

# AVON LOCAL HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY

Registered charity 270930

## Newsletter 162 31 March 2020

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

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

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

### CONTENTS

#### ALHA NEWS

James Russell  
Chairman Bob Lawrence  
Virus cancellations  
... ALHA Local history day 2020  
...and facebook  
...and summer walks  
...cancellations generally  
...and epidemic books  
Bristol historic map project  
**Subscriptions time**  
ALHA speakers list

#### SOURCES AND EVENTS

Closures of institutions  
subject to which  
Thornbury in 1980  
WsM built heritage  
Ashton Court archaeology  
Somerset HC courses  
Somerset HC changed opening hours  
*Bone Detectives*  
Nonconformist registers  
SGC area-wide grants  
SGC heritage open days

#### REVIEWS

Edited by Dr Jonathan Harlow  
*The Local Historian*  
*B&GAS Newsletter*  
*B&AFHS Journal*  
BBHA booklets digitised  
BOOKS etc NOTICED  
Salmon fishing  
Hotwells  
House names  
Filton railway stations  
Jacob's Well Road

#### COMMENTARY and RESPONSES

Crusaders' crosses  
Stumpwork  
Architectural innovation

#### CAN YOU HELP?

S Glos museums group treasurer

#### QUOTE

motto

No EVENTS DIARY this time

Material for Newsletter 163 by 20 June 2020 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.chartley@btinternet.com](mailto:lawrence.chartley@btinternet.com)  
Other news, comments, and changes of contact details to  
newsletter editor and membership secretary,  
5 Parrys Grove, Bristol BS9 1TT  
[wm.evans@btopenworld.com](mailto:wm.evans@btopenworld.com)

### ALHA NEWS

#### JAMES RUSSELL

ALHA has learned with great sadness of the death on 2 March 2020, after lengthy ill health, of James Russell. He was treasurer of ALHA member **Bristol & Avon Archaeological Society** for 40 years and led that Society's activities, often single-handed. After attending Bristol Cathedral School, JR read archaeology

at Bristol University under Keith Branigan, and volunteered at Bristol City Museum under Leslie Grinsell. Employed by the Inland Revenue, he devoted his out of work hours to archaeology. He was active in Bristol Archaeological Research Group, edited B&AAS's journal, and undertook fieldwork, eg at Barrow Gurney and Stoke Park, Stoke Gifford. For several years, after the demise of Avon Archaeological Council, JR provided archaeology updates for ALHA's Newsletter. As well as good write-ups of local archaeology [adds Dr Harlow] some self-published such as *The Civil War Defences of Bristol* (1995), local historians who were fortunate enough to attend them will gratefully remember the tours of Bristol he continued to lead despite advancing ill-health. A full account, written by JR himself, is at <http://bristolandavonarchaeology.org.uk/event-reviews/my-life-in-archaeology-40-years-as-baas-treasurer/>.

### **ALHA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN**

Now that Roger Angerson has stood down ALHA's executive committee has elected **Bob Lawrence** as its chairman. Bob has been a member of the executive committee for some years, manages ALHA's website, and is a member of the events team that organises ALHA's local history day and the annual general meeting and Joe Bettey lecture. He is also part of ALHA's publications team, which helps Dr Harlow with ALHA's booklets; and of the panel that considers applications for grants.

### **ALHA LOCAL HISTORY DAY 2020**

ALHA's local history day 2020, *Conflict in the West – war and the civilian population*, planned for Saturday 2 May 2020, 9.30 – 4.30 at St Michael's Centre, **Stoke Gifford**, Bristol, is postponed until a later date, in compliance with the government's request that we avoid gatherings. A revised date, depending on availability of speakers and venue, will be announced once circumstances permit.

Bob Lawrence has asked Eventbrite to refund payments. The treasurer has returned cheques to those who booked by post. Please let him know if you sent one but have not received it back: contact details page 1 top right.

### **ALHA FACEBOOK AND THE VIRUS**

*Jan Packer writes on behalf of ALHA's facebook team:* There is a risk that events advertised on our page might be cancelled due to the impact of Covid-19. Where we are given sufficient notice we will make every effort to update the ALHA Calendar to highlight cancellations. If you are intending to visit a group meeting we recommend that you double check before setting out.

### **ALHA SUMMER WALKS**

*Jan Packer writes:* Sorry to have to report that the ALHA Summer Walks have fallen foul of the current measures to delay spread of coronavirus, but I'm sure you all understand that just as we were finalising our programme, the first two became victim of the government's new recommendations.

We are hoping that we can reorganise dates and offer at least 3 walks later in the year when we are allowed out again.

We wish everyone all the best during these restrictions. Please do take care of yourselves and those close to you and we'll see you at our next walk. Keep an eye on the ALHA website and the facebook page for information on activities and plans – but we'll hope to be able to bring you at least 3 walks later in the summer.

### **CANCELLATIONS, WHATEVER THE REASON**

The government's discouragement of most forms of group social contact will probably have led most local groups and societies to cancel or postpone meetings and other events, but this may prompt us to consider how we should react to other disruptions to programmes, whatever the cause may be. There appear to be four main risks:

A booked speaker cries off;

Members decide not to attend a booked visit and ask for their money back;

A venue revokes a booking;

The NHS or other government agency discourages, or the government prohibits, even small gatherings.

If a speaker cries off, the question will be whether to arrange a substitute or to cancel the meeting. If members decide not to go on a planned visit, the question will be whether to cancel the event. If a venue cancels the booking, the question will be whether to try to find another venue, or to cancel the meeting. If the NHS advises against gatherings, presumably groups and societies would comply, and if the government prohibits gatherings, there will be no option.

If a speaker cries off, whether a group can find a replacement will depend on whether it wants the substitute to deal with the same topic. The more specialised the subject, the lower the chance of finding a suitable substitute to speak on that topic. If the group or its programme secretary were to entertain change of topic, there ought to be no difficulty in obtaining a replacement willing to talk on something: ALHA's *Walks, talks & visits* booklet (new edition, edited by Sandy Tebbutt, is now ready for posting to those groups who have paid their 2020-2021 subscription) asterisks some speakers willing to stand in at short notice. The question then would be whether the group ought to notify members, to give them the opportunity to decide not to attend.

If a venue revokes a booking, whether the group could find another venue would depend on what was available. The smaller the community, the more limited the choice. Searching is hard work and takes time. Even in large towns like **Bath or Bristol**, most venues will already have been booked. A presumption in favour of cancellation seems simpler. Whether the venue would return any advance payment, or a deposit, would depend on the terms of the booking. Local groups may wish to dust off the file and read the small print.

If even small gatherings are discouraged or prohibited, cancellation would be inevitable. The football solution of playing the match behind closed doors might commend itself in the case of some speakers, but would be pointless if the purpose of the meeting is to hear a talk. Some ingenious groups may try video links, some of which come as part of some e-mail or other computer software.

If a decision is made to cancel, the question would then be whether the group ought to notify members, and if so, how. That seems an elementary courtesy.

During bad weather, and sometimes during strikes, communications about school closures are carried by local radio and sometimes by local newspapers, but that would not reach all members, and the media are not likely to want to make announcements on behalf of small groups unless there is some news angle they could exploit. 'Nempnett Thrubwell LHS cancels talk' may not fall into the screaming headline category. Small village groups might be able to get the message round by word of mouth or telephone. The easiest method would be to send individual messages by e-mail or text to those members whose e-mail addresses or mobile telephone numbers are known, but in many groups they may still be a minority. Of ALHA member groups and societies, 74 (85%) receive by e-mail, but for individual members the figure is only 57 (60%), even though some of the 40% who do not receive by e-mail are known to have an e-mail address. The cost of notifying other members by post may be affordable if they are few, and not out of proportion to the group's resources, but is that practicable for the largest societies with several hundred or a thousand or more members? Or can groups assume that a general request or prohibition would be sufficiently publicised to make individual notification unnecessary?



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The insurance that goes with membership of the British Association for Local History <https://www.balh.org.uk/resources-balh-insurance-for-local-societies> does not include recovery of costs incurred for an event that is cancelled, but brokers offer various forms of event insurance. Whether they would cover cancellations because of an epidemic would depend on the wording of each individual policy. One imagines that the premiums have recently gone up, assuming that such cover is still being offered. As a rough guide, the premium for one-off event insurance (which would cover public and other forms of liability as well as cancellation and bad weather) is not likely to be available for much under £65. Again, the advice must be to read the small print. Insurers' ingenuity and imagination know no bounds when it comes to drafting exclusions and finding reasons to reject claims.

The above has been prompted by reports of the coronavirus panic, but the issues apply generally. A speaker could cry off for all sorts of reasons, as could a venue or transport provider. Groups and their members can save themselves work by making sure that members' e-mail addresses are held and up to date.

## **A LITTLE LIGHT READING**

Self-isolating? Need something uplifting to read that will cheer the spirits? How about:

- *The 1832 cholera epidemic and its impact on the city of Bristol* by Sue Hardiman, BBHA no. 114, 2005, £2.50 from Bristol Archives;
- *The Bristol microscopists and the cholera epidemic of 1849* by Michael Whitfield, ALHA books no. 9, 2011, £4.15 including p&p from the treasurer;
- *The Herapaths of Bristol: a medical and scientific dynasty* by Brian Vincent, ALHA books no.21, 2016, ditto;
- *Public health in Victorian Bristol: the work of David Davies, medical officer of health* by Peter Malpass and Michael Whitfield, ALHA books no.19, ditto.

Each booklet comes with a sense of proportion at no extra charge. Payment by cheque or direct to bank, much appreciated: ALHA cannot afford contactless.

For an international perspective, try:

- *La Peste* by Albert Camus (Gallimard, 1947; English edition Penguin 1998);
- Thucydides II.

## **ALHA GRANTS –HISTORIC TOWNS TRUST BRISTOL MAP PROJECT**

When you read ALHA's accounts for 2018-2019, which will be available after they have been approved by the committee and examined by Mike Leigh, you will see that ALHA's liabilities include a commitment of £1,000 in respect of the project to produce a revised historic map of Bristol. That is the largest grant ALHA has offered. As reported in ALHA *Newsletter* 161, the pledge was subject to conditions, one of which is that the rest of the funding required for the project is found, and that the project actually goes ahead. Bob Jones reports that the funding has now been secured with a grant from the University of Bristol. 'This means,' says Bob, 'that, with the other donations and pledges, we now have enough to go ahead with the project with an intended publication in time for Christmas.'

## **ALHA SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE**

ALHA's year starts 1 April. The government has not postponed it. 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; saves the treasurer some work, as well as depriving him of the pleasure of queueing in (or outside) a bank; and may also help reduce virus contact. If you can pay by standing order – saves time, saves memory, saves work – that is even better: the treasurer can supply a form.

## **ALHA WALKS, TALKS & VISITS LIST**

The 2020 edition of ALHA's *Walks, Talks and Visits* list, edited by Sandy Tebbutt (to whom the ALHA committee offers grateful thanks), is now ready for distribution free to those ALHA member groups and societies that have paid their subscription. If your group has not paid its sub yet, do nudge your group's treasurer. If it has paid its sub but has not received a copy, please tell ALHA's treasurer, contact details page 1 top right.

## **EVENTS AND SOURCES**

Most public services to do with local history and archaeology are now closed, but there are exceptions, and exceptions within some services. Some are closed until further notice; others until a set date; some continue to offer remote services; of those, some will be subject to staff being at work and available, which may change at short notice or without notice. What follows is believed to be correct at 9am 27 March 2020.

The following national institutions are **closed until further notice**: **The National Archives** at Kew: <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/news/coronavirus-update/>; the **British Library**: <https://www.bl.uk/news/2020/march/coronavirus>, but online services will continue.

**Bristol City Council libraries and museums** are closed until 1 May:

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/crime-emergencies/coronavirus-covid-19-what-you-need-to-know>. Even if Bristol museums open after that date, public events booked **up to 31 May** will not take place. Those museums normally closed at present, eg **Blaise Castle House**, the **Georgian House**, **Red Lodge**, and so on will not open before 1 May.

Also closed is **Bristol Archives** <https://www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/bristol-archives/> but it will continue to answer enquiries, presumably so long as staff are there. **Bristol & Avon Family History Society's** research room at B Bond is also closed.

So is **Bath Archives**: <https://www.batharchives.co.uk/covid-19-advice-visitors-bath-record-office-archives-and-local-studies>. 'We will continue to answer remote enquiries by email, telephone and post to the best of our abilities.'

**Somerset Heritage Centre** at Norton Fitzwarren is closed until further notice:

<https://swheritage.org.uk/coronavirus-information/>. Please see below for (1) courses planned, and (2) revised opening hours that will apply once opening resumes.

**Gloucestershire Archives** is closed: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives/> as is the Gloucestershire Family History Society room. 'Look out for updates from us on social media and online,' it says. 'If you have a few minutes you might like to #ExploreYourArchiveAtHome. You can search our collections online at <https://ww3.gloucestershire.gov.uk/CalmView/> or browse or contribute to our online mapping resource *KnowYourPlace* at <http://www.kypwest.org.uk/>'

**National Trust** houses, cafes and shops are closed, as are the parks at **Tyntesfield** and **Dyrham**, the latter not because of the virus but to enable the ground to recover from waterlogging and wear and tear: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/days-out/regionsouthwest/bath-and-bristol>. For **Clevedon Court**, which would not normally open before May anyway, please refer to the website: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/clevedon-court>

Many local museums are closed. They include **Kingswood Heritage Museum**:

<http://www.kingswoodmuseum.org.uk/>, **Aerospace Bristol**, <https://aerospacebristol.org/covid-19> **Winterbourne Medieval Barn**, and so on... **Thornbury & District Museum** is closed until further notice: more detail at [http://www.thornburymuseum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Museum\\_Closure\\_notice.pdf](http://www.thornburymuseum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Museum_Closure_notice.pdf), and please see below for an exhibition that will resume after re-opening.

The following events were planned, are now suspended, but may continue once the venue reopens. Please direct any enquiries to the venue or the organiser.

### **THORNBURY IN 1980**

Exhibition at **Thornbury & District Museum**, 4 Chapel Street, Thornbury, Tuesdays 1pm to 4pm and Fridays and Saturdays 10am to 4pm, *Thornbury in 1980*:

[http://www.thornburymuseum.org.uk/am\\_event/thornbury-in-the-1980s/](http://www.thornburymuseum.org.uk/am_event/thornbury-in-the-1980s/), free. Current exhibitions will reopen.

### **WESTON-SUPER-MARE BUILT HERITAGE EXHIBITION**

**Weston Museum** is closed 'at least until the end of April, <https://www.westonmuseum.org/>.



when *From Village to Town: Weston-super-Mare's Built Heritage* will resume. 'This exhibition brings together objects, images and film to tell the story of **Weston-super-Mare's** architectural development over the past 250 years. It expands on Historic England's new publication *Weston-super-Mare: The Town and its Seaside Heritage* (noticed below). The exhibition celebrates a complex and remarkable heritage which reflects Weston's transformation from a small village to a busy seaside resort. *From Village to Town* has been created by the South West Heritage Trust in partnership with North Somerset Council and Historic England.' **Weston Museum, Burlington Street, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1PR** 01934 621028, free, **until 9 May 2020, 10.00 to 4.30.**

### ARCHAEOLOGY AT ASHTON COURT

This event is postponed until 2021: <https://www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/bristol-museum-and-art-gallery/learning/archaeology-ashton-court/> Kate Iles, Curator of Archaeology for Bristol Culture and Creative Industries, [kate.iles@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:kate.iles@bristol.gov.uk). More at <https://www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/tag/field-school/>

### SOMERSET HERITAGE CENTRE COURSES

- Common Phrases in Latin and English

Tue 28 Apr, 10.00 am - 1.00 pm. This half-day course looks at phrases often found in documents used for family, house and local history research. £12.

- VE Day 75

Mon 11 May, 10.00 am - 12.30 pm. This talk and exhibition is part of a national programme of events marking VE Day 75, and focuses on archival sources relating to Somerset and the Second World War, with a tour of the strongrooms. £5.

- How to Read Old Handwriting

Tue 22 Sep - 20 Oct, 10.00 am - 12.30 pm This 5 week course will look at handwriting from the 16th Century to the 20th Century using a range of documents held at the Somerset Heritage Centre. £48.

Booking is essential for all courses. To book please call 01823 278805, or e-

mail [somersetarchives@swheritage.org.uk](mailto:somersetarchives@swheritage.org.uk). Somerset

### SOMERSET HERITAGE CENTRE OPENING HOURS

SHC's opening arrangements have changed. When it reopens the opening hours will be:

- Tuesday to Friday 10.00 am – 5.00 pm (document productions 10.00 am – 4.00 pm)
- The 2nd Saturday of each month 9.00 am – 1.00 pm (please see below for dates and details)

'The public searchroom is closed on Mondays, and on public and bank holidays.

Saturday Opening Hours: the second Saturday of each month 9.00 am – 1.00 pm (last document orders at 12 noon on the preceding Friday), but the actual dates are:

- Saturday 18 April (Rescheduled to third Saturday of the month to account for Easter)
- Saturday 16 May (Rescheduled to third Saturday of the month to account for changed May Bank Holiday)
- Saturday 13 June
- Saturday 11 July
- Saturday 8 August
- Saturday 12 September
- Saturday 10 October
- Saturday 14 November
- Saturday 12 December

When booking appointments for Saturday opening:

- Please order documents in advance, by 12.00 pm on the preceding Friday
- Up to 12 documents per visitor may be pre-ordered for a Saturday visit
- It may not be possible to order further documents during Saturday opening.'

## **BONE DETECTIVES**

The Channel 4 series of television programmes “*Bone Detectives: Britain’s Buried Secrets*,” one of which includes a **Bristol** site, has been postponed until June 2020.

## **NONCONFORMIST REGISTERS**

*Bob Lawrence writes:* Last September, family history researchers with an interest in the greater Bristol area welcomed the release on the Ancestry subscription website of the parish registers of the **Bristol Diocese** of the Church of England. During March 2020, a further batch of records was made available, and these are over 400,000 nonconformist records held by **Bristol Archives**. With both sets of records, there is an index with transcription, together with a high-quality digital image of the original document.

The coverage of this later batch of records is significantly different from the Church of England registers in the earlier release. “Nonconformist” includes Quaker and Roman Catholic records, and the originals of the latter are often in Latin. A much wider geographical area is covered, so Methodist records from Shepton Mallet and Burnham on Sea are included, although the coverage depends very much on the denomination. While Anglican records for the Bristol Diocese are as comprehensive as the survival of records has allowed, and date back to 1538 in some cases, the nonconformist records tend to be later in date, although there are both Quaker and Baptist records from the mid-seventeenth century. In addition, some records for important local churches are not held locally, or may have been lost at some time. There are no registers for the Moravians, for example, although these are available elsewhere online, and nothing for Counterslip Baptist Church.

Researchers who have mainly used Church of England records will know that the format was gradually standardised over the years, especially with marriages which had an importance legally. The nonconformist records vary enormously in their style and the detail they have. Many chapels did not have burial grounds, and some denominations placed little or no importance on baptism. A marriage in most nonconformist churches could only be legally performed from 1837 onwards, and only became commonplace much later. Despite these limitations, these new records will be a valuable addition to the sources available to local and family historians, and will often resolve gaps and difficulties in research.

Bob Lawrence, **Bristol & Avon Family History Society**

## **SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNCIL AREA-WIDE GRANTS 2020**

**South Gloucestershire Council** invites applications for Area Wide Grants from voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations. Area Wide Grants can be applied for to support community projects, events or services designed to meet the needs of residents in at least [six of the 14 Community Engagement Forum \(CEF\) areas](#) in South Gloucestershire. A budget of £70,000 is available for the financial year 2020/21. The deadline for applications in Round 1 is **30 April 2020**. The maximum award is £3,000, with flexibility for exceptional circumstances and budget availability.

Applying organisations must be registered with SGC’s Grants Online System, and must be approved before making an application. For more information please see SGC’s [Registration Guidance](#). Applications should be for projects and services being delivered from August 2020. For further information on the scheme please go to South Gloucestershire Council’s webpage [southglos.gov.uk/AWG](http://southglos.gov.uk/AWG). Criteria are at [Principles for Area Wide Grants](#). You can contact the Grants Helpline for advice or to request an application form, if your organisation is already registered, 01454 865865 or email [grants@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:grants@southglos.gov.uk).

## **SOUTH GLOS HERITAGE OPEN DAYS 2020 – REGISTRATION NOW OPEN**

*Jane Marley writes:* Heritage sites are closed due to the coronavirus, and we do not know when they will open. However, we all need to plan for the future and prepare for when we do open. If we are

unable to open our sites by the time Heritage Open Days occurs, **11 – 20 September 2020**, we will not publish the events.

Therefore, I am writing to invite you to register your events for Heritage Open Days 2020 in South Gloucestershire. Join us in sharing the fantastic buildings and heritage of our area with its residents and visitors.

You can register your South Gloucestershire event [here](#). **Registration closes at 17.00hrs on Wednesday 27 April.** Registrations submitted after this time will not be picked up, so please do ensure that your registration reaches us by the deadline. [If you have a photo of your venue that you will like us to include in our publicity, please email this directly to \[jane.marley@southglos.gov.uk\]\(mailto:jane.marley@southglos.gov.uk\)](#)

[The national Heritage Open Days theme for 2020 is](#) 'Hidden Nature' to celebrate our extraordinary natural heritage, from centuries-old trees to farmer's fields steeped in history, from clifftop walks to urban oases, and everything in between.

This year the national Heritage Open Days scheme is running for ten consecutive days from **11 to 20 September**; you can open your doors for as much or as little of this time as you want; you can pick just one weekend, one day or even one hour. There are lots of different things you can do as long as your event is free and accessible to all. You can find out more about what makes a Heritage Open Day [here](#).

If you register with South Gloucestershire, we will promote your event on our website and in a South Gloucestershire leaflet that will be distributed to libraries and other Council venues. We will also promote Heritage Open Days in South Gloucestershire as a whole on our social media platforms.

After you have registered with South Gloucestershire, go to the on-line link of the national Heritage Open Days website [here](#) to also register your event on the national Heritage Open Days website and to carry out your own publicity to maximise your chances of attracting a good audience for your events.

If you have any further questions, please do get in touch.

Jane Marley, Museums and Heritage Officer, South Gloucestershire Council, 01454 865783  
MOB: 07808 364704.

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

I have received no books for review this quarter. Please note that I am happy to review a book on loan (subject to safe arrangements for movement): I don't have to be given a copy to keep.

*The Local Historian* 50.1 (Jan 2020) is full of West Country material though none for the Avon area. Slocombe & Ottewill discuss 'Electoral Revision Courts in nineteenth-century Wiltshire'. Mark Forrest uses Court of Common Pleas records to analyse the occupational structure of Dorset in the fifteenth century – interesting well-analysed data, but a caution about occupations as given for a single occasion might have been in order: there is good evidence to show that the occupation as recorded for a single individual might vary according to source and occasion. And whether or not in or close to our region, these articles can always be valuable in suggesting new questions and new sources.

None of ALHA's books and no Bristol books get reviewed here or in the accompanying *Local History News*; but the Somerset Record Society *Handlist of Somerset Probate Inventories & Administrators' Records 1482-1924* is well received as 'a valuable work of reference'.

*Bristol & Gloucestershire AS Newsletter* 86 (March 2020) seeks members' views on the future of the society. There is an update on the Victoria County History for Gloucestershire: expect volumes on South Gloucestershire, on Cheltenham and on Cirencester. A brief but well-illustrated piece on the Roman villa at Cam; and an introduction to the database of Anglo-Saxon burials in southern Britain: [www.ucl.ac.uk/early-medieval-atlas/map-data/beyond-tribal-hidage-data](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/early-medieval-atlas/map-data/beyond-tribal-hidage-data).



*Journal of the B&AFHS* 179 (March 2020). Closures of searchrooms and libraries make more welcome than ever Bob Lawrence's update on internet sources. There is an interesting account by Stephen Bumstead of Bristol's first(?) film star, Robert House Peeters who played roles in films by Cecil B de Mille and others between 1913 and 1928: eg *The Girl of the Golden West* and *Raffles*. A potentially interesting story of William Pullin who was sentenced to life for the killing of a policeman is robbed of local history status by the absence of references. And there are of course the usual family history investigations.

Driven as they are upon their own resources, our readers will be pleased to hear of and profit by the valuable work of Dr Evan Jones assisted by Dr Richard Stone for the **Bristol Record Society**. They have digitised all the 120 booklets published by the Bristol Branch of the Historical Association and several classics of **Bristol** history such as Barrett and Beaven. Go to <http://www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/History/bristolrecordsociety/links.htm> for the current list; or the Publications page where you will see that nearly all but the most recent BRS volumes are available for download in good clean copies.

## **BOOKS etc NOTICED**

Sue Stops, *Hotwells: spa to pantomime*, Bristol Books 2020, 80pp, pb, £10  
<https://www.bristolbooks.org/new-products/hotwells-spa-to-pantomime>, or from author on 0117 939 7999.

Nick Large, *The glorious uncertainty: salmon fishing on the river Severn*, £20 from **Thornbury & District Museum**, 4 Chapel Street, Thornbury, Tuesdays 1pm to 4pm and Fridays and Saturdays 10am to 4pm, [www.thornburymuseum.org.uk](http://www.thornburymuseum.org.uk)

Laura Wright, *Sunnyside: a sociolinguistic history of British house names*, Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 2020, 250pp, illustr. Includes pub names as well as house names. More at [https://global.oup.com/academic/product/sunnyside-9780197266557?cc=us&lang=en&promocode=&utm\\_source=adestra&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=Sunnyside%20-%20Image&utm\\_campaign=Newsletter#](https://global.oup.com/academic/product/sunnyside-9780197266557?cc=us&lang=en&promocode=&utm_source=adestra&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Sunnyside%20-%20Image&utm_campaign=Newsletter#)

Mike Oakley has compiled a history of *Filton's railway stations*, halt and platform. A4, including photographs and diagrams, £5 plus £1 p&p from Mike, but no p&p for **Filton**, 0117 969 2351, [mro6085@virginmedia.com](mailto:mro6085@virginmedia.com)

Andrew Swift, 'The life of Jacob's Well', short article in 189 *The Bristol Magazine*, March 2020, 86-87. A succinct account of the former Woodwell valley area, with an image of the White Hart inn (demolished 1877).

## **COMMENTARY AND RESPONSES**

### **Crusaders' crosses**

Bosham in West Sussex is where king Cnut is supposed to have commanded the tide not to come in. Bosham's little church is ancient. It contains Roman masonry (Fishbourne palace is just up the road). Several Saxon architectural features survive. It is depicted, and named, in the Bayeux needlework. Another unusual feature is that on the inner jambs of the porch are incised crosses. They are reputed to have been cut by returning crusaders who, on making landfall, gave thanks in the nearest church and blunted their swords as a sign of peace.

That tradition must be suspect. There is no reference to it until the nineteenth century, which suggests that Victorian romantics dreamed it up. In medieval times it would have been advisable to keep a sword ready for action. One set of such crosses is at Little Faringdon in Oxfordshire, which is not exactly coastal. But peculiar habits with a touch of the symbolics do occur: look at the padlocks threatening to defeat the motor that moves Pero's bridge over St Augustine's reach in **Bristol**. If returning crusaders did have such a practice, we might expect to see similar crosses in church porches in south coast ports: there is one in Deal. We might also expect to see examples in other international ports, eg **Bristol**, where the knights crusader had a strong presence: **Temple** parish, Street, Quay, Meads and so on. (Not in **Temple Cloud**, because that is inland, and the Templar connection there was land ownership, not operational activity). But there do not seem to be any crusaders' crosses in Bristol. The nearest one is in **Westbury on Severn** in Gloucestershire.

[Image from David Ross in: counties/glouces/churches/Westbury/Westbury-2073-07042007.jpg, at:



<https://www.britainexpress.com/counties/glouces/churches/Westbury/Westbury-2073-07042007.htm>]. Westbury's crosses differ from Bosham's in that Westbury's have additional crossbars, rather like a cross of Lorraine or a patriarchal cross, but they have the same gouges at the extremities. Local tradition does not say whether they were cut by crusaders of local origin on return, or who had had enough and asked to be dropped off from a boat on the way up-river, or who were booked to Bristol but were shipwrecked or misdirected by a drunken channel pilot.

Is it correct that there are no crusaders' crosses in Bristol? Perhaps there were, but they have disappeared. In a commercial town perpetually renewing or upgrading its fabric, and with the clergy exhorting the rich to expiate their guilt and buy eternal bliss or by-pass purgatory by giving to the church, porches will have got replaced. At Mary **Redcliffe** the north porch will have obliterated much earlier stonework. Something perhaps to look out for when old masonry is being uncovered, which is how James Russell made his first discovery in archaeology.

## Stumpwork



Local history can crop up unexpectedly. For example, we might not expect a museum in **Bath** to display an exhibit relevant to an incident centuries ago in a village miles away. The Holburne museum <https://www.holburne.org/the-collection/history-of-the-collection/> is based on the collection of a nineteenth century bachelor, augmented by gifts over the years. One such gift, in 1963, is of a piece of stumpwork. Stumpwork involves raising the embroidery by padding or other materials. The effect is not unlike low relief in sculpture. The piece in question (F236) depicts Charles II: hiding in the oak tree at

Boscobel after the battle of Worcester in 1651; posing, crowned, with his wife Catharine of Braganza; and in the top right hand corner, riding with Jane Lane, disguised as her servant, as he took him south on the pretext of visiting her relations the Nortons at **Abbots Leigh**, from where the black boy moved on to Trent, then to the south coast, and thence to safety in France. The image is from the Holburne website, <http://collections.holburne.org/object-f236>. The piece, made after the king's restoration, is dated to about 1665, and is typical of the iconography produced by royal devotees. It is not known who made it: Holburne's curator suggests it was most likely a woman in a wealthy household, but points out that there were male professional embroiderers – not surprising in view of the industrial quantities of embroidered bling flaunted by sitters in contemporary portraits. Worth a visit when the Holburne reopens after the virus panic, though the charge of £12.50 that applied before closure might be a deterrent. The shop offers a postcard reproduction.

### **Architectural innovation**

When they design buildings, architects have to work under constraints: the size, shape, slope and aspect of the site; planning restrictions; the developer's or funder's requirements; how much money they are prepared to lash out. Within those constraints, architects can choose whether to adopt a past or existing style of design, or to invent a new one.

In Victorian times the establishment's new churches were designed mostly in neo-gothic style; most nonconformist chapels, whose donors and trustees had less money but better taste, in neo-classical. Even in the 1960s churches in **Southmead** (St Stephen, 1959) and **Whitchurch** (St Bernadette, 1968, James Leask) were being built with bell towers. Only in Bristol's **Broadmead** did the Baptists adopt a new design (1969, Ronald Sims), squeezed into what was left after the city council had given priority to mammon.

Sometimes architects have to design buildings for which there is no precedent. In the 1830s there were no medieval or jacobean railway stations that IKB could take for a model, nor were there georgian airport terminals to be copied at **Lulsgate** (1957). When a new activity or business comes along, architects may have to innovate, or adapt rather than copy.

We might have expected to see innovative designs in our area. For many years **Bristol** was second only to London in terms of population; it had international trade links; it had a wide variety of manufacturing and associated services; and it had some wealthy people who could afford to throw money at designers. Local people must have been innovating all the time, if only to compete. Similarly at **Bath**, where fashion might have spurred innovation. In fact there are few examples of really innovatory architecture in our area. At **Filton** George White's state-of-the-art aeroplanes were built and garaged in that most traditional of all local buildings, the shed. Where innovation did occur, it tended to be hidden by traditional nonsense. At **Temple Meads** IKB's buildings aped tudor styles. His train shed roof hides its innovative structure behind arrays of mock hammerbeams of only decorative purpose (IKB knew his engineering and he knew his clients). At **Clifton** his suspension bridge, structurally innovative in many respects, has piers dressed up like something out of Luxor and, if the bridge had been built as designed, sphinxes would be crouching at the anchorages. The former Central Electricity Generating Board's offices on **Bedminster Down** (Arup, 1975) contained many innovatory features, including a heat sink, but the idea of putting central office support services along a central thoroughfare was hardly original: it is called a street.

Where architectural innovation did occur, it was not always home-grown. On the **Bristol harbourside** B Bond, home of Bristol Archives and The Create Centre (1908, Bristol Docks Committee engineer) used a type of internal reinforcement new to Britain at the time, but it was licensed from its French inventor. **Clifton** cathedral (Percy Thomas partnership 1965) is said to have been innovative in its use of in situ cast concrete (Metaphorical?), but only because of its application to a religious building. **Clevedon**'s most striking building is the former market hall (Hans Price, 1869), said by some architectural critics and historians to derive from Chinese pagodas, but more likely from timber stave churches in Norway. Mildly innovative were the designs for **Radstock** market hall (T Martin, 1898, using rolled steel). Originality did not take off in our

area until recently, with the ecohome at **Bristol's** Create Centre (Bruges Tozer 1996), and the ecologically correct architecture building at UWE's **Frenchay** campus, actually in **Stoke Gifford** (2002, designed within UWE). If you looked forward to the Arenal as an opportunity for our area to have a world-class iconic building of revolutionary design, tough: it looks as if it's going to be an adapted hangar, which takes us back to George White's sheds.

## **CAN YOU HELP?**

### **South Gloucestershire Museums Group wants a treasurer**

*Roger Gosling writes:* **South Gloucestershire Museums Group** needs a Volunteer Treasurer. This person needs to be a member / volunteer with one of the S Glos Museums. I am sure anyone who is not already would be welcomed by any of these (Acton Court, Aerospace Bristol, Avon Valley Railway, Dyrham Park, Frenchay Village Museum, Kingswood Heritage Museum, Rolls-Royce Heritage Trust, South Gloucestershire Mines Research Group, Thornbury & District Museum, Winterbourne Medieval Barn Trust, Yate & District Heritage Centre).

The work normally involves fewer than 20 transactions per year (each of the eleven groups pay £5 sub), four meetings in a (normal ie non COVID) year, attendance at which is desirable but not essential, use of email, basic "in and out" financial transactions. The full job description is at <https://www.cvs-sg.org.uk/south-gloucestershire-museums-group-treasurer/>, and other details are available from [roger.gosling@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:roger.gosling@blueyonder.co.uk). The closing date for applications is **17 April 2020**.

Roger Gosling, Vice Chairman South Gloucestershire Museums Group

## **QUOTE**

The past we inherit: the future we make.

*Durham Miners Association motto.*

## **EVENTS DIARY**

*Events notified to ALHA's website manager are listed on the ALHA website. If you want your event to be listed, please send details or a copy of your programme to Bob Lawrence, contact details on page 1 top right. Please tell him of any changes of regular venue or timing. The list is not attached to this newsletter because most events have been cancelled or postponed, and not all changes may have been notified to Bob, so ALHA may not have full information.*