



In the event the committee's plans for check-in at the local history day were not called upon...

AVON LOCAL HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

5 Parrys Grove
Bristol BS9 1TT
Tel, ans and fax 0117
968 4979

wm.evans@btopenworld.com



e-update 30 April 2020

Website: www.alha.org.uk

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AvonLocalHistoryandArchaeology>

CONTENTS

ALHA items

Subscriptions and donations
Accounts 2019-2020
Oldbury Village History Group

Events and sources

Contemporary history collecting at
Thornbury, Bath
Institute of Historical Research online
resources
Ancestry online at home
Library loans extended
B&AFHS
National Archives talks online
Settlement and removal
Oral history partnership
Tony Lewis

Books etc noticed

Gloucester Road, Bristol
Tricky
B&GAS Transactions 137
The Regional Historian new series no.2
1960s and 1970s counterculture

Commentary and responses

Arena and Brabazon hangar
Bristol street names
Tipping points
Valuing the past
Government responses to the virus
Yate and Sodbury markets

Quote

The black boy

Can you help?

Recovering faded thermal print
documents

ALHA ITEMS

SUBSCRIPTIONS 2020-2021

Many thanks to all who have paid this year's subscriptions, and a double thank you to those who, deliberately or inadvertently, have paid twice or added something extra and have asked ALHA to treat it as a donation.

ACCOUNTS 2019-2020

The committee have approved, subject to examination, draft accounts for the past year. ALHA printed more booklets than usual, including reprints of titles sold out as well as new titles, and incurred higher than usual premises costs for the annual general meeting and lecture. The result was a deficit of £765 on the receipts and payments account. Total net

assets decreased by £1,140. That reduction was attributable mainly to the deficit on the receipts and payments account, and the pledge of £1,000 towards the planned Historic Towns Trust map of **Bristol**, which is treated as a liability. With net assets covering more than a year's normal expenditure, ALHA is in a financial position to cope with any reduction in income or other disruption from the corona virus panic.

LOCAL HISTORY DAY, 2020

Yes, the local history day planned for **2 May 2020** has been cancelled. Notifications were sent to those who booked, whether to the treasurer or online via Eventbrite.

OLDBURY VILLAGE HISTORY GROUP

Welcome back to **Oldbury Village History Group**, rejoining ALHA after a gap following the death of John Adnams. Meg has taken over.

EVENTS AND SOURCES

CONTEMPORARY COLLECTING

Thornbury & District Museum is using Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/Thornbury-and-District-Museum-1914303718881741/> for volunteers to do some contemporary collecting. Volunteers are asked to gather and keep information about coronavirus in 2020. They say "We are experiencing one of the worst times in our lives, just as people did during WW1 and WW2 because we are fighting a deadly virus. Coronavirus (Covid 19) will become history and in classrooms children will be learning about what happened to us in 2020."

Bath Record Office has a similar project: <https://www.batharchives.co.uk/corona-captured>

INSTITUTE OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Jane Marley draws attention to the IHR web page on electronic research resources at: <https://www.history.ac.uk/library/collections/online-resources/open-access-resources>. 'Open and Free Access Materials for Research' is organised into sections (including UK Local History), with links to online content. Additional resources are being made available all the time. For example, one of the latest releases comes from the online journals repository JStor, who are offering individuals free access to 100 journal articles every 30 days (see the IHR web page, as above).

ANCESTRY ONLINE

Normally access to *Ancestry* via **public libraries** at no charge has to be done at a public library or **Bristol Archives**, but while public libraries are closed library members whose local



authority is part of the Libraries West consortium can access *Ancestry* from home, at no charge. For **Bristol** see: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/libraries-archives/family-history>. Similarly for **North Somerset**: <https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/leisure/libraries/bringing-the-library-to-you/onlinelibrary/>. For **South Gloucestershire**, and for brief guidance on how to access the *Ancestry* site, see <https://www.southglos.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/libraries/library-e-resources/>

LIBRARY LOANS

All libraries in the Libraries West consortium have extended existing loans until **2 July 2020**:
https://www.librarieswest.org.uk/client/en_GB/default

BRISTOL & AVON FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Bob Lawrence writes: **Bristol & Avon Family History Society**, like other organisations, has cancelled all its meetings for the foreseeable future. The Research Room, housed at **Bristol Archives**, is also closed. You may have thought of using those “locked in” days to research your own family history, and there are many websites with lots of information and much can be obtained free from your home. However, you should be careful not to dive into random websites without planning out exactly what it is you want to know. There are some very good free family history websites, although you will need to pay for census information and to see things like images of original documents.

B&AFHS has just updated some of its basic guides to ‘starting out’ and ‘websites to use’ and these are free to access on their website www.bafhs.org.uk. The website’s home page will give you the link to these guides and also details of how you can contact Society volunteers for research advice and guidance in solving particular problems.

It is a fascinating, gripping and sometimes frustrating hobby, and you can discover not only who your ancestors were but how and where they lived and worked and also how life was for many in previous generations. Family history research can also enhance your understanding of history by revealing how your own family were involved in the changes that have taken place. You will certainly find things which will surprise you, and possible some that will appal you.

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES ONLINE

During the coronavirus lockdown **The National Archives** is making some of its publications, talks and exhibitions available online. Details at
<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/visit-us/whats-on/events/>

SETTLEMENT AND REMOVAL – it’s not all on the internet

Bob Lawrence writes: The Poor Relief Act 1662 established how an individual gained a place of settlement, where the authorities were obliged to support them if they fell on hard times. If you were in need but not living in your place of settlement, then you could be removed back there. This was all a legal process and fully documented, but unfortunately the survival of these documents has been haphazard.

A new website *The Poor Law: small bills and petty finance* (<https://thepoorlaw.org/>) aims to look at expenditure vouchers in order to illuminate the everyday operation of the poor law and the lives of the people involved. Initially, the website deals with Cumberland, East Sussex and Staffordshire. I have ancestry in East Sussex, so took a closer look. This led me to an article on “The Beadles of Winchelsea” by Professor Alannah Tomkins, Director of Humanities Research at Keele University, which in turn contained a reference to a Sussex Record Society publication by Malcolm Pratt entitled “Winchelsea Poor Law Records 1790-1841”. Excellent! I had several family members from Winchelsea and one at least was included in poor law records I had seen previously. Reader, I bought the book. The story below is an example of how the poor law could work.

Joseph Parsons was born at Stalbridge in Dorset in 1774, but was married in Winchelsea in 1796 to Catherine Summers. I have not yet traced why Joseph was in Winchelsea, but in view of tensions between England and France at that time he could well have been a soldier or in the militia. Only one of the couple’s seven children lived to

adulthood. Catherine died in 1811 and just over a year later Joseph married again, this time to Jane Neeves, and another 6 children were born, most of whom survived. However, the couple fell on hard times, a common experience in south-east England after the end of the war with France, with poor harvests and an economic recession. Joseph claimed poor relief at various times for the next fourteen years. On examination, he said that he was born in Stalbridge. He was paid an allowance, but Winchelsea claimed this expenditure back from Stalbridge, and there is a lot of correspondence about this in East Sussex Record Office at Lewes. Things seem to have come to a head in 1829, and on 30 April a removal order was made at Lewes Quarter Sessions for the removal back to Stalbridge of the whole family – parents and five children under 21. Only one son, by then 27 years old and married with a child of his own, stayed on in Winchelsea. But it was too late. Joseph had died and was buried at Winchelsea on 22nd March. The rest of the family were sent to Stalbridge, a place they almost certainly did not know. However, Parsons is and was a common name in Stalbridge and the surrounding area, and it is almost certain that there were siblings, cousins, and possibly even the parents of Joseph there when the family arrived. The Parsons from Winchelsea lived in Stalbridge for at least the rest of the nineteenth century.

Winchelsea Poor Law Records 1790-1814 has three pages on the Parsons family, with details of the family and Joseph's parentage. Stalbridge sent one shilling a week to support the family, but when the removal order was executed this cost £18/16/- (£18.80 in present day money). Calculating what these sums represent in modern terms is not easy, and the Measuring Worth website (<https://www.measuringworth.com>) suggests a very wide possible range of values. However, the labour value of one shilling in 1829 is calculated as £41.91 in 2020, and the labour value of £18/16/- as £15,760. Whatever the calculation, it seems the overseers were happy to spend the equivalent of four years' poor relief to get rid of the Parsons family.

What is not known is how the family made the journey. One of the children was under 5 and another less than a year, so walking seems unlikely. How did they even know the route? These days we use a satnav or road atlas, but most maps of the time are inappropriate for a cross-country journey of about 175 miles. Did they perhaps go via London? Were they accompanied all the way, or given a lump sum to cover transport and accommodation? For those who don't know Winchelsea, which is close to the much more visited Rye, it was a major channel port until destroyed by a flood in 1287. A new town was then built on top of a hill, and laid out on a grid system, which survives to this day. After a period of prosperity, the town stagnated, but Winchelsea has retained a mayor and corporation, although now with much reduced powers.

Most of the removal and settlement orders for Winchelsea relate to people from nearby parishes. However, in 1829, the overseers agreed to send £5 to Joseph Hoad, a native of Winchelsea then living with his family in Boulogne, France to help him set up as a baker. Other documents record the assistance given to local people wishing to emigrate to Australia and New Zealand. Money was also sent to Arbroath in Scotland in 1824 to support a Winchelsea resident then living there.

For the family historian, settlement and removal records sometimes provide the only evidence of an ancestor's place of birth. For the local historian, they can offer fascinating detail about the lives of the poor in a particular place.

WEST OF ENGLAND ORAL HISTORY PARTNERSHIP

Jane Marley draws attention to the West of England Oral History Partnership, whose website is at <http://www.weohp.org.uk/>, which appears to be in the course of construction. The website contains promises a contact form, and gives a telephone number.

TONY LEWIS MBE

The death is reported of Tony Lewis, who lectured in mathematics at Bristol Polytechnic and UWE's Frenchay campus at **Stoke Gifford** in the late 1980s and early 1990s, interested in statistics and probability. He and Frank Duckworth, a mathematical scientist who worked in nuclear power, devised a method of concocting a fair result in limited overs cricket matches curtailed by rain, which was adopted by the English and international cricket governing bodies. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/cricket/52134570>

BOOKS AND OTHER ITEMS NOTICED

Colin Moody, *The great Bristol high street: glorious Gloucester Road*, The History Press, 2020, <https://www.thehistorypress.co.uk/publication/the-great-bristol-high-street/9780750992497/>. Follows his *Stokes Croft and Montpelier*, published 2018.

Adrian Thaws (Tricky) [and Andrew Perry], *Hell is round the corner*, 352pp, Blink Publishing 2019, hb £20, e-book £15.99, audio £32.99. <https://www.blinkpublishing.co.uk/hell-is-round-the-corner.html>. Autobiography of the musician, including early life in **Knowle West**.

Transactions of the Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, volume 137 (2019). Archaeology articles include one on post-medieval pottery kiln waste at Glass Wharf, **Temple Quay, Bristol**; and excavations at Dove Lane, **St Paul's**. History articles look at the twelfth century hall (or was it a chapel?) at **Horton Court**, and the **Kingswood Map of 1610**. Linguistics articles are on the derivation of the place-name **Thornbury**, and of St Arild at **Oldbury on Severn**. There are notes and queries on the inscription in Dano-Norwegian in **Shirehampton** church; Frances Reynolds's portrait of Hannah More in M Shed; and ward representation in **Bristol** after the Municipal Corporations Act 1835. There are reviews of Anthea Jones's edition of *Dissenters' meeting house certificates and registrations for Bristol and Gloucestershire 1672-1852* (noticed in ALHA e-update 31 October 2018); Bob Jones's jointly authored *Bristol, an archaeological assessment: a worshipful town and famous city* (2018); Clive Burgess's *The right ordering of souls: the parish of All Saints Bristol on the eve of the reformation* (2018); and Richard Bourke's *Empire and revolution: the political life of Edmund Burke* (2015); but, surprisingly, no review of Peter Malpass's important *The Making of Victorian Bristol* (2019, reviewed in ALHA Newsletter 158, March 2019). Many sites in our area are mentioned in the annual archaeological review.

The Regional Historian, new series no.2 (2019) has been published online by UWE's Regional History Centre. The usual print version is delayed because of the virus. Contents include William Canynges, Late Merchant of Bristol: Constructing an After-Life Before Death, by Clive Burgess; Material evidence and slavery in Bristol: The Deverell Leg Iron, by Jonathan Harlow; William Gilbert in Bristol: from Asylum to Hurricane, by Paul Cheshire; From Carolina to Kingswood: Boston King's Story of Slavery, Salvation and Sedition in Eighteenth-Century Bristol, by Ryan Hanley; Harking Forwards: Henry Hunt, Glastonbury and the English Constitution, by Adam Stout; Performing capital punishment in an age of reform: the contentious death of Charles Bartlett, by Steve Poole; Elections before the secret ballot: the Bristol Poll Book of 1852, by John Stevens, whose Bristol Record Society volume on the book is due to be published later this year; The Boiling Wells and the Quay Pipe: an Episode in Bristol's Watery History, by Adrian Kerton; Animals and their People at Bristol's Historic Zoo, by Andy Flack; Navvies at the Gloucestershire end of the Severn Tunnel, by Adam Mead; Abbotswood House: a study of male inebriety at the turn of the Twentieth

Century, by Chelsie Hutton; ‘We Didn’t Think it was Monotonous in Those Days, but...’ : Memories of Growing up in Rural South West England in the Early Twentieth Century, by Laura Harrison; Bristol and the 1918-19 Spanish Flu Pandemic, by Eugene Byrne; ‘Homes for Heroes’? Bristol and the Housing and Town Planning Act 1919, by Peter Malpass; and Filton Community History: Twenty Years of Local Research, by Jane Tozer.

Dr Harlow, it is hoped, will review the issue in the next *ALHA Newsletter*. At this stage suffice it to say that the review of Charles Knighton’s *Bristol university; conception to foundation* (Bristol Record Society vol.71), attributed to Dr Harlow, was not written by him; and Jane Tozer’s article is printed with errors not in the original text she submitted.

Stephen Hunt, *Angela Carter’s ‘Provincial Bohemia’: the counterculture in 1960s and 1970s Bristol and Bath*, Bristol Radical History Group, £10 including p&p, but the Tangent Books website <https://www.tangentbooks.co.uk/shop/a-dictionary-of-bristle> says it is sold out. All the things we missed.



COMMENTARY AND RESPONSES

Architectural innovation

John Patchway [Really? Ed.] writes:

The piece in *ALHA Newsletter* 162 about architectural innovation or the lack of it in this area suggested that those who hoped the proposed arena would be an icon of architectural innovation would be disappointed. That may be so, but adaptation of the Brabazon hangar at **Filton** would conserve an important part of our local heritage that may otherwise be lost. The Brabazon did not go into commercial production or use, but it was the outcome of work by large numbers of local people, who took aircraft design and manufacture to new levels. They deserve commemorating, and not just by yet another museum. If the hangar is not adapted to other use, it will lie empty, deteriorate, and before long be pulled down to make way for yet more housing. Adaptation is a conservation benefit we should welcome, especially if the result is visited by, and looked at by, large numbers of people. All the better if they enjoy their visit, albeit for other reasons. [Image from <https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/education/educational-images/the-brabazon-hangar-filton-airfield-filton-11415> Ed.]

Street names

John Stevens writes: Street names frequently call to mind men who were, in the words of *Ecclesiasticus*, “honoured in their generation” but who are now, to most, “perished as though they had never been”. Those with a taste for the politics of **Bristol** in the reign of William IV and the early years of Victoria may find the following of interest.

Little which will be new to Bristol historians can be said of Sir Charles Wetherell (1770-1846: Wetherell Place, **Clifton** BS8), the statesman and Judge whose arrival in October 1831 is said to have sparked the Reform Riots (although, in passing, he is due a significantly more generous assessment than he has so far received from historians of the period).

A stone’s throw away is Vyvyan Terrace. Sir Richard Vyvyan, Eighth Bart (1800-1879), is less well known. Having lost his seat for the County of Cornwall in the “reform” election of 1831, he was adopted by **Bristol**’s Tories at the general election of December 1832, his previous stances in opposition to both Catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform [and abolition of slavery – Ed.] being highly congenial to the redoubtable Alderman Daniel and his allies. Vyvyan was duly elected but his time as Member for **Bristol** was not

happy, since it soon became clear he had neither the aptitude nor the inclination for representing a busy commercial city, and he stood down in 1837. He later sat for Helston in his native county, but made little further impression. Said to have been disappointed in love in his youth, he never married and devoted much of his later life to science, being a believer in Lamarckian evolution, which came to be discredited by Darwin's researches.



Sir John Kerle Haberfield (1783-1858) gives his name to a hill and a house in **Clifton** [and a multi-storey car park, demolished when Bond street was moved to accommodate Cabot Circus: Ed.]. A solicitor, he was six times mayor of **Bristol** (1837-9, 1845-6 and 1848-51), a record still unbroken, and was knighted in March 1851. His style (like that of his near contemporary, Lord Palmerston) is said to have evoked the world of the Regency, rather than the more sober Victorian age which was beginning; sitting as J.P. in a case involving an allegedly polluted water supply, he quipped that he was singularly unfit to judge the matter, as he had not tasted water in thirty years. In party terms a Conservative, he nonetheless split his vote between the Conservative candidate F.A. McGeachy and the sitting Liberal Henry Berkeley in the general election of 1852. There is a handsome bust of Sir John in the Lord Mayor's Chapel.

Another Solicitor politician is Robert Phippen (1801-69: Phippen Street, BS1). Phippen lived all his life in **Bedminster**, where his father had owned the wonderfully named Three Cups and Salmon public house and he was one of the original directors of the Bristol & Exeter Railway Company. He was, like Haberfield, a somewhat independently minded Conservative; in the general election of 1847, which followed the Conservative split over the Corn Law, he backed the soap manufacturer Alderman William Fripp who stood as a Peelite, or free trade Conservative and who came within 120 votes of defeating the official candidate P.W.S. Miles. Like a number of Peel's supporters (Gladstone most famously), Phippen was a High Churchman and interested himself in the affairs of St John's Church, **Bedminster** (demolished and reconstructed 1854).

Tipping points

In *The tipping point* (Little, Brown 2000, Abacus 2002) Malcolm Gladwell explains that expression in relation to the spread of ideas and social practices. The concept is not new. Expressions like Don't push me too far, the straw that broke the camel's back, boiling point, breaking strain, critical mass (not in the sense of the Vatican going postmodern), escape velocity, one step too far, have long been part of the language. The idea is that when a stable set of circumstances is touched by a succession of events, each one of which is not significant by itself, there may come a time when equilibrium is lost and drastic change occurs. The camel or the building collapses, the milk curdles, the dam breaks, the volcano erupts, the business goes bust, the snow becomes an avalanche, the metal component breaks and the aircraft plummets, a virus goes pandemic, the environment no longer sustains a species or human life, and a new set of circumstances ensues.

Because tipping points are situations where drastic change happens, they have fascinated aircraft engineers, not least those at **Filton and Patchway**, and mechanical engineers generally, who need to guard against metal fatigue (we hope); but they ought also to be of interest to historians. What was the change, when did it happen, how, and why? Not every change, but the change that happens when a period of stability is overturned by one of a

series of small and perhaps individually imperceptible events. The concept of tipping points looks as if it might be a useful tool for local history investigators.

It is not too difficult to identify periods of social or economic or political stability. The feudal system; landed estates lasting through generations; medieval agriculture; colonial rule and its consequences back home; monarchy; parliamentary government; and so on. Not so easy to identify are states of equilibrium that were being slowly and repeatedly worked on by small events that eventually precipitated drastic change. In our area the feudal system was gradually eroded as manorial lords, especially big businesses like the church and monasteries, enclosed open fields and common lands, tenants compounded services for cash, and tenures were replaced by leases or contractual relationships. It is not so easy to say whether the system collapsed in one event, or which local event may have been a tipping point. Rather, local events seem to have contributed to widespread changes, and each locality may have had its own tipping point(s).

The reason for those difficulties is probably that most examples of tipping points are from the natural, material world, where for most practical purposes most causes and effects are understood and explained by Isaac Newton's physics, whereas history is about human acts, which are complicated, interdependent and happen in socially constructed contexts, so that any local event does not give rise to one inevitable consequence but offers a range of possible ones. Conversely, an event may have been triggered by any one of a range of earlier events. If what happened at Sarajevo had not set off WW1, something else could have, and probably would have. The same could be said of almost any local event.

Valuing the past

People involved in local history or archaeology are often concerned about preserving or conserving buildings or artefacts from the past. Local history and archaeology pump information into consideration of questions about preservation and conservation, and inform judgements about what should be preserved. Some ALHA member groups are civic or conservation societies who see local history as providing information and arguments to support their present-day objectives.

Propositions about whether a relic of the past should be preserved or conserved, or should be demolished, destroyed or allowed to rot away are moral ones. When we say that something from the past - a building, an artefact, a text, an image or other work of art - is or is not worth keeping, we express a value judgment. When we say that such a thing ought to be preserved or ought to be destroyed, we are going further: we are making a moral claim.

Moral claims can be expressions of emotion or of personal preference, or a conclusion from reasoned argument. In some respects moral claims are like aesthetic claims. They can be culturally determined, influenced or constructed. They may be nothing more than expressions of personal preference: 'I don't know anything about art, but I know what I like.' Like aesthetic claims, moral claims involve evaluation. To assert that something ought or ought not to be done is not of itself conclusive: the proponent must justify the claim. Justification, as with other propositions that imply evaluation, must depend on criteria being applied.

In mainstream British thinking, moral claims can be justified by (1) consequentialism, which looks at the results of an action: utilitarianism is the main strand; (2) virtue ethics, derived largely from Aristotle but revived of recent years; (3) Kantian universal imperatives; or (4) pragmatism. The argument that something should be preserved 'for its own sake' is no argument at all: it is either tautologous or is an evaluation using unspoken criteria.

It is difficult to use any of those main strands of ethical reasoning to justify a proposition that a particular artefact or building be preserved. An argument for preservation may be advanced irrespective of any considerations of utilitarian advantage, and conservation

arguments can be lost because any benefits of conservation are considered to be outweighed by practical benefit considerations. Virtue ethics is of little help either, because qualities that people regard as virtues vary from time to time, from place to place and from one culture to another. There is no consensus on which virtues count or ought to count, or on whether a particular virtue (which is in any case only an abstraction) is of compelling or overriding importance as regards questions of preservation or conservation. Kantian ethics offers no solution either, because it would be absurd to make no-demolition or no-destruction a universal rule. Pragmatism offers a way out, but then the outcome depends on selection of criteria, which is where we started from.

Anthropology, psychology and perhaps psychiatric theories may offer reasons why people may object to the loss of objects or buildings from the past. They may point to factors like reluctance to depart from tradition, respect for ancestors, or reverence for the dead; they may point to religious beliefs or superstitions or modern vestiges of them; they may impute fear or taboo. But what those disciplines offer is not moral reasons why a building or artefact should be conserved or preserved, but reasons why, as a matter of empirical fact or theoretical speculation, humans may contend that they should.

Just because something is old does not of itself entail that it is worth preserving or ought to be preserved. Salisbury cathedral is worth preserving, not because it is old, but because it is aesthetically pleasing to look at. Much ancient art is, to modern tastes, unpleasant. The same can be said about many ancient practices and institutions. Even arch-reactionaries who want to put the clock back do not want to bring back every aspect of the past including bubonic plague, typhoid, cholera, small children being sent up chimneys and so on.

One approach to the problem, albeit a somewhat utilitarian one, might be to start with the proposition that all knowledge is or could be useful. We may not necessarily know how or why the information may be of benefit in future. Remains from the past give information about the past: how people lived, behaved and died. Objects from the past should be respected, not as things to be accorded superstitious reverence, but as sources of information. They should be preserved or conserved because if they are destroyed the information they could have given is no longer available to us and will not be available to our successors.

Yate and Sodbury markets

Across our area, as elsewhere, markets are spaced out, in the sense that they are several miles apart. The reason for that is legal. The right to hold a market was, and is, a monopoly. It is a property right. The common law provided remedies for protecting and enforcing market monopolies: the general writ of nuisance, and also the more specialist *quare levavit* and *quo warranto* writs. When a market was chartered at **Redwick** in 1221, **Bristol** corporation complained, and the **Redwick** market was suppressed the following year. In recent times local authorities, including **Bristol** city council, have taken legal action to stop rival markets being held on car parks and waste land.

A market's value comes from payments to the owner of the market: payments made by stallholders for permission to set up stalls (stallage); and payments made by traders based on their trade (tolls, hence tolzeys as at **Bristol** and **Marshfield**). If a new market is set up too close to an existing one, that will reduce the stallages and tolls the owner of the existing market receives. The minimum distance between markets came to be set at about 6 miles, which was thought to be as far as a seller with a laden animal could be expected to travel to and from a market in one day.

If that is so, why were there markets at both **Yate and Chipping Sodbury**, within a couple of miles of each other? Both markets were chartered by the infant Henry III's

manipulators in 1218, within a few weeks. So any idea of administrative error, or that the crown forgot that one had already been granted nearby, can be ruled out.

One explanation might be that the crown saw that there were bids for a market by both Ralph Willington at **Yate** and William the Fat at **Sodbury**, and granted both on the assumption that only one would succeed and the other would fail. Ultra-libertarian economic theories had not then reached south Gloucestershire, but that is what may have happened, because whereas **Sodbury**'s charter was renewed when Henry III became of age in 1227, **Yate**'s was not.

Another explanation might be that the two markets specialised in different commodities, so that there was no competition. Several markets in our area tended to specialise, and over the years changed what they specialised in. **Sodbury** and **Wickwar**, being near the Cotswolds, understandably sold sheep and wool. At one time **Marshfield** market specialised in barley. In the large towns some markets specialised because of the sheer volume of trade. **Bristol** had specialised markets at the haymarket (which also sold coal), the horsefair, and Corn Street, and had separate fish and cattle markets with their own sites. The market in **St Thomas, Temple** was designated a staple for wool. There was similar specialisation at Sawclose and Walcot in **Bath**. Daniel Defoe noted that **Sodbury** market was good for cheese, but there is no evidence that either **Yate** or **Sodbury** markets specialised, and the volume of trade would not have been big enough to warrant specialisation, though a second market at **Chipping Sodbury**, on a different day of the week, was chartered in 1270. Worth looking into.

William Budd and the virus

From a local history point of view the government's handling of the coronavirus and its consequences has been puzzling. Epidemiologists in our area such as William Budd did not have the scientific knowledge or the medications we have today, but they showed that the simplest and most effective way of stopping an infectious disease from spreading is to isolate the sources of infection. In the case of cholera, that meant identifying contaminated water sources, closing them off, and providing separate clean supplies. Where the source of infection was humans, the best way was to identify them and isolate them. Hence, for tuberculosis patients before drug treatments became available, isolation hospitals like that at **Ham Green** near **Pill**. But the government delayed issuing advice on isolation, and when isolation became imperative, it delayed issuing instructions. A race meeting not far from our area attended by 250,000 over several days was allowed to go ahead, as was a football match in Liverpool attended by 54,000 spectators, 3,000 of whom came from Madrid where the virus was rampant and stadia and schools were closed. The prime minister disregarded his own instructions to isolate, with predictable consequences. The government made arrangements to repatriate at public expense large numbers of UK nationals, many of whom might be thought not to have deserved help (holidaymakers and backpackers in Peru: seriously?), a good way of helping to spread infection.

Histories of medicine in our area, and common sense, suggest that in order to isolate carriers of a transmissible disease, it helps to identify them. Nowadays that means testing people for the virus, and then tracing people who have been in contact with those known to have been infectious. This is laborious and time-consuming, but not rocket science. The government did not put the NHS in a position to offer, let alone order, testing on the scale required. By the time the government introduced some testing, the resources to do it were nowhere near enough, and other countries had bought up testing kits. When testing was

introduced for key workers, many were expected to travel unreasonable distances to get tested, and many of those that managed to get there could not be tested for various reasons, e.g. that the facility was full or all the test kits had been used. The government started tracing contacts, but abandoned that on 12 March.

The government seems either to have expected the NHS, already struggling after eleven years of ideologically-driven austerity measures and with 100,000 vacancies, to cope with large numbers of virus patients; or to have decided that in order not to have to give the NHS enough resources to meet demand, the best way was to take steps to delay the spread of infection rather than to treat patients, which some might have presumed was the purpose of a national health service. Patients were admitted to already full hospitals, again breaking the basic rule of isolation, which helped spread the virus to both virus-free patients and medical, nursing and support staff. Many staff withdrew from work in order to self-isolate, compounding the staffing problem. Some have died. Ordinary health services were suspended in order to create time and space for virus patients, so a number of people have suffered and some have died of causes not related to the virus.

In the Crimean war, WW1 and WW2, emergency hospitals were set up. Not until weeks into the epidemic did the government commission separate one-purpose field hospitals. One is in **Stoke Gifford** on UWE's Frenchay campus. That was possible only because many universities have had to close down and send most students home.

Common sense and medical histories suggest that those who treat patients with infectious diseases need adequate protective clothing and equipment, or they themselves will get infected. Many did, and some have died. The government seems not to have understood the risk, or to have ignored it, or to have assumed that deaths were acceptable. When the government started looking for more protective equipment and clothing, its actions appear to have been inadequate, inefficient and ineffective. Its refusal (denied by the government) to join in a European Union procurement initiative looks, notwithstanding government denials, to have been a political decision taken ideologically to avoid giving people the impression that the government was seeking or taking help from the EU soon after being elected after a campaign that repeated a 'Get Brexit Done' slogan. The government seems also to have ignored local offers of small-scale production, which hospitals, medical practices and care homes have been glad to take up direct.

The government having announced that older people are particularly at risk, one might have expected it to have paid attention to the care sector as distinct from the NHS. Yet the government appears to have ignored residents and staff in care homes until parts of the media started eliciting information and large numbers of deaths were found to have been omitted from government statistics, which were confined to deaths in hospitals. Patients were discharged from hospitals without having been tested; of those, some were discharged to care homes, again with predictable consequences.

Is it unreasonable to conclude that the government's conduct has been one example after another of not paying attention to lessons from history? The parliamentary opposition's contribution has been no better: leaderless, demoralised and divided, it has put forward no plans or proposals of its own, and has not performed its constitutional function. Mrs Prosser's class of mixed infants would have made a better fist of it.

After the panic is over, no doubt there will be calls, especially from the lawyers, who recognise a potential bonanza when they see one, for a public inquiry into how the government handled the outbreak: probably more than one inquiry, because the consequences

have been so numerous, so widespread, so varied and so far-reaching, socially and economically as well as medically. Some of those inquiries ought to have history input, some of it from our area. Don't hold your breath.

WILLIAM EVANS

QUOTE

If the general distraction and confusion which is spread over the whole kingdom doth not awaken all men to a desire and longing that those wounds which have so many years together been kept bleeding, may be bound up, all we can say will be to no purpose; however, after this long silence we have thought it our duty to declare how much we desire to contribute thereunto; and that as we can never give over the hope, in good time, to obtain possession of that right which God and nature hath made our due, so we do make it our daily suit to the Divine Providence, that he will, in compassion to us and our subjects, after so long misery and sufferings, remit and put us into a quiet and peaceable possession of that our right, with as little blood and damage to our people as is possible; not do we desire more to enjoy what is ours, than that all our subjects may enjoy what by law is theirs ...

Charles II, declaration at Breda, 1660

CAN YOU HELP?

Recovery and archiving of thermal print documents

An individual member of ALHA has a document from the 1970s which was printed by a thermal imaging process. The print has faded. Anyone have any suggestions for enhancing the legibility of the document in order to enable it to be transcribed more easily? The treasurer, wm.evans@btopenworld.com, can forward any suggestions to the enquirer.