

# AVON LOCAL HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY

## *Newsletter 151 June– September 2017*

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

Events: <http://www.alha.org.uk/events.html>

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

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Material for **Newsletter 152** by **20 September 2017**  
**please**

Magazines and books to reviews editor, Hardings Cottage,  
Swan Lane, Winterbourne BS36 1RJ  
[jonathan.harlow@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:jonathan.harlow@uwe.ac.uk)

Details of events to website manager,  
Flat 1 Chartley, 22 The Avenue, Bristol BS9 1PE  
[lawrence@hazels.u-net.com](mailto:lawrence@hazels.u-net.com)

Other news, comments, and changes of contact details to  
membership secretary,  
5 Parrys Grove, Bristol BS9 1TT  
[wm.evans@btopenworld.com](mailto:wm.evans@btopenworld.com)

### **ALHA – PETER MALPASS**

The committee has received with regret Professor Peter Malpass's decision to stand down as a trustee of ALHA. Professor Malpass joined ALHA's committee in 2010, since when he has been a member of its events subcommittee, which organises the local history day and the Joe Bettey lecture, and the publications subcommittee, which oversees the publication of ALHA books. For the last five years Professor Malpass has also acted as stockholder and distributor of ALHA's books, having taken over from Mike Leigh. The committee has recorded its warm appreciation of Professor Malpass's work for ALHA. It wishes to appoint a successor, for all or any of the roles Peter has performed. He has agreed to continue to hold the stock of ALHA books until his successor has been appointed. If you would like to volunteer for the role, or to discuss what it involves, please contact Dr Jonathan Harlow, Bob Lawrence or William Evans, contact details at the top right of this page.

### **NEW ALHA GROUP MEMBER**

Welcome to **Cotteswold Naturalists Field Club**. Founded in 1846, the club is about natural, family and local history throughout the Cotswolds, and runs a lively programme of talks and visits as well as a journal and other publications.

## ALHA AGM AND JOE BETTEY LECTURE 2017

ALHA's 2017 annual general meeting and Joe Bettey lecture will be at the **Friends' Meeting House, Beckspool Road, Frenchay on Wednesday 18 October 2017, starting at 7pm**. The lecturer will be Professor Helen Meller, formerly professor of history at Nottingham University and author of *Leisure and the changing city, 1870-1914*, which in spite of its general title is about the Bristol area. Her lecture is titled *How to live in the modern city: women's contribution in Bristol 1860s-1930s*. ALHA is grateful to ALHA member **Frenchay Tuckett Society** for agreeing to host the event.

## ALHA SUMMER WALKS 2017

The programme for the rest of 2017 is:

### **SUNDAY 9 JULY – OLVESTON VILLAGE**

- Leader Eric Garrett – local village resident and keen amateur historian.  
Walk A walk around a typical small Gloucestershire village but definitely not to be confused with Alveston.  
Meet at in the car park near the church. Parking is limited so please park with consideration and car share if possible  
1:45pm

### **SUNDAY 13 AUGUST – CLEVEDON**

- Leader Jane Lilly – historian and local resident  
Walk A short wander through the seaside resort's history, from medieval West End to Victorian pier  
Meet at At the West End Salthouse car park (BS21 7TY) near the Hotel gates on Old Church Road.  
1:45pm

## ALHA FACEBOOK

*Veronica Bowerman writes:* The number of visitors viewing the events of the ALHA member societies posted on ALHA Facebook page continues to attract attention. The number of viewings increases when a member society submits a photo which epitomises their area and/or a society logo if one exists.

ALHA Facebook takes the initial Event information of its Member Societies from ALHA webpage <http://www.alha.org.uk/events.html> and adds any website and/or facebook links plus any photos, posters in jpeg format and/or logos that they have been sent. The collated information is normally posted on Facebook approximately 10 days before the event although this does vary depending on the type of event.

Events hosted by ALHA e.g. Summer Walks and the Local History Day have benefitted from the additional Facebook coverage. It is good to have feedback so promptly, particularly from some of the Committee members on these important events.

## HERITAGE SOCIAL MEDIA WORKSHOP

*Veronica Bowerman writes:* ALHA were invited to attend an event held by South Gloucestershire Heritage Partnership on the subject *Social Media – What can it do for us?* The attenders, who included representatives from local museums and other heritage organisations, were testament of how social media benefitted their organisations by highlighting their existence, their events and their current and forthcoming projects. We were reassured from the meeting that we are going the right way in using facebook to attract



other interested people and organisations.

For those who know nothing or little about facebook, think of it as a bit like joining an online book club. In order to connect with others to see and share information and ideas it is necessary to join. Everyone, with the exception of individuals under thirteen years old can join. There is a huge variety of organisations, individuals, businesses and, of course celebrities; those who have business facebook pages include Tesco and the NHS. Some pages are trying to sell something; others give tips and useful information. Each page might connect, or point, to other pages to recommend others to pages they might find interesting. Just as John Lewis points to Waitrose, so our ALHA page points to our member groups many of whom have their own websites and/or facebook pages. This connection brings new people into reach, in particular the younger set, who may well become the coordinators of some of our member groups in the future.

If you'd like to see what's on the ALHA page today you can join facebook as an individual without giving any information you choose not to share. Your personal page can be completely private unless you choose to share it with friends or family. You will need to give your name and date of birth (to prove you are over 13 years old). That done, you will be able to look around and find a multitude of pages of interest.

ALHA's use of facebook is open to all. The page can be seen by Joe Bloggs in Timbuktu if he's interested - and if he was born and bred in our area, he might well have memories that are relevant which he can easily share with us all. We might never hear from him otherwise! So, join in. Keep yourself as "private" as you want and indulge your interests.

*Veronica Bowerman, Lesley Bowman and Jan Packer write:*

Veronica was the first member of the ALHA Facebook team. Coming from a background of writing books based on her research she aims to discover all sorts of local items of historical interest to share with visitors. Soon after ALHA Facebook started in March 2015 she was joined by Lesley and Jan and, thanks to their wide-ranging input and advice as well, the page has gone from strength to strength with the number of fans increasing weekly.

Lesley brings her wealth of experience as an administrator of the very popular Bristol - Then & Now Photographs facebook page. She wades through the ALHA paperwork (newsletters, minutes, updates etc) and adds some of her sparkle when she posts to our page to keep everyone up to date.

Jan is a "facebook lurker" – been a member of ALHA for years. However she has recently started to upload feedback and photos of various events. She likes to keep private but enjoys reading through all the interesting topics. (She likes history, crafts and walking groups).

To conclude: if you would like see the latest information from ALHA and the services on offer please visit either or both of the following: Website: <http://www.alha.org.uk/>  
Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/AvonLocalHistoryandArchaeology/>

## HOW TO CONTACT ALHA FACEBOOK

The ALHA Facebook team is seeking to increase the number of visitors to the page. They welcome any suggestions e.g. copy and non-copyright photos. The latter should be submitted as jpegs to the ALHA Facebook email [avonandbristolarchaeology@gmail.com](mailto:avonandbristolarchaeology@gmail.com)

## ALHA LOCAL HISTORY DAY 2017

Over 100 attended ALHA's 2017 local history day on 22 April, organised with the Regional History Centre of the University of the West of England. The theme was *The streets where we live*.

**Dr John Chandler** of Gloucestershire County History Trust explained **the origins of Chipping Sodbury, and hence of its High Street**. The three Sodbury parishes were probably the territory of the fort at Little S, which like the common straddled the boundary between two pre-Domesday estates. Early on a deer park (hence Park Farm) was fenced. Chipping S appears to have been a deliberately planned new town, one of many that sprang up in the comparatively peaceful times of the C13, as the economy prospered and rural feudalism broke down. A William Crassus (le Gros, the Fat) was granted a

market charter in 1216. Some were new towns (Northleach, Moreton-in-marsh, Hindon); others were made by extending villages (in Gloucestershire, **Wickwar**, Stow, Newnham, Chipping Camden, Berkeley; and in Wilts Sherston, Downton, Wotton Bassett). The process is explained in Maurice Beresford's *New towns of the middle ages* (1967). Chipping S was located on the west edge of the owner's territory, on or near trade routes (**Bristol** to Oxford; Chippenham to **Aust passage**; and the saltway from Droitwich). The river Frome skirted the north of the town in a valley, and

provided power for mills. The plan was regular, with a wide main street, off which were straight burgage tenements whose regularity and same size suggests they were all laid out at once. Plots were for houses, trading, workshops, arable and grazing. They were held for rents, not feudal services. The town grew steadily: 176 burgages in 1307; 190 in 1360, which suggests CS was not hit much by the black death. Beyond the burgage tenements several rectangular fields (shown on the C19 OS map) suggest they were reserved for future development; the broad high street is on a scale comparable with towns such as Marlborough. Shambles provided market infill, as at Salisbury, Cirencester, Devizes. There is evidence of buildings along the centre line of the high street. The church, dedicated 1284 as a chapel of ease to Old S, seems to have been an afterthought: not until the C18 was it on a street. So C of E provision in CS was poor, hence the presence of nonconformist sects, especially baptists.

JC then gave a virtual photographic tour of the High Street area, including a C14 house in Hatters Lane; the market cross and guildhall (medieval roof and internal features); the George Hotel (medieval doorway). Most of the present High Street buildings are post-medieval, eg the Tudor Hall. Rudder (1779) praised the 'modern buildings', so there may have been a period of prosperity in the C18, then stagnation or even decline, because there are few Victorian buildings. The town got its prosperity from the clothing industry; local quarries; passing trade from through traffic; the market for agricultural products, especially dairying. In the late C19 CS stagnated economically, and in the early C20, because until 1903 the nearest railway was at Yate. Some governmental buildings were erected on the High Street: town hall, police station; court house. The clock (1870s) commemorated the owner of **Dyrham**; its surroundings are arts and crafts and later C20. In the 1960s CS became a dormitory town to Bristol. Extensions of the High Street tended to be linear. At the east end, the High Street doglegs from Broad Street into Horse Street, with grand C18 buildings, opposite to and at right angles to the burgage tenements. At the west end in Rounceval Street (interesting derivation), there are no burgage plots. Though CS is now quite affluent and the retailing focus has moved to Waitrose to the north, the high street retains a good mixture of shops.

**Dr Jenny Gaschke**, curator of fine art at Bristol City Art Gallery, dealt with **representation of the street in the Braikenridge collection**. She acknowledged the work of her predecessor Sheena Stoddard. The Braikenridge family had made money from tobacco and, having returned to England from

Virginia after the American War of Independence, from dealing in chemical products, a business George Weare Braikenridge (1775-1856) joined when he was 22. After his father's retirement in 1802, George Weare became a merchant, trading lucratively from Bristol with the West Indies. By 1820 he was wealthy enough to retire and to dedicate himself entirely to antiquarianism and to collecting documents, artefacts, furniture and items of natural history, especially things with a local history interest.

Not himself an artist, GWB collected and commissioned, mainly from local artists, over 1400 topographical images, intended to extra-illustrate William Barrett's history of Bristol (1779). (Those images remained unbound.) GWB made his own 4-volume catalogue of the works, with his own commentary and identification of artists and depicted sites. His collection was bequeathed to Bristol City Museum in 1908. The main artists employed included Hugh O'Neill, Thomas Rowbotham, Samuel Jackson, James Johnson, George William Delamotte, and Edward Cashin. The images are not pure documentation, but are works of art, deliberately composed to be both topographical and picturesque, following the precepts of writers as William Gilpin.

Images shown by Dr Gaschke included locations at College Street, Tower Lane, Nelson Street, Castle Street, Castle Green, Bridge Street and its environs, Temple, Royal Fort, Pithay, the Quay and Union Street. Few human figures appear in the streets: those that do are placed for compositional effect. Thus Temple Street is shown neat, tidy and empty at a time when Southey was describing it as crowded and filthy. Consequently the paintings show little of activities that went on in the streets. Some images show goods displayed in front of shops; some shops with (older) open fronts, some (newer) glazed; trade signs (watering can, kettle, baskets); products sold eg earthenware, wickerwork, boots and shoes, umbrellas. One includes a lottery poster. Apart from residential and retail buildings, images show glass cones; a fish market. Some buildings are shown run-down and dilapidated, especially in the redlight Tower Lane, but they are not portrayed as threatening: all signs of social disturbance are omitted, and even the smelly and polluted Frome is shown as serene and picturesque. Some images show contrasts between vernacular gabled fronts and rectangular Georgian ones; most buildings are old, but some then new are shown, eg what later became St George's Brandon Hill (Smirke), standing in isolation. Images show men working on buildings; recently installed gas street lighting. So the drawings are a source of historical detail and data, but as to

what life was really like on the streets they are edited and aspirational rather than of record. They do however give glimpses of reality: distant views between buildings of the surrounding countryside, and the steepness and crowding of some of Bristol's hills.

**Professor Peter Malpass described the development of Bristol's Corn Street** and central area. Ricart's plan showed the continuation of the pre-norman street pattern. The town, in a defensive position on a little hill, developed a small, concentrated commercial centre. Its components were: (1) residential: houses, many including workshops and warehouses; those in Small Street are thought to have been fashionable; (2) markets and retailing: until 1727 there was a corn market, for which Corn Street was widened; (3) religion: the 7 churches give an indication of population density; (4) municipal government and the administration of justice: the common council, whose aldermen were justices, met in the guildhall on Broad Street, later moving to next to St Ewen's church; premises rebuilt in the 1820s; (5) financial services: the tolzey was next to All Saints church; banking appeared from the 1750s.

Integrating these requirements meant that the built fabric was being constantly modernised, to be functionally appropriate but also according to fashion and taste. Prosperity led to rebuilding, hence to conflict between those who wanted to modernise and those who wanted to preserve the quaint and picturesque. There were disputes in 1823 over widening Broad Street and Small Street to 60 or 70 feet; and in 1847. Writing in the 1820s, Seyer regretted the loss of jetties, gables and latticed windows. One dispute was over the council house, said to have been wrongly set out. Latimer regretted the demolition in 1846 of quaint, old houses for the Bank of England. Coaching inns (White Hart, Red Lion) were demolished in the 1860s for the Grand Hotel. That houses were demolished in Broad Street implies that people were still living there in the mid C19.

By 1800 a professional and banking quarter was emerging. A map in Cave's history of Bristol banking shows a dozen banks in 1811. In 1868 the Post Office moved from Corn Street to Small Street, where a copper warehouse was demolished. The PO was extended in 1886: it employed 356. The *Bristol Times and Mirror* occupied the former Colston's house in Small Street. Accountants, solicitors and architects moved in, but were less visible, often taking premises in alleyways off the street. Albion Chambers, pre-1843, was the first purpose-built office building in Bristol. Banks dominated the

appearance of Corn Street. After the 1825 crash, banks could become joint stock companies, which enabled them to expand. Other businesses were limited to 6 partners, so remained small. Banks displayed solidity and reliability. Castle Bank was in the Dutch house, later Stuckey's. The first bank came to Broad Street in 1750, and moved 1790 to Corn Street, where it called itself the 'Old Bank.' The West of England & S Wales Bank building (1858) cost £40k according to Latimer; it folded 20 years later.

Banks amalgamated sites to build larger buildings. Banks themselves became bigger as they merged, eg Miles's and Harford's. Whereas Corn Street had 11 banks in 1811, by 1850 there were only 2. By 1875 there were 6; 8 in the 1890s; now only one. The first new bank was Stuckey's, 1851, on the corner of Corn St and St Nicholas Street, later incorporated into National Westminster Bank. Architects included Gingell, who designed for the National Provincial, the W of England & S Wales, and the Midland. The SW Banking Co (Martins) built on the site of St Werburgh's in the 1870s. The banks transformed the visual aspect of Corn Street. They amalgamated sites and erected massive buildings to demonstrate strength. Because they had no visual precedent, they could adopt whatever architectural style they chose; neo-classical and venetian were favoured.

**Pat Hase** entertainingly outlined **the early development of Weston-super-Mare High Street**. Never wide, the street grew organically, north-south, a little inland, away from storm tides and wind-blown sand. An 1806 plan shows 35 houses, nearly all around the street, housing between 106 and 111 people, most of them fishermen and agricultural workers. The church was north of the street, as was a quarry, source of stone for many of the buildings, which were thatched with reed. Visitors started coming in the late 18th century, more about 1800; in 1826 some were directed to lodge in farmer King's cottage because there was no room elsewhere. The road journey for visitors was not easy: the route from Bristol came via **Congresbury** and **Worle** to avoid marshy ground, often flooded; the railway did not come until 1841.

Inclosure in 1815 facilitated development. Parsley and Cox took leases of land for building. Influential were the Pigotts of **Brockley**, one of whom was vicar-squire. They let Grove House to visitors; lodging houses were built, as well as seaside residences such as Leeves cottage (The Old Thatched Cottage) built by the vicar of **Wrington** for holiday use. Close by was the Royal Hotel:

opened 1810, closed and re-opened 1814, when a coach route from **Bristol** started.

The early street had no shops: the nearest were at **Worle and Banwell**. One house kept bread for a week. Another sold goose feathers, plucked live. An area off the street was used to dump fish waste. Several of the residents of the High Street during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century were the subject of a series of 40 paintings now in Weston museum entitled "The Weston Worthies" These include Samuel Norville, Cornelius Hancock, Hannah Gould and Samuel Searle, who multi-traded 1803-1869.

As new houses by the sea were built during the 19th century, and boarding houses and villas, that led to a demand for facilities. An independent chapel was built 1830, rebuilt 1858. (The building later became Woolworths and its spire went to **Banwell** abbey). From the 1820s an open-air market was held, just off the street and later developed into a permanent market hall from 1842. A Pavilion for entertaining holiday makers and residents was built in Grove Park which was bombed during the war. The insurance for this building was used to convert the old Market Hall into a theatre (Playhouse) 1946, updated 1961, fire damaged 1964, rebuilt to modern design 1969.

As the population grew, demand for shops grew too, so buildings on the street became taken over by shops, eg two butchers (Greenland, Coles), one of which became a garage c.1930 and a whole range of other businesses. In 1844, the Devonshire Inn was the site of Joel Fisher's murder of his wife, luridly reported in newspapers. In the 1850s newspapers published lists of people living at or staying in the High Street. They included the author Wilkie Collins. By 1860 the High Street had about 40 shops, serving both visitors and local residents.

Prominent features of the High Street, as the street had become, included (1) Gossip Corner, a sort of town square where people met at the south end; (2) Lance's corner, at the junction with Waterloo Street, the site of a department store, initially Phillips, but later, Lance and Lance, which was taken over by John Lewis 1935 and bombed in 1942; bombs fell on WsM in 1940, 1941 and 1942, because of its location in relation to **Avonmouth, Bristol, Locking** and the coalfields and industry of south Wales; (3) an area west of the street, subject to a restrictive covenant limiting building, which became the site of the Winter Gardens (1927) and the Italian Gardens; and (4) Some long standing shops which are still owned by the same families – e.g. Walker & Ling, Cecil Walker, Rossiters and Greenslades.

Post-war some of the C19 buildings were demolished for redevelopment or altered for national

multiple shops, but the High Street retains its 19th century function as a shopping street and Weston's retail centre.

**Mike Manson's theme, *Old Market through the ages***, drew on the results of the *Vice and virtue* project managed by Trinity Community Centre, which Edson Burton and Mike Manson led. An assumption was that when people understand the history of an area, they will look after it.

Old Market started as a market because it was on main roads from Bristol to London and Gloucester. Its spatial changes can be followed on maps, now overlayable on the *Know Your Place* website. By 1880 Old Market was still a busy thoroughfare; from east Bristol you needed to go through Old Market to get to Castle Street and the Centre. The lands north and south of it had become built up, but boundaries still perpetuated those of the medieval burgage plots. There were 3 almshouses, two of them ancient. There were many slum dwellings. The railway had come to St Philip's and a goods depot had opened 1870. A prison had been built at Lawford's Gate. Trams came in the 1880s, later electrified. The ornate Palace Hotel (The Gin Palace) was built in anticipation of the Midland Railway opening a station, but the MR went to Temple Meads.

Photographs in 1895 show trams, shops, a prosperous area, but no banks: there was not even a cashpoint until 2014. Some industries were in the streets behind. A brewery came in 1914 (Teast Street), demolished 1967. On the south side a sugar refinery closed in 1912 and was replaced by the drill hall, relocated from the top of Park Street.

Old Market became a centre of mass entertainment and gatherings: the Kingsley Hall, venue of public meetings; the Empire music hall opened in the 1890s; the Methodists built their central hall 1924 – church and social centre, not in traditional church architectural style. The King's cinema opened 1911; the Tatler 1910, replaced a skating rink. Queues for trams were long.

In the 1930s Old Market was still busy, but the shops were declining, though there were 5 tobacconists, consistent with increase in smoking. As the depression took hold, some manufactories closed and unemployment rose. In January 1932 the Public Assistance Committee reduced unemployment relief by 10%. There were protest marches; two the police broke up with baton charges. Towards the end of the decade the depression was relieved by the aircraft industry bringing new jobs.

In WW2 black US GIs went to the Spread Eagle in Narrow Plain. There were fights between black and white GIs, whom the US army segregated.

During the blitz few bombs fell on Old Market. As the former Castle Street shops were looking to Broadmead, Old Market attracted some importers and wholesalers, and specialist shops like Mickleburgh (pianos), Hurford (prams) and new services such as Rediffusion (wireless relay). Larger premises changed uses: the BBC took over the Empire; Kingsley Hall accommodated trade union offices. The three almshouses continued. After WW2, the main shopping having gone to Broadmead, Old Market's shops became even fewer, and it began to get a seedy reputation. It was still a major thoroughfare, recognised in the city council's 1960s development plans, but the Bond Street underpass cut off a third of Old Market. By 1973 other services arrived, such as bookmakers and

estate agents, but few people lived there: when Old Market was declared a conservation area in 1979, many of the upper floors of premises were vacant. Some buildings became occupied by sex workers and related trades such as massage parlours and saunas. The area came to attract social nonconformity, and the beginnings of a gay quarter: in the 1980s the Aled Richards trust, supporting people with HIV/AIDS, had its headquarters there. The drill hall was converted to flats, as were the Barstaple almshouses. Some buildings were lost, eg Ebenezer chapel, demolished on a bank holiday. The return of people living in the area has led to the formation of a community association, and plans for regeneration.

## **EVENTS AND SOURCES**

**KNOW YOUR PLACE** offers a free workshop on navigating your way round the site and uploading collections, **10-12.30, Friday 7 July 2017, Kingswood Heritage Museum**, Tower Lane, Warmley BS30 8XT. **Places are limited and advanced booking is required.** For further information and to book your place, go to: [www.kypwest.org.uk/project-diary/free-workshops/](http://www.kypwest.org.uk/project-diary/free-workshops/)

**FRENCHAY VILLAGE MUSEUM's Vintage Vehicle Day**, writes Alan Freke, will be on **Saturday 15 July** in the car park next to the museum. This annual event attracts a wide variety of vintage bicycles, motorcycles, and cars - all owned by local enthusiasts. This year we are marking 50 years since the death of David Fry, and the end of his company Frenchay Products Ltd. Moulton Bicycles of Bradford on Avon have lent us the first prototype Moulton bicycle, made by David Fry to Alex Moulton's design. Also on display will be David Fry's record breaking car the *Freikaiserwagen*, which held records at Prescott and Shelsley Walsh hillclimbs in the 1930s and 1940s.

Anyone wanting to display a vintage vehicle, please arrive between 1 and 1.30pm. The display is open to the public from 2 –5 pm. Admission free. For further details 'phone 0117 9567020 or 0117 9566378.

The car park just inside Entrance "B" of the former Frenchay Hospital, at the junction at Frenchay Park Road and Begbrook Park. The event is run in conjunction with Frenchay Flower Show, centred around Frenchay Village Hall, and there are free vintage buses linking the two events. There is free public parking on Frenchay Common.

The display about David Fry and Frenchay Products, including the prototype Moulton Bicycle, will be in the museum throughout July, August, and September, and the museum is open every Saturday, Sunday, and Wednesday afternoons. Admission is free.

**THORNBURY MUSEUM** has an exhibition, '*Curious works and stately lodgings*': the art of Thornbury castle, **until 22 December 2017**. 4 Chapel Street, **Thornbury**, BS35 2BJ, Tuesday to Friday 1pm to 4pm, Saturdays: 10am to 4pm. Free. More at <http://www.thornburymuseum.org.uk/whats-on/exhibitions/>

**SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE HERITAGE AND MUSEUMS** website is at <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/museums-and-galleries/>. A handy leaflet on the area's museums, including **Kingswood**, **Thornbury**, **Yate** (heritage centre), Avon Valley (**Bitton**) railway, **Frenchay** village, **Ram Hill** (colliery), **Rolls Royce**, **Winterbourne** (medieval barn), **Acton Court**, **Dyrham** and so on is at <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/museums-and-galleries/museum-and-heritage-sites-to-visit/>. The page has links to the websites for each venue.

## A FORGOTTEN LANDSCAPE PROJECT

Latest from **Severnside** at <http://mailchi.mp/c1a67f269bd7/9ra2vzxib8-1326197>. Guided tours of the **Oldbury on Severn** fort will start at the memorial hall **Saturday 1 July 2.30 and 3.30pm**.

Results of the archaeological investigation at the fort will be reported at Oldbury on Severn memorial hall **5pm to 6pm Monday 3 July**. Emma Cross, HLF Project Assistant, A Forgotten Landscape, South Gloucestershire Council 01454 864265 <http://www.aforgottenlandscape.org.uk/>

**BRISTOL'S BRILLIANT ARCHAEOLOGY** this year is on **Saturday 29 July 2017** at **Blaise Castle House Museum**. *Kate Iles* says 'The event promises to be a fun-packed day full of tours, demonstrations, displays and archaeological activities.' More at: [www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/archfest](http://www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/archfest); <https://m.facebook.com/events/1752812931675799/>

## BRISTOL ARCHIVES

Exhibition, *Bristol's Bonded Warehouses*, **until 29 September 2017**. Free, but donations welcome. Tells the story of A, B and C Bond, three red-brick tobacco warehouses, built for the import boom of the early 20th century.

*Doors Open Day*, **Thursday 7 to Saturday 9 September 2017**, behind-the-scenes tours: no admission fee, but booking essential from late July on the *Doors Open Day* website.

*Bristol Theatre Royal archives*: Archivist Anne Lovejoy is cataloguing and repackaging the *archives of the Theatre Royal*, the UK's oldest continuously working theatre.

From January 2018, Bristol Archives will be one of ten national sound preservation centres for a major British Library project, *Save Our Sounds*. Thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund and other donors, this work will save rare and unique recordings at risk of being lost forever. At Bristol Archives, project staff will spend three years digitising 5,000 recordings from across the South West.

City Archivist since 2014 *Julian Warren* will be leaving at the end of July, to become Keeper of the Digital and Live Art Archives at the University of Bristol's Theatre Collection.

If you would like to participate in a user-testing day to make improvements to our searchroom computers. And can spare some time to tell Bristol Archives what would help you find the resources you need, please email [archives@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:archives@bristol.gov.uk)

Acquisitions: Thanks to funding from ALHA member the Friends of Bristol Museums, Galleries & Archives, Bristol Archives has acquired:

- *The logbook of the Levant*, ref. 45874, which records a trading voyage to the Caribbean in the 1790s. The ship belonged to the Bristol merchant Lavers Alleyn and copy letters within the volume document his business there into the 1810s.
- *Land Tax assessments for Stoke Bishop, 1796-1799, and Land and Window Tax assessments for Clifton, 1796-1798* (ref. 45875).

*British Empire & Commonwealth Collection*: With the *Exploring Empire* project due to finish this summer, BA has catalogued almost 40 photographic collections to make them available for research. Amongst these is the extensive archive of the Crown Agents, who rolled out railways across the British Empire.

## ALSO IN BRISTOL

- *Murdered with Straight Lines*: Drawings of Bristol by Garth England, Architecture Centre, Broad Quay, Bristol, **until 10 September 2017**, admission free. Exhibition showcases the work of Garth England, a milkman who lived most of his life in south Bristol and documented the places he knew. The images have been selected from a collection of GE's drawings, deposit of which at Bristol Archives was arranged by former ALHA trustee Mike Leigh. A review of the book of the drawings was in *ALHA Newsletter* 148, October 2016.
- *Meadows to Meaders*, **Ascot Road, Southmead, Sunday 2 July, 2pm and 4.30pm**. Free event - booking required. The story of two fictional families who lived in Southmead since the neighbourhood was built. Inspired by discoveries at Bristol Archives, the people of Southmead will be performing episodes covering the 1930s to the 1960s.

## BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL BUDGET CUTS CONSULTATION – LIBRARY SERVICES

Bristol City Council is consulting on budget cuts to, among other things, the library service. At risk of over-simplification, the proposal is to make £1.4 million cuts to the public library service. As the council wishes to



protect the central libraries in College Green, to which 80% of the budget goes, that implies more severe reductions in spending on branch libraries, including their local history collections, involving complete closures as distinct from yet more reduced opening hours. Consultation is open **until 5 September 2017**. Have your say at <https://bristol.citizenspace.com/bristol-city-council/yourneighbourhood/>

**REVIEWS** by Dr Jonathan Harlow unless otherwise said:

First, some new books from **Amberley Books**, all 96 pages, lavishly illustrated, much in colour, £14.99

***Central Bristol Through the Ages*** by Anthony Beeson, *Review by Prof Peter Malpass*

The idea of a series of books looking at particular places 'through time' or 'through the ages' has proved to be a winner for Amberley Publishing. The formula is simple: old images are paired with photographs of the same locations today, along with a paragraph of explanation or commentary. It is an approach designed to appeal to readers of a nostalgic turn of mind, people who want to be reminded of how their town or city has changed since they were children. This book by Anthony Beeson works well on that level. It is organised as a series of what he calls 'textual peregrinations' around the central area – which seems to include the whole of Whiteladies Road. The illustrations are mostly from the author's own collection or from Bristol Central Reference Library, although there are no details on individual images, some of which will be familiar to enthusiasts for the genre of historical picture books.

The commentary accompanying the pictures is generally informative, but with a recurrent tendency to express regret for lost buildings or criticism of their replacements. There is, however, another way of looking at urban history, one that recognises that places such as Bristol have been built and rebuilt more or less continually over several centuries, to the extent that it is almost true to say that you cannot sleep in the same city twice. Our forebears did not waste valuable resources demolishing existing buildings unless those buildings were beyond repair or were no longer capable of serving the purpose required of them. A lack of old buildings is a sure sign of economic prosperity, proof that people have the capital and the incentive to invest in new buildings that are bigger, better or more suited to current needs.

To regret the passing of picturesque old houses and romantic alleyways is a natural human response to the loss of the familiar and quaint. People in Victorian Bristol expressed that sentiment in their own time. But we need to remember that change was invariably motivated by a desire to improve the city in one way or

another, as demonstrated by the fact that much of it was conducted by the council's Improvement Committee. Old houses may look nice but they are not necessarily comfortable to live in, and Bristol's narrow streets with overhanging buildings were a constant source of complaint by people trying to move around. It is easy, and often justified, to criticise 20th century planning and architecture, but few would want to live in the sort of city that Bristol was before 1914.

*Central Bristol through the ages* is Anthony Beeson's third book of this kind on Bristol. As the former fine art librarian in Bristol he knows the material intimately and he clearly feels strongly about what is happening to the service he worked in for forty years. In the introduction he launches an attack on current developments affecting the library in the wake of central government's spending cuts. As a frequent library user I can only agree with him, although it is a little unusual to find such a strongly worded critique in this sort of book.

***Bristol Pubs*** by James Macveigh and ***Bristol Country Buses*** by Mike Walker

These two works have something in common. The names of the subjects are both abbreviations of Latin words indicating their accessibility: the public house and the 'omnibus' for all. Both have entered into our lore; the pub for much longer. It has enjoyed a central place in our comic tradition from the time of Chaucer, through Falstaff and *She Stoops to Conquer* and right into that TV gem '*Cheers*' - OK north American but how easy to relate to. The bus is later but soon became a legal reference point: the man on the Clapham omnibus. And there is E M Forster's *The Celestial Omnibus*, and one of Flanders' and Swan's immortal songs.

Yet they occupy different places in our minds. Most of us are alert to the peculiarity of pubs, and have lively memories and decided preferences. Buses? We are aware of a few basic differences: buses from coaches (coaches have springs and brakes with some gradation between go and stop); single decker from double decker; and, chronologically, conducted buses with entry at the back and modern ones with entry at the front. Mike Walker's is a book for enthusiasts.

Enthusiasts there must be, for the author draws on collections other than his own. But one supposes they may not be numerous. The bus does not have the romantic appeal of the steam engine, or the sailing ship, or even the motor car. The comparison of the rear-ends of models (p 51) is wholesome, but not many pulses will race. The rest of us must make do with imagining the back story to the double-decker which destroyed its superstructure on a bridge while travelling between scheduled services in 1969 (p 57). A secret assignation? The sort of dare that bus-drivers offer and undertake while grabbing the compulsory cuppa at the Bus Station? A dastardly plot by a rival company? The text is silent and the fancy may roam free.

There are some 200 photographs, many in colour, each depicting a bus by make and route. There is no index and no contents page, but the illustrations seem to be in order of date of capture, though not of the introduction of the model featured.

James Macveigh's book is clearly organised by area, with a full list and keyed map. The photographs include interiors and exteriors, and there is a fair bit of information per pub. That information includes not only history, but often a note of current offerings, so that it serves as a guide as well as a record. (It excludes one piece of information I wish were obligatory: the temperature at which beer is served. Around 6° may be right for lager and other fizzy drinks, but beer should be served at around 12° so that you can taste it.) It includes most of the right items, though I missed the Pump House - perhaps a restaurant indoors but the good waterside benching is truly pubby.

Whatever the size of the immediate readership, Amberley are to be thanked for their many offerings in this sturdy and well illustrated format, a real contribution to the records of our region.

***Sailing Ships of the Bristol Channel***, by Viv Head, reviewed by Chris Harlow The simple and transparent reason for buying this book, reading it,

Other publications reviewed:

***Transactions of the Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*** 134 (2016)

This issue has a number of articles on recent Iron Age and Roman archaeology in Gloucestershire, all out of the ALHA area, but to the usual high standard of visual imaging, and recommended for those interested in the early history of the wider

keeping it, going back to it again, is that it has more than 50 gripping, exciting accounts of the lives lived by the ships themselves, occasionally of their crews and captains. To add to the drama, there's intellectual content. You find out what an armed topsail schooner looks like, what a lugger is and a ketch, a barque, a sloop and a Bristol pilot cutter. The sloop was the gofer of Nelson's Navy. The pilot cutter is what the skipper of the home-bound grain-race four-masted, twenty four-sailed clipper strained his eyes to pick out in the murky tide-race of the Bristol Channel, looking for the mouth of the Avon on the last day of his 80 days carrying out of Australia.

These are stories of drama, of achievement, of fame, of stirring endurance, survival and of sadness. The working boat which served the offshore lightship, the ship that inspired John Masefield's 'Sea Fever', Captain Scott's two Antarctic ships, the extraordinary nostalgia which is aroused by the sight of the stern end remnant of a working Severn Trow, beached on the Sharpness shore, resting after five lifetimes fetching coal from the Forest of Dean to the firesides of Penarth. Stories capped by life-and-death struggles with mountainous seas that arose to herald a noble sailing ship's final resting place, that are softened by the beauty of the neatest West Country trading ketch that can be imagined, by the revived, restored Great Britain, of HMS Warrior's impact and of the racing yachtsman who survived for four days in a South Atlantic storm trapped in the cabin of his upside down wreck.

For anyone who knows the geography of the lower Severn river, or has seen the Severn Bore, the steep gorge of the Avon and the ethereal span of Brunel's bridge, the text and the stream of colour photos become lively with the extraordinary range of sailing ship types metaphorically roaming on the waters, being built and berthed, being ruined and rescued, being brought to their end with the dignity that a sailing ship can somehow command, even in extremis.

region. Then two about people. Bridget Wells-Furby, historian of the Berkeleys, profiles Ralph Waleys, a 14th century man who rose from minor landowner to knight of the shire by clinging as it were to the Berkeley stirrups. Some apposite comparisons make up a mini-prosopography. And Joseph Bettey outlines the story of the 16th

century Young family, still visible in the form of a handsome monument to Dame Joan in Bristol cathedral and in the Red Lodge. The Great House, to which the Lodge was an adjunct, passed via the Smyths to become a Knight-ly Sugar House, and was then replaced by Colston's school, then the Colston Hall, itself now rebuilt and to be re-named. This shaft illuminates centuries of city history. Richard Coates is in accustomed form as the historian of Godringhall - Godhere's hill? upon King's Weston Hill? Maybe. He is in less familiar guise as the historian of the Avonmouth Light Railway, about whose functions and points of call local opinion and documents differ intriguingly.

"Nice try, but no cigar" might be the heading for several of the reviews. Michael Hare is unconvinced by David Higgins's substantial reconstruction of a real St Jordan from a few lines of middle English hymn. (Check out Higgins's BBHA booklets to see if you want to think of the culminating work.) Jan Broadway is very happy with Stephen Hague's placing of the gentleman's house - symbol of achieved status rather than trajectory - in Gloucestershire, but not with the attempt to extend the findings over the British Atlantic world. And John Stevens reckons that the Redcliffe/UWE *Literary Bristol* (see Newsletter 146) is "partial (in both senses)". On the other hand, Philip Morgan is pretty positive about *Edward II: his last months and his monument* (Jill Barlow & others) though this is really about the king rather than the region. John Kingman observes that Churchill's Chancellorship (*Heroic Chancellor*, David Cannadine, IHR - only £10) meant more to Bristol University than to the man. Jane Platt reckons that Alan Munden's edition of *The Religious Census of Bristol & Gloucestershire 1851* (a BGAS publication) is 'one of the most scholarly treatments yet produced of mid 19th-century religious change and diversity'. Richard Coates is pleased with Rose Wallis's 'excellent volume' on Yate in the VCH of Gloucestershire (Newsletter 145). Hugh Conway-Jones reckons Richard Skeet's account of the Hereford & Gloucester Canal, *Rescued from Obscurity*, is sound, well documented and illustrated (and good value at £10 for 200 pages, from the H&G Canal Trust). William Evans gives good marks to *Strikers, Hobbler, Conchies & Reds* by Dave Backwith and others (reviewed in Newsletter 143).

***Hanham & Kingswood Chase before 1750: the Cock, the Owl, & the Windmill*** by R J Williams (contact rogerwilliamshome@btinternet for price or orders) is in many ways a treasure: a detailed survey of surveys and of maps and other documentary evidence, aimed at interpreting and explaining the evidence. It is well referenced both to primary sources and to earlier investigators, especially the work of the Rev H T Ellacombe, vicar of Bitton. It is well illustrated and the versatile home-printer production allows the points to be made in a personal but clear fashion. But it is a pity that the author did not engage more with his contemporaries. Thus individual speculation about place names, however shrewd, should start from the work of the English Place Name Society, and for this area might best have involved discussion with Jenny Scherr and with Professor Richard Coates. A little networking would surely have revealed that Kathleen Hapgood was working on a Bristol Record Society volume about the area East of Bristol in the 16th century; to mutual advantage. And whatever suggested to him that Leland's Itinerary was commissioned by Henry VIII - no reference supplied - was not, I venture to suggest, a work of respectable history. If this seems harsh, it is because the book is good enough to deserve to be even better. In local history, no man should be an island.

***The Local Historian 47.2 (April 2017)*** has again no articles or reviews of direct Avon interest.

***Bristol Industrial Archaeological Society Journal 49 (2016)***. As this year (2017) marks BIAS's 50th anniversary, the issue begins with two surveys: Sir Neil Cossons on the history of the Society and Barbara Buchanan on the pre-history. Tony Coverdale resurrects a forgotten early engineer - or were they father and son? - John Padmore. He or the younger one was one of those extraordinarily versatile C18 millwrights; but besides metal-working mills, he built a floating harbour, worked on the Avon Navigation to Bath, and made the tramway that delivered Ralph Allen's limestone, and cranes including the Great Crane at Mud Dock. The elder P. constructed an atmospheric engine, or steam pump, a decade or so before Newcomen. This excellent article preludes a full book, we hope. Peter Lamb chronicles the Weston-super-Mare Electric Supply Co, a latecomer in the game but, as absorbed into the British Electric Traction Co, a working enterprise until 1948. Owen Ward examines Cleeve Mill and the Frenchay Iron

Company via the Land Tax assessments of 1796-8. Cyril James gives a full history of the Cross Manufacturing Company which has been involved in precision engineering since 1938, and contributed to the development of aeroplanes, balloons, motor cycles and cars. As always, the journal is fully and fascinatingly illustrated, though many of the photographs could have been sharpened to advantage.

The *BIAS Bulletin* reports the anniversary events but has no new material - no need beside the riches of the *Journal*.

***The Bristol & Avon FHS Journal 168*** (June 2017) has all the usual features including Bob Lawrence 'On the Internet' (my apologies for the false claim that it was missing from the previous issue). Penny Gay demonstrates the power of internet-based research with a reconstruction of the family tree of Robert Gay of Bath, early C18 surgeon and MP. Bob himself does a study of divorcee and bigamy in the C19 - those interested might also enjoy Trollope's *Lady Anna* which well illustrates the legal twists. Bob Parfitt has a slice of the history that might have been, a profile

of the Rev Leonard Jenyns, the first choice for natural historian aboard the *Beagle*, and proposer of the unknown Darwin in his place. Jo Hurst briefly introduces the remarkable Brickdale family of lawyers, physicians, and artists. Not a family historian myself, I rejoice in the many ways that family history can illuminate social history.

***History & Heritage Matters 11*** (Nailsea & District LHS May 2017) is especially strong on personal memoirs: Doug Reed and, separately, Phyllis Horman on childhood in the 20s and 30s; Terry Smith on the origin of the Nailsea Environment & Wildlife Trust at Moorend Spout; Reginald Stamp on his Home Guard service; with a more general but still personal take on the Home Guard by Lt Col Tweedie - who had to type out regimental orders for himself. Peter Wright extends his Roll of Honour. Doyenne Norma Knight expands the background to a mortgage taken out by Lucas the hooper in 1791 and recently purchased by the Society. Not many of our local history societies publish: honour to those that do!

Dr Harlow would welcome reviews of recently published books or articles relevant to ALHA's area and objects

## **BOOKS SOUGHT**

Irvine Gray, *Antiquaries of Gloucestershire and Bristol*, B&GAS 1981.

Irene Wyatt, ed., *Transportees from Gloucestershire to Australia 1783-1842*, Gloucestershire Record Series volume 1.

Brian Frith ed., *Bigland's Gloucestershire collections* part 1 (A-C), GRS volume 2.

Brian Frith ed., *Bigland's Gloucestershire collections* part 2 (D-M), GRS volume 3.

Jill Barlow, Richard Bryant, Carolyn Heighway, Chris Jeens and David Smith: *Edward II: His Last Months and Monument*, B&GAS 2015  
wm.evans@btopenworld.com; 0117 968 4979

## **BOOKS NOTICED**

*The Oxford Handbook of Roman Britain*, ed M Millett, L Revell, A Moore, OUP September 2016, £100.

## **COMMENTARY**

### **Grammar schools**

The government wants more grammar schools, but they did not appear in the Queen's speech. Readers' opinions will no doubt be divided. Party dogmatics apart, some will see grammar schools as helping social mobility and widening opportunity; others will deplore how selection demoralises those not selected or exacerbates class distinctions, or will question the educational justification for selecting at age eleven. Grammar schools would be an interesting topic for local history investigation because there are so many unanswered questions.

One question is about how the concept changed: originally the grammar a grammar school taught was latin grammar, as at **Thornbury, Chipping Sodbury, Wickwar, Henbury and Bristol** grammar schools, and **King Edward's in Bath**. That definition was confirmed in the Leeds case in 1805, which had consequences in our area. By 1945 the typical grammar school was one which admitted the fraction of pupils judged most able in tests of English, arithmetic and reasoning, and gave pupils a broad general education, usually dividing them into streams for the humanities and the sciences. How

did that change come about, and how did it work out locally?

Another question arises from grammar schools having been originally founded and funded by charitable gift (or, in the case of Bristol grammar school, by diverting premises from another charitable use), so that they could charge low fees or none. By 1945 few grammar schools were operating as originally intended. Those at **Wickwar** and **Henbury** had disappeared. Others had become private fee-charging schools. Some had come under local authority control to varying degrees. A few, including some in our area, had become funded by direct grant from central government. Histories of individual schools have recounted those changes, but a comprehensive history of how and why the changes happened in our area would fill a gap.

A third question is how and why the role of the grammar school in some places was taken over by schools that had been endowed for other purposes. Examples in **Bristol** include **Carr's Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, Whitson's Red Maids and Colston's**, all founded as petty schools. The role was also taken in Bristol by quasi-grammar schools offering an extended curriculum. These were often founded by special interest groups, some sectarian, some commercial, of which **Bristol College, the Bishop's College and the Merchant Venturers' school** are examples.

Another question is why **Bristol and Bath** never had corporation grammar schools of the sort established by local authorities in places like Plymouth. The answer may be something to do with the large number of other schools, many of them private but affordable by the commercial elite. In **Bristol** the city council converted into grammar schools ones that had been established for other purposes. Thus **Fairfield** started in 1898 as a higher grade elementary board school, became a municipal secondary school in 1904 (though the elementary department did not move out until **Sefton Park** was

## Inflation

After several years of detumescence, inflation, as measured by the consumer prices index, is rising. Cue media hysteria, with newspaper images of Weimar pensioners pushing to the newsagents wheelbarrowloads of banknotes ending in lots of zeroes. Because inflation is an increase in the level of prices throughout an economy, it is not seen as important to local history, but anything that happens throughout a nation is bound to have local effects, which is reason enough for local history people to look at the phenomenon.

opened), and became a grammar school in 1945. It lost its selective ethos in the 1980s as it gradually widened admissions. **Merrywood** had a similar history.

Another topic for study might be how government and local authority policies (not always the same) regarding comprehensive secondary education impacted locally after 1965. Gloucestershire County Council, for example, moved **Thornbury** grammar school (founded not later than 1606, refounded 1879) to **Alveston-Marlwood** in 1972 but turned it comprehensive, as was the **Castle** school which occupied its old building. The pre-1974 Somerset County Council established purpose-built comprehensives eg at **Chew Valley** (1958) and **Backwell**; and grammar schools at **Nailsea** (1959) and **Weston-super-mare (Broadoak, 1922)** became comprehensive in 1966. In Bristol the city council set up new comprehensives at **Brislington, Ashton Park, Henbury, Hengrove, Hartcliffe, Withywood** and so on, but allowed **Fairfield** and **Cotham** to continue selective, for reasons not clear. Outcomes in **Bath** were different. Government policies and local authority attitudes led former direct grant grammar schools such as **Colston's Girls'** to go independent, which protected the schools' academic selectivity but made them less accessible to children from poor families.

A difficult task, relevant to the current controversy, would be to trace what effect grammar schools, however defined, have had on social or economic mobility locally. Representative sampling would be difficult. Records to enable the enquirer to trace the social origin and career path of an individual pupil probably do not exist, except for those whose education got them a biography or an obituary. A researcher would come up against data protection obstacles.

In the 16th and 17th centuries Spain and Portugal imported from south America shiploads of silver and gold (Not ethically sourced, but who are Bristolians to point the finger?) As the wealth worked its way through neighbouring countries, say economic historians, it caused inflation throughout Europe. If any of it washed up in **Winscombe or Charfield**, do let us know.

War and warmongering have an inflationary effect. It is often said that what ended the 1930s depression in the UK was the preparations for war,

as the government increased the money supply to pay for armaments and military operations. In living memory the steepest inflation experienced was probably in the 1960s and 1970s, when a combination of high interest rates and inflation put paid to many public infrastructure schemes, such as **Bristol's** planned inner circuit road (and **Bath's** Buchanan tunnel?).

Those are examples of inflation rendering a project unaffordable, and so preventing local change that would otherwise have taken place. In *Unbuilt Bristol: the city that might have been 1750-2050*, (Redcliffe 2013) Eugene Byrne looked at a number of grand projects that never happened. The reasons why they never took off vary from one to another: some were over-ambitious, others before their time, some impractical, and others daft, but might some of them have been killed off because inflation made them unaffordable? Could that have been the case with Alderman Vick's gorgeous bequest to meet the desperate need for a short cut between **Abbots Leigh** and **Clifton**? Probably not: the project was halted because the money ran out, and that was because both the investment performance of the fund and the cost of the works had been underestimated.

### Some experience desirable

One of the issues in the 2017 USA presidential election was whether the office of president is better performed by a candidate with commercial experience but who had never held public office or worked in government. A not dissimilar issue arose in the 2017 French presidential election, where the winner dissociated himself from the established political parties, and whose new party deputies consist mostly of people who had not held public office or employment before. If we want our political leaders to have experience, experience in what?

From a UK local history perspective, the issue seems to be comparatively recent, and more pressing in towns than in rural areas. For centuries in the counties there was little in the way of government apart from the church, manorial courts and quarter sessions: warlording apart, the main governmental activity was tax collection. The justices of the peace operated mostly locally. The old poor law was administered at the level of the parish, preferably someone else's. After the manorial system dwindled, landowners exercised local control by legal and economic means. Government was not an optional side-dish: it went with and was part of being a landowner. Elected county councils did not appear until 1888. For many years they were continued to be run by the

The obverse of an increase in the supply of money causing inflation is inflation being prevented by taking money out of circulation, eg by the government or other funders spending it on capital projects so that the cash ceases to circulate. Architectural historians have remarked on the large numbers of churches built or extended in the late medieval and early modern periods. Could that have had the effect of preventing inflation that otherwise would have occurred? Similarly with cathedrals, large country houses, canals, railways and other big-ticket capital projects: might that be an explanation why, in spite of great industrial and commercial growth during the Victorian period, inflation remained comparatively low? Did the factories, the railways, the ranks of terraced housing and so on take money out of circulation and so forestall what would otherwise have been inflation?

Lessons for us nowadays? Public infrastructure can be funded by taxation or by borrowing. Both have their pros and cons. But one thing funding expensive projects out of taxation does is dampen inflation, and the effects can be local as well as national.

landed, their nominees and their dependents, until their grip was loosened, first by professional employees and then by political parties. In towns, land ownership was not extensive or important. Charters gave a measure of self-government, but only to the leading merchants. **Bristol** corporation made over its harbour functions to the merchants' cartel, who ran things in their own interests. Until 1835 the corporation was a closed shop, and exercised few functions. The 19th century agencies for specific purposes (paving, lighting, improvement commissioners, health and school boards and so on) were not always part of, or comprised of the same people as, the local authority, though there was cross-membership. It was the size and complexity of problems those agencies had to address which meant that participants had to devote more time and energy, and had to acquire specialist knowledge, some of it increasingly scientific and technical, in order to do their job properly. By the late 19th century in both **Bath and Bristol** the leading political figures were owners of large businesses, some of whom participated out of self-interest (eg to keep the rates down, or as a forum for networking and business intelligence), but many were motivated by a sense of civic responsibility and strong ethical stances, in some cases grounded in

religious belief: 'community capitalism' as Jon Press and Charles Harvey termed it in their opening essay in *Studies in the business history of Bristol* (Bristol Academic Press, 1988). Poorer people could not participate in politics until trade unions and the cooperative movement brought about a pool of working-class or working-class-sympathetic full-time political organisers and activists, of whom Ben Tillett was probably the earliest prominent local example, followed by Ernest Bevin. Not until MPs got paid in 1911 was it practical for those without an income to enter full-time national politics. Not until 1974 were

### Regions

Fewer than 30% of those entitled voted in the election for our area's metro-mayor, and the elected representatives of **North Somerset** decided that their people should not be involved at all. Regions have not been as important in our area's past as has been the case in some other countries such as Germany or Italy. Wessex started off as an ethnic or tribal area, became a military kingdom, then dropped out of sight until it reappeared, as a geographical setting, in Thomas Hardy's novels, and in 1973 as a water and sewerage authority area.

For centuries the largest unit of local government was the shire, which many of the established church's dioceses matched. In the 19th century the government grouped parishes into unions for certain poor law functions. The wars of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 led to regions being formed for other purposes, hence the continuation of the south-west region for various statistical purposes, but little more. Not until the second half of the 20th century did the region start to be seriously proposed as a unit or tier of government. A tentative step was the police amalgamations from 1968 onward (**Avon & Somerset** from 1974). In 1970 the government encouraged local authorities to form regional committees to plan children's services region-wide: expensive and specialist provision, eg secure accommodation, remand homes, and places for children with disabilities, especially for the less frequent

county and borough councillors paid allowances (as distinct from expenses), and only later did the introduction of special responsibility allowances make it possible to get a living by being a full-time elected representative. So participating in local government seems to have required, until recently, multitasking. Both nationally and locally the full-time specialist politician is a comparatively recent phenomenon. At least it is now possible to vote for principles and policies rather than for or against a landowner or employer.

impairments, would be more effective and efficient if planned over a wide area. Similar arguments were not applied to waste disposal, hospitals or special educational needs. An attempt to introduce regional planning into higher education did not last long, partly because the body was only advisory, and partly because higher education institutions insisted, under the pretext of academic freedom, on receiving public money without being accountable for how they spent it. In 2004 proposals by deputy prime minister Prescott for regional assemblies were received in our area with as little enthusiasm as elsewhere. Social pressures have led to some regional agencies, eg regional crime squads in the police; regional strategic planning in the NHS. When UWE's Regional History Centre was established, some wondered what 'regional history' meant: local history, but over an area reflecting the University's main catchment? Local history, but recognising hinterlands? Certainly not a view that the SW region from Gloucestershire to the Scillies had or has one homogeneous history identity. The recent election was based on the premise that the structural planning of land use and transport cannot be sensibly exercised nowadays without regard to people's interdependence and interreactions over a wide area. Once again, local history is in the making, but people do not seem very sure about it.

### CAN YOU HELP?

Peter Charnley, a member of the Richard III Society, based in Derby, has transcribed a will of one **Stephyn Garett, a bowyar**, dated 1489. In his will SG describes himself as being of **Bristol**, and expresses a wish to be buried in the crowde (crypt?) of **St Nicholas**. He left his property to his wife Johan, and his son and grandchildren, less sixpence to Worcester cathedral. He owned lands in Horsham and Rusper (Sussex), and Newdegate (Surrey). Mr Charnley would be grateful for any further information about the testator. [peter.charnley@outlook.com](mailto:peter.charnley@outlook.com)

*Sue Parsons of ALHA member Winterbourne Medieval Barn Trust writes:* Last September we were very lucky to receive HLF funding and we're working hard to raise the match funding required. If we can do this, we will then be able to bring all of the buildings back into use at **Winterbourne**. So, we've launched a crowdfunding campaign and we really need your help. We're hoping to raise £7,500 which will buy much-needed educational equipment for when school groups visit. What's more, we've been chosen to take part in a '**double your donation**' project which means that for every £1.00 you could give, NESTA and HLF will match it. Here's the link to our pages on Crowdfunder where you can watch a short video about the project plus find out more details about the exclusive rewards for early subscribers: [www.crowdfunder.co.uk/winterbourne](http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/winterbourne)

That's the good news; the bad news, the fund is only available until **24 July** so please help us raise as much money as possible. If you can give, then please do so; if not, please share this email with as many people as you can. If you are on Facebook or Twitter please share the Crowdfunder link so that as many people as possible can hear about our fantastic project.

## **DIARY**

*Events notified to ALHA's website manager to end of October 2017 are on the ALHA website. If you want your event to be listed, please make sure that you send details or a copy of your programme to Bob Lawrence, contact details on page 1 top right.*