

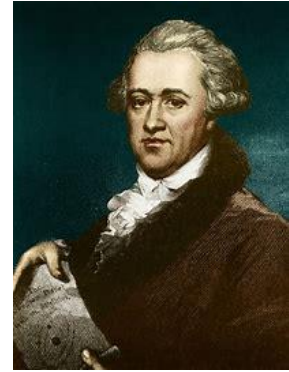


AVON LOCAL HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

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*William Herschel discovers a
new logo*

e-update 30 November 2021

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ALHA ITEMS

ALHA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2021 annual general meeting was held online on Wednesday 17 November 2021. Difficulties with sound, thought to emanate from the computer settings of one of those attending, marred the proceedings. The trustees' annual report and accounts were received. Volunteer Mike Leigh was reappointed examiner of the accounts. The committee was re-elected: Bob Lawrence (Bristol and Avon Family History Society: chairman; website manager; publications; events; grants); Veronica Bowerman (Facebook and new website); Jane Bradley (publications); Ian Chard (Frampton Cotterell & District: events; archive); Catherine Dixon (Gordano Society, honorary secretary); William Evans (treasurer, membership secretary, *Newsletter* editor and distributor, grants, publications); Peter Fleming (UWE: events); Mike Hooper (Knowle & Totterdown: summer walks, events); Jan Packer (Knowle & Totterdown: summer walks, Facebook, new website); Olive Woolcott (Keynsham & Saltford); and Jennifer

Muller (University of Bristol, archaeology). Thanks were expressed to volunteers Lesley Bowman (Facebook), Mike Leigh (examiner of accounts), and Dr Jonathan Harlow (reviews editor, booklets editor, and member of the publications and grants teams).

ANNUAL LECTURE

Following the annual general meeting the annual ALHA lecture was given by Dr Richard Stone, Lecturer in the History Department at the University of Bristol. He titled his talk *Standing on the Shoulders of Giants, Holding a Laptop: Researching Bristol's History in the 21st Century*. RS showed how use of computerised spreadsheets and databases to collect and process data enables present day historians to build on predecessors' work, and gave three case studies on how RS has used the technologies to uncover facts not previously known. The case studies related to increases in the volume of Bristol's American trade in the mid 17th century (much earlier than previously thought); Bristol's trading with the enemy during wars with Spain 1585-1604; and the creation of a database on Bristol and slavery, which shows that between founding of the SMV and abolition only a small proportion of SMV members were involved in the slave trade; that many not in the SMV were so involved; and that SMV members accounted for only a third of Bristol compensation claims when slavery was abolished. It is intended to print in the December 2021 *Newsletter* a longer summary of RS's excellent presentation, and comments on some of the issues raised and suggestions for further exploration.

ALHA'S NEW LOGO

The new logo, designed by volunteer Tina Lane, appears top left on page 1. The logo is intended to convey ALHA's full and abbreviated names; to show our area of operation; and to suggest both the differences and the interconnectedness of the four local authority areas ALHA serves. The intention is to use the new logo where sensible and practicable on ALHA correspondence and publications. It works in both colour and black and white. The committee is grateful to Tina for her work: tina.lane.art@gmail.com

THORNBURY LOCAL HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Thanks and good wishes to Jenny Ovens, standing down after 19 years as secretary of longstanding ALHA member the **Thornbury Society**. Secretary taking over is Steve Griffiths.

EVENTS AND SOURCES

STUKELEY 300

ALHA member **Bath and Counties Archaeological Society** is plotting an event to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the visit to **Stanton Drew** of the physician and antiquarian William Stukeley (1687-1765). He was there for just one day, on 23 July 1723, but his account of the site and his illustrations, published posthumously, brought **Stanton Drew** to national attention. **Sunday 23 July 2023** will be the 300th anniversary, and BACAS is planning a day of celebrations at **Stanton Drew**. Participants so far include Stanton Drew Parish Council, English Heritage, Bristol Museums, Bristol and Avon Archaeological Society, and Dr Jodie Lewis of the University of Worcester.



ALHA is offering what help it can.

UWE LIBRARIES

UWE libraries are beginning to get back to normal. The **Frenchay** library (including Dr Bolland's local history books) and **Glenside** are now open to visitors for reference. Opening hours <https://www.uwe.ac.uk/study/library/our-libraries/opening-hours> 'If asked by a member of university staff, you will need to show your vaccination status, lateral flow test result or natural immunity. In order to achieve this, you will need to show one of the following as proof:

- Proof of double vaccination, either through the NHS Covid Pass app or by bringing your vaccination card;
- Proof of a negative lateral flow test taken within 24 hours prior to arrival;
- Positive PCR test within the past 180 days showing natural immunity following a COVID infection (must have completed the self-isolation period).

'If you cannot prove any of the above then you will be asked to take a lateral flow test on arrival. Please do not visit if you have any COVID-19 symptoms or have been instructed to self-isolate.

'Whilst you are visiting and making use of our facilities, we also ask that you do the following:

1. Wear a face covering when moving around indoors, unless you have an exemption.
2. Use the test and trace app and use the QR codes found at each desk.
3. Use the hand sanitiser placed around the library floors.'

WILLIAM AND CAROLINE HERSCHEL

The Herschels and their massive and revolutionary scientific discoveries, many done from **Bath**, were the subject of a BBC Radio 4 *In our time* programme on 11 November 2021, downloadable at



https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0011c4p?at_medium=custom7&at_custom3=%40BBCPhilharmonic&at_campaign=64&at_custom1=%5Bpost+type%5D&at_custom4=EEE4CE60-4150-11EC-B68E-53F6923C408C&at_custom2=twitter. The page lists recent books for further reading, and links to some relevant websites. [Image from Herschel Museum of Astronomy, 19 New King Street, Bath, BA1 2BL, 01225 446 865, herschel@bptrust.org.uk]

YATE HERITAGE CENTRE – IN SERVICE

In Service - the history of domestic servants around Yate is **Yate Heritage Centre's** latest exhibition. It charts the history of domestic servants in the **Yate** area from earliest times through the Victorian and early 20th centuries. This rarely studied

aspect of history aims to bring to life the lives of many ordinary people living in and coming to live in the Yate area. Some artefacts supplied by **Dyrham Park**, but other houses, eg **Dodington, Stanshawes** featured. Limited opening, **until Wednesday 12 January 2022 4:30 pm. Yate Heritage Centre**, Church Road, Yate, Bristol BS37 5BG. Tel: 01454 862200 <http://www.yateheritage.co.uk/visit/exhibitions.htm>

BALH SPEAKERS GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE

In the expectation that gatherings may resume, many programme secretaries are starting to book speakers. In place of ALHA's *Walks, Talks & Visits* list, edited by the late Sandy Tebbutt, ALHA's new *Catalogue of Presenters*, edited by Mike Leigh, is intended for publication in spring 2022. The British Association for Local History, of which ALHA and some member groups and societies are members, if only for the cheap public liability insurance, has adopted a good practice guide for speakers drawn up by the Cumbria Local History Federation: <https://www.balh.org.uk/members/member-delivering-a-programme-of-speakers-a-good-practice-guide>. This supersedes guidance in ALHA booklet no.3. For those ALHA members not members of BALH, the guide can be read at <https://www.clhf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Delivering-a-Programme-of-Speakers.pdf>

HAROLD WINGHAM

Harold Wingham was a professional photographer and pioneer of LIDAR. His collection of aerial photographs, many of them of our area, taken from 1951 to 1963, are now held by Historic England: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/photos/collection/HAW01>

BOOKS AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS NOTICED

Peter Hughes, *A history of love and hate in 21 statues*, Aurum 2021, £20. Not a work of local history, but a survey, by a psychologist, of destruction of public statuary, for whatever reasons, from second millennium BCE Egypt to Edward Colston. He contends that the cause of iconoclasm is the fragmentation of pluralist societies, accentuated by multicultural living, which leads people to attack images they do not identify with, whether civic, religious, ethnic, cultural or political. <https://www.quartoknows.com/books/9780711266124/a-history-of-love-and-hate-in-21-statues>

BBC4 repeated on 11 November 2021 a showing of its 2012 film, presented by Diana Rigg, about Vaughan Williams's *The lark ascending*, including a performance of the piece with the original piano accompaniment as in the first public airing in December 1920 in **Shirehampton** public hall (Frederick Bligh Bond, 1904). One or two shots of **Kingsweston** House, where RVW was staying with William Napier Miles, and of the hall. Downloadable at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b019c9t9/the-lark-ascending> **until 9 December 2021.**

Andrew Swift, 'A forgotten corner,' 204 *The Bristol Magazine*, November 2021, 72-73: colour-illustrated piece about the **Silverthorne Lane and The Feeder area, Bristol**: Lysaght's St Vincent's works, the Rhubarb tavern etc.

COMMENTARY AND RESPONSES

Horton Court

Not often does a place in our area feature in an important book of weighty scholarship with international clout. The book is Mary Beard's *Twelve Caesars: images of power from the ancient world to the modern* (Princeton UP 2021), which traces the reception and use of motifs from ancient Rome into western art:

<https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691222363/twelve-caesars>

Horton Court is a property between **Yate**, **Chipping Sodbury** and **Wickwar**. It consists of a cluster of buildings in a large garden. For years the earliest building, dated to about 1140, was taken to be a hall, but the latest thinking is that it is the shell of a chapel: article by Mark Gardiner and Nick Hill in *B&GAS Transactions* 137, 161-190. Later buildings and their alterations are of various dates between 1492 and 1521 and through to the 20th century. The main manorial cluster dates mostly from the sixteenth century. In the garden is a renaissance-style loggia, open on one side with arches.

In the sixteenth century Horton Court came into the hands of William Knight (1476-1547), an Oxford graduate who studied law (which would have been roman civil and canon law) at Ferrara. Knight took holy orders, worked for Henry VII, and became private secretary to Henry VIII. He accompanied the king to the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520, and went on numerous diplomatic missions. One was to Rome 1527 to seek to persuade pope Clement VII to change his mind about Katharine of Aragon. Knight was appointed bishop of Bath & Wells in 1541. More about him, including his prodigious diplomatic efforts, seasickness and all, in ODNB at <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/15738>

It is thought that while Knight was in Italy he saw ancient monuments, sculptures and other works of art, which may have influenced his building at Horton Court. The garden loggia there, for example, is thought by some architectural historians to derive from, or at least to resemble, the Hospital of the Innocents (an orphanage) in Florence.

Knight is also thought to have seen roundels portraying Roman emperors in the Carthusian monastery near Piacenza, which he replicated or imitated at Horton Court with four roundels in the loggia, showing heads of Julius Caesar, Nero, Attila the Hun and Hannibal. There are similar at Hampton Court.

MB's book is concerned with how images of people in power in antiquity were received into western art from the renaissance onwards. One chapter traces how roman dictators, starting with Julius Caesar, put images of their heads on coins, and how those images were used to assert authority and were transmitted, adopted (sometimes erroneously) and adapted in artistic works commissioned by people in power or by people like William Knight who depended on, worked for or were close to people in power, and wanted to display their possession, association with or access to power. Knight's roundel heads are an instance of that process. MB does not explore WK's choice of portrait subjects, not all of whom have had fan mail from historians; nor does she speculate whether WK's choice of Nero, Atilla and Hannibal were expressions of admiration of Henry VIII or a coded (but dangerous?) expression of revulsion.

Horton Court is of wider than local interest because of the importance of Henry VIII and his court in bringing the renaissance and its art forms into England, and Knight's role in the politics and diplomacy of his time.

Horton Court is now owned by the National Trust, which has renovated it at great expense and offers a building for holiday lets; details at

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/holidays/horton-court-south-gloucestershire> and

<https://www.visitgardens.co.uk/horton-court/> . The bookings site appears to be frozen

(coronavirus?), and Horton Court does not appear in the 2020 paper catalogue of NT sites open to members and the public.

Horton Court was used for filming *Wolf Hall* (BBC2, 2015), where it was one of the sets used for Thomas Cromwell's house: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/houses-packed-with-history-star-in-wolf-hall>; and for *Poldark*, for reasons less easy to discern and not mentioned on the National Trust website.

Infrastructure wearing out

Crumbling dock walls, leaky water pipes, collapsing culverts, rusting bridges – some of them closed because they are not safe – are examples of how much of the infrastructure we depend on is reaching, has reached or will soon reach the end of its useful or safe life. In 2020 part of the wall of the New Cut along Bristol's Cumberland Road collapsed:

<https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-news/river-bank-collapse-means-cumberland-3773254>. Local history people recognise that much of the material infrastructure on which we rely for ordinary living was constructed or put in place in the nineteenth century and is now older than it was designed for or expected to last.

The internet, television, telephones and radio were largely developed in the twentieth century. Many other services such as electricity, gas, sewerage and water supply were thought up, designed and constructed locally during the nineteenth century (Bristol's earliest water pipes were medieval and monastic [image from *Bristol Post*]); only since 1948 have gas and electricity been organised regionally, and water supply since 1974. As much of the hardware of these services is underground or underfoot, it is not surprising that we tend to forget about it so long as it continues to work and is there when we want it. When it collapses or disintegrates or is eaten by rats or just rusts away, we realise how important it is, and we want it replaced, quickly.



Infrastructure is expensive. Even if maintenance does not cost much (or is ignored) the initial capital cost is huge. In the discussions in parliament last month about whether water companies should be legally prohibited from discharging sewage into watercourses or the sea, the cost of implementing such a prohibition was put at over £600 billion. It would be unfair, and in some cases impossible, for all of the cost of providing or replacing infrastructure to fall on people living at the time, so normal practice is for the provider to borrow the cost and pay it back over the expected life of the asset. Conventionally that has been about 20 years for a road bridge, 60 years for a school, 100 years for a water main and so on, so that those who will benefit from the infrastructure will pay their fair share and not freeload on the backs of the generation that provided the infrastructure or, in our case, have to repair or replace it.

As with other aspects of human activity – no need to go into detail – old age alone ought not to determine whether an item of infrastructure needs replacing. **Kingsweston** roman villa is showing its age, but the original structure of the pantheon in Rome looks good for another millennium at least. Structural engineers tell us that IKB designed bridges, ships, buildings and railways with margins of safety perhaps seven times greater than would be considered normal today. That is largely because increased knowledge in materials science and ingenious applications of mathematics have allowed designers and builders to cut costs without jeopardising safety – unless some profit-driven entrepreneur wants to cut corners.

The cost and logistics of replacing infrastructure, and the disruptions during works, especially in built-up areas, mean that replacing infrastructure needs foresight and planning. Planners tell us that planning should start with a survey of what we have. Navigators say there is no point in setting a course unless you know where you are. Surveying what infrastructure exists, ascertaining or establishing its age, and calculating when it is going to need replacing, is something that local history people could usefully contribute to. Local history people know where the information is, how to find it, and how to make sense of it. Whether infrastructure should be replaced and if so, when, how, and how that should be paid for, are decisions for our elected representatives. Their decisions will no doubt be corrupted by politics and other considerations, but local history people can supply the information to inform their decisions, which are essential if what we rely on for civilised living is not to rot or crumble away and leave us stranded.

Golden Hill – Bristol’s first ‘affordable’ housing?

Golden Hill in **Bristol** is a knot of late nineteenth century houses southwest of Horfield Common. It is bisected by a main road that leads from top of **Blackboy** via **Westbury Park** past Seyer’s rectory and **Horfield** church to the Gloucester Road. Nowadays Golden Hill’s most prominent features are a supermarket (on what were previously Bristol Grammar School



playing fields), a pub-restaurant (formerly an off-licence, then the Kellaway Arms, now renamed *The Old Spot*), a large builders’ merchants, sports grounds and allotments.

Golden Hill’s original houses are mostly small, packed together, simply designed and with no stylish decorative

add-ons, in contrast with the neighbouring terraces and semis of **Henleaze** and **Bishopston**, which were evidently built to attract somewhat more affluent purchasers and tenants than would have been interested in **Golden Hill**. In a recent article on the development of **Horfield** Peter Malpass dates the houses on the eighteen original **Golden Hill** plots to after January 1879.

How and why did **Golden Hill** come to be developed at that time, and why were its houses towards the cheaper end of the market? The site was isolated, so why would anyone other than agricultural workers on nearby Quabs Farm want to live there? It had no road access other than a rough track from the common, so those who kept a carriage would not be interested. There was little employment immediately nearby.

Those considerations may themselves suggest a possible answer to the question. Lack of road access and isolation would mean that the value of the land would have been lower than elsewhere in **Horfield**, so the cost of a plot would have been cheaper, so smaller houses without frills could be erected and offered at a low price or rent, not with the aspirational or more well-off purchasers or tenants in view but for workmen and their families. Tenants would be local agricultural workers, or domestic servants not required to live in (there were at least two big houses within walking distance), or workers in any businesses that might be set

up (laundries were set up in at least two of the premises). The date of construction suggested by Professor Malpass might offer another reason. In 1880 a horse tram route opened from **Horsefair** along the Gloucester Road to Egerton Road (shown on OS 1879 to 1888 maps on *Know Your Place*), and the terminus will have been within walking distance for workers living in **Golden Hill** and commuting southwards.

That the **Golden Hill** houses were almost all tenanted (as distinct from owner-occupied) is shown in the Lloyd George valuation lists 1910, in which only one house, no.42, occupied by a family called Dewfall, was owner-occupied. Was **Golden Hill** an early venture in what a later age would call buy-to-let 'affordable' housing?

Reviews and Reviewers

John Stevens, joint reviews editor, Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, writes: Dr Harlow has reviewed Mr Cullimore's two books; Mr Cullimore has reviewed Dr Harlow's review and the editor has commented on the general question. Here are a few further thoughts.

Do a reviewer's prejudices make that much difference? Suppose a work of fiction is sexually explicit. One reviewer may commend its freedom from inhibition; another may call it filth. Either review will lead to those who like sexy books seeking to buy or read it. A left-leaning book may be praised by a left-wing reviewer and condemned by a right-wing one. Either review – perhaps especially the latter – will lead to those so disposed getting hold of the book. There is such a thing as a *succès de scandale*.

Still less will a reviewer's lesser foibles influence the reader. Who, apart from those sharing such obsessions, will be put off a work by a reviewer's aversion to the Oxford comma or the split infinitive?

As to historical reviewing, I would make these suggestions. One is that the reviewer should have regard to what the book says on the jar. Suppose a book appears in a (hypothetical) imprint called "Welcome to Bristol" and is clearly intended to provide entertainment only or to appear on the shelves at the tourist office. Historical inaccuracies should certainly be exposed; but the author should not be roundly condemned for failing to provide detailed footnotes and cross-references. Horses for courses.

The main *desiderata* in reviewing a work of purportedly serious history are that the reviewer should consider how the author engages with a) the historical facts and b) others who have worked in the same field. As to a), apart from the most arid monographs, all history is to a greater or lesser extent narrative (in AJP Taylor's words, "the answer to the child's question – what happened next?"). The reviewer has a duty to consider whether the facts are fully and accurately given, and in order, and to what extent the author's thesis has influenced his/her selection and emphasis of different facts. As to b), a work of history might be written based on the values, assumptions and facts known to (say) GM Trevelyan, writing in the 1930s. It would however be the poorer without reference to subsequent archival discoveries and to the historiographical tides (Namierite, Marxist, neo-conservative and the rest) which have ebbed and flowed since then. Such should at least be acknowledged in a decent bibliography; fewer works these days seem to include such, instead leaving the reader to look for the needles of sources among the haystack of foot- or end-notes.

The preceding paragraph is perhaps particularly important in reviewing works of local history, some (happily by no means all) of whose practitioners appear to rush into print without first having taken a thorough grasp of the historiographical, national, and where relevant international backgrounds to their work.

QUOTE

The most important day in history is tomorrow. Always tomorrow. Because if our past doesn't inform our future, what's the point in studying it?

Terry Deary, in *i* newspaper, 5 March 2021