



## AVON LOCAL HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

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

[wm.evans@btopenworld.com](mailto:wm.evans@btopenworld.com)



Laura Theresa Alma-Tadema (1852–1909), *A  
Looking out o'Window, Sunshine* (1881)

## e-update 31 May 2020

Website: [www.alha.org.uk](http://www.alha.org.uk)

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

### CONTENTS

#### ALHA items

- Subscriptions and donations
- All the action from the committee
- Events and sources
  - Kingswood High Street bid
  - Women's history network prize
  - Bath obelisk listed
  - Gloucs LHA
  - Clifton rugby club
  - 10 Guinea Street, Redcliffe
  - Museums reopening
  - Caribbean history online at TNA
  - Bristol Archives
  - National Trust gardens, parkland
- Books etc noticed
  - Working mothers
  - VCH Yate 'short' on *Kindle*
  - South Glos WW2 podcast

#### Commentary and responses

- Marshfield Tolzey
- Architectural innovation – stations
- Nightingale
- Working mums
- Façading
- Yate and Sodbury again
- Change of name
- Parish history summaries

#### Quote

Herbert Butterfield

#### Can you help?

- Faded thermal print suggestions
- New request: TNA transcription

### 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.

The committee has not met since the last update, owing to the coronavirus restrictions.

## EVENTS AND SOURCES

### KINGSWOOD HIGH STREET, CONSULTATION

*Jane Marley writes:* **Kingswood** is one of 100 towns competing for a share of the Government's £1bn *Future High Streets* fund. Successful high streets could secure between £5m – £25m and South Gloucestershire Council must submit a bid by the end of June. The proposals are at <https://www.southglos.gov.uk//documents/2097-Kingswood-High-Street-Engagement-v4.pdf>.

South Gloucestershire Council invites you to comment on the plans to contribute to its emerging business case: <https://www.southglos.gov.uk/business/regeneration/future-high-street-engagement-for-kingswood/> .

Under the heading **Promoting high street heritage and culture** the plan includes:

- Funding to achieve the full restoration of the **Whitfield Tabernacle on Park Road**, to convert the building into a cultural cinema and performance arts space, restoring its Grade-I listed heritage status as part of the birth of nonconformist religion and making this a real community asset for **Kingswood**;
- Conversion of the cemetery in **Whitfield Tabernacle to a new public park**;
- Investment to improve high street buildings on **Regent Street**, particularly those with long-term vacancy or heritage status;
- Enhancement of public space at **Halls Road and Kimberley Road**;
- Development of a **cultural and events programme** covering **Regent Street**, the new public park in the **Whitfield Tabernacle** Conservation Area and extending to **Kingswood Park**.

Please give your views on the proposals by 7 June 2020. You can [complete the survey online](#) or you can request a postal survey by calling SGC's Consultation Team on 01454 868154.

### 2020 WOMEN'S HISTORY NETWORK COMMUNITY HISTORY PRIZE

*Elspeth King writes:* It's that exciting time of year - the **Women's History Network** Community History Prize 2020 is live and calling for entries.

This annual prize of £500 is awarded to the team behind a Community History Project by, about, or for women in a particular locale or community and which has been completed between **1 January 2019 and 31 May 2020**. It has been sponsored by The History Press since 2015.

Last year's prize was won by the entry from Glasgow Women's Library which celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Representation of the People Act. It developed an animated web resource highlighting the forgotten heroines who campaigned for women across the world to have the right to vote. For details of this year's competition go to the link <https://womenshistorynetwork.org/2020-whn-community-history-prize/>, which includes an application form.

The Women's History Network is a national association and charity for the promotion of women's history and the encouragement of women and men interested in women's history. Established in 1991, the network reaches out to welcome people from any background who share a passion for women's history.

We encourage submissions from projects which include a strong element of community engagement or collaboration and which communicate a sense of heritage uncovered and learning shared by participants from outside the academic or professional heritage sector.

Projects can have creative or wellbeing outcomes, as well as research outputs, but the entrants' activity must have led to the creation of something which is based on and

communicates the findings of the group's historical research, such as a production, artwork, website, documentary, pamphlet, heritage trail, book, exhibition, artefact or event.

[Applicants have to be community history members of the Women's history network: <https://womenshistorynetwork.org/join-us/> Ed.]

### **BATH OBELISK LISTED**

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has added to the listed of special architectural or historic interest a number of buildings and other structures to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the end of WW2 in Europe. One of the buildings now listed is the obelisk in the roundabout in the **Orange Grove, Bath**. [Image from Historic England]. As this was put up in 1734 to commemorate the visit to Bath of William IV, Prince of Orange (hence the street name, nothing to do with a misguided attempt at local citrus growing), its relevance to VE day may not be immediately apparent.

Elias Prins, a refugee from Alkmaar in the Netherlands, settled in **Bath** in 1940. He led fundraising to relieve poverty in Alkmaar during its nazi occupation. Bath people



contributed to 45,000 articles of clothing shipped to Alkmaar. After the end of WW2 the garden around the obelisk on Orange Grove was redesigned to mark Bath's relationship with Alkmaar, and was named the Alkmaar Garden. In 1946 Alkmaar gave 5,000 tulip bulbs to be planted there.

The cities later entered into a twinning agreement. In 2017 Alkmaar gave Bath a further 5,000 tulip bulbs. The government says the listing is to mark the VE day connection: <https://historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/news/listings-to-celebrate-ve-day/>, which includes an image of the explanatory notices on the roundabout.

In case of interest, Alkmaar's museums include ones specialising in cheese, beer and the Beatles, a Liverpool pop group popular in the 1960s: <https://www.holland.com/global/tourism/destinations/more-destinations/alkmaar.htm>.

### **GLOUCESTERSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION**

**GLHA** has cancelled all its events planned for **June 2020**, including its annual general meeting, which is now deferred to **Tuesday 3 September 2020**, failing which GLHA intends to hold it online.

### **CLIFTON RUGBY CLUB**

*Bob Lawrence draws attention to the website of Clifton Rugby Club*

(<http://www.cliftonrfchistory.co.uk/index.htm>). 'I don't find it easy to navigate, and I don't know who has done all the research, but it has a lot of good information about local people

and places and is well illustrated. It is good for facts about local businessmen and civic leaders, but I recently found a lot there about the Bishop's Knoll War Hospital.'

### **A HOUSE THROUGH TIME**

This 4-part BBC TV series features the house 10 Guinea Street, **Redcliffe, Bristol**, built 1718. The series started 26 May at 9.00 pm on BBC2. It is hoped that a review will appear in ALHA'S next *Newsletter*.

### **REOPENING OF MUSEUMS**

The government taskforce to support reopening of the cultural sector in England aims to group oversee potential reopening of museums and galleries in stage three of UK government's coronavirus recovery plan: [https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/taskforce-to-support-reopening-of-cultural-sector?utm\\_campaign=1747824\\_20052020%20MA%20newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=Museums%20Association&dm\\_i=2VBX,11GMO,27LSLC,3YU6W,1](https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/taskforce-to-support-reopening-of-cultural-sector?utm_campaign=1747824_20052020%20MA%20newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Museums%20Association&dm_i=2VBX,11GMO,27LSLC,3YU6W,1)

### **CARIBBEAN CONNECTIONS – TNA ONLINE**

The **National Archives** offers online lectures:

- *Quarantine and social distancing during Tudor epidemics, Friday 5 June 2020.* 'Find out about state reactions to the epidemic outbreak during the medieval and early modern period. Learn about Henry VIII's attitudes to infectious disease, Tudor social distancing and the introduction of the first government quarantine measures in 1517'.
- *Caribbean Connections, Friday 19 June 2020.* 'Since the settling of the British Caribbean in the 17th century, people have returned or emigrated to Britain. However, up until the 19th century, it is difficult to know how many Caribbean people lived in the UK. This illustrative talk is an introduction into the history and primary sources for researching Caribbean migration and migrants to the UK. [https://prod.flowapp.com/s/nMCRLPDa5a?refToken=EM&utm\\_source=emailmarketing&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=weekly\\_mailer\\_21\\_may\\_2020&utm\\_content=2020-05-21](https://prod.flowapp.com/s/nMCRLPDa5a?refToken=EM&utm_source=emailmarketing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=weekly_mailer_21_may_2020&utm_content=2020-05-21)

### **BRISTOL ARCHIVES**

Latest from **Bristol Archives** is at <https://www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/bristol-archives/>

#### **House histories**

If the BBC2 series *A house through time* prompts you to research further the history of your own house, Bristol Archives offers an online guide:

<http://archives.bristol.gov.uk/Source%20guides/Bristol%20Archives%20-%20Buildings%20source%20guide%20May%202020.pdf>. Recently appointed senior archivist Anne Lovejoy (who has replaced Jo Vietze) offers an online (Zoom) talk on house history research **Wednesday 10 June 5-6pm**. <https://www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/bristol-archives/whats-on/house-research-from-home/> includes a booking application – deadline **noon Monday 8 June**. Free, but a donation requested.

#### **Theatre Royal Bristol**

850 Old Vic playbills are now online, catalogued under TR/pub/1.

### **Arnos Vale cemetery**

Not online yet, but available when the searchroom opens again, are records of Bristol General Cemetery Company, catalogued under 41455:

<https://www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/blog/arnos-vale-cemetery-archive-now-open/>

### **Diary of Mary Beck, Frenchay**

Similarly with the journal 1796-1798 of Mary Beck, nee Bridges, catalogue ref. 46422. Wilberforce connections, and many others.

### **NATIONAL TRUST GARDENS**

*Tom North writes on behalf of The National Trust:* ‘From **3 June** we’re able to reopen the first of our gardens and parklands in England and Northern Ireland, with more opening over the coming weeks. For now, our houses remain closed and we’ll open these as soon as we can. To open these gardens and parklands safely, we’ve had to reduce the number of people we can welcome at one time, so you’ll need to book in advance. New booking timeslots become available on a Friday for visits the following week.’

How to book is explained at <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/how-to-book-your-visit-and-what-to-expect>. None of the sites mentioned is in our area, but the procedure can be expected to be applied to **Tyntesfield, Prior Park** and so on in due course.

### **BOOKS AND OTHER ITEMS NOTICED**

Helen McCarthy, *Double lives: a history of working motherhood* (Bloomsbury 2020, hb, rrp £30, £21 online). Not much on our area, but thorough general background. More below under **COMMENTARY, Working mums**.

Victoria County History (VCH) ‘shorts’ are now available in Kindle e-book form. Links to the Gloucestershire ‘shorts’ (including *Yate* by Rose Wallis) are below:

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/Victoria-History-Gloucestershire-Cheltenham-Before-ebook/dp/B087964K14/ref=sr\\_1\\_2?dchild=1&keywords=Cheltenham+before+the+spa&qid=1589885979&sr=8-2](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Victoria-History-Gloucestershire-Cheltenham-Before-ebook/dp/B087964K14/ref=sr_1_2?dchild=1&keywords=Cheltenham+before+the+spa&qid=1589885979&sr=8-2)

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/Victoria-History-Gloucestershire-Yate-ebook/dp/B015SVE9B6/ref=tmm\\_kin\\_swatch\\_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=1589886000&sr=8-1](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Victoria-History-Gloucestershire-Yate-ebook/dp/B015SVE9B6/ref=tmm_kin_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=1589886000&sr=8-1). *Jane Marley* says the launch blog when *Yate* was available is at:

<https://blog.history.ac.uk/2020/04/discover-victoria-county-history-short-a-lockdown-special-offer/>, but Cheltenham has now been added.

*Jane Marley* also draws attention to a radio podcast: Christina Wheeler, previously South Gloucestershire Council’s engagement officer for the *World War Two Stories* Project created a podcast for local radio. You can hear it at: <https://www.mixcloud.com/edgeradio/south-gloucestershire-second-world-war-stories/>

## COMMENTARY AND RESPONSES

### Marshfield Tolzey- response

*Rita Lees writes:* The piece on markets in the April 2020 ALHA update has stimulated an interesting debate in **Marshfield** concerning the role of the Tolzey. The present Tolzey building in **Marshfield** dates from 1690, founded as a meeting place by John and Mary Gostlett. The name Tolzey originates from the Saxon period and according to the Tolzey Court House file (BCC/J/Tol) held at Bristol Archives and the Discovery at National Archives website, ‘Its name is derived from the place where the King’s tolls were collected and where the Court used to meet.’ Although a Tolzey Court was later held in **Bristol**, there was also a merchants’ Tolzey in Bristol, a meeting place for commercial transactions. The latter was established around 1550 but unlike Bristol, the **Marshfield** Tolzey does not appear to have provided a commercial function. It became a school for boys in 1722, which existed until at least 1861, when the National School opened. In the earlier part of the 19th Century, it served as a lock up and later, it housed the hand-operated fire engine. The building came into the possession of the Rev. Canon Trotman and following his death in 1910, it was gifted to Marshfield Parish Council by Canon Trotman’s daughter, Sybil, in 1914. It remains the office for Marshfield Parish Council today, on the upper floor, whilst the lower floor contains public conveniences.

Thanks to David Colbourne & special thanks to Ann Ballard for their contributions in preparing this follow up.

[This shows that **Marshfield**’s present building called the Tolzey Hall had no market connection from 1690. So how, when and why did it get its name? Was it so named because there had been a tolzey on the site before the present building was erected? It is known that the site of the market was moved from the main street to a site elsewhere: did that make redundant an ancient tolzey on the site of the present Tolzey Hall building? **Marshfield** market was chartered in 1234, and **Keynsham** abbey must have had some arrangement for collecting tolls, at least until the abbey was dissolved. Or was the name applied at some time after 1690? If so, who was responsible for that, and why was the name chosen? More to look into. Ed.]

### Architectural innovation – railway stations - response

*AE Knowling writes:* In the piece on architectural innovation in ALHA Newsletter 162 you said that when it came to railway stations, Brunel had no precedents to go on. [Repeated in a piece about **façading**, below. Ed.] That’s true so far as the external appearance of stations is concerned, but not for the actual points where passengers get on and off and goods are loaded and unloaded. That was already being done in what were then the two main forms of long-distance transport, the coach and the boat. Coaches either stopped in the street, where there were no structures, or drove into the yard of a coaching inn, where the coach was turned. To apply that to trains would have used up a lot of space and taken up time, so Brunel followed the other precedent, the wharf. That consisted of a vertical wall with a flat space on top. The wharf or quay analogy suited the railway: the train stopped alongside, as a boat would on a canal or in a harbour. One of the French words for platform is quai.

### Façading

Bristling with scaffolding, the central length of the neoclassical front wall of Pitman’s works (1859) in **Bath**’s Lower Bristol Road stands, just about. (Image from [bathheritagewatchdog.org](http://bathheritagewatchdog.org)). Behind it loom heaps of rubble



that were once the rest of the buildings on the site. The façade will be incorporated into whatever new building goes behind it.

Among conservation people façading, the preservation of only the front elevation of a building, divides opinion. A fairly early example in **Bristol** was **7 Redcross Street, St Matthias**, built about 1720, and of some historical interest as the birthplace of Thomas Lawrence, portrait painter of georgian celebs. The elegant 5-bay stone front elevation with its shell-hood doorcase has been preserved; behind and either side of it is a brutal 1974 office block with pink cladding. An image, not for the over-sensitive, is at <https://www.bristolcivicsociety.org.uk/redcross-street/>. A more recent example is at Merchants Landing in **Bathurst Basin**, where the wall of Robinson's oil seed factory (WB Gingell 1874, image at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/brizzlebornandbred/2057457430>) stands, but what is behind it are squash courts and flats.

Façading can be useful if it hides an otherwise visually offensive building. Readers might think of a good few buildings in our area that would benefit from it. A good example of how façading can be put to stunning use is the giant mock shelf of books that screens the multistorey car park next to Kansas City Missouri public library: image at [https://visitkcfiles.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/kansas\\_city\\_public\\_library-web\\_0.jpg](https://visitkcfiles.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/kansas_city_public_library-web_0.jpg) if you missed it in ALHA Newsletter 143, July-September 2015.

One argument in favour of façading is that it preserves masonry and other features from the past but allows the rest of the site to be put to economic use, whereas preservation of the whole building would be costly; would be an inefficient use of land that could be put to financially and socially more valuable purpose; and might result in the building lying empty, derelict, vandalised and deteriorating, so that before long it has to be completely demolished.

That façading is a compromise is one of the arguments against it. Since 1974 no.7 Redcross Street Bristol has been neither one thing nor the other: neither a Queen Anne town house (it was part of a terrace) nor a modern office block, but an office block part disguised (masquerading?) as a Queen Anne house. The immediate impression one gets from the image at <https://www.bristolcivicsociety.org.uk/redcross-street/> is one of incongruity.

Another argument is based on the notion that there is something dishonest about such compromises. According to one school of architectural thought, a house should look like a house, a church like a church, and offices like offices. One trouble with that argument is that it would stifle architectural innovation. The argument is absurd where the new building is for a new use for which there are no building precedents. IKB did not ask himself what a railway station should look like: there were no medieval, tudor, jacobean or georgian railway stations he could copy. He designed what structures he wanted and dressed them up in gothick or tudorbethan nonsense instead.

The allegation that façading is dishonest overlooks the fact that many original façades have a touch of misrepresentation about them anyway. In Italy many baroque churches have a white marble front unrelated to what lies behind. In our area **Clifton Court** has a Bath stone provincial palladian front but the rest of the original house was made from Champion's slag blocks and assorted limestone. Many **Bath** terraces have neoclassical ashlar fronts cosmeticising lath and plaster or rubble structures, some of them structurally poor. An aerial photograph at <https://britainfromabove.org.uk/image/epw038337> shows that the façade of Pitman's in **Bath** fronted a hotchpotch of structures, as might be expected in any large manufactory containing many different activities that changed over time.

Façading can produce some incongruous results. For example, if the ceiling heights and floor levels in the new building do not match those in the old one, windows may straddle floors. From the outside you see the floor cutting across the windows, and only the feet and lower limbs of people on the upper floor. Not a problem on the scale of third world poverty

or global overheating; call it conceptual art and some collectors will pay top dollar, yen, rouble or riyal for it; but not aesthetically satisfactory, even to postmodernists.

### **Working mums**

In *Double lives: a history of working motherhood* (Bloomsbury 2020, hb, rrp £30, £21 online) Helen McCarthy looks at conflicts and reconciliations between paid work and caring for children, but any aspect of women's employment could be interesting topics for local history people to explore, especially because so much has varied from place to place and over time, not least in our area.

It may be helpful to start with definitions, especially if numbers are to be counted and comparisons made. One distinction can be drawn between being employed and working independently on one's own account. The day job of the eighteenth century **Hotwells** poet Ann Yearsley, for example, was selling milk. Indications are that she was not employed by someone else, but ran her own business, which may explain why she did not take kindly to Hannah More intercepting and trying to control her earnings from authorship. A distinction can also be drawn between paid and unpaid work. If a family member helps in the family business, is that to count as employment? Given the amount of voluntary and charitable work done by women from the mid 19th century onwards, is that also to count as employment?

One approach might be to try to find out in broad terms what sorts of work women did, where and when the various sorts started, and when and why the numbers grew. One question is when and to what extent in the early modern period women undertook paid work. Was the schoolmistress at **All Saints Bristol** in 1467 employed or a freelancer? Many widows continued their late husband's business. Did that change in the 18th century? How did things change in the 19th century when factories processing tobacco, sugar, cocoa and related products such as packaging started to employ women in large numbers? In WW1 and WW2 the removal of men from the workforce created demands and opportunities for women to work. It has been estimated that three quarters of mothers nowadays work some paid hours a week.

At any time, women's employment will depend on demand, from two directions. Employers may want the work and skills that women can provide. Whether that results in work will depend on whether there are women willing to supply their work, against which there may be constraints such as family pressures and obligations. From the woman's point of view, she may want work, motivated by financial need, domestic boredom, ambition or curiosity. Whether that demand is met will depend on whether there are employers who can supply work. In both cases traditional economic theory says that work will not happen unless the price suits both, but in fact most wage rates are dictated by the employer and employees are price-takers, as currently in social care, where neoclassical economic theory would say that demand ought to push up wages. It might be interesting to enquire whether comparable situations have occurred in the past.

Another aspect to examine might be changes in attitudes, which may be connected with what sorts of work were considered respectable. Single women have long worked in agriculture; in some jobs, eg dairying, women were bosses, eg at Wallscourt farm, **Stoke Gifford** under Alderman Proctor. In towns most jobs for women in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were in domestic service. A little education might qualify for a job as a governess, by about the 1830s as a teacher, and from the 1860s as a nurse. Not until the factories came did the range of work available for women in large numbers expand. Attitudes changed after the wars, as seen in the behaviour of trade unions over women working in public transport. In the early twentieth century telephones and typewriters opened up opportunities for specialist work, including secretarial, bookkeeping, and then office work



generally. Histories of **Westbury on Trym** suggest that in some families for an unmarried daughter a pittance as a shop assistant in **Westbury** was socially preferable to a larger pittance doing factory work in **Bedminster**. Sewing machines and telephones gave rise to occupations predominantly staffed by women. Was that the origin of the stereotyping of some tasks as 'women's work'? In many businesses only single women were employed: once you married you had to resign or were sacked. Such rules were abolished first in teaching and local government: were there local variations? If so, to what extent were they due to trade union pressures?

In the established professions as distinct from the new ones, changes were slow. Work has been published on how the medical professions resisted women like Eliza Walker Dunbar (1849-1925). Other occupations warrant examination. Especially in engineering and law, women's progress has been even slower, in spite of anti-discrimination legislation in 1975. The more conservative parts of the established church, the roman catholic churches and islam still refuse to employ women in positions of power.

Another approach might compare employment of women in towns and the countryside, where some types of work were seasonal. Is it right to assume that opportunities outside towns were more limited in range as well as numbers? In **Stoke Gifford** in the eighteenth century Silas Blandford employed widows to pick stones in fields: out of charity, economy, or to reduce the risk of the woman's maintenance falling on the poor rates? Opportunities varied from village to village; from about 1869 there was commercial laundry work in **Filton**, then still rural; but not in many other villages? Our area seems to have had no working women corresponding to those in Cornwall who packed pilchards on the quays or as bal maidens womanhandled china clay or ores. Another comparison might be between **Bath**, **Weston-super-mare** and **Bristol** with their different economies, seasons, ebbs and flows of visitors, and social distinctions.

It would be interesting to look at how employment and other social institutions and practices interacted locally. Take education: how far did it facilitate women's employment? Or was schooling demanded or supported by employers in order to meet the workforce needs of their changing or expanding businesses? And what about public transport? In the 1950s Ruth Fisher travelled by train from **Clevedon** to read history at Bristol University, as did Dot R from **Portishead** and Ginnie D from **Patchway** to attend school in **Montpelier**. Did the railways and buses facilitate employment of women by making possible longer journeys to work?

One approach might be to trace how individual women progressed through employments. For example, the real Ann Green of **Clifton** started off as an agricultural labourer's daughter but ended up as proprietor of a **Clifton** boarding-house. Assuming that she did not make the transition in one leap, by what stages did she move? Perhaps by first going into domestic service, getting promoted to housekeeper in a small household, then in a larger one, then in a hotel, then as a boarding house manager, eventually saving enough money to be able to go into business on her own account?

### **Nightingale**

The naming of **Stoke Gifford's** field hospital as a Nightingale one might prompt local history people to wonder whether Florence N had any connection with our area. A tentative answer is Not a lot.

FN's family home was Embley Park near Romsey in Hampshire; she also lived in London. She rarely appeared in public, and is said to have been in bed for long periods, hence her voluminous correspondence, which takes up 180 volumes in the British Library, the rest being scattered amongst about 150 other collections, many of them private. Her fame from remedying deficiencies in military hospitals in the Crimea led to national adulation. People

did not clap and bang saucepans on a Thursday night, but they did put their hands in their pockets and raise funds. Wards in hospitals were named after her, but apparently none in our area; perhaps because for many years a Nightingale ward was a technical term for one in which all the beds face a central thoroughfare from the side walls, as distinct from being arranged in bays.

Nor is FN commemorated in our area with a statue. No training school or street was named after her. Nightingale Closes at **Mead Vale** in **Weston Milton** and in **Thornbury**, and Nightingale Way in **Norton Hill, Radstock**, were all named after birds, like other roads nearby, in what look like acts of onomastic desperation. Nightingale Rise in **Redcliffe Bay, Portishead** and Nightingale Gardens in **Nailsea** are not thought to have any FN connection: perhaps the **Gordano** and **Nailsea and District** societies could tell us. Nightingale Lane at **Watleys End** in **Frampton Cotterell** pre-dates FN: the bridge (image at <https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/3538680>) looks very old. Nearby Nightingale Close was probably named after the lane. **Bath** seems to be a Nightingale-free zone: surprising, given the number of late nineteenth century residents who must have needed nursing?

In 1860s **Bristol** nursing was done in two spheres: the voluntary hospitals and the private (commercial, fee-charging) sector. In the infirmary and the general hospital nursing standards were improved by FN's professionalising methods. In the private sector the social status and clinical reputation of nurses was low, as caricatured by Charles Dickens in his gin-soaked and snuff-stained characters of Mrs Gamp and Betsy Prig in *Martin Chuzzlewit*. **Clifton** doctors, helped by their wives and daughters, raised private nursing standards by founding the Bristol Nurses Training Institution. It was first based at **Trinity Street** near the cathedral, later moving to **Richmond Terrace and Chesterfield Place, Clifton** before becoming the Chesterfield hospital in **Clifton Court** in 1934. When the BNTI was founded in 1862 the secretary wrote to FN requesting comment on the Institution's proposed training arrangements, and asking for a contribution. FN gave the requested feedback but, shrewdly perceiving perhaps that the organisation was not a charity, declined to shell out.

### **Parish history summaries**

If you want to find out about a place's past, there are many printed histories you can go to. They range in scale from biscuit-tin sized volumes like the red books in the *Victoria County History* series and comprehensive histories like Graham Davis and Penny Bonsall's *Bath: a new history* (1996) in the *Town and city histories* series published by Keele University Press, to micro-histories like *A small corner of Bristol* by John Holland (Redcliffe 2009), which concentrates on the triangle of streets between the Riverside garden centre and **Ashton Gate** tollhouse.

Online, one excellent source is **Bristol & Avon Family History Society's** website, which contains short histories of individual parishes. These summaries are concise, lucid, readable and reliable. Several have been updated to take on board later research or new information.

The B&AFHS summaries do not cover every parish in the former county of Avon: perhaps at the time B&AFHS had not transcribed the registers for the parish, or no-one volunteered to write a parish history summary.

The contribution B&AFHS has made to local history in our area is massive. Would it be asking too much to hope that B&AFHS will add to its achievements by posting summaries for those parishes not yet covered? Or that informed and competent volunteers will offer summaries of their parish to B&AFHS so that B&AFHS can consider adding them to its website and make its coverage of our area complete?

## QUOTE

Provided disaster is not utterly irretrievable – provided a generation is not destroyed or a state wiped entirely from the map – there is no sin or error or calamity can take place but succeeding generations will make the best of it; and though it be a Black Death or a Fire of London that comes as a scourge and a visitation, men will still make virtue of necessity and use the very downfall of the old world as the opportunity for making anew ...

Herbert Butterfield, *The whig interpretation of history* (1931)

## CAN YOU HELP?

### Faded thermal print - responses

In the 30 April e-update, an enquirer asked how a faded thermal print document could be recovered sufficiently to allow transcription. Many thanks for several replies:

- *Ray Wilson writes:* I feel that if these faded documents can be read with difficulty in their present form then it should be possible to make them considerably more legible for transcription by scanning and experimenting with image manipulation software such as Photoshop or GIMP. It might even be possible to employ OCR (plus manual corrections).
- *Vince Russet writes:* I have successfully recovered some of these documents enough to rekey. Most scanning software has contrast control, and experimenting with scanning the document using this is often useful. Save the document, and then import it into Photoshop, where the Contrast, Brightness and Sharpening tools will usually do the trick. I have occasionally resorted to using through lighting ('slide scanning') techniques. It's really a case of experimentation, to be honest.
- *Chris F writes:* If you scan the document into .pdf, and then copy the result into Microsoft Word, you can select the text and then apply Font Color from the menu bar that goes across the top of the page, and you can choose different intensities of colour.
- Another suggestion is at <https://www.sapling.com/5863141/restore-faded-thermal-paper>. 'Use a hair dryer to create a "negative" image if tweaking a scanned copy of your thermal paper didn't restore the print information. Turn on your hair dryer and lightly blow heat over the back of the faded thermal paper that you hope to restore,' it says.

### New request: transcription

The Legal Records team at **The National Archives** is seeking volunteers to create new item descriptions for cases brought before the seventeenth century Exchequer Court, using the contemporary indexes. Counties needing work include **Somerset and Monmouthshire**. If you like a challenge and have Latin and palaeography experience, please email Dr Dan Gosling ([Daniel.Gosling@nationalarchives.gov.uk](mailto:Daniel.Gosling@nationalarchives.gov.uk)).

More TNA volunteering offers at <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/get-involved/volunteering/current-opportunities/>