



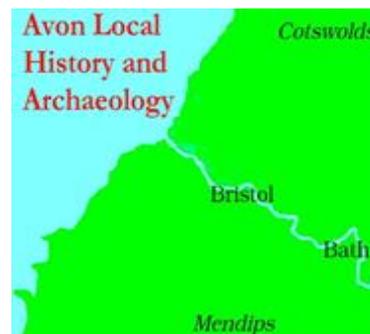
Rembrandt van Rijn

AVON LOCAL HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

UPDATE
31 August 2018

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ALHA ITEMS

ALHA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND JOE BETTEY LECTURE 2018

ALHA's annual general meeting will be held in lecture theatre 1H39 at UWE's **Glenside campus off Blackberry Hill, Fishponds**, on **Wednesday 17 October 2018**. Stella Man, development director at Glenside Hospital Museum, will deliver the Joe Bettey lecture,

Discover the secrets to well-being by examining the history of Glenside Hospital.

Free tea and coffee from 7pm; AGM to start at 7.30 sharp; lecture to start at 8, and all to finish by 9pm. Free car parking, and students to escort from car parks to lecture theatre. Formal notice of the AGM and details of the lecture, with plan and directions, will accompany the end of September Newsletter.

ALHA LOCAL HISTORY DAY 2019 – GETTING ABOUT

The theme for ALHA's 2019 local history day will be **transport**, broadly interpreted.

Our area, past and present, has been shaped by transport. By boats, because we have a coastline and navigable rivers that facilitated trade and communication: along the coast, up the Severn and its tributaries, to Ireland, Iceland, France, Spain, Portugal, America, the Caribbean, the Baltic. That led to seafaring, ships, including the SSGB, shipbuilding and its financing, and the wealth of many commercial families. Roads started with ridgeways and tracks, then roman roads, carriers' routes, turnpikes, town streets, by-passes, motorways and



their engineering. Canals carried stone, coal, agricultural produce, manufactured goods. Railways made links to London, Exeter, Gloucester, south Wales, the midlands and beyond. For centuries transport depended on the horse and all sorts of things connected with it, not least the agriculture that produced its fodder, and those who cleaned up behind it. It also depended on people, thousands of them, not just the likes of Macadam, Charles Dundas, IKB,

William Taylor, Holman Fred Stephens, George White. There were builders of vehicles, carts, wagons, private and stage coaches (and their coaching inns), cars, lorries, aircraft, trams, buses, ambulances, fire engines, bikes (both sorts), balloons, many made locally. Transport generated architecture. People travelled for trade and business, to see relations, to get to and from work and school, for leisure and for tourism. Transport dominated some areas: **Filton, Patchway, Brislington, Temple Meads, St Philip's, Lulsgate**. In WW1 **Shirehampton** specialised. Who paid for it all? Who initiated the ideas? What did people think of the new forms of transport? What work did the employees do? How come trade unions and the domination of the T&GWU? There was a colour bar on the buses. What about modern developments? Buchanan's **Bath**? Bristol's inner and outer circuit roads? A Bristol metro? Guided transport? The Portishead branch? The Avon ring road? Anton Bantock Way?

ALHA's events subcommittee thanks those who have submitted proposals, and invites further proposals for talks or presentations on or connected with any aspect of the theme: maximum 500 words, please, to Peter Fleming, Peter.Fleming@uwe.ac.uk; Bob Lawrence, lawrence.chartley@btinternet.com ; or Bill Evans, wm.evans@btopenworld.com.

EVENTS AND SOURCES

STOKE LODGE ADULT EDUCATION COURSES

The **Stoke Lodge (Stoke Bishop)** brochure of Bristol adult education courses for 2018-2019 is now out. Copies in local public libraries, and at

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/239062/Adult+Learning+Course+Guide+2018+to+2019.pdf/997bd43a-a3e0-f96c-6d2a-d701653eb091> History courses include one, by

ALHA individual member John Stevens, on *British political mavericks 1660-2018*, which must include local contributors Edmund Burke and Anthony Wedgwood Benn.

WW2 AIR RAID SHELTER AT WILD PLACE PROJECT

An air raid shelter from WW2 is being opened to the public at **Wild Place Project, Cribbs Causeway**, for the first time, *writes Lucy King*. It was built in the 1939-45 war in what is now the sanctuary garden at the wildlife park. It was part of the Hollywood estate, then owned by the White family, founders of the Bristol Aircraft Company. Wartime documents show that Winston Churchill visited the Whites, as did Queen Mary and Sir Robert Menzies.

The shelter, cleaned and restored, is opening to the public every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday between 2pm and 3pm. Visitors will be shown down the narrow flight of stone steps into the shelter which is more than 3 metres below ground. It has two train carriage shaped rooms with wooden benches along each wall.

The shelter is next to a Sanctuary Poppy Garden, in which all 117 varieties of the flower are represented, planted to mark the 100th anniversary of the end of WW1 this coming November 11. It is also helping to support the Royal British Legion's Thank You campaign which honours all of those who have "served, sacrificed and changed our world 1918-2018".

Staff at Wild Place Project have also planted an allotment garden inspired by the Dig for Victory campaign of the Second World War.

Wild Place, Blackhorse Hill, Bristol BS10 7TP; www.wildplace.org.uk . Mondays and Tuesdays - Rob Stokes 0117 428 5320 or rstokes@bristolzoo.org.uk; Tuesdays and Wednesdays - Lucy King 0117 428 5320 or lking@bristolzoo.org.uk; Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays - Lucy McCormick 0117 428 5320 or lmccormick@bristolzoo.org.uk.

REDCLIFF EXCAVATIONS

Emily Taylor, Outreach Co-ordinator at Cotswold Archaeology, writes: In January 2016 Cotswold Archaeology began working on Phase 1 of the **Redcliff** Quarter redevelopment, which concluded in May 2016. Archaeologists from Cotswold and Oxford Archaeology are now working on Phase 2. With excavations in 3 of 5 areas complete, we have revealed the remains of medieval and post-medieval buildings and walls, as well as gardens and industrial features (possible bases for dye-vats or tanning pits). Other features include a 12th century Law Ditch, cess pits and garderobes. We have also discovered a range of finds, including large quantities of pottery and animal bone, as well as metalwork and waterlogged remains (worked wood and leather objects).

We will continue working on site until autumn 2018, and the excavations can be viewed from Redcliff Street. We would like to offer groups the chance to come and visit the site. The visit could comprise a guided tour, Q&A with the archaeologists and the opportunity to handle finds from site. We will offer guided tours on **Saturday 22nd September or Saturday 6th October**. These tours will be offered on a drop-in basis for members of the society with a maximum group of 20 per tour. We will open the site at 9am and run tours at **9am, 10am, 11am and 12 noon**.

The tour will be accompanied by the opportunity for refreshments and to handle finds from site at the Church of St Thomas the Martyr, immediately to the north of the site. We cannot offer tours outside of the dates/times set out above, but we have a general 'open day' planned for **Saturday 15th September** to which any of your members would of course be welcome to attend. Emily.Taylor@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk, 01264 347 632; 07889 811 396, Stanley House, Walworth Road, Andover SP10 5LH.

OPEN DOORS AND HERITAGE OPEN DAYS 2018

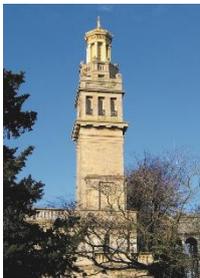
BRISTOL OPEN DOORS, organised by the Architecture Centre, will be **14 to 16 September**. Details at <https://bristolopendoors.org.uk/>. New venues include a maze, a private club, an asphalt plant, and lots of architecture, historic and modern. Some venues are drop-in; some require booking. Free colour brochures in your local public library.

SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

Programme for 2018 at <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/museums-and-galleries/heritage-open-days-2018/> includes churches (**Marshfield, Thornbury, Winterbourne**), **Dyrham Park**, Rolls Royce Heritage Trust at **Patchway, Winterbourne Barn**, museums (**Frenchay Village, Kingswood and Thornbury & District**), collieries (**Brandy Bottom, Ram Hill and Oldwood Pit at Rangeworthy**), the Pegasus building at **Filton**, **Warmley House** garden and grotto, and many more. Most **15 or 16 September** or both.

BECKFORD'S TOWER, LANSDOWN, AND ELTON HOUSE, BATH

The Landmark Trust opens its restored **Beckford's Tower** at Lansdown, and **Elton House**,



Abbey Street, **Bath** on **Saturday 15 and Sunday 16 September 2018**.

More details and posters available from Fiona Keyte 01628 512141 / 07734 962 565 Monday 09.30am – 5.30pm and Wednesday 09.30am – 5.30pm, otherwise Kasia Howard on 01628 512141 or email khoward@landmarktrust.org.uk; The Landmark Trust Shottesbrooke Maidenhead Berkshire SL6 3SW Office: 01628 825920 www.landmarktrust.org.uk

BRISTOL ARCHIVES

Two exhibitions at **Bristol Archives**:

NHS 70: medical care in Bristol, to **7 September 2018**;

Bristol women at war, to **1 December 2018**.

Details at <https://www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/bristol-archives/archives-whats-on>

BATH RECORD OFFICE offers a drop-in day, free, **Monday 11 September, 9.30-4.30**.

<https://www.batharchives.co.uk/events/drop-day-0>

YATE HERITAGE CENTRE

The **Yate** lecture series starts **18 September 7.30pm** with David Smith, former Gloucestershire county archivist and until recently archivist at Berkeley Castle, on conflict between the Fitzhardings and the Berkeleys; and **25 September 7.30pm** with Jim Elsworth on medieval **Chipping Sodbury**. <http://www.yateheritage.co.uk/events/month/#2018-09-01>. **Booking required.**

BRISTOL CENTRAL REFERENCE LIBRARY – VOTES FOR WOMEN

Dawn Dyer writes: The exhibition that followed the *Votes for Women* event at MSHED on 30 June 2018 is now at **Bristol Central Library** and has been extended through **September 2018**. After the exhibition ends its run at Central Library at the end of September the banners will be available for loan, free of charge, to other organisations. They can be borrowed as a full set, or in sections if display space is limited, though priority may be given to borrowers who require the full set. If you would like to find out more or arrange to borrow the banners,

please contact Dawn Dyer at Bristol Libraries, dawn.dyer@bristol.gov.uk, Local Studies, Central Library, 0117 903 7202. Closed Wednesday.

BOOKS ETC NOTICED

Roger White, *Cottages ornés*, Yale University Press 2017. 272pp, including over 190 colour and 50 b&w illustrations. HB, £40. Relevant to Blaise at Henbury.

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/blaise-hamlet>

Nigel Baker, Jonathan Brett and Robert Jones, *Bristol, 'A worshipful town and famous city': an archaeological assessment*, Oxbow 2018, hardback £40, but £32 from www.oxbowbooks.com, if you quote promotion code BRISTOL18.

Clutton History Group, *The story of our village*, 2018, pb 44pp illustrated, £2.60 including postage from Clutton History Group, 12 Rotcombe Lane, High Littleton BS39 6JW. Review intended in next *Newsletter*.

COMMENTARY

Expanding museums

In *The British Museum: storehouse of civilisations* (Head of Zeus, 2018, £18.99, but recommended) James Hamilton makes the point that museums have a built-in tendency to expand. Once a museum is established, argues JH, and its existence becomes known, people donate and bequeath things to it, sometimes single objects, sometimes whole collections. JH might have added that if next of kin are not interested in a dead collector's pride and joy, a museum is a convenient and conscience-salving place to offload it. Another point is that the leading edge of the past is perpetually moving forward, so that the number of things worth preserving in a museum is always increasing. Who has not experienced the shock of seeing in a museum artefacts familiar from childhood? So a museum's collections increase over time without much effort.

Another tendency of a museum is that as its collections grow, it splits into departments, which themselves may fledge into museums separate from the original. Thus parts of the British Museum became the Natural History Museum, the National Portrait Gallery, the Science Museum, the British Library, and so on. A similar thing happened in **Bristol**, where the Bristol Institution for the Advancement of Science, Literature and the Arts started in 1823 in Georgian Park Street, moved to a larger Venetian gothic building up the hill in 1872, and expanded in 1905 into the Edwardian baroque pile it occupies today. Certain collections went to **The Red Lodge, 7 Great George Street and Blaise Castle House**. Various transport and manufacturing exhibits went to the Industrial Museum in the city docks, which closed in 2006 and was replaced by **M Shed**.

If JH is right in saying that museums have an inherent tendency to expand, that has implications, not just for Bristol's civic museums but for other museums in our area as well: **Kingswood, Thornbury, Frenchay Village, Radstock, Yate Heritage Centre, the Holburne, Aerospace Bristol, the SSGB, the Museum of Bath Architecture, the American Museum at Claverton, Bath's Fashion Museum** and so on. One problem is premises: where there's a Will there's a way, but not every locality has a Will. Even if larger and more suitable premises can be obtained and afforded, it costs to run a museum, and even more to do it properly. Whilst those who buy lottery tickets in the hope of effortless riches have helped to relieve local authorities and their residents of a hefty burden, it is not

certain how long that will continue. Meanwhile the public continues to object to paying admission charges. Food for thought.

Prisoners of geography?

In *Prisoners of geography: ten maps that tell you everything you need to know about global politics* (Elliott & Thompson 2015) Tim Marshall examined how physical geography has influenced or, as he would put it, determined, political events. Underneath the journalistic exaggeration and oversimplification is the unsurprising proposition that geographic conditions influence human behaviour and events. Local history people have been saying that for years. It might be interesting to explore the idea in relation to our area and its various parts.

One approach might be to look at negative effects. A settlement's chances of developing into an international port are slim if it is not situated on the coast or a navigable river. **Pilning** and **Yatton** were never going to be world centres for downhill skiing. No spring, no spa. No coal, no mining; and so on. This approach helps identify constraints on how a place developed or changed, but does not say much about what in fact happened.

A more informative approach might be to see geographical conditions as offering a range of possibilities: thus, a place on the coast may have potential for a seaside resort as at **Weston-super-mare**, or a port as at **Avonmouth**, or it could become a large-scale retirement area. The presence of coal made mining possible in places like **Pensford, Radstock, Kingswood, Nailsea and Bedminster**, but also facilitated associated industries, with consequences for population, housing, transport, local politics and the environment. Ground conditions and climate influenced whether farmers reared sheep or cattle or went in for grains or root crops. The lie of the land explains, at least in part, why for centuries first wool and then cloth was so important across our area; why Bristol developed as a port, and Bristol and Bath as market centres; why manufacturing industries found the **Chew valley** convenient. That approach helps explain why some things happened; the challenge for local history people is then to work out why and how a community developed or changed in some ways but not in others.

Weston developed as a popular seaside resort, but its transformation from a cluster of sandblasted farms and fisher folk started with rather up-market holiday pads for comparatively affluent outsiders. A similar thing happened at **Clevedon** and succeeded, but at **Portishead** was not so successful. **Severn Beach** was altogether different in scale and character. That those places developed differently can be ascribed to non-geographic factors such as land ownerships and the directions in which dominant landowners resisted, promoted, manipulated or allowed changes to happen. Coalfields do not just happen: they require market demand, planning, ingenuity, entrepreneurship, organisation and hard work, not necessarily by the same people. Local histories are as much the result of interplay between humans and our environment as products of the environment alone.

Once geographical conditions have helped something to start, later human activity can change it. **Weston-super-mare, Portishead, Clevedon and Severn Beach** changed into different sorts and sizes of resort. **Portishead** changed when docks and a railway line gave an outlet for **Pensford, Clutton and Radstock** coal; when the power stations closed, the docks changed to leisure and housing. In the **Chew valley** the first to exploit water resources were the monks of **Keynsham** abbey, who built or acquired mills, which gave the abbey profit and social leverage as well as flour and rats. Once wool became the path to wealth, they converted corn mills to fulling. By the eighteenth century water power had been applied to drive other forms of machinery, and the valley became an extended workshop for metal-working, from bells to brass. Come the twentieth century and we have a post-industrial landscape, because water power has been superseded by steam, electricity, oil and gas, and

the **Chew valley** is now a vital part of our area's water supplies: not so much a case of geography determining human behaviours, as of humans taking advantage of it.

Juries

Readers surprised at a **Bristol** crown court jury acquitting an England cricketer of affray, with three tests against India still to play, might ponder other examples where, out of sympathy for the defendant, juries have refused to convict in spite of strong evidence. One example was the acquittal in 1979 of Jeremy Thorpe, previously leader of the Liberal party, on a charge of conspiracy to murder. More recently, juries have refused to convict doctors and close relations who have hastened the death of a terminally ill patient suffering unalleviable pain or incurable illness.

Another example, longer ago, was of momentous national historic significance but had two local connections with our area. The catholic James II claimed to dispense with the Test Acts and other laws. In 1688 he ordered the archbishop of Canterbury to tell all bishops to instruct their clergy to read from their pulpits a declaration of indulgence which gave freedom of religion to catholics (and dissenters). Seven bishops refused. James II had them arrested for seditious libel and imprisoned in the Tower of London. He had them tried in the court of King's Bench. There was widespread and vociferous popular support for the bishops, and intense interest in the trial, not least because seditious libel carried the death penalty. Only 25 years previously William Twyn, who had printed a book endorsing the right of revolution, was hanged, emasculated, disembowelled, quartered, and beheaded. When on 30 July 1688 the jury, establishing the precedent of deliberating overnight at the public expense, returned a verdict of Not Guilty there were huge celebrations, with bonfires and bellringing. That added to opposition to James II, who within a year fled to France, and the glorious revolution followed, with consequences for the British constitution and Bristol's public sculpture.

The case of the seven bishops had two connections with our area. One of the bishops arrested and tried was Jonathan Trelawny, who had recently been appointed bishop of **Bristol**. He may well have visited the diocese. The second local connection is that the clerk to the court of King's Bench was Samuel Astry of **Henbury** Great House and owner of other lands in south Gloucestershire including an interest in **Aust** ferry and some coal mines in **Westerleigh**. As something of a legal procedure expert Astry played an important part in the trial. One of his daughters married a Smyth of **Ashton Court**, and Bristol Archives holds some documents relating to him.

Astry held on to his post of clerk to the crown in the King's Bench until his death in 1704. Trelawny was promoted to the richer diocese of Exeter a year or so after the trial of the seven bishops. Queen Anne later appointed him to Winchester, the richest diocese of all. Seditious libel lasted longer: by the mid eighteenth century it had ceased to carry the death penalty, though it was not abolished as a criminal offence until 2009.