

ALHA



# AVON LOCAL HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY

Registered charity 270930

**Newsletter 174**

**31 March 2023**

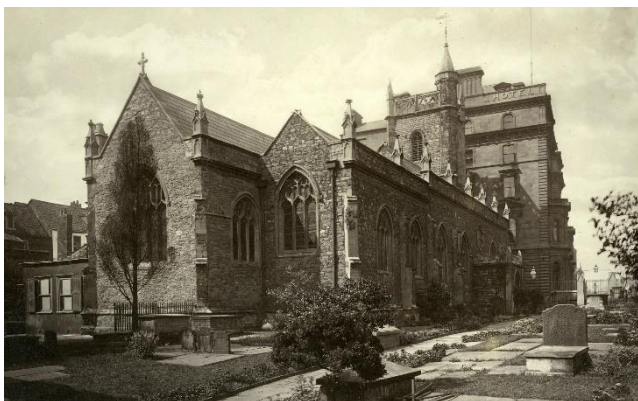
**Material for printed Newsletter 175 by 12 noon  
24 June 2023 please:**

*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  
[webmaster@ALHA.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@ALHA.org.uk)

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)



*St Augustine the less, Bristol*

## ALHA NEWS

2023-2024 subscriptions due  
Presenters directory 2023 edition  
Publications team: Dinah Moore  
Investment  
Budget 2023-2024  
Volunteers (VB)  
Summer walks 2023  
Grants – Bitton, Willsbridge, Oldland  
Common

## GROUPS AND SOCIETIES

Marshfield; Jane Marley (RL)  
Stukeley 300 (JR)  
Marshfield collections (RL)

## SOURCES AND EVENTS

SANHS webinar – Flat Holm (VB)  
GlosDocs and S Gloucestershire maps  
Thornbury museum exhibitions  
Indian stories, Thornbury castle, Thornbury  
treasures  
South Gloucs Council heritage website (JM)

## REVIEWS (Edited by Dr J Harlow)

Nicholls & Taylor  
Somerset loyalties at the start of the civil war  
Dorothy Smith, Dinah Black and the ship  
*Robert of Bristol*  
*The Local Historian* 53.1

## BOOKS ETC NOTICED

B&AFHS *Journal* 191  
*In our time* on megaliths, and Stanton Drew

## COMMENTARY

Francis Fox Tuckett  
Birthplace

## QUOTE

Peter Frankopan

## CAN YOU HELP?

Patrick Nasmyth, *A view of Bristol*  
A printing museum?  
Marching women  
Stukeley 300

The EVENTS LIST is on the ALHA website

# ALHA NEWS

## **SUBSCRIPTIONS 2023-2024**

ALHA's year starts 1 April. **A form to renew membership accompanies this newsletter.** Subscriptions for the ensuing year are now due. Many thanks to those members who pay by bank standing order or online, which saves the treasurer work and queuing in a bank. Many thanks also to those who pay early in the year, which helps ALHA's cashflow and helps keep the subscription down.

## **INVESTMENT**

ALHA's committee has agreed to adjust ALHA's investment in order to produce more income.

## **ALHA BUDGET 2023-2024**

ALHA's committee has approved a budget for 2023-2024. It takes account of increases in postage rates from 2 April 2023, and inflation generally. With no surplus expected from summer walks, and with no local history day planned in 2023, the budget envisages a small deficit, which can be met from cash in bank. In spite of inflation, there is again no increase in subscription rates this year. If inflation continues, ALHA's committee may have to consider whether a small increase is justified next year.

## **PRESENTERS DIRECTORY**

A copy of the 2023 edition of the presenters directory (speakers list), in a new design by Jennifer Muller, will be sent to member groups and societies once they have paid their 2023-2024 subscription. This year ALHA's committee has decided to give member groups the option of receiving a printed copy on paper through the post, or a .pdf copy as an attachment to an e-mail. **A question in the application/renewal of membership form asks which your group or society prefers.** This option is being offered because some groups have asked for a digital copy so that they can circulate it more easily and quickly to committee members when they are planning their programme. Recipients will be asked not to copy the list to organisations that are not members of ALHA. As distribution of digital copies by e-mail means ALHA does not have to pay for printing or postage, any saving ALHA makes through groups opting for a .pdf copy will reduce, or may avoid altogether, any increase in subscription rates next year.

## **PUBLICATIONS TEAM NEW MEMBER – DINAH MOORE**

Dinah Moore, author of ALHA booklet no. 36, *Dr Edward Long Fox, radical and mental health pioneer*, has joined ALHA's publications team, replacing Bob Lawrence. Other members of the team are Dr Jonathan Harlow the series editor, Jane Bradley, and the treasurer. As reported in the Newsletter e-update 28 February 2023, a new booklet is planned for early summer 2023.

## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

*Veronica Bowerman writes:* ALHA is a registered charity - its trustees and helpers are all volunteers. Our friendly team of volunteers want to continue to give our members and the public at large a diverse, useful and interesting service, so we are seeking additional people to cover our increasing needs. If you have some heritage, local history or archaeology knowledge or want to obtain some, this may be for you. Many of our present volunteers belong to our existing ALHA member groups, but new volunteer applicants are welcome.

Can you spare around an average of two hours a week by joining our Events Team? Or can you recommend someone who could be interested? We have only one member of the Events Team at present.

The sort of things we need help with include sourcing suitable halls with easy access; producing publicity for the Webmaster, Facebook teams and the newsletter editor and others in the area; providing copy for local magazines and newspapers; sourcing suitable local speakers; providing information and maps on parking, bus, walking and cycling etc. for visitors. For the local history day, our big event, volunteers will be expected to attend the whole day of which normally runs between 9 am and 4 pm.

Training is available from existing volunteers. If you are a student or are looking for paid employment, such voluntary work could be beneficial to include on your CV. Many of our volunteers have joined ALHA on retirement and have improved their computer skills in the process.

## BACKGROUND

1975 - ALHA initially confined itself to local history, with annual local history days, summer walks, a speakers list and a journal, *Avon Past*.

2000s – On the demise of Avon Archaeological Council, ALHA extended its interest into archaeology.

2009 - ALHA embarked on the project of publishing compact but authoritative books on aspects of the area's history.

2022 - Over the years the website <https://www.alha.org.uk/> has gone from strength to strength, and in this year we were able to launch a new professional version to highlight the wide-ranging areas now covered.

## OTHER

Member organisations are able to have their events published on the website and posters are often submitted by them to our Facebook service.

Our summer walks are a very popular service that we are able to offer again.

Our range of authoritative yellow booklets continues to attract new authors and readers.

Many heritage organisations, including museums, are in regular touch with us.

We are also working towards updating our connections with the Bristol universities, and ascertaining if either of the ones in Bath would like to work with us.

## WHAT TO DO NEXT

If you have any questions or would like to pursue further, please email us [Info@ALHA.org.uk](mailto:Info@ALHA.org.uk) and include the subject header – Volunteers.

## SUMMER WALKS

*Mike Hooper writes* that he hopes to arrange three walks this summer. 'So far the first visit arranged is to **Kingswood Heritage Museum, Tower Lane, Warmley BS30 8XT**. We visited a few years ago, but they have greatly expanded, and this time they will let us see their store rooms that are not usually open to the general public. There will probably be a number of staff to show us around. If people want, there can be refreshments after, or during. They have suggested a £4.00 fee with refreshments extra on top. The date for this is Thursday 11 May 2023, meeting at 6.45 for a 7.00 start.'

Details of the two other walks (and any changes to the arrangements for this one) will be published on the ALHA website as arrangements are made final. Mike Hooper 0117 977 5512, [pathfinder59@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:pathfinder59@hotmail.co.uk).

## GRANTS

The committee has approved an application by ALHA member **Bitton Parish History Group** for a grant of £300 towards printing of history walks leaflets for **Bitton, Willsbridge** and **Oldland Common**.

## GROUPS AND SOCIETIES

### MARSHFIELD & DISTRICT

*Rita Lees writes:* Like many voluntary and statutory organisations, ALHA member **Marshfield & District Local History Society** will be sorry to see Jane Marley relinquish, upon her retirement on 31 March her position as Museums & Heritage Officer for South Gloucestershire Council. I have been fortunate to have received the benefit of Jane's practical advice and assistance, since her term in office over the past 8 years. As a member of our Society, Jane also provided a talk on her role within the Heritage sector. Jane was also closely involved with the World War I exhibitions and events throughout the county, plus the *Inspiring women within South Gloucestershire* exhibition, in which our Society nominated one of our former residents. We wish Jane a very happy retirement.

### STUKELEY 300 AT STANTON DREW

*John Richards writes:* **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.

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. [Image: Photo (cropped) by Stevekeiretsu, CC BY-SA 4.0].

On **Saturday 22 July 2023** there will be a symposium of talks on William Stukeley, and the archaeology of **Stanton Drew**, given by leading academics and archaeologists.

- **Stanton Drew in its local context:** Dr Jodie Lewis, University of Bradford.
- **From gatepost to post circles:** Dr Neil Linford, Senior Geophysicist, Historic England.
- **Connections and Complexes: Stanton Drew in its wider British and Irish context:** Dr Susan Greaney, University of Exeter.
- **A settlement in stone?** Prof Josh Pollard, University of Southampton.
- **On William Stukeley, standing stones and druids:** Dr David Boyd Haycock, writer, curator and lecturer.

Tickets will be on sale from 28 March (£25 for attendance in person; £15 for streaming by Zoom). See <https://stukeley300.org.uk>.

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 ([info@stukeley300.org.uk](mailto:info@stukeley300.org.uk)).

The events are being organised by **Stukeley 300**, a group with representatives from **Stanton Drew Parish Council**, ALHA members **Bristol and Avon Archaeological Society** **Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society** and **Bath and Counties Archaeological Society**, and English Heritage. For further information, see <https://stukeley300.org.uk>

## EVENTS AND SOURCES

### SANHS WEBINARS

*Veronica Bowerman writes:* Have you viewed a webinar yet? Recently on the internet I spotted a webinar being hosted by ALHA member **Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society (SANHS)** about Steep Holm, the island in the Bristol Channel owned and managed by the Kenneth Allsop Memorial Trust Ltd.

Lizzie Induni, Vice Chair of **SANHS**, introduced the presenter Steve Parker, Chair of the Kenneth Allsop Trust. Kenneth was a broadcaster and conservationist who died in 1973. The Trust formed in his memory bought Steep Holm by public subscription in 1976. There is only one place to land from **Weston super Mare** and visitors have to wait for the next high tide before they can leave 12 hours later. All their needs, including drinking water, have to be taken over in the boat. There is plenty to see during that time, which was also highlighted by some magnificent drone photography.

There is a long history of people who have lived there particularly during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, farming and fishing. The Old Inn, built in 1832 by the landing beach, is derelict and unsafe, but the barracks built in 1867 now serves as a visitor centre, a cafe and a museum. A generator supplies electricity.

Underground there was a store for munitions. A path takes walkers around the island. There are small trees, planted mainly in the 1970s, and scrub. There are several interesting plants on the island, including the Steep Holm peony, first described in 1803. Various birds include the peregrine falcon, the oyster catcher, gulls etc.

I was fortunate to visit Flat Holm the sister Island of Steep Holm a couple of times in the late 1960s and early 1970s. On the former occasion we were bombarded by gulls defending their nests. It was really quite scary. Apparently they are also quite ferocious on Steep Holm as well, so it was suggested that umbrellas could be used for protection during the breeding season.



Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society

*Webinar presentation*

### A Trip to Steep Holm by Steve Parker



**Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023 7.30pm**

This fully illustrated talk will take us on a trip to the island of Steep Holm in the Severn Estuary. Just off Weston-super-Mare, the island is home to a range of uncommon wildflowers, slow worms, Muntjac deer and hundreds of breeding gulls. Managed by a small local trust this talk will give you an insight to this remote and strangely beautiful island.

To register in advance for this Webinar, either email SANHS at:

[historicbuildings@sanhs.org](mailto:historicbuildings@sanhs.org)

Or to register directly, go to:

[https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_koumk8MaR3Wwbbe/VeJ0tQ](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_koumk8MaR3Wwbbe/VeJ0tQ)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about

This is a **Free** event, but donations are greatly appreciated. If you would like to donate, please go to the SANHS website <https://sanhs.org/> and use the Donate button.

**We suggest a donation of £5 or more.**



There was ample opportunity to ask Steve questions at the end of his presentation, so the chat facility was well used and enjoyed. It was an informative and enjoyable presentation which was really appreciated by the audience.

NB The publicity poster mentioned that webinar was free to view but donations of £5 or more would be most acceptable.

ALHA members please let us know if you have a webinar you would like to publicise through the ALHA newsletter, website or Facebook page. You can e-mail [Members@ALHA.org.uk](mailto:Members@ALHA.org.uk) or [Webmaster@ALHA.org.uk](mailto:Webmaster@ALHA.org.uk), or [Facebook@ALHA.org.uk](https://www.facebook.com/ALHA.org.uk)

## GLOSDOCS

Gloucestershire Local History Association, whose functions are similar to those of ALHA, but in the historic county of Gloucestershire, runs a website called GlosDocs: <https://glosdocs.org.uk/>. GlosDocs is 'an experimental project ... which enables any member group to "self publish" material online. This might be complete articles, exhibition displays, research notes, image collections, maps, transcriptions, online versions of out of print publications or any other type of document,' it says.

Most of the pieces posted so far relate only to places north of the Avon border, but recent additions to the site include *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Printed Maps of Gloucestershire 1577-1911*, by Thomas Chubb, with additions by Roland Austin, published in 1912 and 1916.

## THORNBURY & DISTRICT MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS

*Indian stories* is an exhibition telling 'the inspiring and often moving stories of some South Gloucestershire residents of Indian heritage. The exhibition is a blend of images and stories, filmed interviews and objects on loan from the interviewees. The stories have some common themes: family history, travel, work, education and family.' This touring exhibition started off last year in **Aerospace Bristol**. Until **Saturday 22 April 2023**.

*Thornbury Castle and the ill-fated 3rd Duke of Buckingham* starts **Tuesday 19 April 2023** and runs into next December. 'Edward Stafford, 3rd Duke of Buckingham, had grand ideas about his place in Tudor society. He set about building a castle where there had once been merely a manor house. He drew ideas from some of the grandest buildings in Tudor England – and was innovative too. Thornbury had ornate twisted chimneys before Hampton Court did. But his ambition cost him dearly. Before the castle was finished, Buckingham was executed by order of Henry VIII in 1521 ... Museum researchers have uncovered a great deal about Buckingham and his castle. Come and find out for yourself why Henry VIII distrusted such a powerful potential rival,' it says:



[https://www.thornburymuseum.org.uk/am\\_event/thornbury-castle-and-the-ill-fated-3rd-duke-of-buckingham](https://www.thornburymuseum.org.uk/am_event/thornbury-castle-and-the-ill-fated-3rd-duke-of-buckingham)

The exhibition *Thornbury treasures* continues until **December 2023**.

**Thornbury & District museum, 4 Chapel Street, Thornbury, BS35 2BJ, 01454 857 774: Tuesdays 1-4, Fridays 1-4, Saturdays 10-4pm; [enquiries@thornburymuseum.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@thornburymuseum.org.uk)**

## **SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNCIL WEBSITE – MUSEUMS AND HERITAGE**

*Jane Marley writes:* We have been working on improvements to make the council's website more accessible and attractive. Please do have a look at the museums and heritage section at <https://beta.southglos.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/museums-heritage-local-history>. The museum and heritage sites are listed, as are heritage trails and all the projects we have delivered together. The new learning resources for the *Indian Stories* project can be found at <https://beta.southglos.gov.uk/indian-heritage-stories>. The 'new look' First World War Stories Learning Resources are at <https://beta.southglos.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/museums-heritage-local-history/ww1-stories>

This is my last news for South Gloucestershire Council. Thank you to all those who have partnered us to create the projects to research and make the heritage of South Gloucestershire available to learning institutions and diverse audiences.

Jane Marley, Museums and Heritage Officer

## **SOCIAL HISTORY IN MARSHFIELD 1901-1972**

*Rita Lees writes:* From the 19th to the 20th centuries Marshfield, like many other parishes in England, regularly received copies of a monthly Church of England magazine. It could be personalised with the parish name on the cover and a local insert containing information written by the parish. Invariably, these contained letters from the local vicar but also news of both local and national events, and therefore provide an invaluable record of the life in each parish. Marshfield is one example, and from 2019-2022 Chris Hart, from **Marshfield & District Local History Society**, meticulously transcribed all the local social history events over 70 years. His thorough research was matched by rigorous editing by Jill Roseberry. Gloucester Archives holds copies of the original publications, plus a pdf digital guide to the social history content, from 1901 to 1972: D 9053, Accession no.16218. Work is now taking place on examining earlier copies of the *Marshfield Parish Magazine*, currently on loan to MDLHS, from 1894-1900.

## **REVIEWS** by Dr Jonathan Harlow

***Bristol Past & Present* F J Nicholls & J Taylor: Vol I *Civil History* [to 1643], Vol II *Ecclesiastical History*, Vol III *Civil & Modern History* [1643-1882]; Arrowsmith, 1881-1882. 318, 308 & 356 pages, copious b&w illustrations.**

The original edition is available for about £200; but there are several modern facsimiles.

Nicholls, the chief librarian of Bristol Free Libraries, took principal responsibility for Volumes I and III; and Taylor, Bristol Museum librarian, for Vol II. Neither was an historian, their work was essentially compilation, and they neither criticize their predecessors nor seek to analyse the events they narrate. Indeed the preface to Vol I says as much: the previous histories are out of print and need rewriting 'in a style adapted to the age'. Which does scant justice to the age: the style is flat; the reader will search in vain for a memorable passage; as indeed for a witty one.

Each volume has an Index, rather oddly placed in the front, and a list of illustrations, also in the front. Direct quotations in the text are usually referenced, but they are usually to previous annalists such as Barrett, Seyer and Evans, rather than to original sources. The illustrations are maddeningly undocumented: the time represented is scarcely ever mentioned; and the source hardly ever identified. The dedication of Volume I to Braikenridge suggests the likely source of most, or rather the cache from which they drew. For today's researcher, they simply show that a potentially useful image exists somewhere.

Nicholls & Taylor are liberals, not conservatives like Barret and Seyer. Accordingly their Civil War (awkwardly split between Vols I and III) is pro Parliament and anti Charles I. But on the more contentious

subject of the slave trade they are almost entirely silent: nothing about Bristol's entry, nothing about abolition. Was it perhaps already being considered as bad publicity for the city?

The work is readily available on-line and in libraries; and its limitations are such that it cannot be recommended as a valuable purchase even for keen local historians.

***Somerset's Loyalties on the Eve of Civil War: Bishops, Ireland & Parliamentary Petitions 1641-1642* A J Webb & S Berry, Studies in Somerset's History Vol I, 414 pages, ill. £49.95**

This book includes transcripts of the petitions from Somerset from October 1641 to August or so 1642 when King Charles first raised his standard. These include one against bishops in January 1642; one of February 1642 for Parliament against 'scandalous ministers' of the Crown; two between March and May calling for compromise and mutual accommodation between King and Parliament; and another of June or after for compromise especially on the control of the militia.



But the bulk of the text deals with the petition made to Parliament in December 1642. This was about the currently active issue of bishops: there was already a campaign to abolish episcopacy altogether - 'root and branch'. The Somerset petition is more moderate: bishops, yes; but out with the bad ones. And very probably Piers, the Bishop of Bath & Wells was considered among the bad ones, for he was a zealous follower of Archbishop Laud in moving the Protestant Church of England into more ritualistic (or Romish) ways. [Image Fitzwilliam Museum].

This was signed by or for some 14,400 persons, but oddly arranged in sections which were identified by numbers and letters.

The authors have done great service in decoding these identifiers to reveal the parish or parishes concerned in each; and in doing this they have worked through the signatories in intensive detail. They have also frequently referred to the occurrence of the same names in the subsequent petitions, which are not however separately discussed at anything like the same length. Despite this vast labour of identification, it is not easy to say how or what proportion of the population the petition represents. A number of parishes are unrepresented; but surely not because all the inhabitants rejected episcopacy. More likely the local landowner and parson were hostile. The authors try to assess the signers as a proportion of adult males; but it seems to this reviewer very probable that only those who paid a parish rate would be invited to sign – eg a farmer but not his labourers. This aspect does not appear to have received the authors' attention, but if correct, the signatories would have been a very large majority of the parishes represented.

A majority, that is, in favour of good Protestant bishops. The authors frequently refer to and discuss the petition as an expression of royalism. This reviewer disagrees. The issue at the time was episcopacy, not royalty; and the wording is likewise all about episcopacy not royalty. On this basis one can compare royalism as later revealed with moderate Protestantism, rather than as here with changes in royalist sentiment. But such disagreements are what history is about; and they are made fruitful by such wealth of data as has here been mined.

So, a must for any local historian interested in the Civil War. A hefty wallop to the wallet, but make sure your libraries get it.



**Dorothy Smith, Dinah Black and the ship Robert of Bristol.** Richard Maidment, privately published 2022, 55 pages fully illustrated some in colour.

Not for public sale but try Richard Maidment, 81 Richmond Road, Bristol BS6 5EP.

This detailed micro-history tells the story of Dinah Black, a slave who in 1667 was consigned by her owner to be deported to Nevis in the Caribbean. But friends (possibly from the church of St James where she had been baptized) rescued her, bringing her case before the Mayor and Aldermen, who ruled that she be released to stay in Bristol.

Maidment explores every aspect of the story, from Dinah herself and her former mistress Dorothy Black to the city's rulers, slavery, and the shipping and shippers concerned. So the story acts as a keyhole through which can be made out many features of Bristol in that period. This is a good booklet, inviting to read and one hopes tempting to imitate.

**The Local Historian 53.1 (Jan 2023)** has an article on 'Fifteenth century Somerset: the Common Pleas indices as a source for understanding occupational distributions' by Edward & Philip Ashford. This draws on the work done by the University of Houston to list all the plaintiffs and defendants before the court in the 15th and 16th centuries for easy home-based research. (Occupations are a specially favourable theme because they are fairly factual compared with elastic declarations of status like 'yeoman'.)

The most common occupations were chapmen (local dealers), followed by butchers, the associated skimmers, tanners and glovers, tailors and blacksmiths. The authors include suggestive distribution maps for the butchers and associated trades. Readers may like to pursue their own enquiries:

[http://aalt.law.uh.edu/Indices/CP40Indices/CP40\\_Indices.html](http://aalt.law.uh.edu/Indices/CP40Indices/CP40_Indices.html)

## **BOOKS AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS NOTICED**

**Bristol & Avon Family History Society** *Journal* 191, March 2023. An issue packed with pages of tributes to former chairman of B&AFHS and of ALHA Bob Lawrence.

An article by Ann Pople and Clare Hayward about Foster's Almshouses, **Bristol**, contains useful information, national and local, though statements like 'residing in **Kingsdown** was obviously a requirement for getting a room in the Almshouse' and that Bristol Corporation was 'founded in 1577' call for clarification. A piece by Jane Bambury on removal of burials mentions Caroline Draper, d. 1769, descendent of Charles II, sitter to Gainsborough, and wife of the general who commissioned Manila Hall in **Clifton** and the monuments now on **Clifton Down**. Her body, or what was left of it, was one of 1,184 removed from the churchyard of St Augustine the less to **Arnos Vale** when **Bristol's** floating harbour was widened 1891-1892. Details of the removal operation, and quotes from contemporary reports, are given, and of other removals in **Bath** and **Bristol**. JB warns that information on gravestones sometimes needs to be checked against documentary and other sources.

*In our time* is a series of programmes on BBC Radio 4. Guided by Melvyn Bragg, a few experts explain and discuss a topic, without being interrupted. The episode broadcast 2 March 2023 was about megaliths.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m001jkzg> gives access to a recording, available indefinitely, it says, and lists a bibliography. Our area's megaliths are at **Stanton Drew**, which will be the subject of a celebration planned by ALHA member **Bath & Counties Archaeological Society 22-23 July 2023** to mark the 300th anniversary of William Stukeley's visit. More at <https://www.bacas.org.uk/2023/01/24/stukeley-festival-at-stanton-drew-2/> and above under **GROUPS AND SOCIETIES**.

## COMMENTARY

### FRANCIS FOX TUCKETT



Mention in a recent ALHA newsletter of the Alpine climber Isabella Mary Straton of **Willsbridge** might prompt local history people to recall other local mountaineers. One was the quaker Francis Fox Tuckett, born in 1834 at The Old House, **Frenchay**, where he lived most of his life. FFT went to school at Exley's in **Cotham**, then joined his father's leather business (Tuckett & Rake in Victoria Street, **Bristol**). That gave him the means and

the time to study and travel, not as a leisure tourist but as a scientific explorer. Whymper dubbed him 'That Mighty Mountaineer.' He visited every continent; explored and climbed in the Alps (269 peaks), the Dolomites and the Caucasus; was a vice-president of the Alpine Club; and was a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. Buildings, landforms and a skiing trophy are named after him. Back home, he donated artefacts to **Bristol's** City Museum and to the Pitt Rivers museum, and gave books on archaeology to the library of ALHA member **Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society**. FFT campaigned for the provision of public open space: but for his efforts, Bristol's **Eastville** Park would not exist. His widow gave land at **Frenchay** for public recreation. To mark the centenary in 2013 of FFT's death **Frenchay Village Museum** published Gerald Franklin's *Francis Fox Tuckett's Alpine letters 1856 to 1874*, and Alan Freke's *That mighty mountaineer: a biographical sketch of Francis Fox Tuckett FRGS*. Photograph of him is at <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person/mp124012/francis-fox-tuckett> .

What can have prompted these people to climb mountains? Novelty, perhaps: were **Kelston clump** and **Sims hill** insufficient challenges? FFT's father travelled abroad: he died in Naples. IMS's motivation is not known. Did they know each other?

### Birthplace

For most people the place where they were born is important. It is part of an individual's identity. 'I'm ... born and ... bred, And when I'm gone I'll be ... dead' is an unattractive but widespread sentiment. Attachment to, or affection for, one's place of birth is akin to patriotism, but birthplace is not the same as nationality: it is more specific, more local.

If you have spent most of your life in our area, but were born in Nicosia because your mother was married to an RAF serviceman stationed there, the chances are you see yourself as British; where you were born may be of interest or curiosity, but as an adult you do not think of yourself as Cypriot or support one of Nicosia's three ground-sharing top division football teams. Nor do you have any salmon-like urge to go back there.

The philosopher John Locke's family lived in **Pensford**, but he was born in **Wrighton**, but only because his mother was staying with her sister when she gave birth. She may have planned that, perhaps because she trusted her sister's midwifery in preference to what pre-NHS **Pensford** offered, but the birth may have been earlier than expected, in which case where it happened was accidental, contingent.

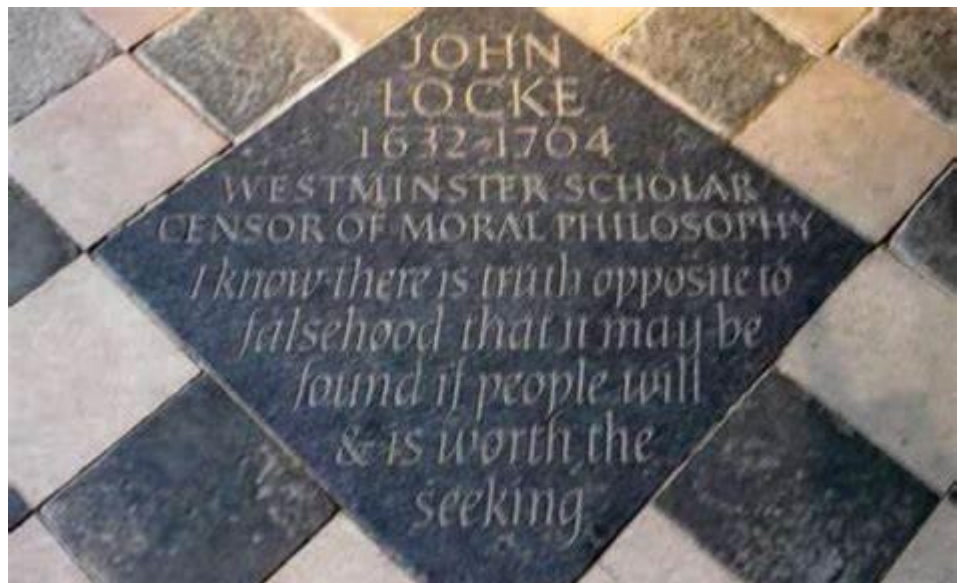
Like parents, names and schooling, birthplace is not something we can choose: it is imposed upon us. We can change our name, nationality, hair colour, and now much else, but our birthplace is something we are indelibly stuck with.

Until about the seventeenth century, and in some places later, most people in our area, at any rate outside the large towns, must have remained in their place of birth for most of their lives. Survival depended on the successful practice of agriculture and related activity within a manor to which tenants

were bound. Only the landed rich, who may have held properties in several places, and in boroughs the mercantile elite, had reason to travel and the means to do so. Some clergy, traders, soldiers, mariners, and people employed by the crown or the church might travel on business or as part of their duties, and some craftspeople like church masons must have moved about to where the next job was, but most people must have stayed put where they were born. That changed as the manorial system disintegrated, and as inclosures and the introduction of machinery into agriculture forced some people to move elsewhere in search of survival. The manufacturing revolution drew people away from their places of birth in order to earn a living. By the late nineteenth century, the colonies, wars, the railways, better roads, and more manufacturing and trading had led to more and more people moving from where they were born. By the twentieth century the armed services, education and commerce meant that if you had contributed significantly to the place where you were living, the chances are you were born somewhere else.

When most births were at home, most people could pinpoint the exact place, and perhaps the room, where they were born. No longer so: during the twentieth century more and more births were in medical establishments such as hospitals or specialist maternity homes. One was by **Durdham Down** in **Bristol** at the top of Blackboy – handy for The Glen – later moved to **St Michaels Hill**. But one suspects that most people think of themselves as born in **Bristol** or **Bath** or **Weston super mare** rather than at the BMH, Southmead, the General, the BRI, the RUH or Weston general.

In December 2022 the national media belatedly splashed, no doubt as a welcome change from Ukraine, inflation, strikes and the problems of the NHS, the birth of a baby in a coastguard helicopter taking his mother from the Scillies to Truro. That there were similar cases in 2008 and 2013 seems to have escaped media notice. If when he grows up the lad wants to visit the place of his



birth, it will be difficult to pinpoint it, let alone visit it, presumably several hundred feet above sea level or a Cornish field. Government instructions to registrars of births, by the way, and Civil Aviation Authority instructions to owners of aircraft when a child is born on an aircraft in flight, helpfully give some flexibility: “Approximate position, eg ‘40 miles west of Lisbon’, ‘over Dieppe’, ‘over Northern France’.”

It is difficult to avoid concluding that attachment to place of birth is irrational. That however has not stopped local history writers from attaching disproportionate importance to birthplace. That someone famous was born in a locality gets a mention, even if the fact has no historic significance to that place’s past, especially if there is not much else of interest to say about the place. Tourism’s appropriation of local history will encourage the practice. John Locke spent most of his life in neither **Pensford** nor **Wrighton**, and is famed for work, and its consequences, elsewhere. I would like to suggest that birthplace, by itself, is of little relevance to local history, or to anything else.

By the way, the image [from *Britain All Over*] is of the inscription on the memorial stone in Locke’s place of burial, Oxford. Historians, and others, would do well to heed it.

## QUOTE

Most people can name the great leaders and major battles in the past, but few can name the biggest storms, the most significant floods, the most severe droughts, or the ways that these influenced harvest failures, provoked political pressures or were catalysts in the spread of disease.

Peter Frankopan, *The earth transformed: an untold history* (Bloomsbury 2023).

## CAN YOU HELP?

**J Naysmith, *A view of Bristol***

Preston Grundy *writes*: One of my favourite paintings is the attached view of **Bristol**. It hangs in the Wolverhampton Art Gallery. Is it possible to find the setting from where the painting was completed, using the various prominent points of interest, and send a modern photo from the same setting? It's just to settle my curiosity as to how everything has changed. Many thanks. Replies please to the enquirer at [mpg@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:mpg@blueyonder.co.uk) ; and ALHA's chairman, Ian Chard, [ian.chard@talktalk.net](mailto:ian.chard@talktalk.net) would be grateful for a copy.



[More about Patrick Nasmyth and his 1827 painting is at [https://www.wolverhamptonart.org.uk/collections/getrecord/WAGMU\\_OP88](https://www.wolverhamptonart.org.uk/collections/getrecord/WAGMU_OP88) . Images of 120 of his works are at [https://artuk.org/discover/artists/nasmyth-patrick-17871831/view\\_as/grid/search/keyword:patrick-nasmyth/sort\\_by/name.keyword/order/asc/page/1](https://artuk.org/discover/artists/nasmyth-patrick-17871831/view_as/grid/search/keyword:patrick-nasmyth/sort_by/name.keyword/order/asc/page/1) . There is also his view of the meeting of the Avon and



the Severn (1826) in the Guildhall Art Gallery, London; a view in Leigh Woods (1830) in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; and of the Severn off Portishead (1827) in Tate Gallery, London. If PN was in our area 1826-1830, could some of his other paintings of that date be of unidentified places locally? Ed.]

## A PRINTING MUSEUM?

*Maria Quintin writes:* I'm looking to set up a print museum in **Bristol**. We are currently in the research stage of this project, so have created a quick questionnaire to collate data before we can get funding and support etc. which would be amazing if you could take a few minutes to fill in:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScELdIkzNOzFSqDWNQOi2iauQdH-gp5wa52BTUGo3BY89qfbw/viewform>

Also - perhaps more importantly - I would appreciate it if you could share it with your contacts, in social media, in fb groups etc. so that I can get responses from as many walks of life and as diverse a range of people as possible!! This doesn't have to be all printmaking or artistic contacts - in fact, I need the majority of people outside of this sector to respond to show the need is not niche. As an artist, I am struggling to get this out to the general public, so the more the merrier!

Maria Quintin, [maria@quintsprints.com](mailto:maria@quintsprints.com) ; Instagram: @bristolprintmuseumproject

## MARCHING WOMEN

*Jane Askew writes:* Can you tell us anything about this photograph please? It was discovered in the



possessions of a deceased person who lived in **Bristol**. Their family are interested to find out why the women chose to march down the street that day. I will happily pass suggestions on to our enquirer. Jane Askew, Regional History Centre Administrator, [Jane.Askew@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:Jane.Askew@uwe.ac.uk) [Where? When? Who? Why? Ed.]

## STUKELEY 300 AT STANTON DREW

*John Richards writes:* On **Sunday 23 July 2023** there will be a day of events Stanton Drew, including tours of the stones and an exhibition. Details above under **GROUPS AND SOCIETIES**. We are looking for volunteers to give tours (notes provided); if interested, please email John Richards ([info@stukeley300.org.uk](mailto:info@stukeley300.org.uk)).

## EVENTS DIARY

**Events notified to ALHA's website manager are listed on the ALHA website. Please send details or a copy of your programme to the webmaster, contact details on page 1 top right Please notify any changes of regular venue or timing.** Because of the coronavirus, or other reasons, events may be cancelled at short notice. Links or directions to online events open to the public appear on ALHA's website, but now in a different format.