



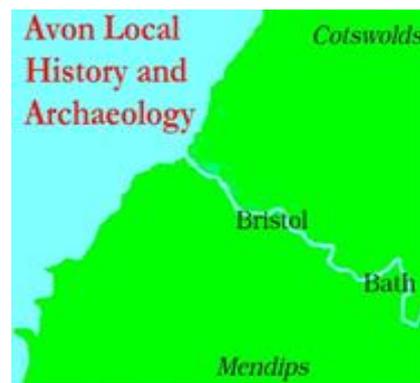
1Matthias Stom (1600-1652) - young reader

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ALHA ITEMS

ALHA SUMMER WALKS

SUNDAY 11 AUGUST – THORNBURY (Cost £3)

Leader Jane Marks of Thornbury & District Museum

Walk A guided walk along the High Street. See how it compares to Old Market, Bristol

Meet at Meet at the Museum in Chapel Street, between the Cossham Hall and the Wheatsheaf pub.
1:45pm for BS35 2BJ
2pm start

ISLA KOUASSI-KAN

Jan Packer writes: We are delighted and proud to tell you all that ALHA's facebook team member, Isla, has achieved a first class honours degree (BA) in History. Isla joined our team in her second year at UWE with the brief of targeting younger people. She did well to work

toward a challenging target: posting about some of her own research projects as well as sharing posts between ALHA and UWE groups.

It's been really great to work alongside a dynamic and resourceful young woman. We don't yet know if she'll stay on board so that she can post news and events as she moves into her career: we certainly hope so.

In any case we shall be hoping to attract another champion for young people interested in history and archaeology to join our team. If you know anybody with an interest in Bristol & District's history who could benefit from some volunteer experience to help flesh out a future cv, you might like to ask him or her to join our facebook group, check it out, and get in touch with some ideas how they could help make a difference to develop ALHA's presence within the younger community.

EVENTS AND SOURCES

MEET THE EXPERTS AT RADSTOCK MUSEUM

Lisa Pool writes: Radstock Museum runs a *Meet the experts* summer programme. We've been very lucky to have freely-offered support from a range of experts, who are appearing between 2-4pm on Saturdays throughout July & August.

- **Saturday 10 August: 2-4pm:** TOOLS & TRADES HISTORY SOCIETY with Nick White
- **Saturday 10 August 2-4pm** TWINE, ROPE & SAIL MAKING with Ross Aitken
- **Saturday 24 August:** 2-4pm: THE MILESTONE SOCIETY with Janet Dowding & Richard Raynsford.

Details at <http://radstockmuseum.co.uk/our-events-programme/> Any help you can offer would be very much appreciated, and of course we would love to see you on a group visit if that suits!

DYRHAM PARK

Laura Williams writes: The National Trust's **Dyrham Park** in South Gloucestershire is undergoing a transformation. With the leaking roof on the 17th-century wing replaced a few years ago, attention has now been turned to the interior. Work is underway to conserve the 300 year-old staircases in the house and a full programme of conservation work is planned for the coming years. As part of this, some of the 17th-century artwork which was displayed on the walls of the house has been taken down and is now on display at floor level which allows you to see much more detail. There are some fine examples of Dutch paintings by the likes of Hoogstraten and deHeem.

You can learn more about the ongoing conservation efforts with 'behind the scenes' tours, which run most weekdays. No pre-booking needed, just turn up and collect a ticket at reception. If you pick up a copy of your Local Voice newspaper in September, there will be a voucher for free



parking for non-National Trust members if visiting Mon-Fri that month. More information on Dyrham Park at: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/dyrham-park. Laura Williams, Senior Marketing & Communications Officer, National Trust, Dyrham Park, Dyrham, nr Bath, SN14 8ER

ROLLS-ROYCE HERITAGE TRUST (BRISTOL BRANCH)

The Trust will participate by having an open morning on **21 September 2019**. As in previous years, there will be four conducted tours at 0900, 1000, 1100 and 1200. The event has been registered on the Heritage Open Days national website and locally with South Gloucestershire Council. Advance booking is obligatory and booking arrangements have been set up on Eventbrite, which is now open.

SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE SECOND WORLD WAR STORIES PROJECT

Jane Marley writes: We have completed over 60 reminiscence sessions, recording quotes from many of the stories onto postcards which have been a fantastic resource to accompany the touring exhibition and school visits. To date we have visited over 30 schools, with objects kindly lent to us by museums and heritage centres, presenting an overview of the impact of the war on South Gloucestershire. We have also been joined by three wonderful living history volunteers, Eric Garrett, Bill Bombroff and Margaret Bracey, who have captivated school children with their memories of the war.

We have just completed the first of our two evacuation days at Avon Valley Railway where we were joined by 90 children who dressed up for the event, took a steam train ride, learnt about Operation Pied Piper, rationing, experienced a billeting officer and being selected by local people. Again, huge thanks to all the volunteers who made the day such a memorable occasion, including volunteers from Avon Valley Railway and Kingswood Museum.

Our community events at the libraries have been hugely successful and supported by the library staff. They have included cake and spam sandwiches, singalongs, choirs, brass bands, sharing stories, poetry readings, adding photos to Know Your Place and making your own medal. The Touring exhibition continues to tour the libraries.



wonderful team of dedicated and thorough volunteers.

The war memorials information is being steadily added to the website, aided again by a

We are also offering **oral history training with Paul Evans of Gloucestershire Archives on Thursday 11 July, 1.30pm at the Council Offices in Yate**. The training would be suitable for local history groups or those working with older people. To book visit our Second World Stories page on the South Gloucestershire Council website:

<https://www.southglos.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/museums-and-galleries/south-gloucestershire-second-world-war-stories/>

The ten short films are in the process of being edited, with stories from dispatch riders in the North African desert during the war, to being bombed out in Kingswood and Filton, to memories of soldiers coming in after the D-Day landings. The films will be shown at the **Armadillo Cinema in Yate on 3 September 2019.**

Other events can be found at www.southglos.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/museums-and-galleries/south-gloucestershire-second-world-war-stories/

The whole project was celebrated at a commemoration event at Aerospace on Saturday 7 July. This is coincided with the 80th anniversary of the beginning of the war. All resources, including school materials, films, and pdfs of the exhibition will be uploaded to the webpages as part of the legacy of the project.

Acton Court

In 1535 Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn stayed at **Acton Court** whilst on their summer Progress around the West Country. In honour of the occasion, Nicholas Poyntz, the owner of Acton Court, built an entire new east wing onto his existing moated manor house. Hastily constructed in nine months, this wing is still standing and is said to be the most ‘original’ Tudor building in England.



This is the first year that Acton Court is participating in the Heritage Open Days. There will be tours of the house and grounds on **13, 14 and 15 September, 2019.** Blue Badge guides tell the story of Acton Court, the Poyntz family who lived here, the monarchs they entertained and the state apartments they built for Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn. Allow approximately an hour and a quarter for the tour. Please wear soft soled shoes. Tours of the house and grounds are already fully booked, but any return tickets will be available on the Eventbrite site which can be accessed via the events page at www.actoncourt.com.

On **Sunday 15 September** there will be a ticketed afternoon concert: *The Odhecaton* 1501 -*



A Musical Revolution, a programme of music from the world’s first ever book of printed music performed by In Echo.

Tickets still available at www.actoncourt.com events page, info@actoncourt.com or 01454 228224.

*A collection of polyphonic secular songs published by Ottaviano Petrucci in 1501 in Venice. Influential in early music. – Ed.

GLOUCESTER HISTORY FESTIVAL 2019

230 talks, events etc **from 7 September 2019**. Content is national and international, but some topics of local interest. Brochure now available at <https://gloucesterhistoryfestival.co.uk/> Gloucester History Festival, Gloucester Guildhall, 23 Eastgate Street, Gloucester, GL1 1NS; box office 01452 396 5762.

SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE HEARTH TAX

Dr Jan Broadway has transcribed the hearth tax returns of 1672 for **Gloucestershire**. She hopes when time permits to produce a full scholarly edition and analysis, but feels researchers may appreciate access to the transcription in the meantime. The transcript can be read via the website of ALHA member **Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society**, <https://www.bgas.org.uk/>, which contains a link to Dr Broadway's company's website, <http://xmera.co.uk/>. The transcript is searchable by hundred or by parish as named in 1672.

Dr Roger Leech has edited the **Bristol** hearth tax records, published by ALHA member **Bristol Record Society 2018**, volume 70, *Bristol Hearth Tax 1662-1673*, £22.50 plus postage from Bristol Archives, (Record Society Books), 'B' Bond Warehouse, Smeaton Road, Bristol, BS1 6XN. Email: archives@bristol.gov.uk.

VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY – YATE AND THE SODBURYS

Alex Craven has written an account of his recent work for Gloucestershire County History Trust on the projected VCH volume that will include **Yate and the Sodburys**. It can be read and downloaded from <http://www.vchglosacademy.org/newsletter.pdf>



BOOKS NOTICED

Clive Burlton, *Congresbury Cricket Club: 175 years of village cricket*, Congresbury Cricket Club with ALHA member **Congresbury History Group**, 2019; www.bristolbooks.org

Helen Doe, *Brunel's ships and boats*, Amberley 2018, now reissued at £13.49. <https://www.amberley-books.com/community-main-page/d/community-helen-doe/brunel-s-ships-and-boats.html>

Nicholas Roe, *Wordsworth and Coleridge: the radical years*, second edition 2018, Oxford UP, £25. <https://global.oup.com/academic/product/wordsworth-and-coleridge-9780198818113?cc=gb&lang=en&>

COMMENTARY AND RESPONSES

Housebuilders

In his *The making of Victorian Bristol*, reviewed by Dr Jonathan Harlow in ALHA Newsletter 158, former ALHA trustee Professor Peter Malpass makes the point that all the 19th century houses in **Bristol** were built by individuals or small firms. Contrast the twentieth century, where much housebuilding was large-scale, by local authorities and by large nation-wide or regional companies such as Wimpey and Barratt and, in the present century, by the

likes of Persimmon and Crest Nicholson. Why was that so? Did the same thing happen elsewhere, eg in **Bath**?

In Bristol the large council estates of the 20th century, from **Sea Mills** (1919, and recently marking its centenary at Addison's oak on Sea Mills Square), **Shirehampton** and **Knowle** (1920), **Hillfields** (1922), **Speedwell and St George** (1924 onwards), **Horfield** (1927), **St Anne's** (1928), **Southmead** (1929), **Bedminster Down and Lockleaze** (1946) were built by the local authority, partly to meet the needs of an expanding and inadequately housed population, but also for rehousing after slum clearance. After WW1 those needs were not being met by private sector builders; new houses were needed in large numbers, and the people who needed them, especially those displaced by slum clearance and other public health measures, were just the ones who could not afford to buy. After WW2 there was an urgent need to house large numbers of people made homeless or living in substandard circumstances as a result of bombing and other wartime conditions. Local authorities were encouraged to build by central government, largely through subsidies; land assembly could be helped by compulsory purchase. None of those considerations applied in Victorian times.



In the private sector, new houses would not be built unless the developer perceived demand, and saw a way to repay money borrowed and to make a profit. Compulsory purchase to assemble a site was not available: area redevelopment assisted by the local authority using compulsory purchase powers did not become common until well into the 20th century. With most workers not paid enough to be able to buy, and with building societies small,

local and with not much capital (**Bristol & West** did not take off until the days of Andrew Breach), demand was limited, so large scale development did not happen, and outside London housebuilding companies remained small. Hence land got developed piecemeal, as and when entrepreneurs saw a market opportunity, in smallish parcels, as explained by Professor Malpass in his ALHA booklets on the development of **Clifton** and **Redland**.

The pattern in victorian **Bath** was similar. The 18th century building of Bath by Bridges, the Woods and Pulteney had been the result of large landowners with free capital (or the ability to borrow it cheaply) meeting large-scale demand as the city became a fashionable resort for the affluent. Those considerations did not apply in victorian Bath: the fashion and the big money had gone elsewhere. Housing development in victorian Bath was small-scale and tentative as its industries – not large-scale ones – grew and Bath expanded into **Twerton**, **Weston** and **Bathwick**. Bath's first council houses (**Dolmeads**) dated from 1907. Large-scale estates began with **Englishcombe Park** (1920).

Another difference is to do with how development was financed. In victorian times the simple method was for the landowner to sell or lease land to an entrepreneur who mortgaged the land or a lease of it until the house was sold. In the twentieth century building companies raised money on the stock market and by borrowing large sums from banks. They needed a succession of projects, so they amassed land banks which required large sums of capital up front. With mortgages as security, banks were happy to lend. With the prospect of steady profits from sales and dividends from profits, investors were happy to invest. Hence the big housebuilding companies, and their repetitive designs, contrasting with the varied output, in smaller batches, and with local characteristics, of the victorians.

Intrusive archaeology

Objections by volcanologists to archaeologists' excavations at Pompeii on the ground that excavating destroys layers of evidence about volcanic eruptions - <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2019/jul/22/pompeii-row-erupts-between-rival-scientific-factions> - can be dismissed as disputes over territory between professionals who ought to grow up. It would not be difficult to devise arrangements for consultation, collaboration and selective conservation of volcanic evidence.

The dispute however draws attention to an aspect of archaeologists' practice that they sometimes overlook, viz that excavating layers of the past to get at what lies beneath necessarily destroys evidence of that past. The problem is a general one, not confined to volcanic deposits. A fairly recent example was the demolition of a baroque church in the forum in Rome in order to give archaeologists access to traces of underlying republican buildings, which turned out to be of little historical or archaeological interest or importance. The problem arises particularly where a site has been occupied by successive generations, but rural areas are not immune, as shown by professor Mike Aston's work at **Winscombe** and **Shapwick** (ALHA booklet no.12, and places like **Camerton** where traces of Roman, medieval and later occupations underlay each other.

Just as modern technologies allow doctors to see what lies beneath a patient's skin without the equivalent of excavation, it ought not to be beyond the wit of archaeologists to use available technologies to get an idea of what is underground, as has been done at **Stanton Drew**, for example. Judgement can then be made whether the expected finds will be worth the destruction.

Atmospheric pollution

For people concerned about the quality of the environment and its effects on human well-being, atmospheric pollution, especially in urban areas and along main roads, is now as pressing a problem as atmospheric overheating. To look at the problem through the lens of local history would be interesting and might be useful, as was suggested in ALHA e-update 30 April 2017.



Leaving aside natural causes such as volcanic eruptions, wildfires and radiation from outside the planet, atmospheric pollution is caused by emissions into the air of very small particles, mostly solid. By and large they come from human activities, most of which involve fire or other forms of heating. As elsewhere, people in our area from the earliest times must have lit fires to keep themselves warm, cook foods, clear woodland and, once metals were discovered, smelt ores and shape implements. The numbers of people and the scale of activities was so small that the atmospheric consequences, if understood, were negligible.

It became a problem only when the scale of activity created results that amounted to a nuisance. Nuisance is a legal concept that started with fire (ie flames, not smoke). Coal was burned to create steam power to drive machinery. It was cheap and plentiful, especially in our

area with its coalfields and outcrops. Burning it produced soot and smoke. Hence the smogs described by Charles Dickens, and the blackened surfaces of buildings in places like **Bath** and **Bristol**, which were common into the 1960s. Traces can still be seen on some stone-faced buildings which have not been cleaned, eg **Old Bridewell in Bristol's Broadmead**. After a particularly severe London smog in 1952, when many people died, the Clean Air Act 1956 brought in controls on the domestic burning of coal, with smoke control zones, smokeless fuels and appliances with smoke dampers.

Some industrial processes led to other sources of atmospheric pollution: in the nineteenth century, alkali works, and chemical manufacturing and processing plants such as Thomas Proctor's at **Redcliffe** (ALHA books no.18, Brian Vincent and Raymond Holland's *Chemistry in Bristol into the early 20th century*) and William Butler's works at **Crew's Hole** (the same authors' ALHA books no.29, *The Butlers and the coal-tar distillery at Crew's Hole*). Other sources of atmospheric pollution followed. As oil was used more and more as a fuel, particularly once the internal combustion engine replaced the horse, the burning of oils and their derivatives put hydrocarbon particulates into the air in increasing quantities and concentrations. In some places acid rain resulted, and oily smuts from power stations. Sheep north of **Avonmouth** turned grey. By the 1960s there was concern that adding lead compounds to petrol (to reduce engine knock) was putting lead into the atmosphere. Medical tests showed concentrations building up in human bones. In the 1970s one of the drivers of the campaign to move St John's primary school from the **top of Blackboy** to Worrall Road was concern about pupils being exposed to lead pollution by reason of the school being on a traffic island formed by main roads. (The premises were later converted to a social services area office, social workers and their support staff being considered less at risk than children; the building is now private flats, and unleaded petrol is the norm.)

The UK government is now under pressure from the EU and the World Health Organisation to take more active steps to reduce atmospheric pollution. Pressure groups have brought legal actions against the government, which has responded by imposing financial penalties on local authorities, especially **Bristol**, to act, notwithstanding the expenditure cuts central government has imposed on local councils. Bristol City Council is putting out to public consultation proposals to reduce nitrous oxide pollution: <https://news.bristol.gov.uk/news/bristol-cabinet-to-consider-two-air-quality-options>. An obvious step would be to reduce the volume of traffic and to replace fossil-fuelled vehicles with ones powered by sustainably generated electricity. The former would evoke widespread political opposition; the latter would cost money. History suggests that the fight will be tough.

QUOTE

History does not always get things in the right order, and can commit some unpardonable blunders. It passes up on the chance of some arresting symmetries and gratifying coincidences, kills off characters just as they are becoming interesting, trails off too often into bathos and farce, lavishes good fortune on the vicious, overloads the main narrative with a number of tedious subplots and allows some trifling accident to distract us from crucial moments of truth. It is also a familiar fact that truth can not only be stranger than fiction but more fictional than it.

Terry Eagleton, *The event of literature* (2012).