

AVON LOCAL HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY

Newsletter 154 April to July 2018

Website: www.alha.org.uk

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

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Material for **Newsletter 155** by **20 June 2018** please
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ALHA NEWS

NEWS FROM THE COMMITTEE

The committee adopted a budget for 2018-2019, to take account of the increase on postage rates from 26 March, an expected fall in individual subscription income, and a likely big reduction in proceeds from sales of ALHA booklets. The committee has authorised the treasurer to change the form of ALHA's investment so as to produce more income, if need be, so the subscription rates remain unchanged. Plans are in hand for the 2018 local history day; the 2018 edition of the *Walks, Talks & Visits* booklet edited by Sandy Tebbut; and the programme of 2018 summer walks, organised by Mike Hooper: venues include **Keynsham, Langford and St Werburgh's**. The committee has promised a grant of £100 to **Keynsham & Saltford LHS** towards its appeal to fund the erection of a memorial to victims of the 1968 floods: the appeal is under **CAN YOU HELP?** below.

ALHA LOCAL HISTORY DAY 2018 –The theme for the 2018 local history day, again at UWE's Frenchay campus, **Saturday 21 April**, will be around **religion and change**. For those

who have not already booked (nearly 80 so far, but there is still room), a flyer and booking form accompanies the paper version of this newsletter and is on ALHA's website.

Arrangements have been made for hearing loops, speedier coffee, heating, and at least 10 stall spaces have been booked.

ALHA's facebook team write: The ALHA Facebook team have now produced a slideshow publicising the **ALHA Local History Day on 21 April, 2018 at UWE**. This has recently been posted on the ALHA Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/events/1898921757088446/>. It is hoped that this slideshow will attract a few more visitors to our local history day.

- For those of you that have a Facebook page, could you share this link?
- For those that haven't, could you be kind enough to pass this on to anyone you know that would be willing to post the above link on their facebook page?

EVERY LITTLE HELPS! Any feedback about the slideshow and/or the Facebook page would be appreciated in due course, and should be sent to the ALHA dedicated email address avonlocalhistoryandarchaeology@gmail.com

NEW MEMBER: TWERTON & OLDFIELD PARK HS

Welcome to new member **Twerton & Oldfield Park HS**. Contact is David Snook, 26 Burnham Road, Twerton, Bath BA2 3RY, 01275 315 929, davidandangelas@gmail.com. 20 members. The Oldfield Park Bookshop sells Peter Little's *A detailed history of Twerton* <http://www.theoldfieldparkbookshop.co.uk/product/a-detailed-history-of-twerton/> (December 2016), which as well as tracing the history of the locality from the 11th century, includes sections on Twerton Co-operative Society, Blackmore and Langdon Nurseries, Twerton Gaol, Penniquick Colliery, weaving and the mills in Twerton, and Bath City Football Club. Profits from sales go to St Michael's Church in Watery Lane, Bath.

ALHA SUMMER WALKS 2018

A flyer for the programme, organised by Mike Hooper, accompanies this newsletter.

NEW ALHA BOOKLET: RICHARD SMITH, SURGEON

ALHA's next booklet will be *Richard Smith: Bristol Surgeon and Medical Collector 1772-1843* by Michael Whitfield. RS was the surgeon who dissected the corpse of **Hanham** murderer John Horwood (M shed has a souvenir). It will be launched at the local history day. A flyer for ordering in advance at a small discount accompanies this newsletter.

ALHA SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE

ALHA's year starts 1 April. We hope you will renew your membership. Subscription rates are as before; £3 for individuals by e-mail; £5 for individuals by post and for groups by e-mail; £7 for groups by post. Application forms accompany this newsletter. If you can pay online to bank, that saves you postage, and saves the treasurer some work, as well as depriving him of the pleasure of queueing in a bank. If you can pay by standing order – saves time, saves memory, saves work – that is even better.

ALHA WALKS, TALKS & VISTS LIST 2018

Sandy Tebbutt has been working on a new edition of the *Walks, Talks & Visits* list. As soon as it is off the press (change of printer, so please be patient), a copy will be posted to those groups and societies who have paid their subscription. Please do not copy it to non-members: ALHA would prefer the freeloaders to pay.

EVENTS AND SOURCES

GLOUCESTERSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION LOCAL HISTORY DAY

Gloucestershire Local History Association holds its annual Local History Day, *Between the Wars: Life in Gloucestershire 1919 – 1939*, **10.30am – 4pm Saturday 28 April 2018 at Churchdown Community Centre Parton Road, Churchdown, Gloucester, GL3 2JH.**

Speakers include Alan Crosby on *The local history of inter-war England: themes and challenges*; Toby Thacker - *“A few fatalities would have speeded things up”*: the outbreak of smallpox in Gloucester in 1923; and David Eveleigh - *Suburban Vernacular: housing and domestic style, 1919-1939*. **Admission free.** <https://www.gloshistory.org.uk/>

FILTON COMMUNITY HISTORY GROUP

The South Gloucestershire Heritage partnership meeting on 9 March 2018 celebrated the work of ALHA member **Filton Community History Group**, which is winding up after 20 years of oral history and publication. A cake was provided by the group, and Linda Coode, Collections Manager at ALHA member **Aerospace Bristol** outlined the achievements of the group to an appreciative audience.

Jane Tozer writes: ‘It all began with a millennium-funded history project for **Filton** schools. Jackie Sims, the enthusiastic driving force in the group, led the exploration of our Victorian history. We recorded the stories of older Filton residents. Memories of work and play going back to the 1940s were published locally in eight booklets and one - *Filton Voices* (Tempus) - came out in 2003. Many of the stories are about working at ‘the BAC’ but there are accounts of the butcher, the baker, the dairy, the laundry and other Filton businesses.

‘Lottery funding and **South Gloucestershire Council Small Grants** have helped to publish 170 interviews. Jackie Sims was instrumental in getting Filton House listed. When, in 2006, we saw the BAC centenary coming up, we convened and hosted group meetings which resulted in the area-wide BAC 100 celebration in 2010. For the BAC Centenary we did sixty five interviews which were locally published in 2011 in the book, *British Workmanship at its Best*. These interviews have also been made available to the archive at the new



Aerospace Museum on Filton airfield for their ‘listening posts’. They are also being kept for family and local history purposes at Gloucestershire Archives.

‘Meanwhile Stan Sims has been keeping a photographic record of the changes in Filton’s infrastructure, and several people have passed us their own collections of documents and photographs. These will also be archived. We published a history of the 1940 Filton Air Raid, helped Airbus while they were restoring Filton House and have advised other groups on interview techniques and best practice, but now, reluctantly, we have decided it is time to retire. All our books are available on sale or loan at Filton Library.’

ALHA would like to add its thanks to **Filton Community History Group** for the enormous amount of work it has put in over the 20 years of its existence, and the huge contribution it has made to the local history of the area.

OLD MARKET AND TRINITY WALKS, BRISTOL

Lowie Trevena of Trinity Community Arts writes: As part of Trinity’s *Heart & Soul* project, which celebrates the heritage and cultural significance of **Old Market and the Trinity Centre**, historian and

writer Dr Edson Burton is leading four guided walks during summer 2018. The walks are being held on - **Thursday 24 May**, 6pm – 8pm; - **Tuesday 12 June**, 6pm – 8pm; - **Tuesday 31 July**, 2pm – 4pm; - **Sunday 16 September**, 12 noon – 2pm. Spaces are limited, so sign up for the walks [here](#). You can find out more about the activities Trinity is running on the [Heart & Soul project page](#).

STOKE LODGE ADULT EDUCATION CENTRE, BRISTOL: HISTORY COURSES

History courses from April 2018 at Stoke Lodge, **Stoke Bishop**: brochure and booking at <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/239062/Bristol+adult+learning+course+guide+2016+to+2017/249376be-e393-4f1c-9445-011ba984f0f0> Not much local history, but the summary for *British titans of the nineteenth century* mentions Mary Carpenter, and *The European reformation 1500-1650* will be missing something if it does not acknowledge William Tyndale.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE BUILDINGS RESEARCH GROUP CRUCKFEST

GBRG offers *Understanding historic buildings*, **Saturday 12th May 2018, Porch House, Castle Street, Thornbury BS35 1HA**. Bar & tea/coffee available. Tickets £6 (£3 to GBRG members). Doors open 9.30am. Lectures 10am to 4pm include *Cruck Construction: Distribution and Dating* by Dr Nat Alcock (University of Warwick); *The historical use of salvaged building materials in Britain* by Michael Heaton (Archaeologist and building historian); *Differences in timber-framing between two counties* by Duncan James (Insight – Historic Buildings Research); *Saddles and Skew Pegs: The Construction of Cruck Buildings* by Dr Alcock again. Tickets from Porch House, Castle Street, Thornbury, BS35 1HA, or by post from the GBRG at Oakraven, Jubilee Rd, Mitcheldean, GL17 0EE (Cheques payable to the GBRG). GBRG members can reserve tickets by e-mail to: akmoir@tree-ring.co.uk and then pay at the door.

More about the Porch House (11 Castle Street), at <http://www.thornburyroots.co.uk/castle-street/11-castle-street/> and <https://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101321130-porch-house-thornbury#.Wqp48kx2thg>

BUNHILL FIELDS (REDCROSS STREET, BRISTOL) BURIAL GROUND REGISTERS 1805-1880

Bob Lawrence writes: Volunteers from ALHA member **Bristol & Avon Family History Society** have spent time in recent years transcribing the burial registers from the Bristol Municipal Cemeteries. While doing so, they also discovered and transcribed two volumes of registers labelled “Bunhill Fields”. These did not come from the well-known nonconformist cemetery in Islington, London, but from a similarly named but previously unknown burial ground in Redcross Street, Bristol, which is now the site of St Matthias Park. Research has shown that this burial ground was administered by Congregationalists, but it is uncertain if those buried there were all members of that church. The Bunhill Fields transcription is now available as a download (price £5) from B&AFHS at www.bafhs.org.uk. Transcriptions of the registers of the municipal cemeteries, as well as parish registers and other documents, are also available from the Society through the same website.

REVIEWS by Dr Jonathan Harlow unless otherwise said:

Clifton Rocks Railway and the Clifton Spa:

Maggie Shapland (Bristol Industrial Archaeological Society 2017; 317 pages fully ill. £15 at Clifton library in Princess Victoria Street, Clifton, Bristol; Bristol Archives; Clifton Suspension Bridge Visitor Centre; or by post - add £3.75 p&p - from <http://www.cliftonrocksrailway.org.uk>). *Review by Chris Harlow*

Maggie Shapland has compiled a well-researched compendium which will provide

enthusiastic students of the **Clifton** area with a *Vade Mecum* of practically everything happening to the attractions of this part of Bristol over a large part of the last 120 years. As well as dramatic narrative about the tunnelling through a clay-to-limestone sandwich to form the funicular railway, from bottom to top, much information is contained about the efforts to turn Clifton into a spa town, about the surrounding tramways and railways, about

the technical artefacts left over from the building, about the abandoning of the railway, and almost inevitably about the way that the Merchant Venturers, ever ready with their stirring spoon, interacted with other groups in the Bristol of the late 19th century.

The railway and its facilities may have ceased to be viable as a paid tourist attraction in the 1930s, but their life and their claim to serve the welfare of Bristol were not extinguished so simply. The spaces and the location were part of the Pump Room and Spa development initially; the funicular railway must have been a thrill for troglodyte travellers; some glory attended the Edwardian days; then rail trips became less interesting for customers. But when the rail trip was no longer the principal draw, the life of the Rocks and the Spa was sustained by its work as a wartime shelter, a balloon site, a Civil Defence site and as an emergency transmitting station reserve for the BBC in World War Two.

It seems almost an insult to the extraordinary labours and ingenuity of the Railway and Spa developers to relate the unhappy position that has applied since the demise of other purposes. What to do with a hole in the ground of the size and location represented has been yet a third episode in the drama; used as a site for theatricals, inveigled into business plans for revival, the process of protecting the 'hole' from looters and protecting the surface from hotel developers has occupied Council time for sixty years.

There are, surprisingly, somewhere in the region of 6,000 funicular railways in the world, and 30-plus in Britain. They hold as much fascination for enthusiasts as the mineral lines of Wales and any of the steam revival lines. The reader must, however, reckon on how much stamina they can bring to reading this 300-page tome, beautifully prepared and printed though it is. For regular dipping into, for reference and for its ability to see Clifton in a new light, it must be commended.

The Remarkable Miss Breton: Artist, archaeologist, traveller (Jane Sparrow-

Niang, Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution. 76 pp ill. £5 or downloadable free from <https://brlsi.org/node/1060>).

Review by Dilys Harlow.

"She is an artist and a very good one too... You look at Miss Breton and set her down as a weak, frail and delicate person who goes into convulsions at the slightest unconventionality in the way of living. But I assure you, her appearance is utterly at variance with her real self. She seems to court discomfort at any cost." (p 38)

Adela Breton was born in **Bath** in 1849 and educated in the pursuits of a Victorian gentlewoman, including watercolour painting, at which she excelled. She cared for her father until he died in 1887 and then, inheriting his 'propensity to wander', she set off alone for North and Central America. In Mexico she was invited to join an archaeological team in the Yucatán to copy the ancient Maya temple murals. Her beautiful and painstaking watercolours of these ancient frescoes are now, for many, their only surviving record. She was not just an artist but became a respected archaeologist and collector with an international reputation. She left her collection and paintings to the Bristol Museum and Art Gallery and to the Victoria Art Gallery, Bath. The paintings are digitalised and available online.

This book is a fascinating account of her life and work. This was not an easy task as, sadly, her diaries have disappeared. The author has woven the narrative using extracts from Adela's many letters to friends and family and from the letters of her colleagues. The result is a lively and insightful description of an indomitable, dedicated and talented woman who deserves to be better known in this country.

[*Comment by reviews editor Jonathan Harlow:* I agree with this assessment of the work, which is also well produced. Oddly, the author is not named and copyright is nowhere ascribed. But the chief criticism is that though the text often gives the sources of information and quotations, and there is also a list of most of them, data and quotes are hardly ever referenced in such a way as to enable readers to follow them up without doing their own exhaustive research. For example, the quote at the beginning of this review is ascribed to Alfred Tozzler in a letter to

his mother, date given - but where is the letter to be found? This also means that the book cannot itself be cited as a reference for much of its content, which is a shame.]

Leaving Home to Fight Liz Tomlinson & Jenny Weeks, Stoke Bishop LHG, pb, 142 pp, illus colour.

This is a full and apparently complete account of all the men who are listed on **Stoke Bishop's** four war memorials, and of some who also died in service but were not memorialised then. The biographies are

placed between short chapters on Stoke Bishop before, and during and after WWI. It is lavishly illustrated, often in colour, handsomely produced and stoutly bound. It is to be launched at the Stoke Bishop LHG meeting, 7.30 pm 27 April, at Stoke Bishop Village Hall.

The authors are to be congratulated on a solid piece of research. What a pity that, as they give no specific references, their work cannot be cited by other historians but will have to be done again!

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

BOOKS NOTICED

Stephanos Mastoris, ed., *The Welbeck Atlas: William Senior's Maps of the Estates of William Cavendish, Earl of Newcastle, 1629-1640* 304 pp; with interactive digital flashcard edited by Andrew Nicholson. Thoroton Society Record Series Volume 47 (2017). ISBN 978-0-902719-25-5 Price: £29.50 or £33 post-paid, UK. Enquiries to Rob James at sales@thorotonsociety.org.uk. Local maps include **Tormarton, Acton Turville, West Littleton, Stowey Sutton, Chew Stoke and Keynsham**. 'Digital reproductions of the maps in full colour are provided on an interactive USB flashcard. These include close-up details of villages and major topographical features. All are capable of being enlarged on screen to any desired scale. Secondly a companion book contains a Map Catalogue listing the recorded names of all villages, fields and commons depicted on each map as well as the names of their tenants. There is also a scholarly introduction by the editor, Stephanos Mastoris, and over sixty full colour plates illustrating selected complete maps as well as other significant details,' it says.



COMMENTARY

Respecting the dead

Our area contains remains of several Neolithic monuments. Largest and most impressive is the group at **Stanton Drew**, but Avon has more than 20 remains of chambered tombs, such as those at **Stowey Littleton** near **Wellow**, Fairy's Toot near **Nempnett Thrubwell**, and **Druid Stoke** in **Stoke Bishop**.

The one at the top of Druid Hill, **Stoke Bishop**, was in a field in the 1920s, but is now in the front garden of a large private house:

<http://www.megalithic.co.uk/article.php?sid=5211>

It has been turned into a garden feature, surrounded by low planting of grasses, heathers and such like. How should we feel about that? Should we applaud the gardener's ingenuity in making use of, and thereby helping to conserve,

an ancient monument? Or should we deplore the adaptation as demeaning the original, diverting its purpose, and disrespecting the dead who were presumably buried there?

Attitudes to burial places and monuments to the dead have changed over time. Some cultures have worshipped ancestors. Medieval people, as in many other cultures, revered the dead and their burial places, often from superstitious fear. In the 19th century some opposition to cremation was based on literal interpretation of early christian texts about the resurrection of the body. Even nowadays one hears it said that one should not speak ill of the dead, though exceptions seem to be made for Hitler, relations, and politicians with whom the speaker

disagrees. Museums get pressured to return artefacts to the countries they came from, on the ground that they have atavistic significance, sometimes connected with religious belief. English law allows disused burial grounds to be redeveloped, but lays down procedures for removing and dealing with the remains of the dead and their memorials, the requirements acknowledging popular sentiments and sensitivities about disturbing them.

Like doctors, archaeologists tend to take a detached view of the remains of the dead, and also of their burial places. The general view is that the benefits of the pursuit of knowledge outweigh superstitious and religious scruples or inhibitions. That is just as well, seeing that so much archaeology is about, or depends on, past people's rituals or other practices to do with

The County of Bristol

Dr Jonathan Harlow writes: **Bristol** was made a county in 1373. Irrespective of local government organisation it is still a county, with a Lord Lieutenant and a High Sheriff. Yet there remains a regrettable tendency to brigade it into one of the adjoining counties of Gloucestershire and Somerset.

This was especially so in the period of the Civil War and Interregnum. Somerset was then the favoured designation. On 1 July 1642, the Common Council disputed the jurisdiction over the city given by Parliament to the Somerset Committee, and won its own Committee and a formal recognition of Bristol's status as a distinct county by the Commons in 1643 (RCHMs V. 40). Yet the Bristol Sequestration Committee was, on paper though not in practice, subordinate to the Somerset Committee; and Bristol came under the Somerset Committee of Ejectors in 1654. When the Parliament of Saints was called in 1653, Bristol was not represented at all and Bristolian Dennis Hollister was member for Somerset.

Nowadays the problem is with archives and published records; and the confusion is with Gloucestershire. For example, John Walker's

death and the disposal of the dead body. For some civilisations and cultures, all we know about them is derived from excavating their burial sites. At the same time archaeologists are aware of people's sensitivities, and expect to accommodate them within reason.

A different question is how far it is permissible to adapt past funeral relics to modern purposes. Conservationists of a utilitarian persuasion will reckon that adaptation may be a price that has to be paid for preservation or conservation, in much the same way as some buildings have been conserved only by being put to a use different from their original purpose. If Bristol Commercial Rooms is now a Wetherspoon's, and College Green is a public open space where skateboarders show off, so be it.

original *Sufferings of the Clergy* of 1714 rightly files Bristol ministers under the heading 'Bristol' (Part II, p 3). But AG Matthews in *Walker Revised* (OUP 1948) gratuitously refiles them under 'Gloucestershire'. And the invaluable collection of Wills (PROB 11) on-line at the National Archives likewise classifies Bristol citizens as of Gloucestershire. I have a handsome communication from the Head of Cataloguing acknowledging that this is incorrect; but pointing out, very legitimately, that this was one of very first TNA on-line exercises, that it was not intended and will hardly be construed as an official downgrading of Bristol's status, and that the labour of changing all such records now could hardly be justified.

Fair enough! Nevertheless, all those who are, justly, proud of Bristol and its history are urged to be on the alert for this error and to draw it to the attention of the errant.



Rabbits

Local historians in our area have not paid much attention to rabbits. In modern equalities-speak, in our historiography they are under-represented. But at different times rabbits have served (or been served) in many ways: as sources of food and fur, as agricultural pests, as objects of sport (as seen by participants), as

fictional characters (in animation as well as prose), as competition subjects, as vehicles for marketing, and as domestic pets. One tradition was that they were introduced by the normans, but that was only inferred from the absence of earlier documentary or archaeological traces. A later tradition was that rabbits were brought into

Britain by the romans who, according to Varro, got them from Spain. More recently palaeontologists have found pre-ice age remains of them, and the view now is that they were wiped out by an ice age but were reintroduced by the romans.

One exercise might be to try to identify the earliest local references to the animals. Place names could be a starting point. Examples include Conygre houses at **Farmborough** and **Filton**; a conygre at **Tockington**; Conygre farms in **Alveston, Olveston, Timsbury** and **Itchington**; and places whose names include the word 'warren.' Field names in tithe and estate maps (eg at **Tytherington**) could be another starting-point.

In medieval times rabbits were an important source of food, a change from salted and cured meat, and an alternative to starving to death. Many landowners established warrens. **Rowberrow** and **Wrinton** had theirs, as did **Walton St Mary**. At **Abbots Leigh** St Augustine's abbey appointed a warrener, though it is not clear whether he was an obedientiary, a full-time or part-time employee or a manorial office holder; or how he was paid, whether in cash, by allocation of open field strips, or in pie. At **Tormarton** in 1336 a gang which included the vicar of **Dodington** broke into a warren and stole hares and rabbits. **Tormarton's** warren, like those at **Yate** and **Tortworth**, was in a park, which could have been for security, but might suggest that the animals were kept, along with the deer, for sport. There were about 40 parks in our area.

Rabbits have had a paw in shaping countryside landscapes. Fast breeders and voracious eaters of vegetation, they have prevented the growth of scrub and trees by eating all succulent new growth. Changes in the other direction were observed when myxomatosis reduced the population in the 1950s. Second, landowners tried to help rabbits establish and multiply by

heaping up earth into pillow mounds, in which the rabbits were supposed to dig their burrows more easily than in the hard ground underneath, and in which they could find immediate shelter from predators. Examples are at Wain Hill near **Clevedon**; Dolebury warren near **Churchill**, inside the ring of an iron age hill fort; Stoke Park in **Stoke Gifford**; and **Little Sodbury** manor. Deer parks at **Tormarton** and **Yate** contained pillow mounds.

As the **Tormarton** rabbit-rustling raid shows, rabbits have long been victims of poaching (as well as other methods of cooking), which may be one explanation why some warrens were established within deer parks, and why many were close to houses, as at **Little Sodbury**. For centuries one of the features of rural life has been conflict between landowners and the landless, the fed and the hungry, over the right to take wild animals. The game laws in the 18th and early 19th centuries were notoriously vicious and pro-landlord. Under the Night Poaching Act 1828 the sentence for a first poaching offence was hard labour; for the second, transportation. That was considered more lenient than the previous law. The Ground Game Act 1880 gave all occupiers of land the right to take rabbits, irrespective of whatever rights other people may have or claim, and irrespective of any written agreement to the contrary. The Act prohibited night shooting, spring traps and poisoning, though it was not the rabbits whose interests parliament had in mind to protect.

Keeping rabbits as pets, and interest in exotic and rare breeds, are thought to have started in Victorian times, and to have had some connection with the movement of people from the countryside to towns. It would be interesting to explore whether that was so in our area. It is not clear when breeding rabbits for show came in hereabouts: newspaper adverts might be a place to start burrowing.

Deserted villages

There is something about the sites of abandoned settlements that fascinates not only local history and archaeology people, but the wider public as well. Is it the sense of mystery, of loss? Like ruined buildings and wrecked ships, deserted villages stimulate the romantic imagination, caught so emotionally with melancholy nostalgia by Oliver Goldsmith. They excite curiosity. Who lived there? What did they do? Why did they abandon the site? What personal or community tragedies lurk under the turf? Well-known are the deserted village sites in the

midlands; less well known are those in our area. How each came to be abandoned would be worth looking into. Each, because whereas many historians sweepingly attribute the abandonment of settlements to one cause such as plague or inclosures, the reasons why people abandoned sites in our area vary from one to another.

A classic example, and the only completely abandoned whole village in our area, is **Woodwick near Freshford**, a stone's throw from the A36. In other places the original site

was abandoned, but the inhabitants moved only a short distance away. Examples include **Thornbury and Wickwar**, both originally clustered near the church. Elsewhere the villagers moved, not to found a replacement, but to be nearer a main road, which was where the traffic and the trade was. Examples include **Charfield, Winterbourne, Farington Gurney, and Alveston**. Something similar may also have happened at **Cameley**, if people moved to the main road at **Temple Cloud**.

Some villages still exist on their original site, but have shrunk, leaving traces of former fields, roads and buildings in the fields around. Examples are at **Tormarton, Horton, Kelston, Christon, Cameley, Ludwell in Hutton, Hinton and Harry Stoke**. **Cameley** is complicated because there are traces of both britanno-roman and medieval settlements. **Long Ashton** has an abandoned site west of Yanley Lane. **Wraxall** has one too. **Winscombe and Bleadon** contain abandoned sites.

Some villages were abandoned to make way for other development. **Moreton in Compton Martin** was surveyed before it was submerged. **Charlton in Almondsbury** got abandoned twice: first to make way for **Filton** airfield, and now the airfield is being built over with housing. At **Pickwick in Norton Malreward** traces of a medieval hamlet, still discernible in the fields, were subsumed into the model farm the Smyths of Ashton Court created at **Norton Hawkfield** in the 1860s.

There is not much documentary evidence to suggest that villages in our area were deserted because

of inclosures, though Rutter bemoaned their effect in north Somerset. In south Gloucestershire there are signs of abandoned open field systems in the saltmarsh, of which **Crooks Marsh north of Hallen** is a much photographed example. A more frequent cause was the creation of parks on large estates to conserve game for the landowners and keep the poachers (ie other people) out. That has been suggested at **Camerton, Kelston, Hawkesbury, Horton, Badminton and Kington near Thornbury**. Given the importance of sheep-rearing, wool, weaving and other industries in our area associated with cloth, one possible reason why many settlements were abandoned is the decline of those trades. Both Rudder, published in 1774, and Collinson, published 1791, noted the decline in the eighteenth century of many villages and towns, because of the departure of wool and cloth. Is that the explanation for **Woodwick**? Worth exploring.

CAN YOU HELP?



KEYNSHAM & CHEW VALLEY FLOOD MEMORIAL APPEAL

Richard Dyson, Chairman of Keynsham & Saltford Local History Society, writes: 2018 sees the 50th anniversary of the great flood of 1968. This event is etched on the memories of everyone who lived in the Chew Valley and much of the Bristol area at the time. It brought tragedy and misery, but also many examples of heroism and selflessness. Much has been written about the flood and at previous anniversaries exhibitions and dramatic productions have been staged to commemorate it.

Yet, apart from one flood level marker, Keynsham has no physical reminder of that night, and no memorial to those who died when their car was swept off the Chew Bridge in the town centre.

ALHA member **Keynsham & Saltford Local History Society** believes it is time to rectify this omission and is proposing a project to construct a permanent commemoration of the event. Many bridges along the River Chew were destroyed or irreparably damaged by the flood. One of these was the ancient County Bridge at Keynsham, on the Bitton Road. Built into the north parapet of this was the County Bridge Stone, sometimes known locally as the Abbot's Seat as it may have come from Keynsham Abbey. (An alternative theory, equally plausible, is that it was originally built into a Roman crossing of the River Avon at Trajectus, now generally thought to be at Keynsham.) Older residents have fond memories of sitting with "one foot in Somerset and the other in Gloucestershire". The ancient stone was swept away but later recovered; since then it has been out of sight in various Council archaeology stores.

The Society is planning to re-erect this stone in **Keynsham Memorial Park** with a commemorative plaque and an explanation of the history of the stone and the events of 10 July 1968 to inform future generations. The project has the support of Keynsham Town Council and permission to use and display the stone has been obtained from B&NES Council.

To display the stone in an appropriate way has a substantial cost and the Society is launching a public appeal to raise £5,000. It is hoped that the memorial will be unveiled on 10 July 2018.

If any readers have a connection with Keynsham and the events of that night and wish to contribute to the appeal, a donation form can be downloaded from the Society's website www.keysalthist.org.uk.

Details of how to donate online are also posted on the website.

DIARY

Events notified to ALHA's website manager 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.