a consortium of local businessmen formed a company to build a hotel for Clevedon in 1884. By that time the Royal Hotel had closed, and the York Hotel had long been a private house. I'm afraid that the popularisation of the Italianate style cannot be claimed by Clevedon.

Wrington or **Winscombe**, **Midsomer Norton** or **Radstock**, **Thornbury** or **Marshfield**? In **Bristol**, **Clifton** and **Redland** must have been the result of affluence in the C18 and C19, but what about **Weston**, **Twerton** or **Bathwick**? Was building in **Clevedon**, **Portishead** or **Weston-super-mare** the result of prosperity, or were other factors involved?

One problem with this rule of thumb is that building may not always have been new build, but rebuilding after dilapidation or fire. Warwick and Blandford Forum have Georgian centres, not just because they were then doing nicely, but because they were devastated by fires which required rebuilding, at any rate so far as the insurance companies coughed up. The motive behind many C20 housing estates was not economic gain or confidence in the local economy, but a social concern to provide decent and affordable housing for thousands of people living in slums, in overcrowded dwellings, in furnished rooms, with the in-laws, or downright homeless. Bristol's **Broadmead**

was the result not of prosperity but of war damage and a political will to regenerate in a time of comparative austerity: those who remember the 1950s will not characterise them as times when local people had money to spend. The rule of thumb does not seem to apply well to inward investment.

Chepstow castle is not a sign of affluent Welsh, but of an English monarch using non-welsh wealth to build in order to cow

Joseph Harding

One thing about local history that amuses or annoys is that it does not always accord to people who have died the same reputation as they enjoyed during their lifetimes. Old newspapers and magazines often eulogise people now considered unimportant or insignificant. One example is Joseph Harding (1805-1876) of **Marksbury** in north-east Somerset, lauded during his lifetime as the father of cheddar cheese, which according to recent newspaper reports still accounts for half the UK's cheese consumption. His manufacturing innovations attracted visitors from Scotland and America, and his son promulgated his methods in Australia. Nowadays Harding is hardly noticed, apart from his grave in **Marksbury** churchyard and a modest memorial plaque inside the church, neither noted by Pevsner. Harding's innovations were aimed at making the process more efficient and at delivering a better quality product: smooth, consistent, tasty and non-crumbling. The technicalities included the way he filtered the milk, regulated acidity

RPM

Resale price maintenance does not feature much in local histories: one would not want readers to get over-excited. So when you come across a reference to RPM, or to its near-abolition in 1964, it makes you stop and think. Did Fry's peppermint cream, Wills's Golden Virginia and Bath Olivers become cheaper overnight? One rare mention of RPM is in Beryl Tully's *The butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker: shops and shopkeepers of Westbury on Trym* vol. 2 (2009). In her account of one of the electrical goods shops now gone, BT says its proprietor had worked as salesman and repairer for

and control a defiant but impoverished population. When inward investment appeared again in our area in the early C20 and later, the wealthy investors, many from overseas, in football clubs and commercial ventures bestowed their buildings on a comparatively poorer population, even if some of them can still afford to attend league football matches.

and temperature, and cut and handled the curds, but nowadays food technologists and hygienists say Harding's really important contribution was to stop the milkers bringing the milk into the cheese-making area, but instead to make them stay outside and pour the milk into a tin bath from which it was piped into the building where the cheese was made. Harding intended that to save time and labour, but another result was to reduce the risk of muck or other

contaminants from the milking area getting into the cheese. From that perspective Harding was the father not just of



cheddar cheese but of modern food hygiene. If you are a legend in your own lifetime, local history will cut you down to size – or it may remember you for a reason you never thought important.

Hoover, the manufacturer of domestic appliances. Made redundant in 1964, he got a job in the shop, and bought it (the shop, that is) when his employer retired. 'All over the country similar workers were being made redundant due to the fact that the Heath government did away with retail price maintenance.' (It was actually the Douglas-Home government: Heath was president of the Board of Trade, and did not become PM until the following year.) BT explains that once RPM was abolished (there were few exceptions), Hoover customers could get Hoover products more cheaply elsewhere

than direct from Hoover, so Hoover's sales fell, so it no longer needed or could afford so many sales reps. Plausible? Were Wills, Robinson's, and Fry's/Cadbury similarly affected? What was the impact on **Bedminster** and **Somerdale**? Interesting to find out.

The abolition of most RPM will have had another effect. While RPM was in force, shops affected did not compete on price. When RPM was made presumptively unlawful, large retailers' economies of scale enabled them to reduce their prices, so as to undercut the prices charged by smaller businesses. Did customers react predictably? You might have expected a small retailer in a city suburb where the sixties had yet to swing to have been unable to compete, especially if the shop (a) sold large ticket items such as furniture, electricals or white goods giving scope for noticeable price reductions, (b) operated on low profit margins and (c) did not diversify or shift into other products. Yet WoT's ex-Hoover retailer survived, and did not retire until 2002. How did other small businesses in our area cope with the outlawing of RPM?

RPM is historically significant for another reason. Because the European Economic Community was posited on benefiting consumers by removing restrictive practices and barriers to free trade, and on promoting competition, prime minister (as he later became) Heath was never going to get the UK into the

EEC unless parliament were to outlaw RPM. The presumptive outlawing of RPM was one of the measures that, notwithstanding the French vetos in 1963 and 1967, paved the way for the UK to join the EEC, which it eventually managed in 1973. Moreover, the outlawing of RPM was the first of many steps taken by successive governments – under prime ministers Heath, Thatcher, Major, Blair, Brown and Cameron – to move away from the post-war state-controlled economy towards a free-market one driven by competition. We now experience the nation-wide results of that in gas, electricity, public transport, water supply, steel, telephones, airports, coal, football, social care, prisons, the post, financial services and so on, and the outsourcing of many local authority services. The local effects in our area would also be worth studying.

RPM is also of interest to local history people in that the 1964 Act outlawed RPM only if it could not be justified. RPM continued in some trades, one of which was bookselling. The Net Book Agreement, which fixed the retail prices of books, survived for a while, as did the small bookshops, independent of the large companies, that depended on it, and the small local history publications that depended on small bookshops for sales. The decline and disappearance of small local bookshops might also be interesting, if saddening, to study. ALHA booklets are available from Peter Malpass or his successor.

CAN YOU HELP?

PHOTOGRAPHS OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE VEHICLES SHOWING NUMBER PLATES

Martin Boothman writes: A project is under way to transcribe all the **Gloucestershire car & motorcycle registration records** held at Gloucestershire Archives, from January 1904, when registration began, to December 1913. Once the work is complete, the results will be published in book form. To judge by a similar volume already produced for Wiltshire, it will give a fascinating insight into the social patterns of early vehicle ownership, as well as listing and indexing the myriad types of vehicle taking to the roads of Gloucestershire at the beginning of the last century. The owners' occupations and places where they lived will also be indexed.

We are keen to find suitable illustrations. Do you have (or do you know of) photos from before the first World War - preferably not previously published - of cars or motorcycles bearing readable registration numbers between AD-1 and AD-3506 for the County of Gloucestershire and between FH-1 and FH-758 for the County Borough of Gloucester? Photos of garages with vehicles would also be welcome.

Have you perhaps a family album with photos of cars and bikes bearing any of these registrations? Do you either have yourself, or can you suggest, possible sources of other relevant material e.g. invoices for car or motor bike purchases in this period? If you think you can help,

please contact me either by email to boothman@dircon.co.uk or phone on 01242 23015 or mail to 3 Taylors End, Cheltenham, GL50 2QA.

GENERAL ELECTION LEAFLETS

Bristol University's special collections include a complete set from 1892 of **general election leaflets and addresses**. One is reminded of horticulture, with gardens and nurseries throughout the country holding the national collection of a particular plant or variety. The University wishes to add to its existing collection, and appeals for samples of election addresses, manifestos and other election publicity for the 2017 election, from any area, not just Bristol. Michael Richardson, UB Arts & Social Sciences Library, Tyndall Avenue, Bristol BS8 1TJ, www.bristol.ac.uk/library/resources/special-collections/ or Michael.Richardson@bristol.ac.uk

UNDERFALL YARD, BRISTOL

Sarah Murray writes: We are currently seeking friendly, enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers to join our growing team. Joining our team is a great chance to make a real difference with a local charity and benefit from:

- Induction and training. Training opportunities for volunteers include areas such as tour guiding, hydraulic pump operations and our education programme.
- New skills and knowledge related to **Underfall Yard and Bristol Harbour**.
- Meeting new people and being part of a friendly team.
- Travel expenses and discounts in Pickle at Underfall Yard

Roles currently available are:

- Visitor Centre Volunteer (regular) – Can you offer 3 1/2 hours a week to welcome visitors and share your enthusiasm? We are particularly interested in hearing from people who are available on Sundays.
- Visitor Centre Volunteer (occasional) – Would you like a more flexible approach to volunteering? “Occasional” volunteers can sign up to sessions using our online rota.
- Workshop Volunteer – Looking for engineering, machinery and “hands-on” experience? We are particularly interested in hearing from individuals with experience of working on historic machinery.
- Hydraulic Pump Operator – Interested in learning how to run the 1907 hydraulic pumps? Although previous experience of operating hydraulic pumps is not necessary, we are particularly interested in hearing from individuals with experience in engineering, machinery and “hands-on” experience.
- Education Volunteer – Are you passionate about education and engagement? Help us to develop and deliver our adult learning, youth engagement and schools programmes.

Role descriptions and registration form available here:

<http://www.underfallyard.co.uk/about/volunteer-at-the-yard/>

To express your interest in volunteering, please complete a Registration Form and return to: Sarah Murray, Community, Learning and Volunteering Officer, email:

sarah@underfallyard.co.uk. If you have a recent CV please also attach this to your email. An informal interview will be arranged. Sarah Murray, Community, Learning and Volunteering (CLV) Officer, Underfall Yard Trust, 0774 287 9658, 0117 929 3250, www.underfallyard.co.uk