



Reading the Newsletter at Scutari: Vincent Brooks, 1855

AVON LOCAL HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

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

wm.evans@btopenworld.com



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Website: www.alha.org.uk

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

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ALHA ITEMS

ALHA LOCAL HISTORY DAY 2020

Conflict in the West – war and the civilian population

ALHA Local History Day, Saturday 2 May 2020

**St Michael's Centre, Stoke Gifford, Bristol
9.30 – 4.30**

Bob Lawrence writes: We recently marked the centenary of the end of the Great War, and this year is the seventy-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War. War has been

an enduring feature of local life for the past thousand years, so for this ALHA Local History Day we thought we would look at other conflicts and in particular how they affected the local civilian population.

Some of our speakers will be already well known locally, while others have a specialist knowledge of particular events or places. We hope that together they will offer a varied and enjoyable day on a serious subject, and one of interest to many local historians.

The speakers will be:

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| Peter Fleming | The great Bristol rebellion, 1312 – 1316 |
| Mike Ponsford | The archaeology of Bristol's medieval castle |
| Mark Stoye | The impact of the English Civil War on Somerset |
| John Penny | Bristol during the French revolutionary and Napoleonic wars |
| Kent Fedorowich | Overpaid, oversexed and over here: the Canadians on Salisbury Plain October 1914 to February 1915 |
| Howard Burton | Charmy Down airfield in the Second World War |

The cost of £15 per person will include tea and coffee, and as usual we offer two free places to any group bringing a display or items for sale.

The St Michael's Centre is a large modern building with space for a large audience and for society displays. We hope it addresses the problems of last year's venue. There is limited parking at the venue, but on street parking close by is without time restriction on a Saturday and the site is close to Parkway station where there is parking. Any bus service going to Parkway is good for the St Michael's Centre, and there are trains to everywhere from Aberdeen to Penzance, London to Swansea.

The Centre is close to the Beaufort Arms, a large pub with a wide menu. We also hope to have refreshments available at the Centre at lunchtime. You can also bring your own lunch if you prefer.

A flyer with a booking form is attached, but you can also book online through Eventbrite via the ALHA website at www.alha.org.uk.

EVENTS AND SOURCES

UNEXPECTED SOURCES – BALH CONFERENCE, TAUNTON

The British Association for Local History is holding a regional conference **Saturday 21 March 2020** at the **Albemarle Centre, Taunton TA1 1BA**. The theme of the conference is "*Unexpected Sources for Local History*" highlighting some unusual sources for local and family history. Speakers include Paul Dryburgh from the National Archives and Esther Hoyle from the South West Heritage Trust. Subjects will include unusual items found in family archives, travel diaries, railway accidents and taxation records. In addition to the talks

there will be a small exhibition of Somerset maps and some original travel diaries on display. Please see the BALH website for more details. Lunch is included in the ticket price £25 and bookings can be made on the BALH website <https://www.balh.org.uk/taunton2020>.

WESTON, CLEVEDON & PORTISHEAD RAILWAY

WC&P Railway Group has a small exhibition about the railway **Tuesdays to Sundays 10am - 4.30pm until 31 March 2020**, at **Weston Museum**, Burlington Street, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1PR. No charge. More at <https://wcprgroup.org.uk/weston-museum.html>.

EMMELINE PETHICK-LAWRENCE

A plaque commemorating EP-L is to be put up in **Bristol Road Lower, Weston-super-Mare**. More about her at <https://www.lucienneboyce.com/.../2019/02/Weston-super-Mare-Final.pdf>. A plaque was put up in 2004 on the house where she was born in **Charlotte Street, Bristol**. Talk in **Weston Museum, Burlington Street, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1PR** 01934 621028, **3.30pm Friday 6 March 2020**, free.

WESTON-SUPER-MARE BUILT HERITAGE EXHIBITION

From Village to Town: Weston-super-Mare's Built Heritage.

'This exhibition brings together objects, images and film to tell the story of **Weston-super-Mare's** architectural development over the past 250 years. It expands on Historic England's new publication *Weston-super-Mare: The Town and its Seaside Heritage* (noticed below). The exhibition celebrates a complex and remarkable heritage which reflects Weston's transformation from a small village to a busy seaside resort. *From Village to Town* has been created by the South West Heritage Trust in partnership with North Somerset Council and Historic England.' **Weston Museum, Burlington Street, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1PR** 01934 621028, free, **until 9 May 2020, 10.00 to 4.30**.

SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE WAR MEMORIALS

Jane Marley writes that SGC continues to develop the *South Gloucestershire War Memorials* site, and thanks the volunteers who have undertaken research and are still researching, and to staff who are inputting and maintaining the web site. To view your local war memorial or search for a relative listed, go [here](#).

ARCHAEOLOGY AT ASHTON COURT

Kate Iles writes: Archaeology at Ashton Court is a programme that involves local primary schools, secondary schools, sixth formers and members of the community in excavating one of **Bristol's** most iconic landmarks. The 2020 field schools provide an opportunity to find out what archaeology really involves, learn useful skills, experience a real dig and discover a range of post-excavation techniques. All profits help support the work of Bristol Museum and help us to offer archaeological experiences to young people. Field schools are directed by Bristol Museum and are led by experienced experts. Sessions are suitable for complete beginners to those who have studied archaeology before but want to find out more. Open to everyone aged 16 or over. Kate Iles, Curator of Archaeology for Bristol Culture and Creative Industries, kate.iles@bristol.gov.uk. More at <https://www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/tag/field-school/>

WARMLEY WATERWORKS SITE

Roger Gosling, chairman of ALHA member **South Gloucestershire Mines Research Group**, invites supporters to sign a petition calling on South Gloucestershire Council not to demolish Edwardian buildings at the former **Warmley Waterworks** site. The site was **Cowhorn Colliery** during the 1800s. West Gloucestershire Water Company used it to pump water up the shaft, using a steam engine, from 1906 to 1959, when the WGWC merged with

Bristol Waterworks, which continued to use the site until 1970. The petition is at <https://www.change.org/p/south-gloucestershire-council-save-our-industrial-heritage-at-warmley-waterworks-site>, which also gives some photographs, background, and an assessment of the importance of the site from an industrial archaeology point of view.

NEWMAN INDUSTRIES, YATE

Exhibition on Newman Industries at **Yate & District Heritage Centre**, Church Road, Yate BS37 5BG, 01454 862 200, **until 11.30am 25 March 2020, Tuesdays to Thursdays and Saturdays 10.30-4.30.** <http://www.yateheritage.co.uk/visit/exhibitions.htm>. Includes collection of Newman-related artefacts and archive photographs.



DOCUMENTING DEATH

Exhibition at **Bristol Archives**, B Bond, Smeaton Road, Bristol BS1 6XN, **until 1 May 2020.** <https://www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/bristol-archives/whats-on/documenting-death-2/> .

‘Through documents and images held in Bristol Archives, this exhibition explores how death has been represented in different ways across the centuries, from official documents to personal commemorations to community memorials,’ it says. ‘*Documenting Death* will explore traditions, practices and attitudes towards death and show how people in the city have understood and responded to death over time. The exhibition will be accompanied by archival material from the Arnos Vale cemetery collection, which has just been made available for research [BA 41455]. The display documents the history of this Victorian burial ground, where over 300,000 people have been laid to rest, as well as its decline and regeneration in the 20th century.’

BOOKS AND OTHER ITEMS NOTICED

Each **South Gloucestershire** public library has a copy of *The Centenary of the First World War: How the Nation Remembered* (DCMS Centenary Publications).

Colin Momber, *Ships in the port of Bristol*, Ships in Focus Publications, 2020, £14.95. <http://shipsinfocus.com/results.php?q=bristol&searching=yes&submit.x=24&submit.y=15>, but they are closed until 20 March 2020. Should be available at the *SS Great Britain* shop.

Alan Aburrow, *A short history of the 'Holmwood Estate,'* Aburrow Bros Publishing, £4 including postage from aburrowpub@gmail.com, but should be £3 over the counter at Westbury Inks in Canford Lane. About **Badock's Wood**, **Southmead** and **Westbury on Trym**, particularly **Holmwood**, the house once occupied by the National Children's Home. More at <https://www.henleazeandwestburyvoice.co.uk/author-reveals-history-of-holmwood-estate>

OFFERS

VE DAY IN SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE

1 Advertising

South Gloucestershire Council wishes to assist local organisations to mark the VE Day anniversary of the end of the second world war by listing their event on the council's website. SGC will advertise VE events and activities from **Friday 8 to Sunday 10 May**. Form, returnable by **11 March 2020**, available from Jane Marley, Museums and Heritage Officer, South Gloucestershire Council, 01454 865783, MOB: 07808 364704

Relevant links include:

- Information about VE Day events: VE Day 75: www.veday75.org/
- Imperial War Museum, What you should know about VE Day: www.iwm.org.uk/history/what-you-need-to-know-about-ve-day
- British Legion VE Day 75 information: www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/remembrance/remembrance-events/ve-day-75
- If you are organising an event for VE, South Gloucestershire guidance on event safety is at www.southglos.gov.uk/business/health-and-safety/event-safety/

2 Grants

South Gloucestershire Council offers grants to organisations planning commemorative events in South Gloucestershire to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of VE Day, over the bank holiday weekend Friday 8 to Sunday 10 May 2020. The closing date for applications is **noon on 5 March 2020**. Do contact the SGC grants team if you have any queries. E.mail: grants@southglos.gov.uk Tel: 01454 865865

COMMENTARY AND RESPONSES

Mumming

Rita Lees writes: J.P.'s comment (E Update 31 January 2020, page 5) relating to **Marshfield** Mumming is unfair and misleading, i.e. 'Most mumming performances (at Marshfield, the last performance of the day) end at the pub, into which the players go with the takings.' It is true that the Mummies usually visit the pub for a well-earned drink after their performances, but the proceeds or takings are distributed amongst local voluntary groups and charities within **Marshfield**. The sum raised is later published in the quarterly magazine *All around Marshfield* and all recipient organisations are named. I hope that J.P. will reconsider the

remarks relating to **Marshfield**. Rita Lees, Programme Secretary, Marshfield & District Local History Society, www.marshfieldhistory.uk

Epidemics I

The mediastria with which the spread of a previously unknown flu virus has been reported may have led local history people to mull over how epidemics have affected our area, and how people reacted and coped. One big difference is that in times past people did not have the scientific knowledge that we have today. When a previously unknown virus appears, we share with our predecessors at least some of their condition of ignorance. The media exploit that to generate anxiety, and we may also share that too with our predecessors.

When it comes to epidemics, our area has made its contribution. According to one chronicle, the Black Death (a bacterial infection, not a virus) came to England in 1349 when a **Bristol** ship brought the plague to what is now Weymouth. Another Bristol First. Half the population of the country died, and what evidence there is suggests that our area was affected similarly. The *Little Red Book* lists 52 members of **Bristol**'s common council in 1349. Fifteen of the names are struck through. One imagines that in a densely populated town with little understanding of hygiene, the plague spread rapidly. With or without the consolations of religious belief, or with their fears exacerbated by it, people must have been scared out of their wits.

But is it right to think of the plague only as an urban phenomenon, spread only in closely packed centres of population? The plague returned six more times during the fourteenth century, and did not die out until the end of the seventeenth. If the plague spread through human contact, there will have been plenty of ways for that to have happened, especially when people congregated. Churchgoing is one obvious example, and no doubt fear impelled people to churches. The other congregator was markets. By 1348 there were 39 in our area, ranging from big ones like those in **Bristol, Bath and Wrington** down to small ones like **Hawkesbury and Norton St Philip**.

Epidemics II

Until the 19th century people will have recognised an epidemic when they saw or experienced one. But because they lacked the scientific knowledge that was later to drive medical advances, progress in coping with epidemics varied from one disease to another. Much depended on insights or guesses by individuals. Mary Wortley Montagu saw inoculation against smallpox in Turkey, and that, together with observations of local folk practices, led to Jenner of Berkeley's practice and campaign, (which the established church and many in the medical professions opposed). Cholera often had a good year, especially in **Bath and Bristol**.

How **Bristol** responded to cholera has been described in two valuable booklets: by Sue Hardiman in *The 1832 cholera epidemic and its impact on the city of Bristol* (BBHA no. 114, 2005); and by Michael Whitfield in *The Bristol microscopists and the cholera epidemic of 1849* (ALHA books no.9, 2011). As late as 1849 William Herapath, lecturer in chemistry at Bristol Medical School, insisted that cholera was a 'putrid animal poison,' getting into the human body via the lungs, and best dealt with by fumigation, chlorine or heat. But in **Bristol** doctors such as William Budd, John Swayne and Frederick Brittan had used microscopes to identify the bacillus. Not until 1854 did John Snow in London pinpoint contaminated water as the source of cholera. From then on in our area medicine and science moved forward, not always in concert, and rarely in co-operation. **Bristol's**



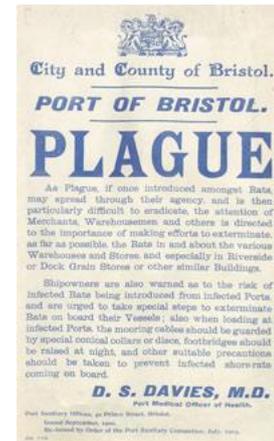
last cholera outbreak was in 1867.

In 1838 William Budd had observed that the typhoid poison, as he called it, was present in human faeces, and that healthy people could catch it through drinking contaminated water. He suggested isolating excrement to help control future outbreaks. Budd identified correlation but not cause. Budd's message did not reach the Isle of Wight: in 1861 prince Albert died of what is now thought by some historians to have been typhoid. Not until the 1880s was the typhoid bacillus identified, by which time three non-medical changes had all but removed cholera and typhoid from our area: the formation in 1837 of the Bristol General Cemetery Company, which opened **Arnos Vale** cemetery [and see under DOCUMENTING DEATH in **Events** above]; the establishment in 1846 of Bristol Waterworks Company, of which William Budd was a director; and the local health board's construction from 1851 onwards, with help from Joseph Bazalgette, of 160 miles of public sewers maintained at the public expense. The scientists and the doctors made progress regarding bacterial infections. Some of the advances in treating them, eg the discovery in 1928 of penicillin by Alexander Fleming, were almost accidental, and it was not until 1940 that Howard Florey's deliberate work made mass production of antibiotics practicable and economical. It took longer for viruses to be recognised and identified. The 1918 flu epidemic killed over 225,000 people in the UK, and our area was not immune. The cause is now believed to have been H1N1, but viruses were not identified until about 1930. In the 1950s people were still talking about 'germs.' Not until biology was systematically taught in maintained secondary schools did popular understanding develop of the distinction between bacterial and viral infections. You still hear local doctors sighing about patients who ask for, demand or claim entitlement to antibiotics to treat a cold.

Corona-type viruses are not the first to have caused worldwide concern of recent years. SARS in 2003 and H1N1 (again) in 2009-2010 killed above average numbers of people, mostly those with existing respiratory conditions or other vulnerabilities. Both epidemics were controlled and died out, and it would be interesting to investigate how local institutions and businesses responded, especially factories, offices, schools, universities, hospitals, libraries and transport undertakings, where large numbers of people came into contact with each other. Containment was achieved by public health measures, devised largely by epidemiologists. People in our area played a part in that. Epidemiology can be traced from the Herapaths and William Budd, but more recently through the work of epidemiologists at **Bristol University**, and public health specialists who until 1974 worked in local authorities and since then in the NHS, including the former **Avon Health Authority** (1974-2000). Since 2013 epidemiology has been overseen by Public Health England, an agency of the Department of Health and Social Care. A history of epidemiology in our area has yet to be written.

SWOT

Rumours that an ALHA member society has conducted a SWOT analysis may have raised a smile or an eyebrow. Had someone been on a management course? SWOT analysis is a tool now used by many large and medium-sized organisations, commercial and public sector alike, and by some charities. It involves the organisation trying to identify what strengths and weaknesses it has, what opportunities the organisation's environment presents, and what threats that environment poses. The idea is that the organisation then works out how best to exploit its strengths, shore up or remove weaknesses, take advantage of opportunities, and guard against or eliminate threats. This simple technique concentrates the mind, and may help



organisations, however small, consider matters they had previously ignored or taken for granted. It can help an organisation plan for the future, assuming it expects to have one.

How about using SWOT analysis, not to assist group navel-gazing, but as a tool for local history investigation? What strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats did a community (or a business, family, school, church etc) face at a given date? What SWOTs did communities face during the roman and norman invasions and military occupations, the anarchy, the black death, the reformation, civil war, the commonwealth, the agrarian and industrial revolutions, religious revivals, cholera, world wars, electoral changes, economic shocks, shifts in world trade? How did places like **Sandford, Thornbury, Wickwar and Batheaston** view the advent of newspapers, canals, railways, buses, the telephone, motorways, votes for women, the internet? Did communities realise that change was happening, and if so, did they regard change as a threat or an opportunity? Did they ignore change or react to it, and if so, how, and with what local effects? If they had strengths, did they recognise them and take advantage? If they did not, why not, and with what results? If they had weaknesses, did they perceive them, and if so, did they try to do anything about them? Worth a look.

QUOTE

The Memory of the world is not a bright, shining crystal, but a heap of broken fragments. ... All history is full of locked doors, and of faint glimpses of things that cannot be reached.

Herbert Butterfield, *The historical novel* (1924)



CAN YOU HELP?

SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE WAR GRAVES

Mike Mckenzie wants to organise groups of people to adopt war graves across **South Gloucestershire** to maintain and clean them. If you are interested, please contact him via Drm414511@gmail.com .

HEBRON CRICKET CLUB, BOWER ASHTON

Geoff Gardiner would welcome any information about Hebron Cricket Club, which played at **Bower Ashton** from about 1910. geoff@thegardiners.org.uk