



ALHA

AVON LOCAL HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY

Newsletter e-update
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Magazines and books to reviews editor
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Details of events to website manager

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Other news, comments, responses to
comments, new work, and changes of contact
details to newsletter editor and membership
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Website: <http://www.alha.org.uk>

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

Facebook:

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



*William
Stukeley*

*[Image
National
Portrait
Gallery]*

ALHA NEWS

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EVENTS LIST

is on the ALHA website

ALHA NEWS

DIRECTORY OF PRESENTERS

Work has started on the 2023 edition of the speakers list. Speakers and walk leaders listed in the 2022 edition have been asked to update their entries. Three speakers are no longer willing or able to give talks, but there will be at least three newcomers, and many speakers have added new titles or subjects to their entries. The aim is to produce the new edition about 1 April 2023, ready for sending out to ALHA member groups and societies once they have paid their 2023-2024 subscriptions. Suggestions for new entries are invited from ALHA member groups and societies. If you would like to suggest a speaker for inclusion in the new edition of the list, please tell any member of ALHA's committee.

ALHA BOOKLETS – RICHARD SMITH THE SURGEON

Stocks of Michael Whitfield's ALHA booklet no.26, *Richard Smith: Bristol surgeon and medical collector 1772-1843*, are running low, so if you want a printed copy, now might be a good time to order from the treasurer or the author.



EVENTS AND SOURCES

HEAT FROM OLD MINES

South Gloucestershire Council says it is investigating whether former mine workings could be used as a source of renewable heating and cooling for new and existing buildings. In September 2021 the Coal Authority announced <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/mine-water-heat> – an initial study of records of local disused and abandoned coal mines and in July 2022 identified areas of interest. South Gloucestershire Council is now seeking funding for a further study of areas with the greatest potential heat resource. The idea is that floodwater in old mines 'is naturally heated by underground geological activity. Using heat pumps, the water temperature can be raised to the level required for space heating and domestic hot water. This could then be used to supply single buildings such as schools, hospitals and offices, or a heat network serving multiple buildings or a district,' it says. More at <http://sites.southglos.gov.uk/newsroom/environment/south-gloucestershire-council-explores-using-local-mines-as-a-source-of-renewable-heat/>, including a fine photograph of Frog Lane colliery, **Coalpit Heath**. Those interested in the conservation of former coal workings or other traces of the coal industries locally may wish to watch how this develops.

OLD MINES AND HE

A piece in ALHA newsletter e-update 30 November 2022 drew attention to Historic England's publication of its latest register of historic buildings considered to be at risk of loss



or deterioration. That prompted ALHA individual member David Evans to ask HE why Brandy Bottom Colliery at **Pucklechurch** had been included in the list, when it was being cared for by Avon Industrial Buildings Trust and others. [Image Avon Industrial Buildings Trust]. HE's reply includes an assertion that the fact that a site or building is not occupied is a 'crucial' criterion for inclusion in the list. That seems odd: one can think of many cases where the fact that a building is occupied, perhaps by a careless or inappropriate user, may hasten the loss or deterioration of a building or site, and of many sites that are not occupied that are not on HE's list. If a building is being cared for, that alone should reduce the risk of deterioration. DE has drawn HE's attention to other sites in our area considered to be at risk, but not on HE's list, suggesting inconsistency. Readers may wish to consider whether to enlighten HE about any in their locality.

EDSON BURTON MBE

Congratulations to Dr Edson Burton of **Easton**, appointed an MBE (sic) in the new year honours. The award must at least in part recognise EB's heritage-related work at the Trinity centre, **Bristol**.

GETTING TO NET ZERO

David Evans draws attention to a message from Dan Miles, who leads a new project for Historic England. 'Just to let you know about an Historic England project to support micro, small and medium sized heritage organisations on their journey towards reaching carbon net zero. This includes organisations that run or manage heritage sites and those that provide heritage services – including archaeological contractors.

The first part of the project is to gather information on where organisations are at on their journey, what issues or barriers they are finding and what type of support they would like to receive. There is a survey out now to capture this information <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/X8E3CQ/> and we are running round table discussions with different parts of the sector.

It would be great if you could pass on information about this project to the local heritage organisations that you work with. The results of the survey will help us develop training for sector resilience and skills and support with our sector partners for heritage small and medium sized enterprises on the journey to net zero. Please drop me a line if you would like to know more about the project.'

Dan Miles, Sector to Net Zero Project Lead, Historic England, 01793 414057,
Daniel.Miles@HISTORICENGLAND.ORG.UK

STUKELEY 300 AT STANTON DREW

John Richards, secretary of Stukeley 300, writes: There will be a celebration in **Stanton Drew** on the weekend of **22-23 July 2023**, of the 300th anniversary of the visit of the celebrated antiquarian, William Stukeley.

Stanton Drew is the site of the most important stone circles in England, after Stonehenge and Avebury. There are three circles, of which the Great Circle is second only to Avebury in size, and a cove of three stones in the village. [Image English Heritage].



William Stukeley was the leading antiquarian of the eighteenth century, and the first to perform a rigorous study of Avebury and Stonehenge. He visited **Stanton Drew** just the once, on 23 July 1723, but in that short time he produced a detailed plan, made several accurate drawings, and wrote an account that was to bring **Stanton Drew** to national prominence.

On **Sunday 23 July 2023**, the exact 300th anniversary, there will be a day of events in the village, including tours of the stones and an exhibition. We are looking for volunteers to give tours (notes provided); if interested, please email John Richards (chair@bacas.org.uk).

The previous day, **Saturday 22 July**, there will be a symposium of talks on William Stukeley, and the archaeology of **Stanton Drew**, given by leading academics and archaeologists. Invited speakers include Prof Josh Pollard, Dr Jodie Lewis, and Dr Susan Greaney. Details of the programme and ticket information will be published soon.

The events are being organised by **Stukeley 300**, a group with representatives from **Stanton Drew** Parish Council, and ALHA members **Bristol and Avon Archaeological Society**,

and **Bath and Counties Archaeological Society**. For further information, see <https://www.bacas.org.uk/2023/01/24/stukeley-festival-at-stanton-drew/>

NEWS FROM GROUPS AND SOCIETIES

PAULTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Paulton Local History Society has ceased to meet.

GIFT AID AND CHARGING NON-MEMBERS FOR ADMISSION TO TALKS

Groups and societies that are charities, or are recognised as charities by HM Revenue and Customs, may wish to note that HMRC rejects claims for Gift Aid on members' subscriptions if the charity charges non-members for admission to meetings, talks, visits and so on but does not make a similar charge to its members. HMRC's argument is that if non-members are charged for attending a meeting, that means that they are receiving a benefit to which monetary value attaches, so if members of the charity receive the same benefit but are not charged for it, then its cost must have been paid for out of their membership subscriptions, so their subscription is payment for something, not a donation, so Gift Aid cannot apply.

This follows from the principle that Gift Aid is recoverable only on gifts or donations, not payments for goods or services or facilities. The rules are in <https://www.gov.uk/claim-gift-aid/what-you-can-claim-it-on>. As fear of catching or passing on the coronavirus recedes, and groups and societies resume gatherings after the relaxing of the coronavirus restrictions on meetings, this might be a good time for those groups that claim Gift Aid on members' subscriptions to check their admission practices.

As tax recoverable under Gift Aid on members' subscriptions normally amounts to a quarter of the subscription, HMRC's strict application of the rule could be significant for those groups and societies that rely on Gift Aid to balance the books or to fund charitable activity. Taking the odd pound or two from non-members could cause the charity to lose much more in Gift Aid.

The HMRC rule would not apply to groups and societies that

- are not charities; or
- are charities but do not claim Gift Aid; or
- are charities and claim Gift Aid on members' subscriptions but do not charge non-members for attending a talk; or
- are charities and claim Gift Aid on members' subscriptions but ask only for a donation towards expenses, either from non-members or from all attenders whether they are members or not.

Until the government changes the rules, or until HMRC changes its practice (which might happen if large charities with big sums at stake demand change), groups and societies that claim Gift Aid on members' subscriptions may wish to consider whether

- to discontinue charging non-members for admission to talks; or

- to request a donation rather making a charge for admission.

BOOKS ETC NOTICED

The Harptreenian no.23, September 2022 is the journal of ALHA member **The Harptrees History Society**. This issue includes researched and referenced articles. One is by Colin Budge about two medieval prebendaries of Wells cathedral endowed by properties in **Litton**. Lesley Ross uses oral history methods to tap the reminiscences of the last head teacher at **West Harptree** school. Andrew Sandon traces connections between **West Harptree** and Bruern abbey in Oxfordshire. Gill Hogarth writes about the twelfth century courtier and itinerant judge William Fitzjohn, relevant to events at **Harptree** castle in the Stephen v. Matilda civil war. John Mayers writes on Bernard Bradly Gough, a local medical practitioner. [Image Historic England].



One of two articles by Sue Emmett is about George Ireland, a **West Harptree** curate popular with parishioners but with unexplained gaps in his career, a successful appeal against revocation of his licence to officiate, and eventual suicide. This calls for more investigation. Alcohol, disorganised incompetence, doctrinal frictions, personal malice, and a depressive illness are but some among various possibilities. The diocesan offices' response to the researcher that 'the records were not available and that, even if they had been, confidentiality issues would have prevented my question being answered' suggests a puzzling misapplication of data protection principles (which do not apply to personal data about people who are dead) in relation to what happened in 1833. The problems were mentioned in a piece 'Data protection and local and family history' in *ALHA Newsletter* 150, March 2017. A decision of the Information Commissioner https://ico.org.uk/media/action-veve-taken/decision-notices/2011/607040/fs_50314844.pdf appears to have been based on the possibility that school records might show that a pupil was in care or had been fostered or adopted, and a surmise that people at the time the data were recorded will have expected them to be confidential. A result is to deprive local and family historians of access to valuable information.

Peter Davies, 'The Bristol Church Goer' Bitton Parish History Group website <https://www.bittonhistory.org.uk/articles/>. Joseph Leech reviewed St Mary's **Bitton** and Ellacombe. If you want to see how your local church service was reviewed (he did not award stars), Joseph Leech's complete *The Rural Rides of the Bristol Churchgoer*, 1847, was reprinted by Alan Sutton Publishing in 1982.

David Punter, *Ship's log*, Bristol Books 2022, £8. '... a collection of poems for the *SS Great Britain* ... now a museum in Bristol harbour. The museum has an archive attached, which holds a mass of passenger letters and diaries. In this book, David has taken extracts for these materials, and written his own poems in response to them.' The author is a professor of poetry at University of Bristol. <https://www.bristolbooks.org/shop/shipslog>

Adrian Webb and Sue Berry, *Somerset's loyalties on the eve of civil war: bishops, Ireland and parliamentary petitions, 1641-1642*, privately published 2022. ISBN 1-86241-045-9, 420 pages, indexes, numerous illustrations, maps, tables and transcripts of key documents. Looks at the national context and area-wide issues, but local mentions include **Chew Stoke**, **Bath** investors, and the **Bath & Wells** bishopric (including the postholder's stay in the Tower of London). Available on Ebay at £49.95 or from the publisher, at 19 Kirke Grove, Taunton, Somerset, TA2 8SB, email: somerset historian@gmail.com . Post free to a United Kingdom address if purchased direct from the publisher. Please make cheques payable to Adrian Webb.

COMMENTARY

Different sorts of history

In his *Why history?* (Oxford UP 2020) Donald Bloxham identifies different sorts of history. His list includes history as entertainment (researched, written and read for pleasure); history as memorialisation (so that we do not forget the past); history as travel (into the past as well as into foreign lands); history as speculative philosophy (grand narratives and historical processes); history as lesson (what the past teaches us about moral and practical choices); and history as method (about standards of research, interpretation, analysis and exposition). How far, if at all, are any of those categories relevant to local history?

For many local history people, local history is about, or at least involves, entertainment. It is a recreational activity. We get pleasure from investigating, reading, listening to talks, exchanging information and so on.

Memorialisation is also important in much local history. Local history is built on the proposition that what has happened in a locality is connected with, but is distinct from, what happened nationally or internationally, and that it is important that the past of a locality and the people who lived there should not be forgotten. History as education is not one of Professor Bloxham's categories, but local history as memorialisation helps explain how we got to where we are, why the environment we live in is as it is and not something different, how those traces of the local past that still exist (especially landforms, buildings and other environmental features, but also local customs, practices and mindsets) came about and survived into the present day.

Local history is certainly history as travel. We go, not to a different place, but into the past: another country, as LP Hartley put it, where they do things differently. That could also be seen as history as education, fostering understanding of how the present has been

formed, but also reminding us that present-day arrangements are not the only ones possible.

Local history is not likely to qualify as speculative philosophy. Postmodernists warn us against grand narratives. But abstraction and a view from elsewhere, so to speak, can help explain local events just as they can help us understand what happened nationally or internationally. Philosophical concepts like cause and effect are as relevant to local history as to other sorts of history. And as national and wider histories are composed of agglomerations of what happened locally (an event can happen only in one place, so is bound to be local), local history can contribute to speculations about changes, causes, effects trends and the other devices that historians use to explain or expound the past.

That we should learn from the lessons of history is trite lore. Unlike the ancients and people in late antiquity, we do not believe in concepts like the wheel of fortune, or that history repeats itself in cycles, so that if a set of circumstances arises now, we can predict how things will unfold by looking at what happened after similar circumstances in the past. We can learn some general lessons from history, especially about what happens when people misuse power, or when people lose confidence or trust in those in power. It is difficult however to see what lessons can be learned from the past of our area or its various parts. Residents of **Frampton Cotterell** or **Peasedown St John** or **Banwell** can have little to learn by way of lessons from their localities' pasts. Less so perhaps in the conurbations, unless one lesson is that cities create particular, and particularly difficult, environmental and social problems, which is more than a local history proposition.

It is in history as method that local history excels. Because local history deals in details, small-scale and close-up, how we find out information, interpret and explain it is crucial in what local historians do. The methods local history people use are many and varied. Writers of other sorts of history could learn much from them.

The commons

In her *Doughnut economics: seven ways to think like a 21st century economist* (Random House 2017) Kate Raworth identified the constituents of a nation's economy as including the state; households; business, trade and finance; markets; and the commons. By the commons is meant those things that we all share, whether they are natural like air, water, the sea, and sunshine; or human-made, such as roads and other public services provided by the state or local or other public authorities as a public service as distinct from a profit-generating business.

One way of examining the past of a locality might be to try to assess how those components varied in size and importance over time, how they related to each other, and how those changes and interactions influenced or made possible what happened in the locality. In the case of the commons, one question is about how to identify and define them, acknowledging that different sorts of commons have existed at different times.

In primitive hunter-gatherer societies government or the state could hardly have existed; what regulated people's lives, apart from the urge to survive, was custom. If

households existed, groups of them are more likely to have been of more importance than households individually or en masse.

In medieval England the relative sizes and importance of the elements identified by KR must have been different: government had become powerful and important; trade, business and finance were emerging, as were markets in various commodities. Households were the standard manifestation of family life. All relied on the commons. One of the original commons, land, had become split. Some land was no longer part of the commons because it was privately owned; the rest was common lands in which every individual had a regulated interest, a share, and responsibilities and benefits.

From the late medieval period onwards the importance of common lands declined as more and more common land was inclosed and became private property. As industries developed, in our area as elsewhere, they made increasing demands and incursions on common lands, water and fresh air. Minerals, being part of land, were claimed by landowners as private property, and in many places, especially in mining areas such as those in our area such as **Kingswood**, common rights were overridden by owners claiming 'liberties' to mine minerals and deposit mining waste. Other forms of waste got discharged into the atmosphere, rivers and the sea. Some commons such as highways continued and grew in importance, but by and large in the 17th and 18th centuries the importance of commons dwindled.

During the 19th century under the auspices of the state and of local authorities created by the state, new commons emerged and grew, mainly through public health legislation. By the end of the 19th century the commons could be regarded as including things like law and order, education, and some health services.

In the twentieth century, again under the auspices of the state, those and other commons grew in size and influence. A new one was housing provided and managed by local authorities. Some might regard the nationalisation of various public services after 1945 and the creation of institutions such as a national health service as new commons. Since the 1980s some governments have reduced the scope of the commons, partly by cutting resources for public services and partly by privatising central and government services by selling them to private commercial interests. Since then there has grown greater recognition of the effect of various sorts of pollution on those of the commons that remain, not least air pollution, the discharge of heat, particles and gases into the atmosphere, and more recently concerns about discharge of sewage into watercourses and the sea.

All those changes, and many more, have occurred locally. They are part of the past of localities, and can be the subject of local history investigation and study. Plenty to look into.

Bristol central library

Media report that Bristol City Council is no longer putting forward as a budget option removing the city's central public library from its Charles Holden building in **College Green** to a site elsewhere, perhaps in **Broadmead**. <https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/local-news/bristols-central-library-relocation-plans-8014248> . The proposal, noted in ALHA

newsletter update 30 November 2022, evoked objections and protests. Only a cynic would note that the library is in a ward where a by-election is pending.

Now that the fuss and the party politicking has died down, arguments for and against such a move can be considered unemotionally.

One consideration is that the council's prime objective must be to keep the library service going. If a better service can be delivered in a different building, or if removal to a different building is the only way of keeping the service going in face of the financial and other constraints imposed by central government, moving must be preferable to the service being cut or curtailed.

Another consideration is that the library service is not the same as the building from which it is delivered. They are separate things. A public service does not have to be delivered in the same building for ever.

If the present building is no longer best suited to the library service, and if there are better alternatives, it is unreasonable to insist that the service continue to occupy the building. Just as the 18th century building in **King Street** was not adequate to meet the needs of the city in the early years of the 20th century, so a 1906 building, however architecturally important, is not bound to meet the needs of the 21st century, when the book stock has expanded to the point that many items are now in B Bond and need to need to be ordered in advance, and other means of storing, retrieving and disseminating information are available.

Whether a new site or a new building or an adapted one will help deliver a better library service or save the present service from damage is for investigation. Location, cost, accessibility, capacity and convenience to the public need to be assessed.

It may be that after investigation it appears that alternatives considered will not be feasible, practical, affordable or suitable. But until investigation has been done and those questions answered, to dismiss the possibility of the library being moved elsewhere would be emotional, shortsighted and irrational.

CAN YOU HELP?

STORE WANTED FOR KILN WASTE

Ian Beckey writes: Following some discussions at a recent search room session at the Bristol Record Office I was advised to contact you regarding archaeological kiln waste recovered from various sites around Bristol by myself and Mike Baker over the past 30 years or so as members of **Bristol & Avon Archaeological Society** and the Society for Clay Pipe Research.

Mike Baker was a dedicated local historian and local artist among other things but above all he was as an enthusiastic amateur/professional archaeologist for more than 40 years.

Both he and myself worked on many important rescue excavations and as a result we made some significant discoveries including brass waste and clay tobacco pipe kiln waste from **Baptist Mills** and clay tobacco pipe kiln waste from **St Judes/Easton** together with pottery waste from **Temple Back** and Pountney's factory at **Fishponds**.

These archaeological finds are now stored at Wards of Bristol Signs premises in **Barton Hill** and the Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery archaeological stores. Some of the material has BRSMG accession numbers but has not been fully processed and after a recent audit it appears that there are nearly 90 museum boxes stored at Wards.

Up until now, Wards have been happy to store the material free of charge but owing to business requirements they now want the boxes removed from their premises as soon as possible.

There have been previous discussions with Wessex Archaeology, Bristol City Museum and the Barton Hill History Group concerning the removal of the boxes for safe storage, but it is unclear as to whether they can help. It is vital that the finds are safeguarded to stop the pottery/pipe waste from being disposed of especially as it is an important part of Mike's legacy. I am concerned that valuable information will be lost because on most of these sites, post excavation work has not yet been completed nor have the archaeology reports on them been published. This material is an important part of Mike Baker's legacy and I want to ensure that it is safeguarded for future research.

Would any of your members be able to assist in finding a suitable secure location for the finds like an empty garage or other premises until they can be accessioned to go into the City Museum archaeology stores or elsewhere? Unfortunately, I'm unable to pay storage fees and I have so far relied on Wards goodwill to store the finds.

You are welcome to call me on 07988 583809 to discuss this in more detail with a view to visiting Wards Signs to see the finds.

STEPHEN LEWIS, WICK

The National Museum Passchendaele at Zonnebeke in Belgium tries to collect information about the Canadian and other soldiers named on the Menin Gate, of whom over 6,000 were recorded as missing. Many were in the Canadian Expeditionary Force in Flanders. The museum seeks further information about Stephen Lewis, a Canadian who was killed on 26 October 1917 and was buried near Tyne Cot. The museum believes that SL was born in **Bristol** and that before he enlisted as a Canadian soldier he worked in farming. Notice of his death was sent to his next of kin, a William Lewis who lived or worked in **Wick** in south Gloucestershire. The museum requests any information readers may be able to give about the family, and would be particularly interested in letters, photographs or stories relating to Stephen Lewis. More about the Canadian Expeditionary Force is at



<https://digi-expo.passchendaele.be/> , and there is an interactive map at <http://archives.passchendaele.be/en/geo/1> . Readers are asked to post any information on the website. Information can also be sent by post to Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917, Ieperstraat 7A, BE-8980 ZONNEBEKE, BELGIUM, tel 32 51 77 04 41.

BRASS BANDS AND MUSICIANS

Sarah Crowe writes: I am a PhD student with the University of Gloucestershire. I am researching women's bands and female brass musicians in twentieth century Britain for my thesis, with a particular focus on those associated with the armed forces and brass bands.

The main records for the armed forces bands are held at The National Archives in Kew, but I was wondering if your readers know of anything held locally which may be relevant which I could view, either digitally or in person, or whether you would have any advice regarding collections, search terms, or anyone else I should contact please? I am a mature, physically disabled student, so digitised sources are easier for me to collect, although I am happy to arrange visits in advance so that I can get the correct support in place.

When searching the British Newspaper Archives I have found hundreds of references to these bands performing up and down the country (particularly during wartime) and I would be very interested and grateful if you think you may hold, or could direct me towards, any of the following please:

Diaries/biographies of women in armed forces bands in the 20th century (up to around 1960)



Photographs of female brass/military musicians/bands 1900-1960 [Image National Science and Media Museum]

Playbills, postcards, posters or magazines which feature the above

These musicians and bands definitely existed and performed extensively, yet they seem, frustratingly, to have been almost entirely left (or ignored) out of history. I would like to rectify this by bringing to life their forgotten stories and achievements in the most detailed and accurate way possible. I feel it is a crucial part of women's history, and would definitely help to enrich it. sarahcrowe.research@gmail.com .

QUOTE

All knowledge of the past which is not just supposition derives ultimately from people who can say 'I was there.'

John Carey, introduction to *The Faber book of reportage* (Faber & Faber 1987).

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 the webmaster, contact details on page 1 top left (Please note changed e-mail address). Please notify any changes of regular venue or timing.

Because of the coronavirus and the weather, events may be cancelled at short notice. Some venues are continuing to impose restrictions or requirements. Links or directions to online events open to the public appear on ALHA's website.