Friends of the Centre for English Local History

NEWSLETTER

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER NUMBER 15 OCTOBER 2002

Whittlewood project:
The illustration on the cover page shows a series of test pits that were opened during 2002 to investigate a possible 'burh' site. Whittlebury church is in the background. The photograph was taken by Dr Richard Jones.

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EDITORIAL

The past year has been one of great change for the Friends. Three of the key members of the committee have completed their term of office, and in accordance with the constitution, had to stand down. All Friends of the Centre will be aware of the dedication that Derek Shorthouse, Dr John Goodacre and Dr Mike Thompson, respectively Secretary, Treasurer and editor of the Newsletter, have given over so many years. It is always difficult for any organisation to maintain a real semblance of continuity under such circumstances, so we are delighted that they have been so willing to offer their help to the incoming officers. Derek continues to look after sales of Friends books.

On a personal level, coming from an industrial rather than academic background, I felt honoured to be asked to take over editorship of the Newsletter. As always on such occasions, I wondered what I might have let myself in for, but Mike Thompson's support and advice has made the job so much easier. He himself continues to organise the annual book sale that is so much part of the Hoskins Day lecture. This year the sale raised over three hundred pounds for the Friends. At the same time the Centre for Urban History held a book sale, a practical sign of cooperation.

During the year the Friends have held a number of activities, a tour of Leicester castle in October, the seminar day in November, and in April, our first study weekend held in Gloucestershire, followed by the summer outing, which this year was a visit to St Ives and Ramsey in Cambridgeshire; all of which are reported in greater detail elsewhere.

The objectives of the Friends remain as always, to support the work of the Centre, to provide financial support to students where appropriate and to serve as a means of contact between former students; all have been achieved during the year. When news of the impending expansion into No.1 Salisbury Road became known, the Friends committee requested that a small room be made available for our use; it remains to be seen if we are successful.

THE CENTRE

THE FUTURE OF THE CENTRE FOR ENGLISH LOCAL HISTORY. A PERSONAL VIEW.

We are learning to live in interesting times, as the Centre goes through another constitutional transition. We only recently changed from a Department to a Centre in the Department of Economic and Social History, and began to share our accommodation with the Centre for Urban History. Now the Department and its two Centres are to join a School of Historical Studies. This already exists in a rather shadowy form, and has made a useful contribution in co-ordinating undergraduate teaching, but from January 2003 it will be a reality, with a single budget and a single Head of School. The formation of schools of history and the disappearance of autonomous and independent departments of economic and social history has already happened in most universities, and Leicester is falling into a general pattern. In many ways it is a positive move, as it strengthens history as a subject, gives students more choice, and allows the subject to be taught and managed more efficiently. It is absurd, for example, that the undergraduate course taught by English Local History in the academic year 2001-2 was not taken by students of History, only by those from Economic and Social History. The negative aspect of the new arrangement is the threat that the School poses to economic and social history as a branch of history located within the social sciences. When an economic historian leaves or retires, his or her replacement may be a political or cultural historian, and in the long run the subject could be weakened.

From the Centre's point of view we had lingering doubts about whether the recent surrender of our status as a separate Department had been the right thing to do – now we know that had we held out against change we would have been clinging to a very short term independence, and we would have lost our departmental status and would have been absorbed into the new School this year.

Our time under the wing of Economic and Social History has been a generally good experience. The Head of Department, Peter

Musgrave, has been a very good friend and ally, and we were able to continue with our work in much the same fashion as before. There is an obvious danger as we face a new School and a new Head that our unique position may not be recognized as it was under the benign rule of Peter Musgrave. We have a vital task in the next few months to show that we are a valuable asset to the School and the University, and that we can contribute to the common good by developing our subject and our approach as a postgraduate and research unit within the School. Our special qualities are appreciated in the University, and we must show that this goodwill is justified. This is a time when we need friends, and we hope that the Friends who receive this Newsletter will come to our aid if that is necessary!

There is no need for alarm and I am quietly confident that we can cope with this new challenge. The best form of defence is to expand our operations, which will disarm our critics. These are some suggestions for the way forward, which are in most cases steps that we have begun to take, or which we have discussed purposefully.

Firstly, we can generate more income by hosting research projects funded by such bodies as the Economic and Social Research Council and the Arts and Humanities Research Board (soon to be a Research Council). Applications have been made successfully for more than a decade, and of course David Postles' work on surnames is partly financed by the Marc Fitch Fund. This year we celebrate the success of the Whittlewood Project, which has completed its two-year pilot, and is now embarking on a three-year phase with the help of a £318,000 grant from the AHRB, and a number of smaller grants (see the article in this Newsletter on this project). We are actively preparing an application to the AHRB for one of their five-year Research Centre grants, with partners from the School of Archaeology, and scholars from other universities such as Exeter. The theme of the Centre is landscape history, with a central aim of marking the 50th anniversary of the publication of Hoskins' *Making of the English Landscape* by rethinking the subject and producing a new synthesis. Funding opportunities are also being sought for a continuation of Graham Jones' work on saints' cults.

These ventures give the university financial benefits, but their main justification is the worthwhile research which they enable us to complete, a good example being Keith Snell's book on Victorian religion, and the chance that they give to young scholars to gain research experience and to contribute to the life of the Centre.

Secondly, we need to increase our student numbers on the MA course. Our recruitment is quite healthy, compared with other courses offered elsewhere in Leicester, and similar courses at other universities, but we need to explore methods of publicity, which will bring us more full-time students, and more students of 'normal age'. We enjoy teaching adult students, and value their contribution, but a few more 21-year-olds ought to be attracted to our courses. We are teaching a course for Leicester undergraduates, which in the future should be available to all history students, and we hope to encourage some of them to carry on their studies with us after they graduate. But how can we gain applications from other universities? We send posters and leaflets to history departments, but university notice boards are festooned with hundreds of posters, and they attract little attention. We have an excellent website, thanks to Dave Postles, which is frequently visited.

It would be a great help if we could recruit more overseas students, and we have been told that our landscape history might draw student interest from the USA, as this is not taught at post-graduate level over there.

Thirdly, we need to recruit more research students, especially those working in the period before 1700. One method would be to develop distance-learning techniques which would enable us to gain students working on PhDs away from the Leicester region or even overseas. We do this already by informal agreement, but the announcement of a distance learning programme would enable us to publicize our availability to supervise research, and we would devise a structured system of supervision.

Fourthly, we must continue to keep up a high profile as researchers. We must maintain our good reputation, and strengthen it, with publications and participation in conferences. We should keep up our international links, and make

sure that we are well known not just in the English-speaking world, where the appeal of our subject should be obvious, but also in continental Europe and beyond, where we must show that our ideas and approaches have a universal application.

Fifthly, this outward looking and expansive programme ought to be helped by the new developments in Salisbury Road. No. 1 Salisbury Road is being converted into offices and rooms, mostly for use by our Centre and the Centre for Urban History. We will gain more room in our present premises when some of the Urban History staff move to no.1. The Marc Fitch library will be able to expand, and we can provide visitors with offices. A visiting fellow from Spain will be occupying a room in the autumn of this year, for example. The most important asset in no.1 from our point of view will be a larger meeting room, where sixty or so people can be seated, which will be ideal for larger seminars and small conferences. These facilities are to be shared with the Centre for Urban History, and postgraduates from the School of Historical Studies will be encouraged to use the facilities. The title 'Marc Fitch Historical Institute' appears on a notice board outside our present house, but I have yet to see any evidence that such an organization exists. I hope that it can be brought into being, and that the Centre can play a leading role in it. But to some extent this depends on the new School of Historical Studies.

Our aim must be not just to keep our position, but also to improve it. We badly need a member of staff with expertise in the period 1500-1700, and our aim must be to make a compelling case to the new School for such an appointment.

Any comments on these thoughts will be gratefully received, especially on the recruitment of students.

Christopher Dyer

SOCIAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The Social History Society will hold its annual meeting at the University of Leicester at the invitation of the Marc Fitch Historical Institute in Jan. 2003

SEMINAR PROGRAMME 2001-02

Professor Christopher Dyer introduced the first speaker of this year's seminar season, **Professor John Koch** (University of Wales, Centre for Advanced Celtic Studies), who is the Editor of the *Encyclopaedia of Celtic Studies*, and other publications on the same subject. Professor Koch started his talk on 'Social identity in Early Medieval Britain' by discussing the concept of objective and subjective identity. We may know how the Greeks looked upon the Celts but we do not know how the Celts looked upon themselves. The fifth and sixth centuries were not times when the written word was of great importance. It was unlikely that they considered themselves as Celts and even less likely that they knew of the spread of other Celtic peoples throughout Europe. The conflict with the Anglo-Saxons would have been seen in local terms.

The views of St Patrick, Bede and Gildas were then considered; Patrick identified himself variously as a Roman and a Christian. Koch felt that most people would have been more influenced by their political and military masters than their ethnic origins. Civitas was the highest level of identity; we do not yet understand how the concept of identity might have changed. Gildas's opinions cannot be taken too seriously as he did not live at the time, and Bede concentrated on the old kingdoms. The writings of all three would only have been read by a small elite.

So how did a sense of identity evolve? Secular identities were at the civitas level. We need to read the writers with a much more critical eye. To what extent did the changes in settlement patterns after the departure of the Romans influence identity? Indeed, what was the level of continuity? A most thought-provoking talk was followed by a lively discussion.

In today's frantic world where supermarket shopping is either an endurance test or an experience to be completed as quickly as possible, it was refreshing to listen to our speaker, **Dr Nancy Cox** (University of Wolverhampton) talk in unhurried tones of the origins of the situation we now endure. By way of introducing her subject, 'Shopping - the seventeenth-century experience', she examined the definition of shopping as provided by Samuel Pepys – 'to

frequent shops for the purpose of shopping' – and the OED – 'to visit a shop to purchase goods'. Eighteenth-century literary references suggest shopping was on a par to visiting and was a social activity. Indeed, Joanna Schoppenhauer, writing in her diary of a visit to England, notes '*the large display cabinets, seductive displays, and choice of goods*'. But plate glass and decorative lighting only arrived in the eighteenth century, so the thrust of the seminar was to investigate the evolutionary aspects in the previous century.

Dr Cox, acknowledging there are relatively few accurate records available to historians, has used inventories as far as possible to build up a picture. With the strict control of printing, it was difficult for shopkeepers to promote their goods; the configuration of urban building did not help, though improvements were made towards the end of the century, especially when London was rebuilt after the Great Fire. The town market was the central point for shopping and the majority bought everything there. Gradually, however, shops opened on the peripheries, with a door giving direct access to buyers. The appropriate level of social awareness was maintained by ensuring that only the higher orders actually entered the shop. Using information from inventories,she considers the range of products available in the seventeenth century was far greater than has generally been thought. She considers that shopkeepers played an important role in introducing new products and establishing fashions, and used the introduction of tobacco as an example. Hospitality became an important part of a shopkeeper's skill. The concept that shopping should be a pleasure is starting to be repeated today as an antidote to the nineteenth and twentieth-century concept that shopping only started in the nineteenth century.

Christine Hill, a trustee of Hill Close Gardens in Warwick, gave a fascinating talk on 'the town gardens of the eighteenth century'. Her interest had been awakened when she was asked to visit an overgrown area of the town and explain its origin. Inspection of maps identified it as an area of some two acres that had been divided into plots and sold to townsfolk who developed them as places for relaxation and pleasure. While the Hill Close Gardens were created in the middle of the nineteenth century, the town garden had come into being a century earlier. Gardens, situated on the edge of town, became popular with middle class tradesmen who lived in the town centre.

Town gardens were established on the outskirts of most towns; in many cases the rents obtainable were twice those possible if the land was used for grazing. Fields were divided into plots of, typically, one eighth of an acre. While fruit and vegetables were grown, by far the largest part of the garden was devoted to landscape and pleasure, reflecting the interest of the time in plants and horticulture and the import of exotic new species. The summerhouse became an integral part of the town garden; where tenancy was held by the same family for a long time, summerhouses often became quite substantial. Town gardens, which Christine Hodgetts also called hedged gardens, were always bounded by a hedge and could still be found in use up to the nineteen-twenties. However, as towns expanded during the nineteenth century, many gardens were sold for building and, in any case, the prosperous middle classes had moved into the suburbs to houses with an integral garden.

The crossover with allotments is difficult to define. The highest prices for town gardens were achieved in the eighteen-sixties-and seventies. Thereafter, gardens came down the social scale; at the same time land was given for allotments from the middle of the century, though statutory definition of allotments did not take place till the end of the century.

Professor James Stokes (University of Wisconsin) has been involved with the REED (Records of Early English Drama) project that was started by the University of Toronto in 1975. It was natural that he chose to speak on 'Performance and Posturing: records of drama in early Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and Rutland'. REED has set itself the daunting target of publishing every reference to drama in all English counties up to 1642. Professor Stokes has researched and published the two volumes on Somerset, and since 1996 has been working on the Lincolnshire volume, to which Rutland was later added. Much of the work concerns the identification of traditional and religious plays that were performed the length and breadth of the

county. Grimsby seems to have been the most prolific performance site of plays in Lincolnshire, a point that led to a discussion on the importance of foreign content. Sutton Bridge, in the south of the county, features more often than expected for a small town.

Many plays were performed on a regular basis, though not necessarily presented annually. Many of the town trade and social guilds, whose records are a rich source of detailed information, performed their own special play, such as the Lincoln Cordwainers' 'Bethlehem pageant'. Records indicate that the players would visit the local towns and villages to announce a forthcoming play, perhaps even giving a short extract. Visitors from thirty towns and villages attended a play in Spalding in the 1540s, while another held in the same town in 1546, took two days to perform. Plays were also performed to celebrate specific events such as the casting of new bells. The larger towns would have a number of places where plays were performed; Lincoln had four play places. Professional actors and musicians are recorded from 1360 and included a number of women. Musicians seem to have outnumbered actors and, contrary to common perception, were not itinerant and came from all social backgrounds; they are most often recorded in Lincoln, Boston and Stamford. If this was the player announcing his play, all those at the seminar will eagerly await publication of the forthcoming volume.

As the advertised speaker for the final seminar of the year had been taken to hospital that morning, **Dr Richard Jones and Dr Mark Page** stood in at short notice to provide an insight into the 'Whittlewood Project'. This project, lead by Prof. Chris Dyer, who introduced the speakers, is looking at the evolution of settlement patterns in twelve parishes on the Northamptonshire/ Buckinghamshire border, in an area that formed part of Whittlewood Forest. The project started in the summer of 2000, with funding for three years; an application for further funding has proved successful, see page 27,so the project can be continued.

Mark gave an overview of the area from the eleventh century, all but one of the parishes (Deanshanger) being mentioned in Domesday Book. Luffield Abbey is the centre of the area under study; it was a royal hunting forest during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, there being evidence that Henry I (probably) and Henry II (certainly) hunted there. Gradually the forest area seems to have shrunk so that the king's foresters would not have had the right to control people in Buckinghamshire after 1300. Part of the study is to look at the effects of assarting and how settlements changed as a result of deforestation. Today, all twelve parishes still exist in a mix of nuclear and dispersed villages, some of which have grown while others have withered.

While Mark is researching historical aspects, Richard is concerned with the landscape archaeology. He has so far concentrated on the small compact parish of Akeley. Field patterns to the west are more regular than those to the east of the village. Roads on the west are straighter than roads on the eastern side, all of which indicates that the land on the west side of the village was arable while that to the south and east was used for pasture. The medieval field pattern can be identified to the north and east of the village Richard had opened twenty four shovel test pits in various parts of the village which has produced Roman and early medieval pottery fragments while today's village is nuclear. Evidence is now appearing to indicate it was formerly a polyfocal village with centres round the church and the manor farm.

'Changing clothes and changing status: the bequest of clothing in sixteenth-century Kent' was the subject chosen by **Dr Catherine Richardson** (The Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham). In her introduction she explained that her talk would deal with the significance of clothes as exposed by the written word, not by any discussion on the changing fashions of the time. Her current research looks at the relative social meanings of dress using the Ecclesiastical Court Depositions and other supporting evidence such as wills, tailors' accounts etc. The theme of her work has been to analyse the link between clothing and morality as expressed by deponents; while Ecclesiastical Court Depositions do not consciously consider the importance of clothes, the way deponents explained what they saw or heard concerning a particular case, often provides an insight into the attitudes of our forbears.

Deponents often explain in considerable detail, whether it is factual or circumstantial. We therefore see the social interaction of clothing within a code of morality. On occasions they can provide a cameo full of detail, providing a lively impression of an occasion as witnessed by the deponent.

Dr Richardson also discussed how clothing can show aspects of relationship. The Court was used to describe the significance of clothes, to show the boundary between courtship and marriage, especially when items had a factual or legal role. Where the Court was dealing with cases of sexual morality, or more often immorality, deponents were careful to use expressions that were acceptable in the sixteenth century; there was more innuendo than actual reference to nakedness. In many cases the mere reference to a couple being alone, especially if there was any suggestion of clothing that was unsuitable for the occasion, was sufficient evidence. Dr Richardson's talk provided an interesting insight into the role of clothing in the morality of the sixteenth century, which in turn, stimulated a lively discussion afterwards.

Dr David Marcombe (University of Nottingham) gave a very graphic account of 'The power of the place: a Lincolnshire sacred site and its continuity'. This was about the chapel at the hamlet of Spital in the Street, dedicated to St Edmund, King and Martyr, 12 miles north of Lincoln on Ermine Street which, with friends, he bought as a fully consecrated church within the Anglican communion in 1992, from the charity which had owned it since the 1390s. With the aid of numerous slides he unfolded a fascinating story, stretching back to prehistoric times, based upon archaeological and documentary evidence.

Spital occupies a site high on the limestone ridge, where a number of parish boundaries meet, it possesses both chalybeate and clear water springs, is shown on early OS maps as Spital Spa, and is in an area of profuse late Iron Age and Roman finds close to a postulated oppidum of the Coritani at Owmby. Given this environment Dr Marcombe explained how he and his colleagues set about answering the questions as to why such a small place had been so special and had survived through the ages. He began with the puzzle of the chapel's dedication and why that was to St Edmund, some way from his East Anglian setting. He explained this by reference to an account in Florence of Worcester, of how Aelwin, an emissary to the Viking king, Sveyn Forkbeard, had had a vision of the saint at an unknown spot but, 'near Lincoln on the high road'. Dr Marcombe went on to tell how subsequent pilgrim traffic was amply confirmed by archaeological finds; how in the twelfth century, until their suppression in the fourteenth, the Knights Templar held the chapel; how chantries and a hospital for poor people were founded there; and how Spital became a centre for market fairs, church courts and courts of justice, leading to the establishment of a thriving hostelry.

The Dean and Chapter of Lincoln Cathedral exercised patronage over the chapel from the fourteenth century onwards, and it was they who, after the Reformation, eventually had resolved in 1640, a long running court case that left the foundation of the 1390s with sufficient endowments to continue in some style. From then on, however, the charity responsible for the chapel was often less than conscientious in its administration and the building and its attendant alms houses suffered much neglect and decline until, in the 1990s, it seemed that it might be converted into garage space!

It was, however, archaeological rather than documentary evidence which, apart from revealing that the present chapel (dating from the seventeenth century) was probably the third built on the site, also produced signs of prehistoric occupation below the Saxo-Norman foundations, together with an intriguing cache of animal bones, small samples from which had still to be analysed. From this evidence and that of extensive field-walking and aerial photography Dr Marcombe explained how he had become convinced that Spital had been a sacred site from Neolithic times and was at the very centre of one of the largest ring ditch earthworks, perhaps a druidic centre, yet to be found in England. erhaps it was the mention of druids that led to the questions that followed being somewhat metaphysical in tone and which resulted in Dr Marcombe's quite persuasive arguments becoming clouded by discussions of the mystical power of the place, ley lines and such.

Rob Lee (Department of English Local History) provided an insight into the work he has been doing for his PhD on 'Rural Society and the Anglican Clergy in Norfolk, 1815-1914'. How can we begin to understand why a Victorian clergyman, locked out of his own church, had to fetch ladders and climb in through the belfry window? Or why another clergyman, returning home late one night, knocked his head against an effigy of himself hanging just inside the Rectory gateway? Or why a newly restored church was entered at the dead of night, a charge of gunpowder laid under the organ, and an explosion detonated which shattered the instrument to pieces and inflicted serious damage to the church itself?

All of these incidents, and a number of others like them, happened in rural Norfolk parishes in the 1860s and 1870s and were indicative of a climate of anti-clericalism which must, in itself, do much to remind us that the image of a passive, deferential nineteenth-century countryside is a considerable historical myth.

His work stems from a desire to explore the social and political tensions in these rural communities and the part played by the Anglican clergy in creating, exacerbating, or soothing those tensions. It was in their secondary roles– as landowners, magistrates, poor law guardians, school governors and charity administrators – that clergymen had their most direct impact on the lives of the labouring poor, and it was here, too, that the engines of social control can most readily be seen in motion. For the clergyman was an operator within a shifting pattern of alliances in parish politics. He might be any – or all – of these things: a tithe-owner, a beneficiary of Enclosure, a target of arson attacks, a kinsman of the local gentry, a campaigner against immoral housing and working conditions, a paternalistic organiser of schools and charities. As a consequence, he was constantly re-negotiating his relationship. Understanding these issues might help to explain why the Rev. Septimus Lee Warner came face-to-face with his own photograph, stuck provocatively to a coffin lid, in a Little Walsingham shop window. More fundamentally it might also offer some clues to the many ways in which societies functioned – or dysfunctioned – in the nineteenth-century countryside.

CENTRE PUBLICATIONS 2001

C. Dyer
'The urban hierarchy in the east midlands in the later middle ages', Urban History, 28(2001), pp.331-57. (with Jane Laughton and Evan Jones)

H. S. A. Fox
The Evolution of the Fishing Village: Landscape and Society along the South Devon Coast, 1086-1550 (Oxford: Leopard's Head Press, 2001). xviii + 208pp. Leicester Explorations in Local History, 1.

K. D. M. Snell
`English Rural Societies and Geographical Marital Endogamy, 1700-1837', *Economic History Review*, LV, 2 (May, 2002), pp. 262-298.
Ed. With Liz Bellamy and T. Williamson: *Rural History: Economy, Society, Culture*, 12:2, October 2001, 123 pp.
Rural History: Economy, Society, Culture, 13:1, April, 2002, 121 pp.
Reviews of,
Adrian Bell, Corduroy (2000), in *Rural History: Economy, Society, Culture*, 12:1 (2001).
Michael Havinden, *Estate Villages Revisited* (1999), in *Family and Community History*, 4:1 (May, 2001), pp. 74-5.
Ann Gander, *Adrian Bell: Voice of the Country-side* (2001), in *Rural History: Economy, Society, Culture*, 13: (2002), pp. 111-2.
John Archer, *Social Unrest and Popular Protest in England, 1780-1840* (2000), in *Labour/Le Travail.*
Thomas Sokoll (ed.), *Essex Pauper Letters, 1731-1837* (2001), in the *Economic History Review.*

D. Postles
'Learning medieval palaeography on the web', *Association for Learning Technology Newsletter* 37 (2002), p.7
'Medieval palaeography on-line', *Local History Magazine* 88 (2001), pp. 14-15
'Small gifts, but big rewards: the symbolism of some gifts to the religious', *Journal of Medieval History* 27 (2001), pp. 23-42
'"Gender trouble" (Judith Butler): describing English women in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries', *Nomina* 24 (2001), pp. 47-66

M. G. Thompson
ed., *Friends of the Department of English Local History Newsletter* (2001), 35 pp.

ELH PAPERS

C. Dyer
'Shopping 1250-1520. A different world?'. CHORD conference, University of Wolverhampton, Sept 2001
'The meaning of peasant obligation in the 13th century'. Thirteenth Century Conference, Durham, Sept. 2001
'The urbanizing of Staffordshire: the first phases'. The Earl Lecture,
University of Keele, Nov 2001
'Is the archaeology of small towns worth pursuing?'. Presidential Address to the Annual General Meeting of the Society for Medieval Archaeology, Museum of London, Dec 2001
'The archaeology of medieval small towns'. The Pre-Modern Towns conference, Institute of Historical Research, London, Jan. 2002
'The wool towns of the medieval Cotwolds: a myth exposed'. The annual Cotswold Archaeological Trust lecture, Cirencester, Feb 2002, and to the Chipping Campden Local History Society, March 2002.
'How oppressed were peasants in the middle ages? Assessing lords' impact on the peasant economy.' Program in Agrarian Studies, Yale University, USA, March 2002.
'Villages and non-villages in the medieval Cotswolds'. Presidential Address to the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, Bristol, March 2002.
'Summing up' at the Society for Medieval Archaeology's conference on Town and Country, 1100-1500, York, April 2002.
'Making sense of the midlands'. Plenary lecture to the Annual Conference of the Economic History Society, Birmingham, April 2002.
'The language of oppression. English vocabulary for rents and services, 1000-1300'. Conference entitled 'Pour une anthropologie du prélevèment seigneurial, at Jaca, Spain, June 2002.
'A new middle ages: some lessons for early modern historians'. Early Modern History seminar, University of Leicester, May 2002.

G. R. Jones
'Saints and lost Landscapes: medieval meetings of the earthly divine', Centre for Medieval Studies, Leicester, February 2002.

D. Postles
'Market space in the 16th century' as part of a panel on urban space in the 16th century. North American Conference on British Studies, Toronto, Nov. 2001:
'The religious and the laity in England, c.1100-1300'Haskins Society, Ithaca, Oct. 2001:;
'Pittances', Thirteenth-century England Conference, Durham, Sept. 2001:
Centre for Medieval Studies, Leicester, March 2002;
'Women's descriptions in twelfth- and thirteenth-century England', Council for Name Studies Conference, York, Nov. 2001.
Paper to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, seminar on medieval economic and social history, Nov. 2001;
Chaired session on names and naming policies in Italy, Israel and Sicily at the Anglo-American Conference at the IHR, London, July 2002,
Contributed to BBC Radio 4 programme 'Making History', Nov. 2001

M. G. Thompson
'Medieval dairying in England: prescription, practice and performance', International Conference of Zoo archaeologists (ICAZ), University of Durham (August 2002).

NEWS OF FORMER STUDENTS

Kathy Burrell has been appointed to a lectureship at DeMontfort University (Bedford site)

Janette Martin (Brown on the MA course),, archivist at the People's Museum/John Rylands Library - organised an exhibition of labour history at the John Rylands University Library, Manchester, March-May 2002

RECENTLY COMPLETED THESES

Elaine Brown

'Working-class education and illiteracy in Leicester, 1780-1870'.

This thesis concentrates on elementary and adult working-class education and illiteracy in Leicester between 1780 and 1870. The need for a literate workforce for the town's economic viability is also examined.

The introductory chapters argue that economic and social change had had an adverse effect on education. Moreover an educated working class was perceived to be a threat to the existing social order, although the necessity for working-class education became increasingly apparent. Contemporaneously, members of the working class - particularly among the artisans - sought self-improvement, and appreciated the value of education in their desire for political and social reform.

A variety of sources were used to trace the development of schools and Sunday schools in Leicester - the majority of which were founded in response to middle-class philanthropy and/or denominational rivalry - but with few exceptions voluntary provision failed to reach the poorest children. The need for more schools, sectarian conflict, and the quality of education were among issues that the Leicester School Board had to resolve. Indeed the effect of education upon illiteracy - measured by the ability to sign the Anglican marriage registers some 15 years later - had become most noticeable by 1890.

Evidence for working-class interest in adult education can be seen in an attempt to establish a Mechanics' Institute in Leicester. However this was eventually inaugurated *by* the middle class to provide scientific and technical education *for* the working class. Numerous other institutions were founded by philanthropic middle-class reformers, but - with the exception of the Working Men's College, and science schools - these tended to concentrate on 'rational recreation'.

The study concludes that although Leicester's economy expanded in the second half of the nineteenth century, it was not until about 1881 that the need for a technically-educated literate workforce came to be considered as crucial if Leicester was to compete in foreign markets.

Sibyl Phillips

'Women and Evangelical Religion in Kent and Northamptonshire, 1800-1850'.

This thesis illustrates, examines and explains a diversity of female responses to Evangelical religion in Kent and Northamptonshire between 1800 and 1850. Previously untapped archival sources are investigated producing fresh evidence of Evangelicalism in women's domestic and local experience. Special collections, parish records and various other documents are explored to establish the religious and social identities of women featuring most prominently in this study. Family background, socio-economic circum-stances, local environment and childhood denominational influences are shown to have been of greatest significance in shaping the spiritual attitudes and activities of women discussed here individually, or collectively. Local traditions of belief were important and the historical development of Evangelical religion in specific parishes is traced. Female responses to evangelicalism are considered not only in parochial, but also in national religious, political, intellectual, geographical and social contexts of the period. This wide-ranging enquiry points to avenues of research that can bring something new to the local history of women and the nineteenth-century Evangelical Movement.

Chapter one concerns an orthodox Anglican woman with a family history of ecclesiastical and civic service in Canterbury, where she herself lived. Her antipathy towards Evangelicalism, its expansion in that city and other parts of Kent is investigated from her correspondence, dated 1809-1835. The second chapter focuses on women in a Northamptonshire family who provided a home for the well-known Evangelical, Rev. Thomas Jones (of Creaton), throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. Letters and other substantial documents give insight into a rural household and locality significant as Midland centres of Evangelicalism within the Church of England. Chapter three investigates female involvement with the Church Missionary Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society and other Evangelical activities in and around Creaton during Thomas Jones's time. Detailed annual reports from the Creaton branches

confirm that it was mainly middle-class women who visited the poor every week to collect penny contributions. These home visitors were vital to the success of the CMS and the BFBS. Yet women were not allowed to serve on branch committees, or hold positions at national administrative level. The final chapter relates to a young woman living in a Northamptonshire village, near the Buckinghamshire border. She was a lace-maker who belonged to the Particular Baptist community established in her parish by noted evangelicals. Having learned to read and write at the Sabbath School, she wrote one-hundred-and-fifty hymns and a very long poem about her life before and after conversion at the age of eighteen. This and seventy-one of her hymns were published for local circulation following her death two years later. Analysis reveals them openly expressive of Evangelicalism. Landscape, enclosure, land-ownership and employment patterns are shown to have favoured continuing expansion of Evangelical Dissent in the parish during her lifetime (1808-1828).

MA DISSERTATIONS FOR 2001-02

Sue Burns

'The Socio-Economic History of a South West Leicestershire Village: Leire 1870 – 1945'.

"As I sit quietly alone with my thoughts it is only now that I realise what a lovely childhood I had in many ways. The world as I recall it in those days was a very different place to today." These are the opening words of a reflection of her life, written by Elsie Eden, an inhabitant of Leire, in south-west Leicestershire, when she was 84. The aim of this dissertation is to look at the changes that have taken place in Elsie's village during her early childhood and the lifetime of her parents. The intention is to look at the social and economic changes that affected the villagers of Leire and show that this can be evidenced just as much through the written and spoken word, as well as through more usual research sources like the census or parish registers.

The period of review is from 1870 to 1945 and the research concludes that there is a wealth of resource available to show that Elsie's opening words of an ideal childhood may not in fact have been as true as she might like to remember. There was certainly plenty going on, especially as she lived through two world wars. There were periods of change in education, the role of the church, working patterns, transport, housing, facilities and general village welfare and administration that, as a child, she may not have appreciated but had a significant affect on how the village evolved. These changes have been captured through the words of the villagers in their meeting minutes, oral and written histories to give a truly local flavour to this dissertation.

Paula Casson

'Early churches and ritual landscapes in the Sparkenhoe hundred of Leicestershire'.

The aim of this study was to identify church sites originating before the Danish disruption in south-west Leicestershire and to explore related patterns of religious change and continuity. The 'minster hypothesis' was adopted as a theoretical context, and, on the basis of existing studies, three to four such churches were predicted for the area. Data for all parish churches in the Sparkenhoe hundred were collected and tabulated in five categories: Documentary, Archaeological, Topographical, Architectural and Place-name. Ten churches showing possible early characteristics were discussed in detail, and it was concluded that three of these displayed 'minster' characteristics. Their geographical distribution supported the 'minster hypothesis'. No church of this type could be certainly identified in the proposed Mercian estate to the west of Leicester, which may have been served by a church within the borough. Neither could any be identified for the Anker drainage, and this study proposes that the west and south-west county borders reflect Mercian partition after 877. To the south-west, the Anker drainage was served by a church or churches in north-Warwickshire. In the far west cross-border territorial units were also evident. There were therefore, implications for the route of the boundary between the dioceses of Lichfield and the Middle-Anglian diocese of Leicester.

Place-name studies identified several probable cult sites of the Romano-British *Anu/Danu* in woodland locations, and a possible *hearg* site in succession to a Romano-British shrine. Post-Roman continuity and possible

resistance to Christianisation was indicated, with identified minsters suggestively placed in relation to earlier ritual landscapes.

Deborah Hayter
'Pastures and profits: sheep and enclosure in sixteenth-century south Northamptonshire'

The starting point for this study was two documents relating to purveyance for the royal household, which list the sheep-flocks on enclosed pastures in Northamptonshire in the mid-sixteenth century. The lists give the size of sheep-flocks and in many cases the names of their owners, together with the places that had enclosed pastures in 1547, 1564 and 1595. By no means all the sheep and pastures were in the former fields of deserted villages, as might have been expected – many were in supposedly open-field vills which were later enclosed by Act of Parliament.

The study focuses on the six southwestern hundreds of the county. Using the sheep lists together with other sources, an attempt has been made to examine the progress of enclosure through the sixteenth century and to look more closely at the owners of the flocks. They were not all gentry or aspiring gentry – though these are the easiest to see in the surviving records; many were husbandmen or freeholders who took such opportunities as came their way and expanded their businesses where they could. Almost all the townships in this area had acquired pastures, some of considerable extent, by 1700, by one means or another. Some communities had enclosed partially or wholly by agreement; some farmers were able to rent the pastures round a neighbouring deserted settlement; some vills had access to commoning rights within large areas of heath or woodland.

What emerges very clearly is a strong pastoral tradition in this area, where two-field systems were more common than three-field (allowing more animals to be kept), there were medieval deer-parks which later became the 'parkes and laundes' which supplied oxen for the royal table, and much of the land was best suited to pasture, for both sheep and cattle.

David Holmes
'Creating an industrial society; a history of the shoe industry in Desborough since 1850'.

By 1850 the silk and lace industries were in decline in the small Northamptonshire town of Desborough. The dissertation analyses why the boot and shoe industry replaced them soon after 1860 and charts the history of boot and shoe manufacture during five evolutionary periods, using information taken from trade directories, industry journals, local press, trade union and company records. The first period deals with the earliest factories and the importance of Leicester and the railway line. The second was a period of dynamic growth and looks at the growth of individual factories, the development of machinery, the change from home-based methods to factory-based production and how this affected management/worker relations and factory design. Then came a period of consolidation, during which the process of factory mechanisation was completed, by which time the industry employed over one thousand people in a town with a population of just over three thousand. The period finishes with the First World War. The difficult inter-war period affected Desborough shoe manufacturers and caused a number of them to close. The final period deals with the time since 1945 and evaluates the causes of decline in the local industry, to the extent that only one shoe factory now exists.

Apart from the shoe factories, consideration is also given to the supply companies that grew up alongside; growth of the shoe industry is also set within the context of the overall development of the town and its other major employers, ironstone quarrying and corset manufacture. The dissertation concludes that, though little of the boot and shoe industry survives, it served an important role in the evolution of the town for the best part of a hundred years and ensured that Desborough did not return to obscurity after the failure of the silk industry.

Sonjia Shilhan
'Women and superstition: a study of superstitions concerning the female life-cycle in south-Lincolnshire in the first half of the twentieth century'.

The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate superstitions that primarily concerned women in Lincolnshire in the first half of the twentieth century. The research considers the

factors that contributed to the formation of these superstitions' and their continued adherence. It looks at four main areas: marriage, birth and pregnancy, menstruation and the household, as these four subjects were the most important in women's lives at the beginning of the twentieth century. It was originally hoped to research the period between 1600 and 1900. However, this was found to be impracticable as there were very few sources available. There was very little reference to superstition in diaries and personal correspondence in the earlier period.

Therefore, the approach taken was to use oral history sources, interviewing elderly women living in residential homes or communal flats, as this would give access to a greater number of women at one time, as well as to women from all social backgrounds and districts of south-Lincolnshire. Thirty women in total, ranging in age from sixty to ninety years, were interviewed.

A questionnaire was devised and structured interviews were recorded. Although it was not always possible to limit the discussions to the questions devised, all the interviews were based round this format. The completed interviews were transcribed to aid subsequent research.

The dissertation also considers from where these superstitions originated, who were the people ensuring that they were adhered to, were there any local aspects to the superstitions and were they obviously from Lincolnshire?

Maureen Sutton's book on women in Lincolnshire was found to be very helpful. It covers issues similar to the ones discussed in the dissertation, though the evidence is treated in a somewhat different way. And also concentrates on northern Lincolnshire.

Matthew Tompkins

'Emerging pays and peasant migration in Buckinghamshire *c*1332-1552; the evidence from surnames'.

This is a study of the surnames contained in the 1332 Lay Subsidy Roll for Buckingham-shire and other contemporary sources, to illuminate the emergence of the modern *pays* of that county and the pattern of rural migration in it during the medieval period.

The distribution of various categories of surnames shows that, in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, the settlement pattern in the northern part of the county – the Vale of Aylesbury – was nucleated and that in the southern part – the Chilterns – it was dispersed. It also confirms that there was then little sign of the specialisation in pastoral farming that was later to emerge in the vale.

The pre-1330s pattern of migration evidenced by the toponymic surnames was different in each *pays*, notwithstanding that each attracted some migration from much further away. Most of the immigration to both *pays* was from the south-east Midlands, almost none from south of the Thames, even to the parts of the county immediately adjoining the river. Comparison of the surnames in the 1330s sources with those in the 1552 Certificate of Musters reveals very low surname persistence in individual townships, but much higher rates in each of the *pays* as a whole. However, in this period, the *pays* boundaries seem to have formed much weaker boundaries to migration than previously, with considerable movement of surnames between the *pays*.

Sub-*pays* existed within the principal *pays*: the Thames and Colne river valleys displayed differences from the adjoining Chiltern Hills, and in the north, Whittlewood and Bernwood differed in some respects from the more open parts of the vale.

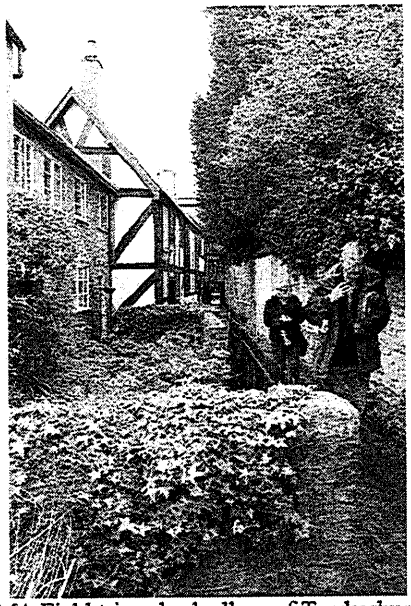
Catherine Ward-Langman

'The effects of evacuation on Leicestershire 1939-1945: an oral history project'.

This dissertation sought to compare the public image of evacuation in the existing bibliography, national and local press with the reality of evacuation. It focussed broadly on Leicestershire and whilst the aim was to gather oral testimonies from all areas of the county, it was not intended as a scientific quantitative approach, but as an oral history project. Contact was made with a whole range of organisations within all areas of the county and in London, Birmingham, Ipswich and Sheffield as those were the evacuated areas. Those organisations were the local press, libraries, museums, family history organisations and old people's homes.

The aim was to interview approximately thirty people, although this grew to forty and included taped or written reminiscences where

respondents lived a long distance away. The project sought to make contact with children and adults who were involved in any way with the process and not just the evacuees themselves. However, there was a tiny response from ex-hosts/teachers owing to their age. Nevertheless, it was possible to use these oral testimonies to qualitatively measure the effects of evacuation. These effects were sub-divided into categories such as living conditions, education, health and food, social, political and psychological effects and a sense of belonging to the locality. An attempt was then made to develop a general conclusion about the so-called success of evacuation, as many local studies have always shied away from this. The experience was found to be life-changing and more negative than positive with any enhancements such as independence coming at a price psychologically. From this an attempt was made to identify those factors which influenced the relative success and effect of evacuation on an individual but the surprising conclusion was that this had as much, if not more, to do with pre-evacuation factors, such as family size, class, age, living conditions than the actual billets themselves. The difference between the way evacuation was reported nationally compared to locally was startling and it was obvious a lot of local people resented evacuation.



MA Field trip – back alleys of Tewkesbury

HONORARY DEGREE

On 12th July 2002 Professor Maurice Beresford was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters by the University of Leicester. Before the presentation, Professor Beresford was entertained to coffee in the Centre where he met staff and students. We print here the oration given by Professor Petersen .

"In an exceptionally distinguished career Maurice Beresford has transformed the world of local history, and invented a whole new field of study. His work on lost settlements and the development of towns has changed our view of economic history, and his ability to write for a general audience has made the subject accessible to all.

Maurice grew up in modest circumstances at Sutton Coldfield and attended the local grammar school. Despite his father's desire that he become a pharmaceutical chemist, Maurice's talents and interests drew him to history. He gained a scholarship to Cambridge, and following a first in the preliminary examinations was invited to a seminar on economic history led by a charismatic tutor – John Saltmarsh, which was to set his academic interest for life.

A student assignment allowed him to combine his fascination with maps and his historical skills in a study of the agricultural history of his home area. The work, accepted for publication while he was still a student, demonstrated his exceptional talent from the very beginning – a distinctive approach combining the study of documents with an appreciation of landscape and material remains.

Despite his double first, a burning sense of social justice led him away from academia for a while, first working as an early type of Social Worker in Birmingham, then as an Adult Education Tutor in Rugby. His academic drive never waned however, and combining his interests in local history and walking he studied the local agricultural history.

In 1946 he found what he describes as his personal "Road to Damascus" – the sudden realisation that earth works in the Leicestershire parish of Bittersby were in fact a deserted village. Maurice believed that such deserted villages were widespread – not a view shared by his senior academic colleagues who were none too

supportive of these heretical ideas. He did, however find support from the University of Leicester, where Hoskins was working along very similar lines. Unfazed, Maurice turned archaeologist, and with the help of local school pupils he successfully excavated the church walls of the lost village of Stretton Baskerville, near Hinckley.

In 1948 Maurice returned to the academic fold, as lecturer in economic history at the University of Leeds, where he has remained ever since, becoming a Professor in 1960. A new area meant a search for new lost villages.

The village-less parish of Wharram Percy was to be a focus of work for 40 years, and to this day a national heritage site. Maurice assembled a multi-disciplinary team,a novel academic concept in those days, to draw together different types of evidence – documents including maps, aerial photographs made available in high quality by the technology developed in the second world war, and the input of archaeologists led by John Hurst fresh from his studies at Cambridge. Every summer an ever-larger army of volunteers were marshalled and organised by Maurice, who took care to create a lively intellectual and social environment for the research.

By autumn 1952 Maurice had completed his seminal work "The Lost Villages of England", published in 1954. Still some senior colleagues were disbelieving. One sent a postcard "I feel impelled to advise you whether you should really go ahead with such a book."

Again Maurice stuck to his guns and published. The last 48 years have demonstrated how wrong his colleague was.

Over the next four decades Maurice published a series of books and articles, including the comprehensive "Aerial Survey of Medieval England" and "History on the Ground". Maurice is firmly established in the elite of historians. He has been recognised by his peers in election to the Fellowship of the British Academy and many other distinguished awards.

His exceptional talent for writing however also made him familiar with a general audience. He has made his work accessible to all, and stimulated interest in local history around the country.

He went on to work in many other areas, including the development of towns in the Middle Ages, and, given his adopted home – the nineteenth-century development of Leeds.

Maurice has combined his academic career, including great involvement in University life with a continuing passion for social justice. He has worked tirelessly for offenders, including work with Leeds prison, and a special interest in young offenders. His entry in 'Who's Who' lists one of his interests as 'Delinquency', which surely means the amelioration of the problem, rather than the practice of it.

He continued his adult education work throughout his career, and when chairing Faculty Board meetings at the University he made sure that the more rambling discussions were contained so that the board could finish in time for him to set off to his class in the prison.

Maurice is clearly a man who inspires devotion in colleagues who speak warmly of his talents and foibles. "The Professor with the Dog" is a familiar figure in the University of Leeds, and his talks attracted audiences from all walks of life.

Maurice is a true academic, showing us all how intellectual activity and research can enrich our lives and inform our society. The world of history owes him an enormous debt.

Mr Vice-Chancellor, on the recommendation of Senate and Council I present Maurice Warwick Beresford that you may confer upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters".

Maurice Beresford and Harold Fox in conversation.
(Photo by Anne Pegg)

STAFF DISTINCTIONS

Dr Keith Snell has been awarded a personal Chair as Professor of Rural and Cultural History in the Centre for English Local History.

STAFF CHANGES

Dr Penny Lane has been a Research Fellow in the Centre for the past year, during which time she has been researching the wage books of Arkwright and Oldknow's mills at Bakewell and Mellor. She has now accepted a teaching appointment at Preston High School in New York.

Dr Jane Laughton has been appointed an Honorary Research Fellow in the Centre.

GIFTS TO THE CENTRE

Grateful thanks go to those who have donated books or other material to the Centre's library and map room collections over the past twelve months. They include:
J.Fletcher, D.Hayter, H.S.A.Fox, J.Lewis, A.Monk,P.G.Scott, Uffculme Archive Group, C. Vialls,

JOHN NICHOLS PRIZE

Friends will be delighted to hear that the winner of the John Nichols Prize this year was Ros Faith who has been, and continues to be, a supporter of the Friends, the Department and Centre. Seven submissions were received on a wide range of topics. The award to Ros adds to the distinguished list of academics who have won the Prize and confirms the quality of the submissions. Amongst those academics who have won the Prize in previous years, we must count Ros alongside Clive Burgess (1983), Chris Marsh (1988), John Craig (1991) and Steve Hindle (1994). Ros is already an academic of considerable stature, but some of the winners listed above were awarded the Prize in the dawn of their academic careers. The moral there is that it is possible for younger people to win the award, as has been illustrated in recent years by Tania McIntosh, Amanda Flather and Maria Osiewiecki. The purpose of this note therefore is not only to congratulate Ros on another of her distinctions, but also to encourage new researchers out there to make submissions for the Prize. To remind people, the Prize is awarded for essays in Local History not more than 20,000 words in length and we will consider unrevised MA dissertations which have been awarded a distinction as well as revised PhD chapters. Please e-mail pot@le.ac.uk to give notification of your intention to submit. The closing date is the end of the calendar year.

MINISTERIAL VISIT

On 10th May 2002 Lord Bach, Minister of Defence Procurement, was visiting the University at the invitation of the Vice Chancellor. He was invited because of his local connections - he comes from Lutterworth, had been a barrister with chambers in Leicester, and served on the County Council, where he was known as Willie Bach. Local History was selected as one of three departments that he visited. C. Dyer welcomed him, explained the history of the Centre, and A. Larrivé showed him examples of student work, Friends' Newsletters etc. Short presentations were given in the Library on the Whittlewood Project (R. Jones), Surnames Project (D. Postles), TASC (G. Jones) and nineteenth-century religion(K. Snell). The speakers ingeniously connected each of their projects with Lutterworth and Defence. Lord Bach clearly had a lively interest in local history, asked many questions, and had to be persuaded to go to his next appointment. We heard afterwards that he was favourably impressed.

Christopher Dyer

The May 2002 issue of *History Today* (Vol.52 5) carried an article by Daniel Snowman on his interview with Professor Christopher Dyer. The article ranges widely over Professor Dyer's work, interests and approach to historical research.

M.A. COURSE FIELD TRIP TO GLOUCESTERSHIRE – APRIL 2002

It seemed fitting that the three of us who met up at Lutterworth should choose the Fosse Way and an old Cotswold pub to get us to Bristol and a good choice it proved to be too, on a glorious day. My only apprehension was that, as a father of two recent graduates, the words 'student accommodation' still cause me severe anxiety but I should have had more faith in CELH. Churchill Hall at Bristol was warm and comfortable with an endless supply of tea and coffee and woodpeckers in the surrounding trees.

On arrival we learned that we were sharing the halls with B.O.S. which, the porter informed us, (not in jest as I first thought), stood for the British Origami Society. This gave us a great sense of superiority. Here were people who had come from all over the country for a weekend in the trivial occupation of folding paper whereas we would be spending the week in lofty academic pursuits; looking at bumps in fields, shop fronts of Tewkesbury or gazing in awe at twenty tons of soil allegedly covering the floor of a Roman villa. My one disappointment in our B.O.S. colleagues was that, after breakfast, they scrunched up their table napkins in a ball like the rest of us. I expected more.

Before being let loose on the inns and cafes of Clifton, the thirteen of us were given a briefing by Graham. We were to explore different themes by visiting six areas or groups of towns over the six days. These were Bath and Bristol (Gloucestershire was clearly to be defined quite loosely!); pastoral South Gloucestershire; the Forest of Dean; the main Cotswolds textile communities; Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury; and the north Cotswolds. The sub-plot was to identify as many different *pays* as we could during the week, all this in a 20-seater coach (our 'van de pays'!). It was an ambitious programme and we were to see a lot of the inside of that coach although we did get a good look at Gloucestershire too.

As often happens on field trips, we had one mishap. Ironically it happened on the only occasion that we managed to prevail on Graham to make an unscheduled stop. In a weak moment he let us visit the mining museum in the Forest of Dean on the grounds that it might have some historical relevance. As we walked down the path from the coach one of our group slipped and fell. From her new vantage point she calmly announced she had broken her ankle. Another of our group, suggested that we left her footwear on and simply applied an ice pack whilst we got her back to civilisation and a hospital. Unfortunately the only thing the lady running the museum cafe had in her freezer was her family's supper for that evening, but needs must and she was cajoled into handing it over. It should be noted that the meal was returned to her before we left. After several days and nights in hospital our patient returned to Leicester and, happily, has now made a good recovery.

This incident apart, the week was most enjoyable, the weather was excellent and there cannot be many Gloucestershire villages we haven't seen, albeit at 30 mph from the inside of the coach! (What was it that Hoskins said about getting mud on your boots!) The event was particularly beneficial in bringing the Monday morning and the Thursday evening classes together and giving us a chance to socialise. Some members, having been told by Graham that the yews in Painswick churchyard were well worth seeing, spent sometime looking for sheep amongst the gravestones! Our horse lover showed that she had a way with other species too and had great success with a Gloucester Old Spot at Dean museum. Our most resourceful colleague had a day-bag that seemed to contain virtually everything we wanted, including a mini Marc Fitch library! Graham managed to keep us amused with tales of his mother's teaching career, professional hermits(!) and Painswick's early bath. However he did avoid the really difficult questions. 'What actually are 'wolds', Graham?'. 'Oh, you'll have to ask Harold that one!' (He did relent, later) Even the bus driver joined in and, when Graham asked us the meaning of a place name element he had told us two days before, our driver ended an embarrassing silence by coming up with the right answer. It was a good trip but the writing up of the evaluation may be a little less enjoyable.

Phil Davis

SEMINAR PROGRAMME 2002-03

All seminars are held on Thursdays at 2.15pm in the Seminar Room of Marc Fitch House, 5 Salisbury Please phone Audrey Larrivé, 0116-252-2762, to reserve a place. You are invited to tea in the Common Room afterwards.

2002

- Thursday 10 October — **Dr Thomas Sokoll** (Fern Universität, Hagen): 'Narrative of poverty: Essex pauper letters, 1800-1834, in comparative perspective'
- Thursday 24 October — **Dr Julie Rugg** (University of York): 'Defining the place of death: what makes a cemetery a cemetery?'
- Thursday 7 November — **Prof. Anthony Sutcliffe** (University of Nottingham): 'Film and locality in England, 1926-1990'
- Thursday 21 November — **Dr Paul Bryant-Quinn** (University of Wales): 'Locality and belief: lessons from 15th-century religious writing'
- Thursday 5 December — **Dr David Roffe** (University of Sheffield): 'Domesday Now! Uses of the Domesday Book data'

2003

- Thursday 30 January — **Dr Margot Finn** (University of Warwick): TBA (Courts and small credit)
- Thursday 13 February — **Dr John Knight** (University of Bristol): 'Woodland archaeology: lessons from Wansdyke parishes'
- Thursday 27 February — **Prof. Mick Aston** (University of Bristol): TBA (Early monasteries in the landscape)
- Thursday 13 March — **Mr Martin Ayres** (University of Leicester): 'Housing and rural society, 1834-1914'
- Thursday 20 March — **Dr Peter Musgrave** (University of Leicester): 'Valpolicella in its region'
- Thursday 27 March — **Prof. Steve McCluskey** (University of West Virginia): TBA (Did medieval villagers orientate their churches?)
- Thursday 24 April — **The Rev. Dr Thomas M. McCoog, S.J.** (Jesuit Historical Institute, Rome): 'Experiences of 'mission' among Roman Catholic priests in seventeenth-century England'

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

A request for help from Margaret Spufford (who did her MA and Ph.D in the Department of English Local History in the 1960s when Herbert Finberg was Professor).

Professor Spufford is now Research Director of the Centre for Hearth Tax Studies at the University of Surrey Roehampton, which is in the process of preparing some twenty volumes of Hearth Tax documents for publication with scholarly introductions. She is looking for volunteers to help transcribe the fullest surviving Hearth Tax assessment or return for those counties which do not yet have one in print. There are still seventeen counties to go, so there is plenty of scope!

There is no need to be in a position to get to the Public Record Office easily, since Margaret has had a complete set of microfilm made of the returns in the PRO, and volunteers can be sent print-outs from this microfilm to work on, or, if they have access to a microfilm reader, copies of the microfilm itself. Use of a word processor is necessary, since transcriptions are initially made into an Excel spreadsheet or, if the volunteer involved cannot manage Excel, into a word-processing programme with flags. Are any former students of the Department/Centre able to help? Volunteers will be asked to take a basic test on seventeenth century handwriting. Volunteers may also be needed to count the households with different numbers of hearths in the assessments and returns not chosen for publication. If you are interested, please write to Dr Susan Rose at the Centre for Hearth Tax Studies, School of the Humanities and of Cultural Studies, University of Surrey Roehampton, Roehampton Lane, Roehampton SW15 5PH. Margaret will be very grateful for your help with this huge undertaking. There is a little more information about the Hearth Tax and Roehampton Centre for Hearth Tax Studies and what it is has done so far on the Roehampton web-site: www.roehampton.ac.uk/hacs/research/research1.asp.

EVENTS SPONSORED BY THE FRIENDS

DIARY DATES

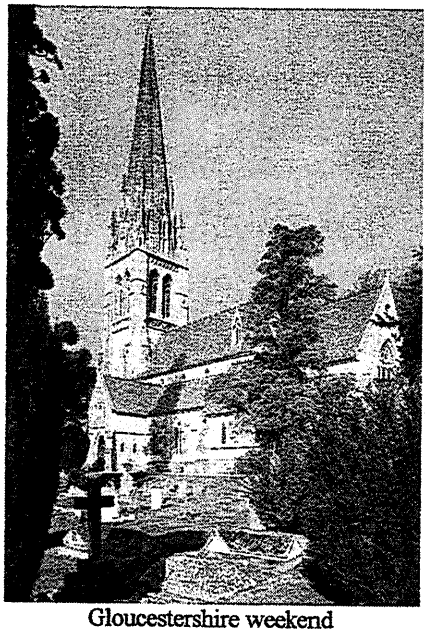
Sat. 26th October – Study Day at Much Wenlock, Shropshire. Meet at Priory Rooms 09.45 for coffee and registration. First talk starts at 10.15. Cost £20 for Friends and £25 for visitors.

Sat. 16th November – Morning tour of Leicester, visiting the Guildhall and Magazine, followed by lunch. Meet at the Magazine at 10.00.

Thurs. 21st November – Friends AGM. Formal notice is hereby given that the Friends AGM will be held in Marc Fitch House at 4.15pm. Please do your best to attend.

25th - 27th April 2003 – Weekend study school in Shropshire.

Saturday 30th May 2003 – preliminary notice of the fourteenth Hoskins Lecture when Ronald Hutton will speak on 'Paganism, Folklore and Historians: A Witches Brew'.



Gloucestershire weekend
Church of the Holy Innocents, Highnam. Built 1851.

SEMINAR DAY – 10TH NOVEMBER

Unfortunately Sylvia Pinches was unable to take the chair, as she was to give a paper at a conference in Wolverhampton. Ian Hunt stood in ably and must have been bewitched by Sylvia's persuasive charms, for he also agreed to give the final paper of the day as the published speaker had cried off at short notice. The day was to follow the same format as last year, with the exception that Mike Thompson's absence, on holiday in the antipodes meant there was no book sale. Could this have been the reason that fewer people than last year attended a stimulating and varied day? **Adam Fenn** gave the first paper which was based on his recent M.A. dissertation and dealt with aspects of transhumance in early medieval *Rhung Gwy Hafren*, the area of the Welsh Marches we now call Radnorshire. He considered the connection of upland and lowland place names on their own and in relation to a cluster of churches round Radnor forest, all of which are dedicated to St Michael and suggested this was an area of transhumance. He noted that 'Bride' as a place name element was also well represented. The final part of the paper dealt with the settlement of *Glasgwm*, meaning 'green valley', which is surrounded by hill forts and may have been the site of a multiple estate.

This was followed by **Cynthia Brown**, project manager of the East Midlands Oral History Project, based in the Centre for Urban History. Cynthia explained that the project has received £350,000 of lottery funding, which together with funds from partners, makes a total of £500,000.The first part of the project is to locate and list all existing oral history recordings in Leicestershire and Rutland; this will be followed by adding to the archive of material and finally it will be made available to schools in CD format. While this project deals with history of the present or very near past, she observed that Bede's *History of the English Peoples* was largely written from peoples' recollections, thus showing that only the technology has changed.

The third paper, given by **Kathy Burrell**, was a summary of the work she has done for her PhD thesis on three relatively minor groups of immigrants to Leicester from Poland, Italy and Cyprus. The Poles are the longest established group, having arrived during the second world war, and came mainly from the eastern region that became part of the Soviet Union. The small group of Italians arrived in the nineteen-sixties as economic migrants from the south. The Greek Cypriots came as a result of the civil war in the following decade. All three groups, numbered in hundreds, have followed remarkably similar paths in their attempt to retain national identity through schools, churches and clubs. These were especially important to each group during their early days in Leicester, originally serving as places to speak their language and retain cultural identity, and later to act as focal points for their children to learn about their cultural heritage, language, literature, traditions etc. The church has been of greatest importance in this as they have focused on morals and values.

Second and third generation members have inevitably lost some of the closeness experienced by the original immigrants, as they grow up and often marry in to the local society. However, Kathy has noticed that the new forms of communication have given another opportunity for the younger generations to renew contacts with their homeland; many homes receive satellite television from their home country, while the internet has brought cheap travel so that regular personal contact has become commonplace. This has created overlapping identities between old and new places of habitation.

An excellent lunch, as well as refreshments before and after the working sessions, was provided by Carole Carpenter, to whom we offer our sincere thanks. Following lunch, **Delia Garratt** gave us an insight into the workings of the Primitive Methodist circuits in Shropshire in the nineteenth century. Delia, who is part-time curator of the Englesea Brook Primitive Methodist museum, near Crewe, has been using the 'preaching plans' as the basis of her research for her thesis. Preaching plans were prepared quarterly for every circuit and detailed every preacher's commitments for the period. Each circuit had several paid preachers, who

travelled continuously, undertaking three hundred engagements each quarter, and a number of unpaid preachers who operated locally. In rural Shropshire it could mean unpaid preachers would travel considerable distances for an engagement at all times of the year and in all weathers. Unpaid preachers undertook seventy-five percent of all engagements.

Preaching plans have survived over a long period, which has allowed Delia to study the evolution of the movement. Early circuits covered large areas; over time the size of individual circuits was reduced, especially in urban areas. Apart from identifying the travel and preaching commitment of every preacher, preaching plans provide an enormous amount of additional information on a varied range of subjects, reorganisation of circuits, length of service of preachers, numbers of male and female preachers, development of new congregations and failure of old ones, areas of strength and weakness in relation to other denominations.

The final paper considered the number of wool combers in north-west Leicestershire, 1640-1800 and their relationship with the local spinners and weavers. As part of his investigation **Ian Hunt** has looked at the evolution of different breeds of sheep over time and the suitability of their wool for various products, long wool pasture flocks mainly in eastern and southern wold areas, common sheep in Charnwood forest. The Lincolnshire long-wool breed was popular in the pastoral regions. Ian has identified that the pattern of deserted villages is most prevalent in areas where long-wool sheep were most populous. Wool combers were a close-knit community of tradesmen who gradually diversified into spinning and weaving. By the eighteenth century they controlled a large part of the framework-knitting trade, to the extent that less worsted material was available for the independent knitter. Wool combers lost their importance after 1840.

This was a most interesting day for all those that attended, covering a wide range of subjects.

AUTUMN OUTING

Ulverscroft Priory was to have been the venue for this outing, but due to the restrictions of foot and mouth disease, caused by a late suspected outbreak nearby, some twenty Friends gathered at short notice to visit Leicester Castle, the church of St Mary de Castro and Castle Gardens on 13th October. Our guide for the morning was Maureen Carlidge, a long-standing blue badge guide. Viewing the castle from the front, it appears to be an eighteenth-century building, but this is only a façade that, as we learnt, dates from about 1695. Behind the façade we find the remains of the castle. The first castle was built about1068, the most impressive feature being the great hall which dates from the early twelfth century, and was the largest such hall in the country, larger than Westminster Hall. The castle, which had been an assize court from the thirteenth century, had become inhabitable by 1485, but remained an assize court. In 1821 the hall was divided into two courtrooms and operated as two courts till 1992, which layout still remains today.

John of Gaunt is associated with the castle and we visited the undercroft, dating from 1400, that is more usually called John of Gaunt's Cellar.

Group of Friends in John of Gaunt's cellar.

The final part of the morning was spent in the Castle Gardens, from where it is still possible to see the imposing defensive walls that overlook the River Soar. We climbed the motte which, though considerably lower than it originally was, is the only part of the original castle still standing. From here it is possible to appreciate the ability of the Normans to select

sites that were defensively strong and impressed their authority on the local populace.

After the castle, St Mary de Castro was the next largest building within the castle complex, serving both as place of worship for castle residents and also as parish church.

FRIENDS SUMMER OUTING

This year's summer outing brought us to St Ives and Ramsey in Cambridgeshire on 6th July; natives, including our own Dr Mary Carter, still smart over the loss of Huntingdonshire's county status and incorporation into Cambridgeshire. The sense of place is however preserved by use of the administrative title 'Huntingdonshire District Council'. Some twenty-five members arrived at Connie's tearooms on the quayside, overlooking the River Ouse; there everyone was issued with a comprehensive set of maps and literature for the day's activities.

Our leader for the morning was Bob Burn-Murdoch, curator of the Norris museum in St Ives, assisted by Dr Mary Carter (Friend and former student in the Department), who were to take us on a tour of the town. We assembled by the chapel of St Leger on the bridge over the river, which had first been bridged about 1100, though the current bridge dates from 1426. The chapel served both a place of worship and toll gate till the end of the nineteenth century, for the bridge was the road to London. In his introduction Bob explained that the layout of the centre of the town, in the form of a T, with the bridge being the upward stroke, has not changed since medieval times, though most of the buildings belong to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Dutch influence, noticeable on a number of gables, dates from the draining of the fens in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The parish church is situated at the western edge of the old town while the eastern boundary was formed by the priory. Nothing remains of the priory, which was owned by Ramsey Abbey, other than part of the outer wall of a barn. Even the exact location of the priory has not been ascertained. Though the priory may have been destroyed at the time of the dissolution, its importance has been felt long afterwards for the town did not expand to the east until the nineteenth century with the arrival of the railway.

The centre of the town had a wide market street running virtually the full length from the parish church to the priory, but the central section of this was subject to encroachment at various times. Standing at either end it is still possible to visualise the bustling medieval markets and fairs. We then went to the parish church that stands in the oldest part where the original community of Slepe was located. The earliest parts of the church date from the twelfth century though the majority of the building is perpendicular in style. It is a sign of the wealth and tenacity of the townspeople who have rebuilt the tower six or seven times following collapse, the most bizarre of which was caused by an aircraft crashing into the tower on take-off from a nearby field in 1918.

No visit to St Ives would be complete without some reference to its most famous, or depending on one's view, infamous son, Oliver Cromwell. The monument to Cromwell stands opposite the Free Church, a Victorian edifice, built to look like the Anglican church, only the spire is slightly higher and has not suffered the accidents that have befallen its neighbour at the west end of town.

The morning ended with a visit to the Norris museum where we saw the original Pettis Survey of 1728. Pettis was an amateur surveyor who recorded in great detail all the town buildings; this has enabled a remarkably accurate comparison of the eighteenth-century town with today's layout. The museum also possesses the only manuscript version of John Clare's poem *'The Fountain'*.

After lunch we travelled by coach the ten miles to Ramsey where our guide was Dr Paul Spoerry who has carried out the only recent investigation of the site. Very little of the buildings of this great abbey, one of the wealthiest in the country, remain. When the abbey was destroyed at the Dissolution, the land was bought by the Williams family, later to change their name to Cromwell, and virtually all the stonework was removed, as was only to be expected in an area noticeably lacking in stone, and sold for the building of the Cambridge colleges. As a result only the infirmary (now the

parish church), one corner of the gatehouse, a length of wall and an undercroft of Ramsey Abbey School survive. The exact location of the abbey is unknown despite some archaeological digging and extensive use of modern technology. However, current thinking is that the dog-legged wall that divides the abbey ground from the parish church may be part of an outside wall, but nothing has been proven.

The other area of contention is the undercroft, which tradition says was part of the lady chapel. Current thought suggests that it might have been the chapter house, a point that elicited a lively discussion between members and Dr Spoerry.

After a well-earned rest and a cup of tea in a local hostelry we returned to St Ives. Pam Fisher, who had organised the day with care and precision, commented on the landscape and villages we passed, and had members not seen the sign for themselves, would not have believed in the existence of the Pidley mountain rescue team whose headquarters are shown to stand a full thirty metres above sea level. Thank you, Pam for an instructive and enjoyable day.

Bob Burn-Murdoch on the bridge at St Ives giving an introductory explanation of the forthcoming tour.

THIRTEENTH HOSKINS LECTURE

Professor Sir Keith Thomas had known Hoskins in the 1950s - Hoskins had spent fourteen years in Oxford between his two bouts in Leicester - and he began and ended his lecture with personal reminiscences of Hoskins the man and Hoskins the historian. He recalled Hoskins' down-to-earth approach, his dislike of generalizations, and his dislike of the 'landscape as scenery' approach; for him landscape was history, where fieldwork, together with research into documents, could provide clues and information to make possible the recreation of the past.

Professor Thomas' title was 'The perception of the landscape in Early Modern England', and his focus was the period 1570 – 1770, which Hoskins had considered to be rural England at its peak, going downhill thereafter. Professor Thomas reminded us how nostalgic Hoskins could sound about this vanishing England, quoting his belief that the 20th century had destroyed and 'uglified' the landscape and produced 'foul and joyless towns'. (Alan Everitt, however, produced a footnote to this during questions at the end of the lecture, describing how Hoskins had shown him, with evident pleasure, a Victorian church, and adding 'His lack of consistency was part of his charm'.)

The central theme of the lecture was that there was never any single perception of the landscape from the late sixteenth to the late eighteenth centuries: it depended on the point-of-view of the observer, or, very different, of the inhabitant. In the seventeenth century 'landscape', or more usually 'landskip', was a new term, introduced by artists, referring to the background to pictures, or to a painted 'prospect': 'landskips' were always the product of art not nature. By the 1620s pictures of 'landskips' were being produced, some realistic and topographical, some idealized and Arcadian, such as those of Rubens and Claude.

Professor Thomas illustrated his lecture with a fascinating and eclectic range of references from contemporary and classical writings (too many for this reviewer, with no shorthand, to capture more than a passing few). He showed how the idea of 'landscape' implied an aesthetic response in the viewer: 17th century travellers such as Celia Fiennes described the countryside through which they passed as 'landskips', as if they were pictures; and poets of the same period were similarly influenced by painters, so that there was a common currency of what was, or should be, admirable by the educated elite. Ideas here were as important as what actually appeared on the ground: the new landscape gardens and parks could only be appreciated by the educated elite who carried the

cultural baggage – the classical education and the knowledge of painting –which enabled the recognition of the Arcadia before them. The spectator's stance, recognizing the references to classical landscapes, opened a social gap between the viewer and the view: the spectator was emphatically not in the landscape, and the working inhabitants were preferably out of sight.

The 17th-century fashion for 'prospects' and panoramas seen from high hills had been foreshadowed by medieval enjoyment of views revealed in such names as 'Beaumont' and 'Belvoir'. The Elizabethans had a taste for fine prospects too, but in the seventeenth century it was implied that a 'good view' could be appreciated by anyone, but a 'fine prospect' could only be appreciated by someone of taste, someone who would notice its variety, its harmony and its extent. The medieval *hortus conclusus* went out of fashion as it became more important to see a greater extent of the surrounding countryside, and in the seventeenth century new houses were built high on hills, with commanding views (and also weather), when previous generations had sought sheltering valleys. Large houses commanding the heights exuded authority and power, overlooking lower and socially inferior houses.

Professor Thomas cited Camden, among others, whose ideal of landscape was an extensive garden, an ordered, regular, tidy and looked-after place, with the hand of man everywhere in evidence. Agricultural improvers shared the preference for a busy, tilled and 'smiling' countryside, for practical reasons, but whose advocacy of expanding tillage into marginal land was also based on the shared aesthetic that an uncultivated common was 'horrid and unpleasant'.

Champion country had its own appeal for the upper classes, as it was good for hunting, hawking and recreation, but Professor Thomas pointed out that this unenclosed landscape, especially where it included heaths and commons, provided a living for the lower classes of poor cottagers, who therefore were unlikely to share the post-1700 educated and dismissive view of this sort of uncultivated land. However, many rocky and mountainous backgrounds were to be found in idealized painted 'landskips', and Professor Thomas had found late seventeenth-century writing which enthused about mountains, following biblical and classical sources: this was a hundred years before the Romantic movement, and showed that 'mountain mysticism had arrived'.

Turning to those whose livelihood depended on the countryside, and pointing out that the view of those on foot was important, and fundamentally different to that of the rider on horseback, Professor Thomas quoted George Bourn (Sturt) and Wordsworth, among others, who described, in different ways, how all aspects of the landscape were important to the farm labourer: he was part of it, and fitted into it. Many ancient field-names were redolent of the attitudes of past generations of workers – names such as 'Starveall', and the like. Many arguments pro- and anti-enclosure in the period of parliamentary bills had revealed strong historical knowledge and an inherited memory of what relics in the landscape meant to the community: Old men's memories had been raided for information about the significance of old ridge-and-furrow, barrows, deserted settlements and so on. As an aside, Professor Thomas noted that some knowledge degenerated over years into myth, as in the many stories of stone circles having originated as petrified dancers; nevertheless the popular perception of the landscape had a historical perspective: the landscape was a human creation, and a 'recognizable archive of previous experience'.

By way of his own childhood, growing up in agricultural Wales, and spending much time in the company of a farm labourer and his son, both of whom were deeply knowledgeable about, and in tune with, the landscape they inhabited and worked in, Professor Thomas returned to W.G. Hoskins, finding that an historical awareness of landscape was already in existence amongst yeoman farmers, such as Hoskins' forebears, long before the invention of 'landscape history'. This was an enormously wide-ranging lecture in the scope of its references, and much enjoyed by all.

Deborah Hayter

FRIENDS WEEKEND SCHOOL, GLOUCESTER 26-28 APRIL 2002

The first weekend school ever organised by the Friends was a resounding success. Thanks to the meticulous planning and deep local knowledge of Derek Shorthouse, thirty-three of us had a stimulating introduction to the delightful country of the Upper Severn area of Gloucestershire. When we arrived at the Twigworth Inn late on Friday afternoon, we were warmly met by Derek Shorthouse and Mary M^{c}Ghee, dispensing marvellously detailed information packs and ushering us towards the dining room for an early dinner. This set the tone for the rest of the weekend – we were well informed and well fed throughout. After dinner Dr. N. M. Herbert, editor of the *Victoria County History* for Gloucestershire, gave a beautifully illustrated talk on the landscape and settlement history of the area we were to explore over the next two days. With appetites whetted, we wisely went to bed betimes, as Derek had organised an early start and a full day for us on Saturday.

Our first visit was no further than the parish church of Twigworth, just across the road from the Inn. Indeed, I do not think we travelled more than 15 miles from Twigworth in the whole weekend, but what a range of places and buildings we saw. It does not often happen to one to be seated at a quarter to nine on a rather chilly Saturday morning on the narrow benches of a crumbling early Victorian church, but so we were, and so enraptured were we by the excellent lecture by Mr. Anthony Boden on 'Ivor Gurney and his Friends', that we all forgot our gradually stiffening bottoms. Ivor Gurney, a poet whose work celebrates this glorious area of Gloucestershire, is buried in the churchyard at Twigworth. From there we went by coach to Highnam, an estate village with a very different sort of church. The Church of the Holy Innocents was built at the expense of Thomas Gambier Parry between 1849 and 1851, to the designs of Henry Woodyer. Parry himself embellished the Gothic Revival architecture with a series of mural paintings. The church is further decorated with fine examples of Victorian glass and metalwork. Here we were guided by Mr. Jonathan MacKechnie-Jarvis, and provided with coffee and biscuits by the ladies of the parish.

By 11.30 a.m. we were on our third church of the day – but, what a contrast. Hartpury Church is a very old, plain church, though with some curious figurative carving. Mr. Jim Chapman, whom many of us had met on our visit to Newent last year, spoke to us about the church and about the work of the Hartpury Historical Buildings Trust, of which he is chairman. The work of the Trust ranges from the complete restoration of the nineteenth-century Catholic Chapel in which we were soon to have lunch, to the re-erection of a curious stone bee shelter in the churchyard. After the church, we visited the large medieval barn across the lane, still very much part of a working farm, then we repaired to the Catholic Chapel, now a well-appointed village hall, for lunch. Gloucestershire produce was well to the fore, with a 'plough-man's lunch' of Double Gloucester cheese and an excellent pear and walnut tart, all washed down by perry – Hartpury is the home of the Hartpury Pear, some of which now grow in the churchyard.

While thoughts of an afternoon nap were very appealing to some of us, there was no rest. On the coach again and off to Tewkesbury. On all the journeys between visits we received an informed commentary from Dr. Herbert, who kindly spent the weekend with us. At Tewkesbury we were met by Dr. Anthea Jones, who gave us a talk on 'Tewkesbury – Living with Madame Sabrina' – a rather whimsical soubriquet for the river Severn, from the Latin. The river was the constant thread of the weekend, as it was, and is, of the lives of the people of this area. No longer important as a means of transport, the river is now more of a tourist attraction. Yet it still forms a barrier only crossable at certain points, and the extensive floods to which it is prone cause many problems. After the talk, in the old National School building, Dr. Jones took us on a brief walk around the town, taking in such points of interest as the old wharves and the very early Baptist Chapel. This stroll was hardly enough to work up an appetite, but we still managed to do justice to the excellent afternoon tea laid on at the Abbey visitor centre.

Then we were off again, to Deerhurst, perhaps one of the most evocative places we visited all weekend. Mr. Michael Hare and Mr. Steve Bagshaw showed us around the church, which contains substantial amounts of Saxon work. Mr. Hare spoke about the history of the church, while Mr. Bagshaw pointed out the various building stones used in its construction, probably including reworked Roman material – reminiscent of Brixworth. A short walk down the lane, past the flood barriers close to the Severn edge, brought us to Odda's Chapel. This chapel, dedicated in 1056 by Earl Odda for the good of the soul of his brother Elfric, later became incorporated in a farm-house. The dedication stone was found in a nearby orchard in 1675, but it was not until 1885 that this wing of the farm-house was recognised for what it is. The later walls and floors have been removed, and this very spare building has a most haunting effect.

We then returned to Twigworth, for more food! After dinner Mr. Roy Palmer regaled us with amusing insights into Gloucestershire folklore, interspersed with folk song, in which we were encouraged to join. This was very enjoyable and an excellent idea, for I fear that no matter how good the speaker, many of us would have been nodding off that evening if we had not had the singing to keep us awake. Mr. Palmer was helped by his wife, who played and sang for us, and also recited some poetry. Another husband and wife team added to our entertainment that evening. Trevor and Margaret Hill had brought a collection of what my father calls 'jolly good somethings' – a collection of bygone implements, domestic, agricultural and industrial – which we had to try to identify. We had till Sunday afternoon to puzzle over them, and Dr. John Goodacre was the most successful, identifying twelve of the twenty mystery objects.

Whereas we had been in church first thing on Saturday morning, we were in a pub at nine o'clock on Sunday morning! Sitting in the skittle alley of the Haw Bridge Inn, we had another fascinating lecture from Dr. Herbert on 'The River Trade in Upper Severnside'. Once again we were made to realise how important the river was, sometimes barrier, sometimes means of communication, but always there. After coffee we drove to Ashleworth, a charming small village with a remarkable collection of important medieval buildings, reflecting its importance as part of the estate of the abbey of Gloucester. We were welcomed into Ashleworth Manor by Dr. and Mrs. Jeremy Barnes, the party having to split into three and rotate. While some were looking at the medieval timber-framed hall, with later additions, some strolled about the lovely garden which Dr. and Mrs. Barnes have created and others visited the ancient church. Next to the church is another large medieval house, this time stone built, now a farm house, which, like Hartpury has a very fine barn in its yard, currently undergoing restoration. It may be a sleepy hamlet now, but in its time it was once a prosperous and important place. The secret was not hard to discover – for at the end of the lane lay the river – and a crossing place. The ferry here was run for much of the eighteenth century, at least, by the family who also ran the pub – which is still there, though the ferry has long gone. On this pleasant spring lunch-time the pub was doing a thriving trade with visitors come to look at the river, even before a coachload of thirsty local historians descended upon it.

Having slaked our physical thirst, though with our local history thirst only whetted by our weekend, we returned to Twigworth for lunch. Afterwards Dr. Herbert kindly answered a few questions, the identity of the mystery objects were revealed, and thanks were made all round by Dr. Pinches, especially to Mr. Derek Shorthouse for having devised such an excellent weekend. It is impossible to say what were 'the best bits' of such a full weekend, but for me, apart from the fascination of places and buildings and the erudition of our guides, abiding memories will be meadows full of cowslips and lady's smock and hedgerows full of bluebells; the cry of a curlew as we stood by the river at Tewksbury and swallows wheeling by the mill at Hartpury; the birdwatchers in the hide which we drove past all turning their glasses on us and waving!; but most of all 'good food and good fellowship'.

Sylvia Pinches

BURSARIES

In exceptional circumstances this year, the Student Support Committee has awarded grants amounting to £5,100 to four M.A. students, three part-time and one full-time. This in part reflects the low level of grants made in the previous few years having left a surplus in the available funds. However, such a level of support can only be maintained in the future by increased fund-raising. This is all the more necessary, as the committee has decided to widen the scope of its help. In future, not only will help be available with fees for the M.A. course, but also towards defraying exceptional costs incurred in the course of research by M.A. students working on their dissertations and by M.Phil. and Ph.D. students. The sort of cost which might attract help includes travel to a far-flung record office, not the one where the bulk of research is carried out, or the purchase of microfilm or microfiche of vital documents.

Application forms are available from the Secretary of the Friends, or from the Secretary of the Centre.

Gloucestershire weekend
Ashleworth Manor

FRIENDS' PUBLICATIONS

The following publications are still available:

The Departmental Bibliography (ISBN 0 9533105 3 1), "English Local History: The Leicester Approach", with an introduction by Charles Phythian-Adams, at £11.50 (by post) or £10 (if collected, by prior arrangement with the Publications Secretary, from the Centre).

Friends' Paper 3 (ISBN 0 9533105 2 3), "The Politics of Place: a Study of Church Seating in Essex, c. 1580-1640", at £6 per copy for Members, and £7.50 for others, (including postage).

Friends' Paper 4 (ISBN 0 9533105 4 X), "John Sneyd's Census of Ipstones in 1839", by Marion Aldis and Pam Inder, at £6 per copy for Members, and £7.50 for others, (including postage).

Friends' Paper 5 (ISBN 0 9533105 5 8), "The Market Town Lodging House in Victorian England", by Barrie Trinder, at £7.50 per copy for Members, and £9 for others, (including postage).

If you would like to purchase any of the above, please contact:
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THE WHITTLEWOOD PROJECT

The Whittlewood project originated in meetings of the Medieval Settlement Research Group (the national organization which grew out of the work of Maurice Beresford and John Hurst) in the 1990s. The long term research at Wharram Percy came to an end, and it seemed the right moment to push forward a new large scale project to investigate the origin of villages, and in particular to explain why villages formed in one place, but in others the population lived in hamlets and scattered farms.

Carenza Lewis and Patrick Mitchell-Fox surveyed rural settlements in the east midlands, and produced a book which answered some questions and defined unsolved problems – it was called *Village, Hamlet and Field* and has recently appeared in paperback, published by the Windgather Press. They also drew up a list of places suitable for a new research project, and from their short list Whittlewood was chosen for intensive investigation. 'Whittlewood' is shorthand for 11 adjacent parishes forming part of the royal forest of Whittlewood, and straddling the Buckinghamshire/ Northamptonshire border. The parishes include Silverstone, Whittlebury, Stowe and Passenham. These parishes include nucleated villages (e.g. Akeley) and polyfocal and dispersed settlements (Paulerspury and Leckhamstead). These places are ideal for investigation because there are good historical documents, earthworks, ploughed fields full of pottery and artefacts, and a friendly population who welcome archaeologists. It lies in an area with a range of pottery dated between 400 and 1000, so that we can identify settlement sites in the period when villages formed.

Research began with a two-year pilot project funded by the AHRB between 2000 and 2002, when our main aim was to show that the evidence existed, and that we could make sense of it. The pilot was a great success mainly through the skills and dedication of the two researchers, Dr Richard Jones (the archaeologist) and Dr Mark Page (the historian). When we applied this year to the AHRB for another three years (the grant totals £318,000) we were successful, and so Richard and Mark will continue to be members of our staff, and will complete enough research to write a monograph.

The research is concerned with landscapes as well as settlements, and involves documentary study, field walking, digging test pits in villages, and collating information from such sources as early maps and aerial photographs. The results are collected and analysed on GIS. This is a project driven by carefully defined research questions, which is genuinely interdisciplinary, and which treats the whole landscape as an archaeological site. Already exciting results are emerging about the origin and development of woodlands and woodland society. Exploration of individual villages shows how they grew from a small nucleus, or coalesced from a number of separate foci.

Large numbers of people and organizations participate in the work. It is sponsored by the Medieval Settlement Research Group; the co-applicants, who serve on the Project Board, are Mark Gardiner of Belfast University and Stephen Rippon of Exeter University. We work in partnership with Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire County Councils. Extra funding for fieldwork has come from the Aurelius Trust, the Medieval Settlement Research Group, the Royal Archaeological Institute, the Society of Antiquaries, and the Society for Medieval Archaeology. A team of archaeology students have participated as part of their fieldwork training, mainly from Sheffield University but also from Exeter and Southampton. Volunteers, a number of them from the area, play an important part in the work, and this year MA and research students from the centre, and Mike Thompson and Audrey Larrivé, have been digging test pits.

If you wish to know more, there are interim reports in *Annual Reports* of the Medieval Settlement Research Group, and on the Whittlewood website, which is accessible from the Centre's website.

We need volunteers for field walking in the winter, and other types of fieldwork, including test pitting, next summer. If any Friends wish to learn the skills, or exercise skills you already have, and indulge in some healthy exercise, please contact Richard Jones.

Christopher Dyer

MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT RESERCH GROUP

The fifteenth Annual General Meeting of the M.S.R.G. was hosted by the Centre in Marc Fitch House on 1st December last year. Harold Fox was in the chair as the retiring President of the Group having held office for the last three years of successful operation as described in reports given by the Secretary (S.Coleman) and Treasurer (Robin Glasscock). Notable amongst many research activities detailed in the Annual Report for the previous year was the major programme undertaken and planned for the Whittlewood Project now based in the Centre and for which some interim funding was to be provided by the Group. As always the business of the AGM was speedily and efficiently concluded and the members (including such alumni as Maurice Beresford, John Hurst and Mick Aston to say nothing of our own Harold Fox and Chris Dyer were joined by others over a splendid buffet lunch provided on behalf of the Friends (almost single-handedly) by our chairwoman Sylvia, supported on the day by Audrey Larrivé and Jane Thompson.

Lunch was followed by a series of four short papers on the theme of coastal settlement. In his introduction Harold touched upon four salient aspects of the subject: the hierarchical status of such settlement from great ports to mere quays and seasonal sites; the effects of lordship on one hand and the community on the other on their foundation, siting and mode of operation; and their degree of permanence. Each of the four speakers had something significant to say about one or other of these matters. Mark Gardiner (Queen's College, University of Belfast) in 'Medieval fishing and settlement on the Sussex coast', talked about the importance of seashore resources and the development of fishing settlements by the shore some little distance away from marginally inland villages. He concluded that the characteristically 'soft' coastline of Sussex was quite different from the 'hard' coastline of Harold's Devon and this tended to give rise to the separation noted and somewhat ephemeral fishing settlements as at Dungeness.

Paula Martin (University of Dundee) gave us a richly illustrated account of the typical built structures associated with the strongly contrasted east and west coasts of Scotland in her paper, 'Medieval and later coastal settlement and infrastructure'. From the royal boroughs of the east coast to the isolated post-clearance settlements on the west, we were treated to an absorbing array of early breakwaters and quays, lighthouses, limekilns, fish traps, tollbooths, churches and tombstones, all redolent of the world of hardy northern fishermen and shoreline dwellers. Next, Hassel Smith (University of East Anglia) gave us a fascinating insight into the 'The lifestyle of North Norfolk coastal communities, 1570-1630' with his account of those – squire, husbandmen and labourers - who lived in and around Stiffkey in Norfolk during the early modern period. This was primarily a farming community with fishing being an important secondary occupation, with the resources of the salt marshes exploited by all. The significance of local face-to–face marketing was also touched upon and several maps of the wider community of Stiffkey's hinterland were displayed. Finally Peter Warner (Dean of Homerton College, Cambridge) evoked the scene of seventeenth-century internecine warfare between lords and community in 'Walberswick (Suffolk): decline and fall'. He described how Walberswick first prospered, as its important neighbour Dunwich disappeared beneath the waves, and then declined as the community's common rights were eroded by the lords of the manor, and problems of silt deposition on this 'soft' coast added to its problems.

After drawing together the various themes aired during a splendid afternoon and thanking all those who had contributed to the occasion many of those present remained for further refreshment, discussion and convivial recollection of times past.

M.G.Thompson

THE FUTURE OF THE VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY

Many Friends must have noticed that changes are taking place in the VCH, and the Editor of the Newsletter has asked me to write about this as I am the Chairman of the Victoria County History Committee, which is the committee of the Institute of Historical Research, which oversees the VCH for the whole country.

When I joined the VCH Committee in 1995, managing the VCH consisted often of responding to successive crises, as the funders, mainly local authorities, were constantly threatening to reduce their contributions. As the VCH was locked into a local government system, which was always short of cash, its long-term future could at best be one of survival, and there was always the threat of decline. Three developments gave cause for hope and optimism. Firstly universities were becoming involved in providing homes for VCH staff, and even finding a little money to supplement the funds provided by local government. Shropshire and Staffordshire moved to a new home at Keele, for example. Secondly, some counties were funding their work wholly or partly by means of trusts which raised funds locally. Oxfordshire was very successful in this venture, and counties which had no active VCH, such as Northamptonshire and Durham, were able to resume work on the basis of money gathered by trusts. Thirdly, the Heritage Lottery Fund seemed to offer the hope of providing seriously large sums of money to pay for expanding the existing counties and resuming work in others, such as Devon and Cornwall.

The most recent developments have seen the appointment of Professor Anthony Fletcher as General Editor and Director, the successful completion of a pilot project funded by the HLF, and the submission of a bid to the HLF for a larger tranche of funding.

Anthony Fletcher was the first General Editor to be appointed from outside the ranks of the VCH staff for many decades. He has wielded the new broom that could have been anticipated, bringing in new systems of management, and introducing changes in the content of the parish histories, including a section on social history. He is an enthusiast for taking the VCH into schools, and for changing the publishing programme to make the work of the VCH available as paperback books.

The HLF has encouraged changes in the VCH, which to some extent coincided with innovations that the VCH itself wished to pursue. For example the lottery has been keen to see all of the existing volumes made available on-line, a project which the former General Editor, Chris Currie, had been exploring.

One of the aims of the pilot project was to demonstrate to the HLF that samples of VCH text (from Oxfordshire and County Durham) could be placed on the VCH's web site and thereby made accessible to a wide audience. The pilot project and the new bid put great emphasis on making the VCH available to the public, hence the new sub-title 'England's past for everyone'. The VCH demonstrates its concern to attract a wide readership by consulting with a large constituency, through user groups who comment on the output. On these bodies family historians, amateur local historians, teachers, librarians and other interested groups are represented. The VCH is also intending to make more use of volunteers in its research. The VCH now has an educational programme and keeps contact with teachers and schools. New output from the VCH editors will appear on the 'England's past' website, and there are plans to publish text in the form of relatively cheap paperbacks as well as the formidable and expensive 'red volumes'.

If the negotiations with the HLF are successful – it is a demanding and complicated organization with which to deal – the VCH will be launched next year with lottery funding, matching locally raised money, in Durham and Oxfordshire, the two counties chosen for the pilot, and with new starts in Bristol, Cornwall, Derbyshire, Exmoor, Herefordshire, Kent and Norfolk. These will be very focussed projects, for example on Ledbury and district in the case of Herefordshire, and will initially be published as paperback volumes.

The original vision that the lottery would pay for the expansion of the existing VCH operation, in counties such as Gloucestershire, Middlesex, Sussex and Somerset, has not

materialized. The HLF will only pay for new ventures. So there will still be a struggle to maintain local authority funding where this is still the basis for the work of the VCH. Indeed, during the protracted discussions with the HLF two counties, Cheshire and Shropshire, have in effect ceased to operate. But contrary to rumours, the HLF's influence will not lead to a wholesale 'dumbing down'. There will be a glossary which will explain the technical terms, and volumes will be more lavishly illustrated, and the VCH will be made accessible to more people, but the scholarly standards will be maintained. To ensure this an advisory panel of academics has been appointed to help with the new ventures.

Readers of this Newsletter will wonder about the possibility of reviving the VCH for Leicestershire. Its revival was one of the items on my agenda when I came to Leicester, which I had intended to encourage after I had gained more local contacts. But last autumn Philip Riden, who had previously worked on Northamptonshire VCH, held a meeting in Leicester to explore ways of fund raising for a Leicestershire VCH. He set up a committee on which Graham Jones represents the interests of the Centre. We will keep Friends abreast of future developments.

Christopher Dyer

OBITUARIES

Denis Gwynne Stuart, 1919-2001.

Denis Stuart passed his Ph.D. viva, on the history of the early Quakers in Staffordshire, a month before he died of cancer on 6th November. The degree was awarded posthumously in February this year. Though in his eightieth year when he started his degree, for him the process of education and self-improvement never ended. The subject of that degree was another token of the breadth of his historical interests. While clearly not well, he never explained the nature of his illness to us, I suspect because he wished to ensure (in a typically principled way) that no moral pressure of any kind was put on the examiners. His death has therefore come to us as a shock.

I used to joke to him that he must be the first Ph.D. student in this country to do his Ph.D. research while already having a festschrift of essays by leading academics published in his honour.

He was an extra-mural lecturer all his life, at Oxford and then notably at Keele University where he was a senior lecturer in history in the Department of Adult and Continuing Education. His commitment was strongly towards adult education, and his energetic and geographically far-reaching activities in this field were renowned. He was a famous and erudite historian with about twelve books to his name, notably a book on Latin and early modern palaeography which is very widely used as a textbook. He wrote books on Midlands history, a two-volume history of Burton on Trent, a biography of Millicent, Duchess of Sutherland, a biographical dictionary of people in the Potteries, a social History of Yoxall in Staffs, a History of Staffordhire (with M.W.Greenslade), and another much consulted book on Manorial Records.

He was a man of enormous energy and enthusiasm, who was always happy when expounding to large audiences, when he also showed a wonderful sense of humour. His viva will be remembered by the two examiners as an extraordinary demonstration of his learned exposition, confidence and mental alacrity. He was small in stature, highly principled, very dignified, studiously didactic, with a painstaking eye for the revealing nature of fine detail in historical sources which he stressed to others. He initiated the Keele palaeography school, which is now internationally famous.

He leaves a wife, Barbara and daughter, Katherine.

Keith Snell

John Heathcote Ball, 1941-2002

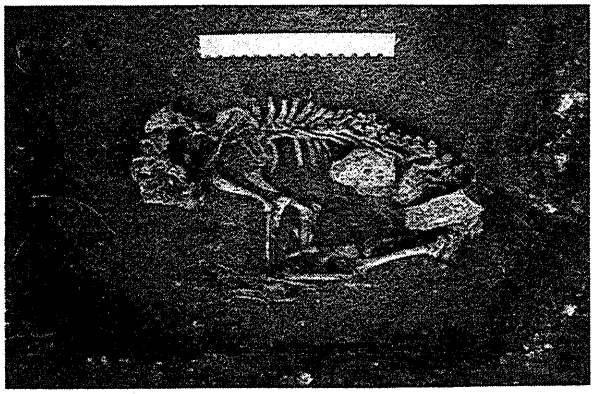
John Ernest Heathcote Ball was an enthusiast for the local history and landscapes of Leicestershire and it was that interest that drew him towards the Department. Born at Gables Farm in the parish of Claybrooke, he began his career in the surveying and estate management section of Shakespeare, McTurk and graham where he gained further knowledge of the land

of Leicestershire and its estates and families. A second passion which developed further while he was with that firm was for fine art of all types, but especially furniture. His two great interests converged at many points – his knowledge of great houses was intertwined with his appreciation of their art collections, while his study of landed families assisted his interpretation of armorial porcelain and crested silverware. In the 1970s he set up his own firm, Heathcote Ball & Co., fine art auctioneers and valuers. He combined business with pleasure, never being more happy than when tracing, like an academic, the obscure provenance of a collection or when asked to advise one of the international fine art firms.

Another development in his life during the 1970s, and one that led him further towards the Department, was his purchase of Ulverscroft Lodge in Charnwood Forest, a secluded property though unfortunately close to a reputed right-of-way. Other purchases followed: adjacent land, fishponds and the ruins of Ulverscroft Priory. Here he engaged in the pursuits of an eighteenth-century gentleman, planting trees with his own hands, draining and reconstructing the monastic fishponds as they had been in the Middle Ages, restoring the priory buildings. He also began to contemplate writing the history of the priory and its lands and became interested in such topics as medieval assarts and ridge and furrow. Thus it was that he came to see me and to enquire about a degree in the Department, which he always described as 'the shrine of St William'. With some help from the Higher Degrees Board over little matters like extensions, he acquired his degree with a distinction for a dissertation, neatly combining his interests, on the church effigies of Leicestershire families. The degree was one of the many new challenges which he took up during his lifetime, others being fox-hunting – which he did fiercely – and the building up of a collection of rare and antique breeds of sheep and cattle. He was a founder-member of the Bakewell Society which celebrates the life of one of Leicestershire's most influential men. He gave his time very freely to many causes and was generous, not only in hospitality but in other ways. It was a generosity that stemmed from his deep interest in people of all kinds, so that he made new acquaintances throughout his life.

John Heathcote Ball had a few enemies; but also very numerous friends who completely filled the large collegiate church Of St Mary de Castro at his funeral, following his death through an accident in the field. He was in some senses a controversial figure. He considered that it was his duty to conserve the countryside and its traditions, such as the yearly service which he resurrected in the nave of his priory; some however were critical of his views on rural issues such as hunting and the right to roam. Above all, he was great fun to be with, full of life and larger than life. And so, as I now drive along the roads of Leicestershire and see the changing shapes of the Charnwood hills in the distance, my mind inevitably and always goes back to John in his sylvan and civilised setting, a mind full of sadness at the thought that he is no longer there. But perhaps he is?

Harold Fox



Whittlewood project.
Medieval dog – skinned before deposition. It is larger than a Labrador and was found in Glebe field, Leckhampstead in the summer of 2002. Is this a hunting dog?

CURRENT LIST OF PhD STUDENTS AND RESEARCH SUBJECTS

Elizabeth Allan
Title: The social and cultural contexts of a late Medieval English small town: Saffron Walden (Essex)

Martin Ayres,
Title: Poor relations in rural England: local government and housing, 1834-1914.

Matthew Badcock
Title: Measuring democratisation: alternative electoral geographies of nineteenth-century England

Katherine Burrell
Title: Preserving the Nation: national consciousness and the Polish, Greek-Cypriot and Italian communities in Leicester

Anne Coombs
Title: Some aspects of religious reform in the diocese of Ely at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth.

Celia Cordle
Title: The culture of the hop

Rose Crossan,
Title: The immigration into Guernsey, 1830-1914

Vernon Davis,
Title: Economics, exploitation and environment, N.W. Leics c. 1870

Rupert Featherby,
Title: A historical/archaeological study of Swaledale

Alan Fox,
Title: Aspects of agrarian change in the Wreake Valley in the 16th and 17th centuries

Delia Garrat,
Title: Nineteenth-century religious history

David Holmes,
Title: The boot and shoe industry of England and Wales – its structure development and change since 1850

Ian Hunt,
Title: Growth of rural industries in NW Leicestershire

Robert Lee,
Title: Rural society and religion (19th Century)

Lynn Thornton,
Title: The economic and social responses of the town of Glastonbury to Glastonbury Abbey's role as a Cult Centre

Alistair Mattinson
Title: Mediaeval Shrewsbury

Darren Miller,
Title: A documentary and archaeological study of Westwood and Hampton Lovett, Worcestershire c.716-1618.

Paul Oliver,
Title: Provision of housing for the labouring class by landowners in Bedfordshire and the surrounding areas

Patricia Oorme,
Title: Church monuments as a reflection of society and culture: based on Warwickshire and with particular regard for the Felden, Arden and north-eastern industrial area

Elizabeth Paul,
Title: The care of churches in Herefordshire c.1662-1762, with special reference to the Archdeaconry of Hereford and the peculiar of the Dean and Chapter

Catherine Robinson
Title: 19th Century costume in rural areas

David Sheppard,
Title: Medieval and early modern landscapes of the Warwickshire Arden

Michael Thornton,
Title: Rural society in the manor courts of Northamptonshire between 1350 and 1500

Matthew Tompkins,
Title: Changes in two contrasting communities in Buckinghamshire 1400-1600

Anthony Upton,
Title: Warwickshire parishes: their clergy and the Reformation

Penelope Upton,
Title: Deserted settlements in Warwickshire

Geoff Wolfe,
Title: Church and society in Warwickshire 1350-1540

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Contributions of books for the book sale to Mike Thompson at Marc Fitch House.

Purchase of Friends publications: Derek Shorthouse, 3 Cams Ground, Highnam, Gloucester, GL2 8LZ, Tel: 01452-311974.

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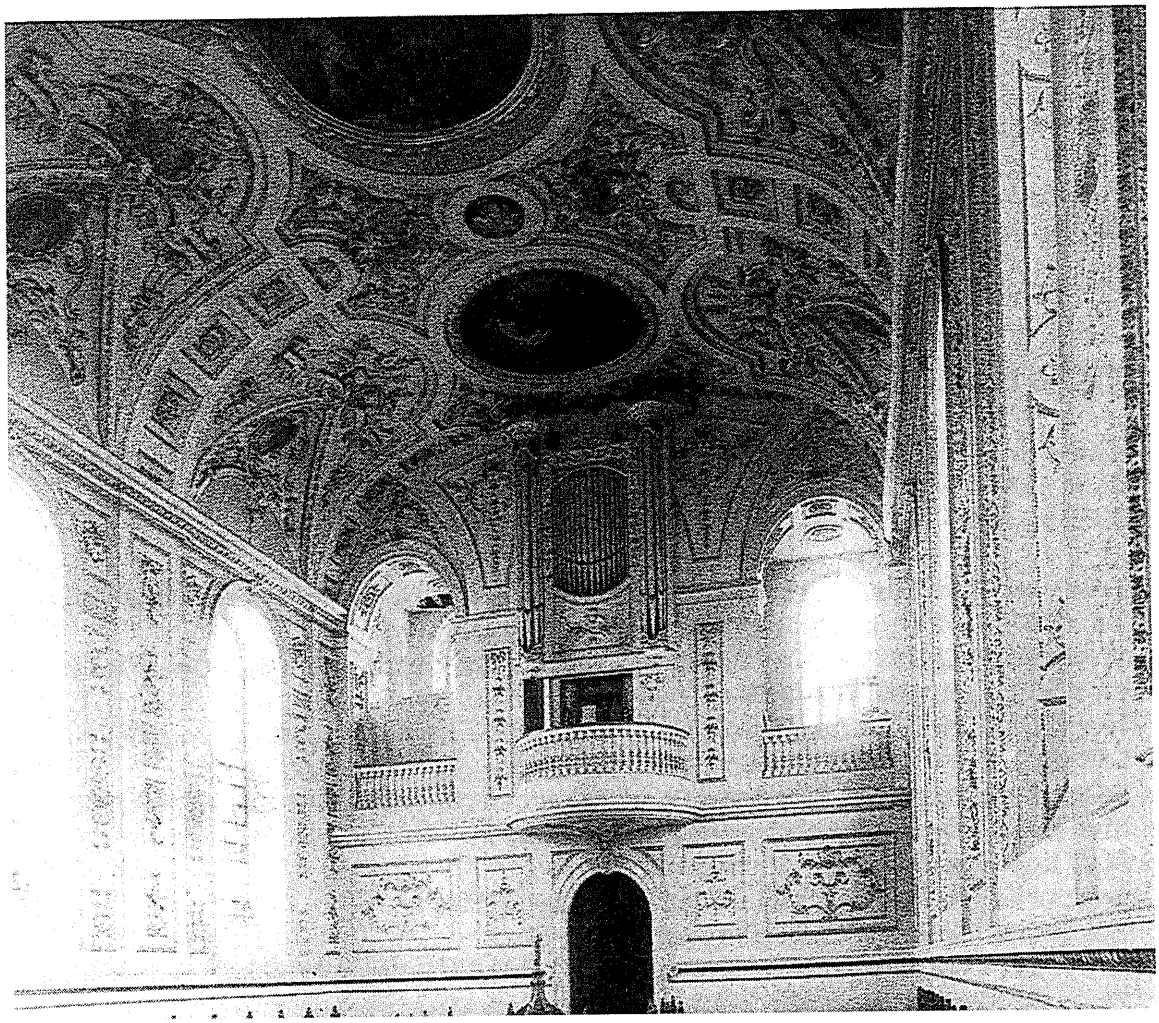

Interior of St Michael's Church, Great Witley, Worcs. The church, originally part of Witley Court, which was destroyed by fire in 1937, was consecrated in 1735. Pevsner calls the interior 'the most Italian ecclesiastic space in the whole of England'. An interesting feature of the ceiling is that, what appears to be stucco, is in fact papier-maché, a process that had been invented some time earlier by Henry Clay of Birmingham. The photograph comes from the Attenborough collection which is owned by the Centre.