

**AVON LOCAL HISTORY
AND ARCHAEOLOGY**
5 Parrys Grove
Bristol BS9 1TT
Tel, ans and fax 0117
968 4979
wm.evans@bopenworld.com



Edmund Spenser reads Walter
Raleigh the newsletter

e-update 31 January 2021

Website: www.alha.org.uk

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

CONTENTS

ALHA items

AGM
Groups' responses to the virus
BALH discounts

Bristol University digitising

West Littleton VCH
John Juřica
Historic statues to be protected

Events and sources

Preserving family and community archives
Woodes Rogers
Oliver Dearden
Local Connections Fund
Silverthorne Lane area Bristol
Bristol 1480s map
Somerset Archives lockdown lectures
and family history Q and A
Blagdon pottery online
Bristol museum talks online
UWE RHC past talks online

Books etc noticed

Cary Grant
Slavery inherited

Commentary and responses

Bristol zoo
Repatriation
Dairy farming
Theeky not vegetarian

Quote

Andrew Adonis

ALHA ITEMS

ALHA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

ALHA's delayed annual general meeting was held online via Zoom on 18 January, hosted by longstanding ALHA member **Frampton Cotterell and District Local History Society**, and attended by ALHA committee members, representatives of groups and societies and individual members. The annual report and the treasurer's report for 2019-2020 were received. Mike Leigh was re-appointed to examine the accounts. The executive committee was re-elected, and the volunteers and the host thanked.

The committee had invited groups to give short reports on recent activities, and in particular on how they were coping with the virus restrictions.

- For **Knowle & Totterdown LHS** Peter Read explained he is working alongside Mike Hooper and during the lockdowns producing emails and keeping in contact with members. There is a good archive and even in lockdown, following queries from people, a lot of information had been sent out. There is a fortnightly e-mail newsletter and 6 quizzes had been organised, also research undertaken. Mike Leigh had photographed every street in Totterdown and will be doing talks about this and writing a book. Peter stressed the importance of keeping in contact with members and it is hoped to arrange some summer walks this year.
- For **Filwood Chase History Group** Jim Smith explained that Ivor Grinstead the Chairman of the society, had suddenly died recently and Jim had taken over as Chairman (with now only 4 committee members). The group were sorting through the archives, stored in Knowle, as they were to be evicted from their room owing to closure of the building; it was hoped there would be a room for the group in a new community centre being built. Sorting of the files had to be stopped owing to the virus lockdown, which meant there would be less time to sort paperwork, etc. before it all had to be moved from the room in the old Merrywood School. Originally the room was free of charge, but now rental is £100 per month. There is an excess of books, which a local bookshop will buy, but not now until after the lockdown. The group have made a video of what they are doing. Jan Packer is working with others on what to put in storage. There is a Grade 2* listed building (Inns Court Tower (<https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101202314-holy-cross-inns-court-vicarage-filwood-ward#.YAgYMTlxflU>) which it is hoped to be used for tours; also an annual pipe walk, celebrating the spring which supplies water near St Mary Redcliffe church via a pipe installed in 1190. It was also suggested that any list made should be digitised, and Bristol Archives might be interested in taking some papers.
- For **Bristol & Avon Family History Society**, ALHA's largest group member, with more than 1,000 members worldwide, Bob Lawrence reported that the Society's research room at Bristol Archives is now closed, but members were still offering to help people nationwide with enquiries; working on list of people on WW1 war memorials; publishing the quarterly journal; and delivering 3 Zoom meetings, restricted to members, which can be viewed afterwards on demand. Attendance has been between 50 and 60, and another 40 have asked for a recording of the talks, which have been put into a DropBox file to save the organiser having to send them.
- **Aerospace Bristol's** archivist Louise Clarke started in 2019 and has been furloughed for most of 2020. The collection is closed at the moment, but Museum staff are fielding enquiries and emails. During lockdown visitors communicate online: guidance for intending visitors has been posted as FAQs on the museum's website. The museum is hoping to organise children's activities and wellbeing visits, and is proceeding with its web-based platform *Aerospace Lives*, drawing on stories and reminiscences of people who worked at or otherwise were involved in the area and its industries, and looking at the built environment around the museum as they have historic photographs of the area and how it has changed.
- Jenny Weeks explained with classy images how **Stoke Bishop Local History Group** normally meets in the 125-year old Stoke Bishop village hall 5 times a year and produces a newsletter, organises occasional walks and publications, and helps with local history queries from the general public. The Group had put all its programme of talks online via Zoom, and most also via YouTube, with between 62 and 112 video

views. The first one was at no charge. The Group had spruced up its communications and publicity – made more noticeable by *sendinblue* e-mails - helped by a high proportion of its members being online. Particularly striking were the membership and attendance figures: 140 members before the virus, now up to 150; attendance 80 to 100 before the virus, and now 60 to 220 viewing.

BALH – DISCOUNT FOR ALHA MEMBERS

The British Association for Local History is to trial a discount scheme for BALH events. At first there be a discount on selected online webinars, workshops and talks:

<https://www.balh.org.uk/balh-events> To take advantage of the discount, when members book designated events via BALH's website they will be asked to enter ALHA's code. If you would like to have the code, please e-mail the treasurer wm.evans@btopenworld.com.

EVENTS AND SOURCES

PRESERVING FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ARCHIVES

Jane Marley draws attention to **Gloucestershire Archives'** blog at <https://gloucestershirearchives.wordpress.com/2020/12/22/> ; to read earlier posts, click on the icon in the top right corner. Includes some welcome common sense practical advice. The archival equivalent of practices from Palencia, Zaragoza and Estella have not yet appeared in our area.

WOODES ROGERS'S HOUSE?

Are you interested in Woodes Rogers (privateering voyages, Alexander Selkirk, Daniel Defoe, Robinson Crusoe, candlesticks in **Bristol** cathedral, possible link with Coleridge's *Rime of the ancient mariner* etc)? ODNB article, via your public library's website, at



<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-24006>. Hogarth's painting of him and his family is in the National Maritime Museum (<https://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/14446.html>), from which the image left is taken. A house at Lympsham, south of **Bleadon**, (which from 1974 welcomed the world with a road sign saying BLEADON AVON) has been for sale since October 2020. According to the marketing, it was owned by a family called Rogers, connected with Bristol's pioneer privateer and colonialist:

<https://www.somersetlive.co.uk/news/property/gallery/inside-18th-century-somerset-house-4744095> .

OLIVER DEARDEN OBE

Congratulations to Oliver Dearden, volunteer originator of what is now **Aerospace Bristol**, awarded an OBE in the new year honours for services to cultural heritage in the aviation industry:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/948421/New_Year_Honours_List_2021.pdf , p.28.

LOCAL CONNECTIONS FUND

Jane Marley draws attention to the **Local Connections Fund**, a new £4 million fund to help charities and community groups working to reduce loneliness by helping them build connections across their communities. Book clubs, walking groups and other community projects can now apply for a small grant worth between £300 and £2,500. These investments are designed to help local organisations bring people and communities together as the country recovers from the coronavirus pandemic. There will be 2 funding rounds, the first is closed, but a second round is planned. More information at

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/local-connections-fund#section-1>

SILVERTHORNE LANE AREA, BRISTOL: CONSULTATION

Bristol City Council is consulting on whether the Silverthorne Lane area in **St Philip's** should be made a conservation area. The area is north of the Feeder and south of the railway east of Temple Meads, and includes Silverthorne Lane and stretches of Gas lane and Avon Street. Unlovely and derelict, the area is soaked in Bristol's industrial history. Occupiers have included



Acraman, Lysaght (St Vincent's works, image from Historic England), the Bristol Gas Light Company, and Aardman (until the fire). The area is ripe for redevelopment as part of the **Temple Quarter and St Philips Marsh** regeneration; a conservation area would give the local planning authority stricter control over development. Details at

<https://bristol.citizenspace.com/city-design/silverthorne-lane/> from which a copy of the planners' character appraisal can be downloaded. Deadline for comments is **19 February 2021**. They can be made to conservation@Bristol.gov.uk, or posted to Silverthorne Lane Conservation Area Consultation, Conservation team, City Design Group, City Hall PO Box 3399 BS1 9NE.

Bristol in 1480 – A Medieval Merchant City (Map) published by the Historic Towns Trust January 2021, ISBN 978-0-9934698-7-9

Mike Leigh writes: This is an amazing document! I feel very privileged to have been involved with its production, in a very minor way, being a member of the Grants Sub Committee of ALHA, which agreed a substantial grant towards its production. Those responsible for this document on behalf of the Historic Towns Trust are John Bryant, Rob Harding, Pete Insole, Robert Jones and our very own Peter Fleming, who by the way has written a very good Introduction to the map.

This is a map of Bristol in 1480 superimposed over an OS map (1:2500 scale) of 1918. When I first saw the business case for the production of this document I felt sure in my own mind that it would be a great success. It does not disappoint. The very clear mapping not only shows the extent of Bristol at that time, but also includes parish churches, nunneries, friaries, great houses and much more plus, not least of all, the extent of Bristol castle; some of these were just outside of the town's boundaries. And because of its superimposition the

reader can easily relate it to a layout of the town at a time that most of us, in turn, can relate to.

The extensive notes, covering the whole of the back of this map, contain a mountain of information compiled in a very succinct way and referenced to points on the map. The writers should be congratulated on the way in which this information is presented, in very readable form that holds our attention.

The map corresponds to the topography of medieval Bristol compiled by William Worcester in 1480. Francis Neale translated and edited it in 2000 for a volume for the Bristol Record Society, which is now available from the Society's web site, as a free download. The two documents sit very nicely together.

Now I am biased as I love maps, plans and photographs and have done for as long as I can remember. I think that anyone who has an interest in the City and County of Bristol and its history should rush out tomorrow and buy a copy of this map. You will not be disappointed. And I must say that at a price of £9.99p I feel it is a giveaway.

SOMERSET ARCHIVES AND LOCAL STUDIES

Somerset Archives and Local Studies offers online lockdown lectures. They include:

James Crowden, *Literary Somerset*, **3 February 2021**

Martin Hesp, *Walking the Somerset landscape*, **18 February 2021**

Prof Stephen Rippon, *The southwest in the roman period*, **4 March 2021**

Booking required, and fee payable, through the website link <https://r1.technology-trust-news.org/5KNS-5FGD-8B52A66FA9FD2CD24G7S6A78489D61E1510BE/cr.aspx>.



Somerset Archives and Local Studies offers an online questions and answers session on family history **Thursday 11 February 2021, 10.30am to noon**. Booking at <https://r1.technology-trust-news.org/5KNS-5KU7-8B52A66FA9FD2CD24G7S6A78489D61E1510BE/cr.aspx>

POTTERY ONLINE TALK

Mike Adams of ALHA member Blagdon LHS draws attention to an online presentation arranged by ALHA member **Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society** and South Somerset Archaeological Research Group: *A potted history of Britain: 6000 years of pottery in 60 minutes*, by Dr Julian Richards **Friday 26 February at 7:30pm**. The event is free, with donations (at least £5 is encouraged) shared between **Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society** and South Somerset Archaeological Research Group. To register in advance for this event, either email SANHS at: historicbuildings@sanhs.org, or to register directly, go to: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_wzFOFn9ASQmI6i-2g9n7iA. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar. If you would like to donate, please go to the SANHS website <https://sanhs.org/> and use the Donate button.

BRISTOL CITY MUSEUM TALKS ONLINE

European Witch-hunting in the modern World - **Wednesday 10 February 2021, 7.30pm:** Professor Ronald Hutton on why the medieval and early modern European witch-hunts took place and the impact they have had on the modern world. Free tickets for this talk via : <https://www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/bristol-museum-and-art-gallery/whats-on/archaeology-online-european-witch-hunting-in-the-world-context>

Other **Bristol Museum** events include:

Archaeology study sessions: treasure and hoards (Monday evenings, **1 -15 February 2021**). Curator-led archaeology study sessions on treasure and hoards. Tickets cost £23/28. <https://www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/bristol-museum-and-art-gallery/whats-on/archaeology-study-sessions-treasure-and-hoards/>

UWE Regional History Seminar: *Personal devotion in late medieval Bristol - The case of Isabel Ruddock*, **18 February 2021, 6pm**. <https://www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/m-shed/whats-on/personal-devotion-in-late-medieval-bristol-the-case-of-isabel-ruddock/>

Archaeology study sessions: early prehistoric art in the British Isles (1 March—22 March 2021) The history and archaeology of early prehistoric art in the British Isles in 4 online sessions with Dr George Nash. Tickets cost £30/£35. <https://www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/bristol-museum-and-art-gallery/whats-on/archaeology-study-sessions-early-prehistoric-art-in-the-british-isles/>

Reading the ‘book of skin’: The life and death of John Horwood (15 April 2021, 6pm) <https://www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/m-shed/whats-on/reading-the-book-of-skin-life-and-death-of-john-horwood/>

UWE REGIONAL HISTORY CENTRE PAST SEMINARS

Recordings of three past seminars are on the **UWE Regional History Centre** site, <https://www.uwe.ac.uk/research/centres-and-groups/regional-history/events> . They include:

- *Looking out from the edge of the world: Bristol, Gascony and Iberia in the later Middle Ages*
- *Our Zoo: The relationship between Bristol Zoo Gardens and its neighbours*
- *The Norman Lords of Bristol*

DIGITISING BRISTOL UNIVERSITY COLLECTIONS

Bristol University has obtained large grants – from the Arts and Humanities Research Council and Research England World Class Laboratories – for digitising parts of the University’s special collections and theatre collection. The aim is to make available, for access from anywhere, of digital copies of documents that range from early science, IKB, medical history, Penguin Books, election addresses and so on. More at <http://bristol.ac.uk/news/2021/january/digitisation-of-collections.html>

WEST LITTLETON – VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY

The latest newsletter from Gloucestershire County History Trust includes pieces by Simon Draper and John Chandler about the progress they have made on the **West Littleton** section of the planned volume 14 in the VCH series for Gloucestershire:

<https://www.vchglosacademy.org/newsletters/VCHnews14.pdf>. Readers in the **Stowey Sutton** and **Chew valley** area may be interested to see (or be reminded) that Bess of Hardwick had a finger in **West Littleton** as well. ‘**Tormarton** manor (including both **West Littleton** and **Acton Turville**),’ writes *Simon Draper*, ‘continued in the de la River family for a further century until the last of the family Isabel married Sir John St Loe (d. 1499) of **Sutton near Chew Magna** in Somerset. His great grandson was Sir William St Loe, an MP and royal officeholder (Elizabeth I’s captain of the guard by 1558), whom history remembers for his second marriage to Elizabeth Cavendish, better known as the redoubtable ‘Bess of Hardwick’, to whom Sir William left all his estates. Bess, who is perhaps best known for her associations with both Chatsworth House and Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire, kept the greater **Tormarton** manor until her death in 1608, the year of a survey in Nottinghamshire Archives showing it to have been worth £279 a year to her.’ John Chandler draws attention to an early map of **West Littleton** in Welbeck Abbey Nottinghamshire Archives, showing its houses and field system, a sketch of which is in the GCHT newsletter.

DR JOHN JUŘICA

The GCHT newsletter also contains an appreciation of Dr John Juřica, who has died after a long illness. JJ edited, with fearsome rigour and meticulous skill, the *Transactions* of the **Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society** from 1994 to 2009.

PLANNING PROTECTION FOR STATUES

The government has said it intends to bring in legislation and new regulations controlling the removal of statues from public places. What could have prompted that, I wonder? ‘All historic statues, plaques and other monuments will now require full planning permission to remove, ensuring due process and local consultation in every case. The law will make clear that historic monuments should be retained and explained. The Secretary of State able to “call in” any application and ensure the law is followed,’ it says at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-legal-protection-for-england-s-heritage>

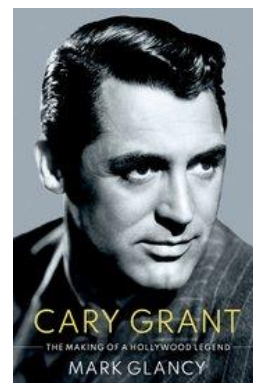
BOOKS AND OTHER ITEMS NOTICED

Mark Glancy, *Cary Grant: the making of a Hollywood legend*, Oxford University Press 2021, 568pp, 50 images, hb £22.99. ISBN:

9780190053130, also available as an e-book. Details, contents and author information at <https://global.oup.com/academic/product/cary-grant-the-making-of-a-hollywood-legend-9780190053130?q=cary%20grant&lang=en&cc=gb#>

Padraic X Scanlan, *Slave empire: how slavery built modern Britain*, Robinson (part of Little, Brown, part of Hachette) 2020, £25. ISBN: hb 9781472142351; e-book 9781472142320.

<https://www.littlebrown.co.uk/titles/padraic-x-scanlan/slave-empire/9781472142320/>



COMMENTARY AND RESPONSES

Bristol zoo relocation

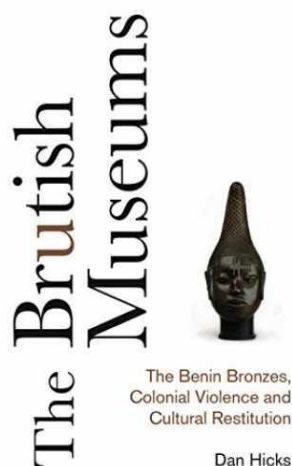
Terry F writes: The reference in *Newsletter* 165 to Bristol zoo as a ‘spectator sport’ was not fair. The zoo has performed many roles over the years, usually more than one at a time. In 1836 the zoo was the animal equivalent of a cabinet of curiosities in a gentleman’s house: examples of the exotic, the strange and the unusual for people to look at. But from its beginning the zoo also did scientific work. In the 20th century firework displays and brass bands became less frequent, and with affordable admission charges the zoo became for some families, including mine, a day out like a trip to the seaside, but scientific research at the zoo increased. Since the 1980s conservation of rare species has been emphasised in the zoo’s publicity. It has also reacted to changes in public opinion. A polar bear or wolf obsessively pacing to and fro in its enclosure must have made even the uninformed visitor suspect that confining wild animals caused them stress. I’m not taking sides on any of this: local historians should be objective. That includes recognising all aspects, not just the entertainment side, of what is an important part of the history of Bristol, and now of south Gloucestershire as well.

[More about the zoo below, under **Thecodontosaurus**; and above, under **UWE REGIONAL HISTORY CENTRE PAST SEMINARS**. Ed.]

Back to where they came from

In *The brutish museums: the Benin bronzes, colonial violence and cultural restitution*, Pluto 2020, £20, e-book £7.99. <https://www.plutobooks.com/9780745341767/the-brutish-museums/>, noticed in ALHA e-update 30 November 2020, Dan Hicks contends that all UK museums should return to their countries of origin all items in their collections that were acquired as a result of colonialism. The proposition generalises an argument that has been going on for many years about one exhibit, the Elgin marbles at present in the British Museum and claimed by Greece.

Not all museums exhibit their whole collection: most items are stored, and many have never seen the light of display. DH’s argument applies to the lot.



Not all museums hold objects of foreign origin. Some museums are purely local. That raises questions of definition. Suppose the core of a museum, like the Holburne in **Bath**, is a collection made by a local resident or donor that contains objects that originated abroad, ought they to be repatriated even though that will diminish the historic integrity of the collection? Or suppose the collection includes items representative of a local industry – in the case of **Bristol**, tobacco, sugar or cotton – does the fact that some items have come from abroad mean that they should be repatriated? Should a museum in Jamaica return shackles, chains and leg irons on the grounds that they were manufactured in **Bristol**? Should a museum in Guinea-Bissau repatriate items of **Kingswood or Saltford** brass?

If the answer to those questions is ‘Of course not,’ then what should be the criteria for repatriation? One criterion might be that the item was unlawfully acquired – not the acquisition by the museum, as it will have accepted most items as gifts, or will have purchased in good faith in order to supplement or fill gaps in its collection on a theme. Rather, the question is whether theft or fraud was one of the links in the item’s provenance. Where the item is known to have been stolen, as in the case of Jewish-

owned items appropriated by fascist governments or their supporters, or colourably sold under duress, or abandoned when the owners were forced to flee, there may be little doubt. Doubts may arise where the item was part of the spoils of war. Much of the contents of the Louvre falls into this category, because not all that Napoleon looted was returned after his downfall. Given the number of wars fought, it would be surprising if the provenance of some of our museums' items did not include appropriation in war. Should they be retained or repatriated?

Another contestable category might be objects acquired in exercise of claimed colonial right. Once Britain conquered or took control of a country, it often claimed sovereignty over all the land contained. It is in that category that the Benin bronzes probably fall. What is the provenance of the Assyrian reliefs in Bristol city museum? Images at <https://www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/blog/black-history-month/attachment/h796a-1250x1250-assyrian-relief/>

When an item was purchased, one question that could be asked is whether the purchase was fair. Was there, for example, equality of bargaining power? Did an impoverished African bargain on equal terms with a representative of a colonial nation? Was the seller aware of the value that would be put on the item in England? In most cases, one suspects not. Most trade depends on one party to a transaction knowing more than the other party about the value or potential value of the item sold. The position may also be clouded by the circumstances surrounding the sale. Elgin, for example, is credited as having got the right to remove the Parthenon marbles in order to protect them. Given the laissez-faire ideology of the English common law at the time, his actions, openly and in a free market with authorisation from those in power, would have been considered unimpeachable, and at least he asked for permission. Not necessarily so nowadays, with legislatures and courts recognising that injustices can stem from inequality of bargaining power. Both UK and EU law have legislation against unfair contract terms. There are presumptions against monopolies and cartels, and many jurisdictions recognise the concept of abuse of power, so a different view might prevail.

Another criterion, not necessarily one that would have been appreciated by 'original' purchasers, is whether the artefact has some cultural significance, perhaps religious, to people in its country of origin. This consideration applies to some items of north American or African origin, especially to items connected with ancestors or the dead. To display such items in public or to keep them in storage might offend the sensibilities of present-day descendants. If those sensitivities stem from religious belief, there is conflict with the rational. One person's religion is another's superstition. How far should such sensitivities be respected? The issue is pertinent to traditional civic museums with a collection grounded in archaeology, because often all that survives of a past people or civilisation is funerary, be it a mummy, bones or grave goods. The notion that the human dead warrant respect still continues. One suspects that whilst Richard III's fan club is not numerous, and his re-interment in St Martin's Leicester smacks of economic motives not unconnected with visitor numbers, it was not thought right that the last resting place of a king of England should be under a car park.

Another question, relevant to the Elgin marbles, is whether an item will be safer, and will be more likely to be conserved, where it is now, rather than in its country of origin. Given the corruption and incompetence of governments and municipalities in Italy and their neglect of large parts of the national patrimony including Pompeii, one might be tempted to argue that they cannot be trusted to look after their heritage, and that safeguarding it ought to be the responsibility either of a nation with higher standards of competence and public morality, or an international organisation such as the United Nations or one formed for the purpose, as was Venice in Peril. At times doubts have been expressed whether a Greek

government could be relied on properly to conserve the Elgin marbles, if repatriated. Similar considerations might apply to many artefacts from many countries.

The last question is relevant where repatriation is requested by a country with a strong moral claim but little resources, so that doubts arise whether the nation could afford, and would provide, the security and conservation arrangements appropriate to the item. This is one argument against those who object to American universities and cultural institutions buying up works of art, artefacts, manuscripts or rare books from UK museums and other holders. The USA, it is argued, is richer and can afford to keep such items safely and conserve them, when less well-resourced UK institutions can no longer afford to do so.

Dairy farming

Did you see the BBC2 *Inside the factory* programme about **Blagdon**'s Yeo Valley blackcurrant yoghurt? It is available online, the programme that is, for another 5 months or so at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000r6vj>. As well as being of current interest, the programme is relevant to part of this area's local history. Given how much dairy farming has taken place, and how much dairy products feature in the average diet, it is surprising that no histories have been published of dairy farming in our area.

A local history of dairy farming could start with why dairy farms have existed in only some parts of our area. A simple (too simple?) explanation might be that water-retaining soils on low-lying land produce grasses more suited to (liked by?) cows, than do shallower soils over quick-draining limestone on higher ground, which produce grasses more suitable for sheep [Image from Yeo Valley.co.uk].



One gets the impression that dairy farming practices changed little for centuries. Is that true? If so, why could that be? One explanation might be that raw milk has a short life, especially in summer. People discovered early on how to turn it into longer-lasting forms such as cheese and butter, but otherwise they had to consume milk fairly promptly, so for centuries the market for milk was necessarily local.

That changed in the nineteenth century with three innovations: better transport, mechanisation and, towards the end of the century, refrigeration. The big change when from the 1840s the railways enabled milk to be transported further before going off, and thus extended the market in which milk could be sold. In our area, as elsewhere, farmers took advantage. The Bristol & North Somerset railway, opened in 1863 from **Radstock to Bristol via Clutton and Hallatrow**, was conceived by mine owners as a cheap way of getting their coal from the north Somerset coalfield to **Bristol** docks and, via the GWR, to London. Landowners and their farming tenants also saw that the railway would get their agricultural produce, including milk, cheaper and quicker into populous markets such as **Bristol** and

beyond, especially to London where prices were a fifth higher than locally and the population to be served was huge. Did similar considerations prompt the line, opened in 1864, from **Yatton to Axbridge via Congresbury, Sandford and Winscombe** to Cheddar? It can hardly have been financially justified only by the strawberry traffic, which was seasonal.

Until the railways enlarged the market, dairying was local, with many small producers. Elsewhere in Europe, eg France and Italy, farmers formed co-operatives, but little of that happened in the UK until the government established the Milk Marketing Board in 1933, during the economic depression. What effect did that have on our area? The board was intended to be a buyer of last resort, so that farmers were guaranteed a sale and a minimum price. Did that save any farmers in our area from bankruptcy? The MMB lasted until 1994, when it became a voluntary co-operative called Milk Marque. Dairy Crest and its brands are now owned by a Canadian company.

Governments have intervened in dairying in various other ways. School milk was subsidised from 1934 until abolished in 1971, though an EU subsidy continued. WW2 resulted in UK government subsidies. Milk quotas (there were at least five sorts) were imposed under EU law from 1984 because of over-production (remember the butter mountain?), and lasted until 2015. At various times the UK government has tried to control the retail price of milk. How did these interventions affect dairy farmers in our area?

Retail aspects of dairying might be worth examining. In the nineteenth century milk was ladled out of a container on the milk cart into the customer's own container. Some milk sellers used horse and cart: when did electric floats come in? About 1923 according to a digression about milk floats in the *Inside the factory* programme. In our area too? In dairies mechanisation made bottling fast, efficient and large-scale. In the 1950s most milk was sold in glass bottles, with foil or cardboard tops, the latter recycled by small boys for many purposes. When did waxed cartons come in, and plastic bottles? Were they introduced by supermarkets? When did supermarkets in our area start selling milk, and manipulate it as a loss leader? Some are now said to price milk cheaper than bottled water, or to price bottled water dearer than milk. What other effects have supermarkets had? Is it true that their buyers have driven prices down so hard that dairy farming is now uneconomical? Or is the problem the cheapness of milk imported from Poland?

Government also intervened through Food & Drugs Acts from 1875 onwards, which made it an offence to sell watered-down milk. Television viewers will remember that one of the occupants of 9 Guinea Street, **Redcliffe**, was prosecuted. More recent concerns have been the adulteration of milk by antibiotics administered by farmers to cows, reducing the effectiveness of antibiotics prescribed by doctors for humans who really need them. Another transmission from cows to humans via milk is of tuberculosis. The link was discovered in 1882, but it was not until 1935 that pasteurisation of milk was required in the UK. Attestation of herds started about then, but compulsory testing did not come in until 1950. TB has not been eradicated: hence the current controversy about the culling of badgers: our area is considered high risk. **Stoke Bishop** has setts and runs. From a longer-term perspective, many people worry about the contribution methane-releasing cows make to global overheating.

Plenty for local history people to look into.

Thecodontosaurus

Bristol University researchers are reported to have used computerised tomography scanning and three dimensional printing, as one does these days, to reconstruct the brain of Bristol's dinosaur fossil: nothing to do with any of our elected representatives on the city council, but the city museum's thecodontosaurus antiquus: <https://news.sky.com/story/thecodontosaurus-bristol-dinosaurs-brain-rebuilt-using-digital-technology-12160878>, and <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bristol-55275316> The fossil was found in 1834 in a

quarry near **Clifton** zoo, reported by Henry Riley and S Stutchbury, ‘A description of various fossil remains of three distinct saurian animals discovered in the autumn of 1834, in the magnesian conglomerate on Durdham Down, near Bristol’, in the *Proceedings of the Geological Society of London* 2 (1836) 397–399. Riley, a local physician with a conviction for grave robbing, was a founder of the Bristol Institution in Park Street, forerunner of the Bristol city museum and art gallery, and led the formation of Bristol, Clifton and West of England Zoological Society, hence Bristol zoo. The sample is not unique: similar fossils have been found in **Tytherington**, and abroad. From the fossil’s brain structure the researchers draw inferences about the animal’s posture (upright, on two legs) and diet (not vegetarian). One of the earliest dinosaurs, Theeky is thought to have been about the size of a large dog (4 legs) or small child (2 legs). Bristol museum shop offers various dinosaur-themed soft toys (image BMAG), including an improbably friendly tyrannosaurus rex. The shop does not offer a cuddly toy of Theeky (it will not stock ALHA booklets either, on the ground that the profit is not worth the bother), but within living memory the shop offered a plastic model thecodontosaurus, complete with Clifton suspension bridge. Presumably there was not enough room for the SS Great Britain, a nail and the spire of Mary Redcliffe as well.



QUOTE

To understand modern Britain, warts and all, you need to understand Ernest Bevin.

Andrew Adonis, *Ernest Bevin, Labour’s Churchill*, Biteback 2020.