



AVON LOCAL HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

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What statue?

e-update 30 November 2020

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CONTENTS

ALHA items

Ivor Grimstead
Harold Lane
Meetings online
How was your AGM?
Difficulty with hyperlinks?
New ALHA booklet - surgery

Horse buses

Bristol poll book 1852
Kip's Gloucestershire engravings
Museum replicas
Return everything
African Europeans
Historic Bristol map
Whitchurch LHS reprints

Events and sources

Public libraries
National Trust gardens
S Glos heritage open days 2021
Institute of Historical Research
Online seminars
Online resources list
Bristol zoo move

Commentary and responses

What people do
Overshopped
Replicas
Special education
Gaps

Books etc noticed

Bristol recognizances
Historic England research audit

Quote

Simon Armitage

ALHA ITEMS

IVOR GRIMSTEAD 1940-2020

Jan Packer writes: Ivor was a significant figure amongst those interested in history within the **Knowle** area. With a special interest in the **Filwood** area he established ALHA member **Filwood Chase History Society** (FCHS) whose meetings have only recently become well enough publicised for many of us to recognise the bijou Heritage Room that had been their home at The Park for the past 20 years. We hope that FCHS will survive his passing and flourish through the forthcoming challenges as The Park is due for significant renovation in the next couple of years, which will set a rocky path for their group in coming months.

FCHS don't host talks but are delighted to welcome visitors. They are open on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons 1-4pm (lockdown weeks excepted). More at

<https://theparkcentre.org.uk/wp/>

HAROLD LANE

ALHA's committee has heard with great regret of the death of Harold Lane, who used to live in **Southmead**, and more recently in **Frampton Cotterell**, where he was active in ALHA member **Frampton Cotterell & District LHS**. HL drew elegant and attractive versions of the tithe maps for various parishes in **south Gloucestershire and Bristol**, many of which have helped to illustrate local history publications, eg Veronica Bowerman's books on **Henleaze**. An example of HF's work, for **Stoke Gifford**, is at <https://stokegiffordhistory.wordpress.com/0178-1842-tithe-map/>

MEETINGS ONLINE

Since the government started restricting the number of people that can lawfully meet, hardly any ALHA member groups and societies have held normal meetings or talks. Many individuals have preferred to avoid gatherings anyway, and may continue to do so. As few groups meet during the summer, the restrictions did not affect that aspect of what groups and societies do. Now that most societies would normally expect to have started their autumn and winter programmes, some of them have been looking at alternatives.

One alternative is to host talks online. One means is via *Zoom*, which is free for up to 40 minutes a session with a maximum of 100 participants. Some groups have bought or use a version which allows more time and more participants. **Bristol Museum** and **Yate Heritage Centre** have used *Zoom* to host several talks, some of the former's in collaboration with one or more local groups. ALHA groups and societies that have used *Zoom* to host a programmed talk include **Yatton LHS**, **Marshfield & District LHS**, **Stoke Bishop Local History Group** (which has put its entire programme online) and the **Bristol section of Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society** (which has arranged some online talks for its own members, others in collaboration with other societies such as **Bristol & Avon Archaeological Society and Bristol city museum**). ALHA's committee has held some meetings via *Zoom*, though not all members have been able to participate. **South Gloucestershire Heritage Forum**, which is organised by **South Gloucestershire Council**, will have held its latest meeting using Microsoft *Teams*, which is advertised as free. Attenders will no doubt make comparisons with *Zoom*.

Meetings online need not be confined to members of a particular group or society. *Rita Lees of Marshfield & District LHS writes: 'Marshfield & District Local History Society will be continuing their talks, via Zoom, into 2021. This will be a limited service for members only but new members are welcome. Anyone interested should use the Contact Page on our website: www.marshfieldhistory.uk As soon as mass vaccinations have taken place and government regulations allow, we shall revert to our physical meetings at Marshfield Church Hall.'*

Local history people will be hoping that resort to meetings and talks online will be a temporary measure, lasting only until it is lawful, and acceptable to individuals, to congregate again. No-one can be sure when that is going to be possible. Uncertainties include how the virus will behave; how far government measures succeed in controlling its spread; how far the public or sections of it will tolerate and observe government advice and requirements; whether the virus or a variant of it will become endemic; whether vaccines of different sorts will have different effects; when vaccines will be made available, and if so, to what categories of people and over what timescale; whether older people will be regarded as expendable or to be protected; how confident individuals are about social gatherings; what requirements venues will impose; and so on. Not that we are going to let any of that get us down.

Local groups and societies have a choice. They can shut up shop, for the duration as it were; they can continue to do local history activities, but not those that involve people congregating; or they can devise other ways of operating. Holding meetings online is one possible way. There will be restrictions, and only the larger societies will be able to afford the cost of large-capacity online events: *Zoom Pro*, for example, at present costs over £100 a year. There can be technical glitches. But some meetings and talks online is better than no meetings at all, and can go some way to restoring the social and interactive benefits that come from gatherings in person.

Not all members of a group or society will have online access. Of those that are online, not all will have up to date hardware or bandwidth capacity to allow the application to work properly. Some will not be comfortable using the application. Most groups try to be as inclusive as possible. We welcome people with disabilities, and would try to make reasonable adjustments to allow them to participate even if the law did not require us to do so. Some of our groups' members have never used a computer or other electronic devices. Others have deliberately decided not to use these devices, thereby disabling themselves from access to the benefits modern technologies provide. However, it ought to be possible for local groups and societies to devise ways of including in online meetings as many members as possible. Until the present difficulties are resolved, that seems a sensible way forward.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS, GENERALLY

How are local groups and societies managing their annual general meetings? A reader has asked, so here goes. Some groups do not bother with them, but if a group has a constitution, that document will probably require agms to be held approximately once a year. Some people regard agms as boring, or as a distraction from practical activity, or as a waste of time. Others see the agm as the essence of local democracy: as former ALHA president Roger Angerson of **Frenchay Tuckett Society** used to say, 'This is your chance to say what you like about what we do, how we do it, and what else we ought to be doing.' Or as another trustee puts it, 'If you don't attend an agm and a daft decision is made, you have only yourself to blame.' Apart from facilitating orderly governance and accountability, agms are also useful because they make us take stock, to reflect on what the group has done (or not done) in the past year, to review the group's finances and make any necessary adjustments, to re-elect or remove those running the show, and perhaps to think about the future.

What business an agm should consider will depend on what the group's constitution says. Standard items include approving or amending the minutes of the previous agm; receiving a report on what the group has done over the past year; receiving the group's accounts and, if independent examination is required, the examiner's report or certificate; electing people with particular responsibilities; and considering proposals put to the meeting, which may range from the tea rota to winding up the group and disposing of its assets. It might also be an opportunity to thank those who have been working their socks off behind the scenes.

Such business may not be of gripping interest, so it is not surprising the some agms do not attract many attenders. If the constitution requires a quorum, and not enough people attend, any decision may be invalid. No problem if no-one objects, but what if someone does? An inquorate resolution to increase the subscription, for example, might not be binding. So some societies, including ALHA, try to lure people to the agm by following it with a talk, preferably by a speaker known to be popular or non-soporific. When ALHA's Joe Bettey lecture has been given by a speaker spangled with television stardust, like Mick Aston or Ronald Hutton, the attendance has been over 100; otherwise, not.

One of the effects of the virus has been that most agms have had to be postponed or abandoned altogether. This may worry sticklers for constitutional propriety, but for those groups that are registered charities the Charity Commission accepts that compliance with legal requirements may not be practicable: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-the-charity-sector#agms-and-other-meetings-postponing-or-cancelling-meetings> Those groups that want or need an agm will therefore look for other means.

Solutions being adopted include:

1. separate the agm from the talk or other event, and defer the talk to another occasion, perhaps offering it online;
2. give members the opportunity to vote by post or by e-mail;
3. hold the agm online, using an application such as *Zoom* or Microsoft *Teams*.

If the agm will last under 40 minutes, the free version of *Zoom* is likely to be suitable.

Attendees are limited to 100. If a group wants to exceed those limits, other versions of *Zoom* are purchasable, eg *Zoom Pro* at £119.90 for a year. Managing a meeting using these applications is straightforward, so long as simple rules are observed if those speaking are not to be interrupted. It is doable. **Frampton Cotterell & District LHS** has kindly offered to host ALHA's delayed annual general meeting via *Zoom*. Notice and papers will accompany Newsletter 165 to be issued 31 December 2020. How does your group manage?

NEW ALHA BOOKLET – SURGERY IN C18 BRISTOL

By the time you read this, ALHA's latest blockbuster ought to have been extracted from the printers and will be ready for dispatch to those wanting it for Christmas, with the usual early bird discount. **A flyer accompanies this e-update.** Orders by post to the treasurer by or e-mail to wm.evans@btopenworld.com will be fine, and if you can pay online, that will be even better.

HYPERLINKS

If not all the hyperlinks in ALHA newsletters and e-updates have worked for you, one reason may be that a full stop at the end of a sentence has been included in the hyperlink. I will try to make sure that full stops are not included in hyperlinks, but if one gets through the net, one remedy is to select and copy the hyperlink and paste it into your browser without the full stop. Thanks to ALHA individual member Ruth Hecht for drawing attention to this.

EVENTS AND SOURCES

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

All public libraries in our area are now closed, at least until **2 December**. For the latest information and local variations (online services, for example, mostly continue), please see the websites noted in the end of October e-update. All loans are automatically extended.



NATIONAL TRUST PREMISES

National Trust gardens and parklands remain open. Cafés are open for takeaway only. All National Trust houses and shops in England are closed until **Wednesday 2 December**. It is still required to book visits online. https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/how-to-book-your-visit-and-what-to-expect?campid=email_central_04NovEngClos2

SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE HERITAGE OPEN DAYS 2021

SGC has pencilled in **10 to 19 September 2021** for next year's heritage open days.

THE LOCAL HISTORIAN DIGITISED

Ian Chard points out that each back issue from 1952 of *The Local Historian* is now accessible online via the British Association for Local History's website, and apart from the current number is free to view and download during the restrictions against gatherings.

<https://www.balh.org.uk/thelocalhistorian> IC holds ALHA's stock of paper copies of *The Local Historian*, which ALHA members are welcome to borrow on request:

ian.chard@talktalk.net

NATIONAL LOTTERY GRANTS FOR HERITAGE

Jane Marley reports that National Lottery Heritage Fund has announced a phased reopening of project funding through its National Lottery Grants for Heritage. In the first phase, which started 25 November, it will resume accepting applications for grants from £3,000-£10,000 and £10,000-£100,000, looking for projects with a particular emphasis on organisational resilience and inclusion. In the second phase, beginning **8 February 2021**, it will resume accepting applications for grants from £100,000-£250,000 and £250,000-£5m. Through the funding, National Lottery Heritage Fund wants 'to grasp the possibilities that this trying period offers for positive change across the heritage sector,' it says. More at



<https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/blogs/were-backing-heritage-sector-adapt-and-thrive-again>

NATIONAL ARCHIVES ONLINE

Ian Chard draws attention to TNA's allowing free downloading of many categories of source material access to which it charged for before lockdown. You have to register, and then you are allowed 100 free downloads over 30 days:

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/news/digital-downloads/> TNA also offers talks online, as mentioned in ALHA's e-update 30 April 2020:

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/visit-us/whats-on/events/online-talks/>

THE INSTITUTE OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Online seminars

Jane Marley draws attention to the IHR's series of online seminars in collaboration with historians of various kinds and with institutions across the UK and internationally. Seminars for 2021-22 range from environmental humanities and histories of the anthropocene, to history of health, medicine and wellbeing, global histories, politics and risk, as well as seminars on historical practices, resources and challenges for the profession. A full listing is available, with further details of the seminars and the convening teams (and institutions) added to the IHR website shortly. For more information see

<https://blog.history.ac.uk/2020/11/timely-interventions-and-conversations-ih-announces-its-new-partnership-seminars-2021-22/>

Researching British History online

Jane Marley draws attention to a video of a training workshop, 'Researching British History online'. Organised by the IHR and London University Senate House Library, the workshop provides introductions to four key resources for studying British and Irish history: the [Bibliography of British and Irish History](#) (BBIH), [British History Online](#) (BHO), Mass Observation Online, and the IHR's Library's new guide to '[Teaching British histories of race, migration and empire](#)'. The workshop also drew up a resource list of 30 additional digital resources for studying British history, free to download from

<https://www.history.ac.uk/sites/default/files/file-uploads/2020-10/Researching%20British%20History%20Online%20%E2%80%93%20Resource%20list.pdf>

[f?utm_source=Institute+of+Historical+Research&utm_campaign=23f08fc718-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_04_08_09_12_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_2277f50ab8-23f08fc718-581099682](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bristol-55103745)

BRISTOL ZOO TO MOVE

Bristol zoo, founded in 1836, is reported to be planning to move from its **Clifton** site at the end of 2022, reopening at its **Cribbs Causeway** satellite in 2024:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bristol-55103745> . Cue histories, reminiscences.

BOOKS AND OTHER ITEMS NOTICED

John Stevens ed., *The Bristol poll book for 1852*, **Bristol Record Society** 2020, vol 72. A reproduction of the printed edition by Henry and Alfred Hill (1853), with an introduction, analytical appendices and index.

Susan Scott ed., *Orphans, widows and guardians in medieval and early modern Bristol: the register of recognizances, 1333-1594*. **Bristol Record Society** 2020, vol 73. Includes translation from the Latin, French and English of the original. Introduction, analytical appendices, and index.

Ruth Hecht draws attention to Historic England's recently published report *The Impact of transatlantic slavery on England's built environment: a research audit*. Madge Dresser is one of the authors. There's a separate Excel spreadsheet with the report which means it is searchable. It lists 23 publications to do with **Bristol**. Link to both:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/research/inclusive-heritage/the-slave-trade-and-abolition/audit-of-slavery-connections-with-englands-built-environment/>

Peter Davey, *Bristol Tramways & Carriage Co Ld, horse-bus routes 1887-1906*, self-published 2020, £5 including post and packing from author at 4 Downs Park East, Bristol BS6 7QD. Three routes served the **Centre, Clifton, Long Ashton, Ashley Down**, and another copped from the **Old Halt** at the Sneyd Park end of the Downs via top of **Blackboy**, (from **Sea Walls** on Sundays) to the top of **Westbury Hill**.



Anthea Jones, 'Johannes Kip (1652-1721) and the Gloucestershire engravings', *The Local Historian* October 2020 vol. 50 no.4, 307-317. Not much about JK's engravings for Atkyns of houses in our area, but informative background for south Gloucestershire. JK engraved **Dyrham, Kingsweston, Henbury** great house and **Henbury** Awdelett, but why did he not portray **Cold Ashton** or **Dodington**?

John Darlington, *Fake heritage: why we rebuild monuments*, Yale UP 2020, £25 hb. If we won't be able to visit so many originals any more, perhaps replicas will have their uses. Comment under COMMENTARY below.

Dan Hicks, *The brutish museums: the Benin bronzes, colonial violence and cultural restitution*, Pluto 2020, £20, e-book £7.99. <https://www.plutobooks.com/9780745341767/the-brutish-museums/> Return all the plundered artefacts, contends the Pitt Rivers museum curator. Comment may appear in a future issue.

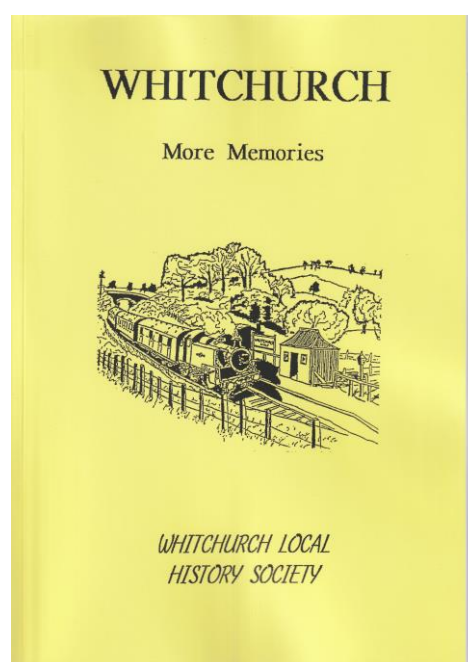
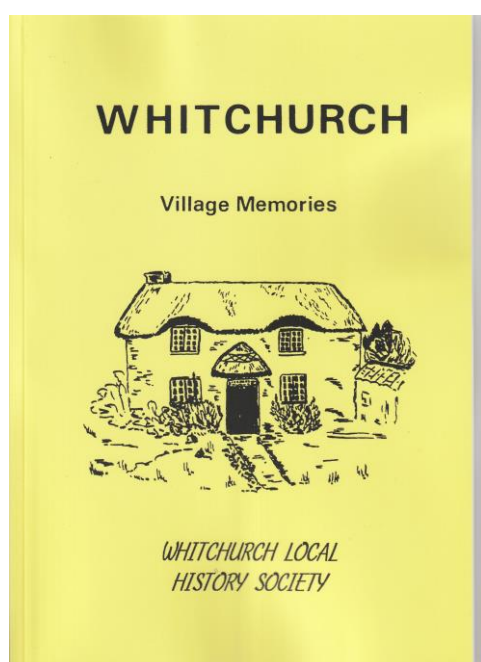
Olivette Otele, *African Europeans: an untold history*, Hurst £20, hb.

<https://www.hurstpublishers.com/book/african-europeans/> Latest from Bristol University's professor of the history of slavery.

The Historic Towns Trust's revised map of historic **Bristol**, towards which ALHA has made a substantial (for ALHA) grant and to which ALHA trustee Prof Peter Fleming has contributed, is expected to be published **7 December 2020**. Newsletter 162 31 March 2020 p.4 reported. The 31 December 2020 Newsletter plans to include a review.

Cyril Pearce, *Communities of resistance: conscience and dissent in Britain during the first world war*. Francis Boutle 2020, £30. Includes a chapter on Bristol and its 427 known conscientious objectors. <https://francisboutle.co.uk/products/communities-of-resistance/>

ALHA member **Whitchurch Local History Society** has reprinted two of its books,



originally published in 1980 and 1997. 'Both books,' writes *Geoff Gardiner*, 'are compilations of the memories of village people about life in the area during the mid-20th century. They are A4 size and printed on quality paper retaining the integrity of the original contents.' They are available at £5.00 each from The Music Box Shop on the main road in the village, or from Keith Stenner (01275 541512), Geoff Gardiner (01275 830869) or Susan Subow (01275 834677). Post and packaging is £2.00 for 1 book or £2.50 for 2 books.

COMMENTARY

Human acts

In *The emperor in the Roman world* (Duckworth 1977, reissued in paperback by Bristol Classical Press 1992) Fergus Millar, who died last year, argued that historians should examine not so much institutions or social patterns but the actions of individuals. He summed it up: 'The emperor was what the emperor did.'

In one sense that's true of most history. Few historically significant events have been purely natural. Examples might include whatever detached the moon from the earth; whatever extinguished the dinosaurs; the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 and Krakatoa in 1883;

the Severn flood of 1607; the great freeze of 1708-1709; the Lisbon earthquake of 1755; the UK storm of 1987. There are not many wholly natural big events, and their historical significance usually lies not so much in what happened but in how they affected people and how people reacted. Epidemics may have natural origins – bacteria hitching a ride on fleas on rats, for example – but transmission is the result of human contacts. Similarly with the 1918 influenza and the present coronavirus, though the (natural?) origins of the latter are at present not known. Global overheating manifests itself in the natural world, but is mostly the result of human activities, and has and will have consequences for humans.

FM's prescription reminds us that many historical generalisations and abstractions are short (lazy?) ways of referring to large numbers of human acts. When we talk about the Norman conquest, the reformation, the English civil war, the industrial revolution, the slave trade, fascism and so on, those are only convenient expressions for hundreds if not thousands if not millions of human acts. Epidemiology relies on the aggregation of data about individuals into generalised propositions. If we say that 'starvation reduced the population,' what we mean is that John Smith died of hunger, Mary Smith died of hunger, their children Alice aged 6, Michael aged 4 and Robert aged 3 months died of hunger, and so on. Aggregation and generalisation can make sense of large quantities of data, and help us understand what was (or is) going on, but do we sometimes use abstractions because looking at the raw data is too uncomfortable or painful?

Local history makes us look at the detail, at what actually happened, and at what individual people did. That does not stop us detecting patterns, noticing trends and making generalisations. If we want to say that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries **Bristol** corporation misappropriated, often corruptly, funds of local charities, we do not need to enumerate every instance: Thomas John Manchee's 1831 account ran to several hundred pages over two volumes, and because much corruption is covert, he may not have nailed every instance. If we need to look at the detail behind a generalisation, or to test whether a generalisation is true or what its limits or exceptions are, we have the detail of the human acts involved, at local level. As FM said, it is what people do that makes history.

Shopping

Whilst supermarkets and online retailers have adjusted to the virus and many have increased their profits, further helped by the government's waiving of business rates, other retailers have had to close individual shops and in some cases the whole business. Some commentators say that retailing was already on the skids, and that reactions to the virus have exacerbated what was already happening.

In planning jargon an area is said to be overshopped if it has more shops than it needs. Signs of overshopping include: (1) falling shop rents, a sign that traders are not making enough money to pay the rents landlords want; (2) empty shops, a sign that landlords cannot get tenants who think they can make enough profit to pay the rent; (3) boarded-up shops, a sign that the landlord has decided it would be a waste of money to try to get a tenant; and (4) an absence of new shops, a sign that business owners think there are enough already. Some would add (5) charity shops (How many are there in your area?), because some landlords are willing to let at a low or no rent to a charity a shop that would otherwise be empty and exposed to vandalism and theft and would lower the value of adjoining shops. Others would say that most areas need shops selling second-hand goods; that a charity shop is evidence of shopping, not of overshopping; and that it is the result of consumer demand that conventional shops have not met.

Overshopping has tended to occur, in our area as elsewhere, either because property developers and landlords have over-estimated demand, or because consumers' behaviour has changed and has reduced demand for what shops offer. More people buying goods over the

internet has resulted, it is thought, in reduced demand for purchasing in shops, hence the demise of small bookshops, department stores and so on. Demand drives the economy: however attractively designed your product, however ingenious, however cheap, however enticingly presented, however useful, if people do not want it they will not buy it, and if there is no demand, there is no trade.

Sometimes overshopping has occurred because of a deliberate act of competition. By providing new and more attractive premises in a new development, a property developer may aim to attract traders from existing shopping areas, with the result that the old shops become vacant. **Bristol** city council may not have intended the extension to **Broadmead** now called **Cabot Circus** to have damaged trade in the **Galleries**, but that is widely considered to have been one result. Was the former Northavon district council's development of **Cribbs Causeway** as a regional shopping centre was intended to attract businesses from central **Bristol** (eg John Lewis, which did not retain a shop in **Broadmead**), partly to boost the district's rate income but also as a deliberate act to damage the economy of **Bristol**? Unless it has been shredded, documentary evidence almost certainly exists for future local historians to substantiate, qualify or disprove the allegation behind that question.

Shopping might be an interesting subject for local history people to explore. There are many aspects, and there is a wealth of accessible sources, much of it recent and in print. For centuries retail buying and selling was done in markets, or from the front room of the manufacturer's or supplier's premises. Shops in the sense of separate premises whose only function is to hold and display goods for retail sale seem to have appeared in the eighteenth century. Directories give a good idea of where shops appeared, when and in what trades, and how they changed over time. Another aspect to look at might be shops' interplay with advertising; wartime rationing; refrigeration; self-service; supermarkets and out-of-town shopping centres; increased car ownership and changes in public transport routes; the clustering of shops and of shops selling the same sort of goods; the design of shopping malls and the use of large multiple stores as anchors or end-stops; family businesses (including marriage as a means of promotion or acquisition); adaptation and diversification, and so on. Helen Reid's *Bristol & Co* (Redcliffe, 1987) and her other books on shopping in our area are fascinating, but there is a lot to tell since she published.

Replicas

John Darlington's *Fake heritage: why we rebuild monuments* (Yale UP 2020) is noticed above. Displaying replicas in museums divides opinion. Some do not approve of replicas because they are not the real thing. If nothing can be as good as the real thing, and a replica is not the same as the real thing, it follows that a replica must be worse than the real thing. It would be wrong to misrepresent a replica as the original when it is not, but some people object to replicas even though the museum makes it clear that what is on display is a replica.

These objections are puzzling, because few people object to other forms of replication. We do not object to a photograph of a painting being reproduced in a book, so long as the image is of good quality. If we cannot, or cannot afford, to go to see the original, especially if it is in south America or China or India or in some country we would prefer not to have anything to do with, we may be content to look at a photograph. We can look at it when, as often, and as long as we like, which may not be possible in the Louvre, in the forbidden city or halfway up Machu Picchu. If we are not able to hear music live, we may be content to hear it over the wireless or television, or to listen to a recording on disc, tape or vinyl, or some electronic means. When it comes to artefacts, we may have miniature replicas at home, perhaps as souvenirs of places visited, but when it comes to displaying full size replicas in a museum, many people object.

If we ignore the ludicrous (there are over 50 replicas of the Eiffel Tower), bad taste (eg https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Venetian_Las_Vegas#Attractions), and the commercial (the British Museum plans to offer replicas of some of its exhibits in chocolate <https://3dprint.com/182710/british-museum-3d-printing/>) and if we confine our attention to replicas in museums, there are at least two good reasons for displaying replicas. One is where the original is so fragile, unique and important that display would risk irreparable loss or damage. The caves at Lascaux, whose residents drew pictures to teach their infants what dinner looked like, are closed to the public, but tourists can visit a replica:

<https://www.francetoday.com/culture/inside-lascaux-4-a-full-size-replica-of-the-famous-cave/>

Similarly in Egypt with the tombs of Tutankhamun

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/01/exact-replica-tutankhamun-tomb-egypt>

and soon that of Seti I, long closed for its own protection or, as an archivist would say, unfit for production. That saves the original from damage, accidental, unintentional or deliberate, and of deterioration through being exposed to human breath and whatever it might carry.

Another good reason is educational. The Victoria & Albert Museum's plaster casts of objects from antiquity <https://www.vam.ac.uk/collections/cast-collection> include casts of the whole of Trajan's column in two instalments, Michelangelo's David, and much more from different ages and cultures. The casts were made or acquired so that they could be studied by students who could not, or could not afford to, travel to Rome, Paris etc to see the originals. Replicas of sculptures or other material artefacts can be studied in the round, from various angles, and for as long as the gallery's opening hours allow. Bristol has its own replicas: of the Elgin marbles in the **Royal West of England Academy** building, intended originally for the education of art students; of the Bristol boxkite aircraft (made from the original drawings for a 1964 film, acquired by a local business and donated to the city museum; image from BM&AG); and of the top of **Bristol** high cross, commissioned from John Norton in 1850 as a late consolation for the original having been sent to Stourhead. Once on College Green, the replica was removed in 1950 to Berkeley Square.



Another reason for encouraging replicas is destruction of originals. Much has been destroyed under cover of religion, from ancient Egypt (Akhenaten) and Judaea

(Hezekiah), through the byzantine iconoclasts of the eighth and ninth centuries CE, the European and English reformations (there is an example of a broken image in the church of **Westbury-on-Trym**), and various outbreaks in branches of islam. Recent examples include the destruction by the Taliban of images of the Buddha in Afghanistan in 2001, and much of the grand mosque of Aleppo in the war in Syria. But we can still see a reconstruction of the Pergamum altar in Berlin's Pergamon museum.

Measures to control the spread of the coronavirus have included restrictions on movement and on the opening of museums and galleries. That is another good reason for museums to display replicas. Why should we have to traipse up to London to see the Portland vase? Or if we cannot go there at all because travel is discouraged or prohibited? Why should we not be able to view a replica locally?

Until not long ago the cost of making replicas was high. The techniques were highly skilled and complicated and the work was slow and time-consuming. Most processes involved risk of damaging the artefact. Modern technologies offer cheaper and safer

solutions. Laser scanning and three-dimensional printing open up all sorts of possibilities. Museums should take the opportunity.

Special education

Bristol city council is consulting on plans to develop **Claremont** special school in **Henleaze**: <https://bristol.citizenspace.com/children-families-services/claremont-school-redevelopment-proposals/> . That might draw local history people's thoughts to the history of special needs education in our area. One question to look at might be how, when and why it became accepted that some children should be given non-standard teaching. Was it a recognition that pupils with mental or physical impairments deserve and are capable of levels of attainment that ordinary teaching will not provide? Or did teachers' unions represent views of members who could not be bothered to adjust curriculum and methods to suit individual pupils? Or did parents object to their children's academic (or economic or social?) progress being held back by teachers having to give time to pupils who could not cope? How much was change driven by educational theory and how much by politics?

Another issue to look at might be how local education authority policies changed from removing pupils with special needs from mainstream schools and educating them separately, to including as many pupils as possible in mainstream schools. The argument continues nowadays.

Connected with that is how policies changed about specialisation. Like other authorities, **Bristol and Bath** city councils established special schools for pupils with particular categories of need, eg **Elmfield** school for deaf children in **Southmead**. Later it became the view that educating with the same disabilities together did not help them integrate into society once they left school, and exacerbated the stigma that many children with disabilities experienced. It might be interesting to compare similar changes of policy in social services, where both **Bath and Bristol** city councils initially set up separate residential homes for adults with disabilities, such as visual impairment and dementia ('for the confused elderly' in the 1970s), but later abandoned such distinctions.

Voluntary organisations that established their own special schools (because of lack of provision by the local authority?) often concentrated on providing separate schools for children with particular disabilities. A charity founded to support blind people, such as Bristol Royal Society for the Blind, which ran a school at **Henleaze**, might have regarded itself as constrained by its constitution and charitable objects from providing education for children whose difficulties did not include visual impairment. How did that work out in our area? Did that skew special educational provision in favour of particular disabilities when others might have deserved priority? Given that few special schools run by voluntary organisations exist nowadays in our area, what caused the changes? Have charities relied on government or local authority funding, and then collapsed when the funding was cut?

A local history of special education in any area would not be complete without looking at the effects of the Warnock report of 1978, which led to the Education Act 1981. Parliament removed the many categories of disability that previously governed special educational provision, and introduced a general legal category of special educational needs, for whatever reason. How was that applied in our area? Were there differences of approach between one local authority and another? How did it work out in our area?

Another change to look at might be the introduction, by the Education Act 1993, of a right of appeal, to a special educational needs tribunal, against decisions of a local education authority such as to refuse assessment a pupil's needs, to refuse to issue a statement of special educational needs, or to refuse to include particular provision in a statement. The Act was accompanied by a code of practice. How did that alter what happened in our area? Which

authorities had most decisions overturned by the tribunals? Did any changes of local policy or practice or provision result?

Other changes worth looking into include the incidence of special educational needs in the local population, and how the numbers have changed over time. The impression one gets is that the numbers of children with special educational needs has gone up; that some types of need are more prevalent than in the past, others less. Is that true? Government publications and local education authority will give the answers, or at any rate the official answers. Do parents, pressure groups or voluntary organisations challenge the official figures?

Related to that is what changes there have been in the sorts of special educational need for which parents demand special provision, and in the sorts of provision that local authorities have offered. In the 1930s only impairments in sight, hearing and physical mobility appear to have been recognised. In the 1940s some children were categorised as 'delicate.' Was that in fact down to malnutrition or ailments associated with overcrowding or insanitary housing? Between 1913 and 1957 Bristol had four open-air schools: at **Knowle, Barton Hill, south Bristol and Victoria Park**. Was that about education or health? Autism, emotional and behavioural difficulties and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder had not then been recognised (or had not been invented by the medical professions). Linked to that are questions about medication: is there a local history of ritalin waiting to be written?

Gaps

Local history and archaeology people have to put up with the fact that there are gaps in the record.

In the case of local history, there may be periods or topics on which there is no information. That may be because no records were made at the time; or perhaps records were kept but have not survived. That could be because of neglect, loss or destruction. Destruction may have been deliberate (the 2008 banking crisis comes to mind), or the result of rot, fire, damp, flood, vermin or war. Thermal print fades over time, as do some pigments. During WW2 Exeter diocesan registry suffered a direct hit, and in the blitz incendiary bombs destroyed records in many towns such as Plymouth and Coventry.

In the case of archaeology the reason for gaps is different. Archaeology tends to be sporadic, and sometimes is haphazard. Whether a site gets investigated may depend on chance. Sometimes investigation is triggered by a find unearthed by ploughing or other agricultural operations, erosion by the weather, or use of a metal detector. Investigations take place only if someone is willing to fund the work and if landowners co-operate. In the UK of recent years much archaeological investigation has been triggered by a condition on planning permission for development, which may depend on the developer's programme and finances, the state of the property market and so on. No development, no archaeology. Another reason for gaps is that though investigation may have taken place, the results have not been written up or published or made available to researchers.

To overcome the problem of gaps, historians and archaeologists have resorted to various expedients. One is to assume that whatever was the state of affairs before the gap continued during the gap. If a society is stable and nothing much is happening, that may be a reasonable guess, but it can be no more than a guess. If a village had a population of 200 in 1330, it would be unwise to assume that it was the same 20 years later.

Another device is to assume that what happened elsewhere also happened locally. For example, there is evidence that before the reformation the Sarum rite was the usual form of church service in many places across the south of England. It is not unreasonable to guess that the rite was used also in churches in north Somerset and south Gloucestershire at the

same time. We cannot be sure, but unless or until evidence to the contrary comes to light, it is a not unreasonable working hypothesis.

Some historians imagine what may have happened and construct a narrative. The signs are compound verbs like ‘will have...’, ‘can hardly have failed to...’, ‘can be presumed to have...’ and so on. Historical novelists, that is, writers of historical novels, get away with this because their genre is fiction. Readers do not expect to believe as fact everything a novelist writes. When historians do it there can be disagreement. Hilary Mantel portrays Thomas More as a nasty bit of work, whereas many historians see him as a man of principle and integrity, bravely standing up to a despot.

Much simpler, and more honest, if there are gaps in our knowledge, to say so. As Wittgenstein advised philosophers, ‘If you can’t say it, don’t.’

QUOTE

All this for a soul
Without name or rank or age or home, because you
Are the son we lost, and your rest is ours.
Simon Armitage, *The bed*, 11 November 2020