

Friends of the Centre for English Local History

NEWSLETTER

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER NUMBER 18 OCTOBER 2005



REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 1073528

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CONTENTS

EDITORIAL.....	1
THE CENTRE.....	1
SEMINAR PROGRAMME 2004-5	3
INAUGURAL LECTURE – H.S.A. FOX.....	10
STAFF DISTINCTIONS	12
CENTRE PUBLICATIONS 2004	12
PAPERS PRESENTED AT CONFERENCES, SEMINARS ETC.	13
JOHN NICHOLS PRIZE	14
DEVON FIELD COURSE 2005	14
BOOK REVIEWS	16
SEMINAR PROGRAMME 2005-6.....	18
RECENTLY COMPLETED THESES.....	19
MA DISSERTATIONS	21
NEWS OF FORMER STUDENTS	24
EVENTS SPONSORED BY THE FRIENDS.....	25
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING	26
SIXTEENTH HOSKINS LECTURE.....	27
THE SQUIRE FAMILY OF 1 SALISBURY ROAD.....	28
AUTUMN OUTING TO NORTHAMPTON.....	29
CONTRASTING CULTURES: A WEEKEND IN KING’S LYNN, 8-10 APRIL 2004.....	31
FRIENDS’ PUBLICATIONS.....	34
BURSARIES.....	34
FRIENDS’ PAPERS.....	34
WHITTLEWOOD PROJECT.....	35
CONFERENCES.....	38
W.G. HOSKINS AND THE MAKING OF THE BRITISH LANDSCAPE.....	38
THE AGRICULTURAL HISTORY SOCIETY ANNUAL CONFERENCE.....	41
CURRENT LIST OF PHD AND M.PHIL. STUDENTS AND RESEARCH SUBJECTS.....	43
USEFUL CONTACTS.....	45

EDITORIAL

The past year has been one of change for the Friends, with Pam Fisher taking over as chairman from Sylvia Pinches at the Annual General Meeting in November. Sylvia devoted an enormous amount of time to the Friends during her four years as chairman. Her enthusiasm, good humour and general organisational ability ensured that the work of the Friends was undertaken in a spirit of friendliness and cooperation. Apart from mundane activities such as providing lunch for the new M.A. students at the induction day, she will perhaps be best remembered for breathing new life into the publication of new Friends Papers, three of which have been published in the last year. She believed that the Friends' should go out and look for members and spread the gospel of the 'Leicester approach' to all those who, though interested in local history, did not know about the work of the Centre. This concept was put into practice when she initiated the history day that was jointly organised by Kineton History Group and the Friends. Thank you, Sylvia, for all you have given to the organisation and we wish you well in your future career.

Apart from the usual reports concerning the activities of staff and students, the committee decided that the Newsletter should in future include a report of the Annual General Meeting together with the accounts.

The Hoskins Day lecture, given this year by Dr Tom Williamson, was well attended as usual and the book sale that followed raised a record amount for our funds. £464 was raised on the day and this amount will exceed £500 when other sales are taken into account. Thank you to all who helped make it possible.

Elsewhere in the Newsletter readers will find an article concerning editorship of the Newsletter. As all officers only serve a five-year term, I can only edit one more issue. I have enjoyed the continued contact with staff and students of the Centre after completing the M.A. course and would recommend it to anyone who is interested. If you would like to know more about this opportunity, further details are given on page 25.

THE CENTRE

This has been quite a difficult year for the Centre, but there have been a number of positive developments. Staffing changes required some resourceful adaptations. The University decided at unusually short notice to give Keith Snell a year of study leave, beginning on 1 January 2005. This was for Keith a deserved respite from the routines of teaching and administration so that he could complete a book, from which the School of Historical Studies would hope to benefit in the next Research Assessment Exercise, but the short notice meant that both Harold Fox (who was Head of the Centre in the autumn when I was on study leave), and I have spent a great deal of our time organising replacement teachers on the MA course. The students taking modern modules on the MA, and those being supervised for research degrees, have had to experience a change of teacher/supervisor, which has been a smooth transition in most cases! In Keith's absence both staff and MA students have had the pleasure of encountering a lively lecturer in historical geography from Southampton, Carl Griffin, who studies rural society in the nineteenth century, and took half of the 'modern cultures' MA classes. Other teachers also filled in the gaps with enthusiasm, among them Alan McWhirr, who led a Saturday School in the summer with the theme of 'Leicestershire gothic revival churches and industrial archaeology'.

To add to our problems, Audrey Larrivé, our secretary for the last four years, left for a post in a larger University department, Criminology, in the spring. She was replaced in succession by two part-time and temporary secretaries, and then by a long-term and full-time appointment, that of Lucy Byrne. Lucy was proving to be a very devoted and conscientious secretary, but in June sadly broke her ankle, and is to be replaced during her convalescence by another part-time and temporary helper. We have had to cope with these constant changes, and one of the temporary staff, Katy Newton, handled brilliantly the many duties required of her. I am amazed that we have not committed more errors in this period as successive secretaries had to learn our rather complicated procedures. The worst incident came when two students were sent identical comments about their book reviews, but they reported the problem with good humour. It was really good luck that this was the year that we decided to move with the times and to assess student work

anonymously, thus creating more likelihood of mistakes! It was also the year that we welcomed a new external examiner, Ted Royle from York, in place of Steve Hindle, and fortunately he was very understanding of the inevitable hitches as he received information from four successive secretaries, and a novice examinations officer, Harold Fox. A final complication was the programme of building work on Marc Fitch House, that began with a change of internal doors and other fire precautions, and continued with repainting of all rooms, which forced the more untidy of us to attempt some re-ordering of our books and papers.

The year has seen a closer relationship developing between the Centre and the School of Historical Studies. Both Harold Fox and I taught undergraduate history students, and Harold's third year course on medieval Devon, which was much enjoyed by the students, has already resulted in our recruitment of a Leicester history student onto our MA course. This is the shape of things to come, and I am confident that as we are established as regular teachers in the School, a greater number of history students will be attracted to the MA. We have also become more engaged in School administration. David Postles has acted as School careers adviser. Harold serves on the Postgraduate committee. And I became the Chair of the Research Committee, which has involved research interviews with all of the staff, with a view to preparing the School's submission to the Research Assessment Exercise, which looms in 2008. This has been hard work, but it is interesting to talk to 30 colleagues about their work, and I hope that I can use my experience of the RAE, on which I have in the past served as a panel member, for the benefit of the whole School.

This has been a year of achievement for Centre students. In particular it is good to report that five students, four of them part-timers, successfully submitted their PhDs, and two or three others are very near to completion as I write. Two students beginning their studies obtained financial support from the AHRC (once the AHRB), one of them a part-timer. The AHRC insists that the postgraduates that it funds should be provided with training, and this year an Arts Faculty programme was available to all research students, whether they are funded by the AHRC or not. Seminars were given on such diverse subjects as the use of IT and 'how to manage your supervisor'. It was good to see a number of our

students taking advantage of the seminars, which also gave them the opportunity to talk to each other, and meet fellow students from outside the Centre.

Two years ago we launched a new pathway to our MA degree, the 'MA by Individual Supervised Study'. This was a substitute for a 'distance learning' MA, and provides the students with two weeks of intensive study, which is assessed, and then leaves them to write a supervised dissertation of 35,000 words as the main component leading to their degree. This enables students living outside the midlands, or even overseas, to take our MA. It might also appeal to local students who prefer to study for an MA without regular weekly commitments. We sent out hundreds of leaflets, but without much immediate response, but they were slowly effective, and this year we have had a number of applicants, and the first cohort of students will embark on this MA in April 2006, both full-time and part-time.

The Whittlewood Project comes to an end in July 2005, and its last year has been a particularly eventful one, as we completed our programme of disseminating the results, both orally and in print. We took part in a seminar with staff on the Discovery Programme (which researches early settlement in the Republic of Ireland) in Belfast, and Richard Jones and Mark Page spoke at two large conferences at Leicester in April and July. Richard has published an innovative paper on the archaeological evidence for the origins of the open fields in the *Archaeological Journal*, and together they will complete on time a book for Windgather Press summing up the main results of the whole project, called *Medieval Villages in an English Landscape*. Richard will continue in the autumn to work on the Whittlewood electronic archive for the AHRC, while Mark on 1 August will begin a new job with the VCH for Oxfordshire.

In April Harold Fox gave his inaugural lecture, which had been postponed from the previous year. It was attended by a large and enthusiastic audience, including many former students, which impressed the Vice Chancellor. Harold, whose subject needless to say was Devon, managed to be both erudite and entertaining, and introduced various unusual features, such as snatches of music, and posed two quiz questions, which made a sudoku seem easy. In the manner of Oscar winners he thanked a wide range of people for their help, including his gardener.

A big public event of the year was the conference on 'W.G. Hoskins and the making of the British landscape', which is the subject of another article in this Newsletter. It was a real group effort, as Mike Thompson helped in many ways, not least as financial adviser, and Harold Fox served on the organising committee. He, Charles Phythian-Adams and Graham Jones led excursions into the landscapes east of Oadby during the conference. Our collaborators in this venture were the School of Archaeology and Ancient History. The Friends helped by providing some money to pay for the first batch of publicity leaflets, and Friends were on hand to run a stall selling their publications. Individual students of the Centre and Friends attended the conference in good numbers. I acquired a number of new skills in the course of planning the conference, including how to deal with very grand visiting speakers!

On a personal note, it seems about a century ago that I had a brief period of study leave (in the autumn of 2004!), some of which was taken up, not with my intended progress on a new project on a Cotswold wool merchant, but with proof reading and preparing the index of two books (*An Age of Transition?* of which I am the author, and *Town and Country in the Middle Ages* for which I am co-editor). These were both published in the spring. The proof reading and indexing continued during a visit to the USA, where I gave a keynote talk to the North American Conference on British Studies in Philadelphia, and then went on to New York (on the day of the presidential election) for some brief tourism. In the spring I organised the annual spring conference of the Agricultural History Society (of which I am president), with much help from Maggie Whalley, and this event proved a useful experience in preparation for the much larger Hoskins conference.

We look forward next year to a less eventful year: Lucy Byrne will be restored to health, and Keith Snell will return from his study leave. We have no plans to run an enormous conference. The Friends, who have had a good year in 2004-5, and helped us again by funding MA students, will I am sure continue to flourish.

Chris Dyer

Seminar programme 2004-5

Professor Pat Hudson (University of Cardiff), our speaker at the first of this year's seminars, chose as her subject 'Everyday life in industrialising West Yorkshire'. Professor Hudson explained that she is very interested in the social aspects of industrialising societies and especially the position of women. Women's lives reflect the routines and rhythms of the year and this was applicable to the process of industrialisation. The everyday world of eating, washing and work reflects and creates society. As a result she is also interested in the economic effects on the people of industrialisation. She noted that mainland European historians have been much more interested in this aspect than British historians. Marx, in 1844, was the first to write about everyday life and was later followed by many other European intellectuals.

Some writers, including Schutz, considered that everyday life could not be written down. Scientific knowledge would be debased should it be mentioned alongside everyday matters. George Simmel was the first to write about the insignificant aspects of life. Another way to find out about everyday life came about as a result of the mass observation movement. Surveys were made of many groups of people, some looking at specific localities, others dealing with groups of workers as varied as miners, bakers or undertakers.

Professor Hudson suggested that everyday life is most affected by the home. Feelings and attitudes that are formed may be based on external experience of work and authority. Every locality has its own sense of place. Professor Hudson then used these basic statements to explain how communities developed in West Yorkshire within the differing constraints. Development of work brought about increasing localism; localism may have been intensified by dialect and vocabulary. Localism could have its dark side, such as the strict enforcement of courtship rules.

Professor Hudson concluded her talk with some observations on the importance of the weather to the domestic phase of the industrialisation process. Craftwork had to be done in daylight. It was necessary to adapt all rules of everyday life to the demands of day, night and the weather. The quality of the cloth was dependent on the strength of the wind and the

amount of water. Because the weather dominated all work and life, there is a whole area for study covering all parts of the country.

Dr Richard Cust (University of Birmingham), spoke on 'Lineage and gentry honour in Tudor and early Stuart England'. Dr Cust provided an insight into the cult of lineage that started in the reign of Elizabeth and continued into the third quarter of the seventeenth century, explaining how it began and then, by means of an excellent Power-Point presentation, illustrating aspects of its development over the following century. The starting point was the developing interest on the part of the gentry in their family lineage, which enabled them to establish their position and to display it publicly.

Interest in genealogy became an obsession in the late sixteenth century and it would seem that the need to have a good lineage was paramount, to the extent that, if the lineage was not naturally available to display, it became necessary to delve into the past to find remote ancestors to lend credence to, and improve, one's current standing. Dr Cust illustrated this, noting that Lord Burghley spent time improving his origins. The Spencers were another family, several generations of whom spent considerable time and energy developing their pedigree until, by 1617, they felt able to register the deSpencer name as of pre-Conquest origin. As is the way of nature, the old aristocracy of the time considered all this searching for lineage somewhat below them; the Arundel family considered the up and coming Spencer family as sheep farmers. If all could claim noble lineage by one means or the other, the only difference would be how far back one could genuinely follow the line.

Dr Cust discussed why lineage was considered so important, how virtue was the definition of true nobility. The further back one could go would bring one nearer to a biblical connection. There was a concept that nobility was created by God to show honour and virtue. The quality of a family could be judged by their attitude to their servants.

The cult of lineage reached its peak in 1632 with the completion of the Shirley Roll for the Shirleys of Staunton Harold Hall. The actual Roll is enormous and was produced for public display.

The display of lineage was made in a number of ways, placing heraldry and coats of arms both inside and on the outside of houses, whether it be carved panels, stained glass,

external stone work or lead guttering. As time passed the means of display became more ornate and ostentatious. Church statues and funeral monuments became a form of competition to show off one's lineage, thus providing a good living for the most well-known sculptors and stone masons of the time. This was the time when many of the most ornate family chapels were built as an integral part of the parish church.

This was a most interesting talk that was followed by an equally interesting question and answer session. Your correspondent was left wondering if today's family historians are more rigorous in their approach to the subject than their predecessors.

Dr Jeremy Boulton (University of Newcastle), the final speaker in 2004, spoke on 'The significance of the landlord – tenant relationship in early modern London'. Dr Boulton has written many articles and papers about the history of London and is currently looking at the relationship between landlords and tenants. He acknowledged that this is not a subject on which there is a lot of archive material available for study; some of the best sources are diaries, wills and the London Fire Court records. Diaries generally suffer from the limitation that the writer is usually more concerned to record his or her activities rather than his opinions on matters of interest. Dr Boulton used the diary of the young James Boswell who wrote about his approach to obtaining lodgings when he first arrived in London in 1762. As an impecunious young man, who was concerned to maintain the best standard of living possible from limited means, he records his dealings with a potential landlord in Downing Street and how he sought to improve the terms of the agreement while at the same time bargaining to reduce the amount of rent to be paid. Dr Boulton used the diary to illustrate how the relationship between landlord and tenant could vary, depending on the state of that relationship. From the diary it is possible to build up a picture of how closely together landlord and tenant lived.

Dr Boulton went on to discuss the property market in the seventeenth century using the 'List of inhabitants of London, 1638' as source material. Apparently London had an active property market at that time. While some landlords were taking lodgers into their own home, others owned a number of properties. Some work that has been done on Westminster in 1690 would indicate that few landlords owned

more than ten properties. An added complication is the fact that a landlord might also be a tenant as it was quite common to sub-let rooms. The Crown attempted at times to stop sub-letting by penalising the landlord for dividing houses. The tangled mass of houses often led to boundary disputes, which means that court records can also be a useful source of information. He briefly touched on the subject of 'lodging houses', which were such a feature of the nineteenth century.

The lecture was given with the assistance of an excellent Power-Point presentation. Dr Boulton had started his presentation asking the audience to judge whether landlord/tenant relationships could be considered a real subject for academic study. From the questions asked by this audience, it would seem that they look forward to hearing more about the results of his research.

Dr John Moreland (University of Sheffield), was the first speaker of the Lent term, speaking on 'Bradbourne – closing the gaps in the history of a Peakland landscape'. Dr Moreland explained that the University of Sheffield first started work on archaeological landscape research in 1978, first at Roystone and more recently at Bradbourne. The two sites are within five miles of each other and are located in the southern part of the White Peak area of Derbyshire. The work being undertaken at Bradbourne is the study of an upland site that shows strong signs of lowland 'champion' country. The research work takes the Roman occupation as the starting point, at the time when lead was required and sheep were grazed in the area. With the retreat of the Roman Empire, the land was deserted and, in the case of Roystone, there is no further mention until the area was again populated, by which time ownership had passed to Garendon Abbey in Leicestershire. For Bradbourne, there are several clues that may enable archaeologists to fill in the time gap and prove that the land was not completely deserted.

Wigber Low, on which is situated a seventh-century burial mound, overlooks Bradbourne. A sixth-century escutcheon brooch was found nearby. In addition, there is a ninth-century cross in Bradbourne churchyard and the village is recorded in Domesday Book. It was also part of a very large medieval parish, suggesting it might have been an ecclesiastical or secular place of importance. One problem for researchers has been to establish if the burial ground at Wigber Low is connected with

Bradbourne, and if so, in what way. Was the burial ground directly connected to Bradbourne or did those buried there live nearer to the site? Or perhaps, the location of Bradbourne has moved. To seek answers to some of these questions the team have mapped the area and dug various trenches in the medieval fields of the village, near to the church. While no medieval buildings have been found, various sherds of pottery from the twelfth/thirteenth centuries and fifteenth/sixteenth centuries as well as evidence of iron smithing, suggest that the village was populated over a long period. Dr Moreland considers that the village may have been subject to some reorganisation during the late eleventh century and an element of contraction during the fourteenth century. Eighteenth-century drains were found in the furrows of the old fields.

The researchers have also undertaken some oral history with the older inhabitants of the village. This concludes that Wigber Low is still important to the village conscience. Further investigations are to follow. It is hoped that more information can be gleaned from the ceramics using the latest techniques. The work done so far clearly shows that the village and surrounding area may have suffered periods of growth and contraction, but it has never been entirely deserted.

Dr Kate Tiller (University of Oxford), was the speaker at this seminar, which was originally scheduled for the previous session. Dr Tiller, who is also an Honorary Research Fellow of the Centre for English Local History, spoke on 'Religion and community: Dorchester-on-Thames 1800-1920'. The dates form the beginning and end of four distinct periods of ecclesiastical history in the town. She set the talk in context with a brief historical survey of the town. Dorchester is dominated by its abbey church, which was certainly in existence by A.D. 675. It is associated with St Berinus. From the seventh century it was an occasional seat of the bishop until he moved to Lincoln in 1070. During the fifteenth century it was an important centre of pilgrimage. It was a centre of recusancy during the post-Reformation period. Many of the leading figures of the community were Catholics but continued to be buried in the churchyard. Dorchester is situated on the road from London to Worcester, Gloucester and South Wales. It had a period of growth after the road was turnpiked in 1766, but declined when the railway bypassed the town and coaching declined. The Enclosure Act

of 1861 makes it one of the last to be enclosed. The result was that the population, having reached its maximum in 1861, declined and was virtually the same in 1801 and 1901.

The first period, 1780-1838, was that of the Old Regime of Anglican decline, both in respect of the building and the people. Dr Tiller showed pictures of the church, illustrating a building in need of considerable attention. The internal layout reflected the liturgical attitudes of the time. Large areas in the north aisle of the church, probably used by pilgrims in earlier times, were now unused. The priest was normally absent, services being taken by the curate, with communion but once a month. This period of decline was followed by one of revival and competition between the 1830s and 1856. This was the first time that Dorchester had resident clergy. The Abbey was restored over a time span of twenty years under the architects Butterfield and George Gilbert Scott. A new Roman Catholic Church was built and opened in 1838 and nonconformists in the guise of Baptists and Primitive Methodists make an appearance, albeit short-lived. While religion was growing in importance, not all the inhabitants were of a religious disposition, as the Religious Census of 1851 illustrates, for just 51 per cent attended services. A grammar school had been in existence since 1672 and there were three schools by 1818, to which a National School was added in 1836.

The next period, 1857-85, was one of Anglican assertion and tractarian triumph and matches the incumbency of the Rev. McFarlane. McFarlane was a wealthy young man, 38 years of age when he arrived, whose first job was to build a vicarage. A member of the Oxford Movement, he had been appointed by the university. His ministry was one of great activity; he completed the restoration of the church, introduced a choir in 1861, introduced high-church celebrations into the normal routine to the extent that it was said 450 communion services were held in a year. He believed the church should be involved with every aspect of education, moral and physical welfare and recreation of the parish and involved him-self in everything. His involvement with education included building a new school after 1870 and instigating a missionary training college, which was inaugurated in 1878. Such enthusiasm was difficult to sustain, so the period 1886-1920, under the ministry of the Rev. Nathaniel Poyntz, was one of declining certainties. Poyntz himself

displayed an uncompromising approach to the church, developing tractarianism within the community. Services became more Catholic in form, even being called mass, to the extent that they were more Catholic than those of the Roman Catholic Church. The result was two-fold, declining support for the church and the opening of a Mission Hall to counter high-church practices.

This was a most interesting lecture covering Dr Tiller's area of research, which she hopes to publish later this year.

It was natural that **Mr Cyril Pearce** (University of Leeds), would choose to speak on 'Comrades in conscience: mapping war resisters 1914-18' as he has been working on this subject for many years. Mr Pearce is interested in the broader subject of resistance to the war and how that expressed itself. The greatest problem for researchers is the lack of published information, whether one looks in military records or the local press. He has concentrated his work on West Yorkshire and, in particular, on his hometown of Huddersfield as this was a centre of resistance. Although records are scarce, those concerning Huddersfield are better than most. The starting point of his research has been the officially recorded number of 16,100, being the total number of classified conscientious objectors, of which he has recorded information on some 6,000. This is a minute number out of the number of men called up, and so poses the question whether there were others of whom there is no record.

Mr Pearce explained that Huddersfield had a history of anti-war resistance dating back to the Boer War. The town, rooted in a Quaker base, had a broad mix of middle-class Liberals who questioned the war on moral grounds, and a strong working-class element involved with the trade unions, Independent Labour Party, British Socialist Party plus a women's movement. He had interviewed Wilfrid Whiteley, one-time MP for Birmingham Ladywood, who told him that the people of Huddersfield generally understood and accepted the position of conscientious objectors. Within this mix certain families threw up a number of charismatic figures who were not afraid to defend their opinions in public debate. Unlike many towns, such views did not create outbursts of war fervour, leading to public disturbance. In fact, the opposite was true, to the extent that the government and the military felt it necessary to spend extra effort drumming up

support for the war because the number of conscripts from the area was less than from the country at large. Mr Pearce does not think one can underestimate the importance of the Women's Movement to the strength of the overall resistance movement.

To illustrate the way resistance was so strong in Huddersfield, Mr Pearce used the example of three quite different families who campaigned against the war. The Robson family were dyeworks owners and Quakers. Joshua Wheeler Robson (1831-1917) was a Liberal suffragist who married into the Rowntree family. Their three children were all politically involved, John as a Liberal, Julia, an idealist, who was rooted in socialist politics and Alice, a chemist, who worked for the family firm and became involved with the Liberal party. The Shaw family were working class. William Shaw, a committed trade unionist, a founder member of Huddersfield International Labour Party, was arrested and imprisoned as a conscientious objector. All the family became socialists and anti-war campaigners. William Key, head of the third family, had been opposed to the Boer War and consequently supported the movement in 1914. Both he and his wife, Edith, were members of the ILP. Edith was also a suffragette. Their sons were also members of the ILP and one became a conscientious objector.

Having spent many years identifying the strength of the anti-war movement in West Yorkshire, Mr Pearce considers that the strength of the movement nationally was understated and he is attempting to build up a better picture. Such records as were held by the government have been destroyed, while the national and local press reported very few acts of anti-war sentiment. The best source of information has come from Quaker records and those prepared by Katherine Marshall of the 'No Conscription Fellowship'.

Starting with the title 'Landscape and society in two Buckinghamshire villages', **Matt Tompkins** (Research Student, Centre for English Local History, University of Leicester) described his study of the two Buckinghamshire villages of Great Horwood in the northern clay lowland area, and Chalfont St Peter in the wooded, hilly area of the Chilterns in the south of the county. At the time of the seminar only Great Horwood had been researched and so the title was amended to 'Landscape and society in one Buckinghamshire village'. The main aspects of Matt's research are land ownership, land use,

landscape and the interrelationships of societal structures.

Rather than describing the landscape history of the whole parish of Great Horwood, he concentrated on Great Horwood Township, which has an area of 2400 acres. This township consisted largely of one manor and there is an exceptionally good run of manorial records from the fourteenth century to the present day. Ownership was first in the hands of a French priory but came later into the possession of New College, Oxford. Great Horwood is a compact, nucleated village situated on top of a line of low hills in the clay lowland. We were shown maps that indicated higher ground in the north-eastern corner of the township, consisting of common and woodland pasture, remnants of the original Whaddon Chase. The rest of the township was stiff, wet clay with patches of gravel resulting in only moderate agricultural land, rather more suited to pastoral than to arable farming.

In 1300 the whole of the township was open-field arable and final enclosure did not take place until 1842. This might indicate a very conservative farming community, but a map of the enclosure award suggests that, even in the period before the final enclosure, there was much pasture in the township. Mr Tompkins pointed out that there were pasture closes around the edges of the open fields, as well as leys within the open fields and meadow near the streams, adding up to at least one-third of the whole area. The manorial records show that the situation was similar in 1610, which means that this farming community had been, in fact, innovative and not conservative.

Matt has been able to get back further in the study of the landscape by examining maps of ridge and furrow produced from aerial photographs, taken in 1945. He suggested that most changes in the landscape had taken place in the period from 1400 to 1600. Evidence from the manorial records indicates that the first enclosures took place about 1574 but there were probably some earlier ones for which no accounts have survived. Enclosure around the edge of the open fields, particularly near the streams, was sensible and may have occurred as a result of corporate decisions of the whole farming community. There were few references to conversion of arable land into pasture, but increasing mention of stints indicates that the area of pasture was increasing during the fifteenth century. The holders of demesne land probably led the way, for it had

been leased to tenants in 1320 and it was here that the conversion to pasture first took place. After 1610 the ratio of pasture to arable remained fairly constant and the agricultural revolution of the eighteenth century had little impact because the improvement had already taken place.

He then presented his findings on the size and distribution of landholdings from 1280 to 1610, based on his study of manor court rolls, extents and rentals, with support from other documents, such as wills. He has found that landholding size was very stable, with very little fragmentation and amalgamation. Even when a certain amount of change did occur the size of farm units remained fairly similar throughout the township with most under three virgates, though the majority had more than half a virgate. This was an unusual situation, for many Midland parishes saw increasing inequality and more stratification of society as a result of enclosure. The different situation at Great Horwood may be due to an absentee landlord, a lack of gentry presence, and a secure customary landholding procedure with low rents. Despite the moderate soils it was a very desirable place to hold land. The continuation of the common wood-pasture in the north of the township meant that a balanced mixed farming practice could be followed in the medieval period and innovations could be introduced without having to radically change the landholding structure. In this township we had an unusual, egalitarian, self-governing society of small men working co-operatively.

As a former post graduate student of the Department of English Local history, it was appropriate that **Dr Richard Peberdy** (VCH Oxfordshire); should speak about the early life of W.G. Hoskins under the title 'W.G. Hoskins: the origins of a creative historian'. Dr Peberdy, who first met Hoskins when Hoskins gave the inaugural lecture to the newly formed Oxford Local History Society and was then given the idea of writing a biography by Professor Jack Simmons, recognises that a number of articles of appreciation have been written, notably by Professor Alan Everitt and Professor Charles Phythian-Adams.

This talk concentrated on the early life and the influences that directed Hoskins on his chosen path. Hoskins' father was a baker in Exeter, who, through his own efforts, became relatively prosperous. Richard considers that he was a tolerant man and, though the bakery provided his living, he was really more interested

in farming and the land. After first attending the local Episcopal schools, where he showed some academic prowess, the young W.G. was sent to Hele's School. Here he came under the influence of Mr Snowball, the headmaster, a man who actively improved the school's academic record by encouraging boys to think for themselves and reach conclusions from the information presented to them. History was brought to life for the young Hoskins by study of Ordnance Survey maps. He developed in the atmosphere of the school until he left, having won a scholarship to University College, Exeter, where he studied economic history.

Hoskins' mother, Alice Diamond, one of fourteen children, was brought up in the Exe Valley. Her parents died early and the young Alice went into domestic service. Richard considers that the Diamonds had a greater influence on Hoskins than his father's family. As a boy he wandered across the Devon fields and lanes. He noticed the difference between Cadbury parish and other villages he knew and was stimulated by tombs and tombstones. This curiosity led him to further study and he soon came across Maitland's study of the Domesday Book. From the age of 15, Hoskins had established a method of working and recording which he used throughout his life.

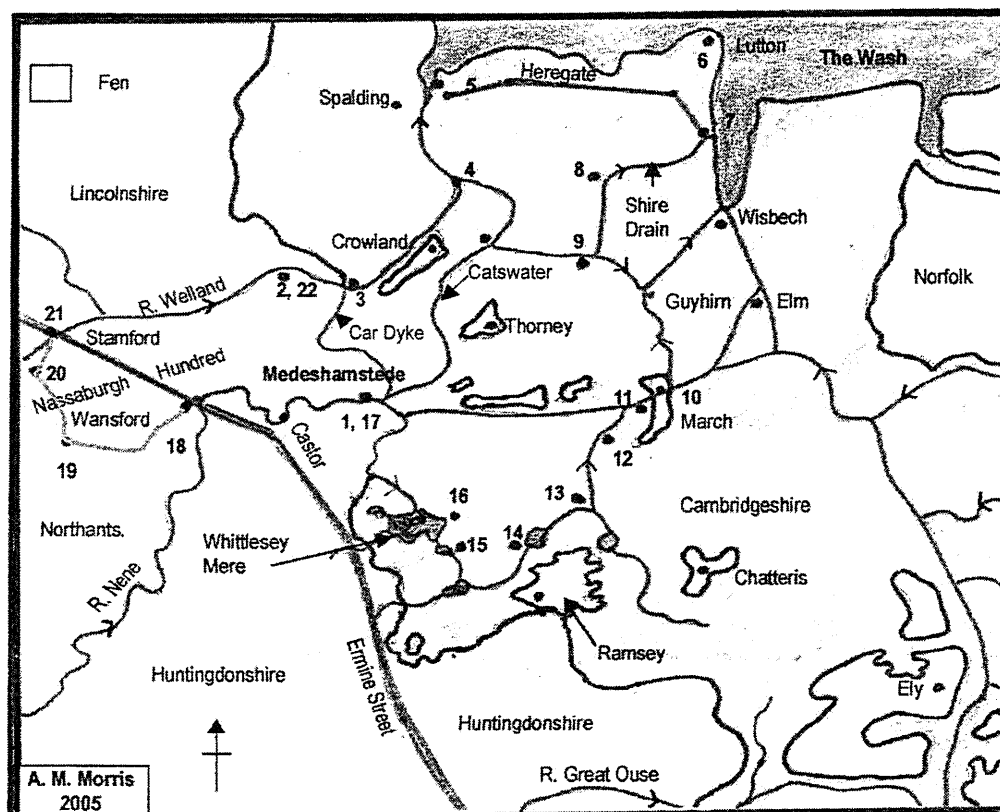
Dr Peberdy then mentioned other people that he met at university who were to have an influence on Hoskins, such as Joseph Sykes and Bertie Wilkinson. He considers Hoskins was obsessive, rational, egotistical, had a love of the country and liked to give the impression that he was a self-taught historian and that he was more than a local historian. He was a cultural critic, comparing the present with the past. All of this served as a basis that led towards establishment of 'the Leicester approach' to local history and was a timely introduction for the conference that is reported elsewhere in this issue.

Avril Morris (University of Leicester) spoke on 'King Wolthere's Charter revisited: the seventh-century boundaries of Peterborough Abbey'. Avril spoke about the research she has done on this subject and set her work in context with a brief history of the abbey from its foundation about A.D. 650. The main body of her lecture concerned her contention that King Wolthere's charter was a forgery. She used the following map and descriptions of the charter bounds of Medehamstede (later to be called Peterborough), which include the important

ecclesiastical sites of Crowland and Ramsey, to illustrate her lecture. She then related the charter descriptions to the present day map. Drainage of the fens over the centuries has made this a very difficult subject to prove. Watercourses have changed, the northern boundary of the Wash has been altered by the building of sea banks, the general level of the land has changed.

From her investigations, Avril Morris considers the charter to be an early twelfth-century forgery; whereas the charter claims to

have been drawn up in 664. The forger observed the natural landscape and the eastern boundary describes the Nene before it was changed in the late tenth century. The forger had a good knowledge of the area and an understanding of what it might have looked like 500 years earlier. The area is so large that she thinks the aim was to give an air of importance to Peterborough. It is unlikely that he expected that the Abbey would be granted the full area defined in the charter.



Translation of the charter bounds

From Medshamstede (1) to Northborough (2); and thence, as far as a place that they call Folies (3); and thence, across the whole fen directly to Esendic (4); and from Esendic, to a place which they call Faedermude (5); and from there, along a road ten leagues in length to a place that they call Cuggedic (6); and from there to Raggeuuilc (7); and from Raggeuuilc, five miles to the main stream which leads to Wisbech and Elm (8); and from there, three miles against the current of the main stream to Throckenholt (9); and from Throckenholt, directly across a vast marsh to Dereuorde, a distance of twenty leagues (10); and from there, to the Great Cross (11); and from Great Cross along the beautiful stream by the name of Bradenea (12); then six miles to Paccalade (13); and through the middle part of the many meres and vast fens with the inhabitants of the county of Huntingdon (14); with all the lakes and meres to Scaelfremere and Whittlesey Mere and all the others, no matter how many pertaining to these (15); also all the lands and houses, which lie next to the southern part of Scaelfremere (16); and within all the enclosed marshes on all sides as far as Medeshamstede (17); and from there, as far as Wansford (18); and from Wansford, as far as [King's] Cliffe (19); and from there, along to Easton [-on-the-Hill] (20); and from Easton to Stamford (21); and from Stamford as the water runs down to the aforesaid Northborough (22).

Inaugural lecture – H.S.A. Fox

On the 26th April the Vice-chancellor introduced Harold Fox, professor of Social and Landscape history to give his delayed inaugural lecture titled 'Separate from the rest of the world: Landscape and Society in medieval Devon'. Following a humorous introduction, Professor Fox divided his lecture between two main subjects that, in their different ways, illustrated aspects of medieval Devon.

Up to the seventh century Devon was ruled by local Celtic kings. The area was remote and different from the main part of the country. After 700 A.D. Devon became part of Mercia and, though it still remained remote; the dispersed nature of the population within the landscape was so different from the Midlands. Taxation may not, on the face of it, appear to have much to do with the landscape of any part of the country, but Harold Fox made the point that the human landscape affects society and culture. This was his first theme. He discussed the nature and success of the attempt to tax personal possessions in 1224. The independently-minded farmers of Devon, living in small, scattered units, often at the end of remote lanes, were better placed to resist the arrival of tax collectors than their more community-minded Midlands compatriots. The dispersed nature of the farms produced a culture that resisted the collection of taxes, which were no doubt considered irrelevant to the farmers needs. Barricades were put up and life was made so difficult for the tax collectors that they were unable to do their work with any degree of thoroughness. The result was that Devon came bottom of the list of counties providing taxation revenue.

Some farmers hid their belongings in order to prevent them from being counted, which introduced a discussion on the activities of transhumance. The art of moving animals around from field to field and owner to owner seems to have been a means of deceiving the tax authorities that was perfected from an early time. Harold also discussed the role of women and girls in transhumance and illustrated with slides the impact on the present-day landscape of lanes leading up to the higher pastures of Dartmoor. The medieval people of Devon had a healthy dislike of authority, both secular and ecclesiastical.

In the second part of the lecture, Harold considered everyday life in medieval Devon. The area was generally cold and wet., one where travelers did not linger; Charles the Second thought Devon was horrible. The climate produced a breed of hardy, independent farmers. From manorial court records, Harold presented a picture of everyday life. We were presented with a picture of John Soper and his family, living in their longhouse, with animals and humans living in the same building. The court rolls provide a description of the family's day-to-day activities, their work and means of subsistence. Again, the role of transhumance in Devon farm practice was described, for this was part of normal farming practice, and records indicate that there were over 10,000 cattle on Dartmoor by 1400. John Soper was a part-time tin miner, whose sons followed in their father's footsteps. Tin mining was a variable activity, with production fluctuating wildly from time to time but it made a great impact on everyday life, society and culture.

Professor Fox concluded his lecture with some words on the special nature of the Leicester approach to local history. During the lecture he had referred to his own early contact with Michael Postan at Cambridge and his reading of Joan Thisk and Alan Everitt, all of whom had had an influence on his work.



GOODBYE TO ALL THAT!

I arrived in the Department of English Local History in October 1988, after eighteen years in a career as an archivist. Together at Sheffield Archives we had experienced a decade of exacting circumstances: Thatcher's vendetta against certain local authorities and the consequent and continuous financial crises; the abolition of the metropolitan county councils in 1985 which meant that Sheffield became the lead authority for archives in South Yorkshire, really without the resources; the collapse of the industrial base in Sheffield which resulted in our making constant visits to dilapidated industrial buildings to retrieve the industrial records of Sheffield's past; and the planning of a new archive centre (to replace half a dozen under-resourced outstorage facilities, some collapsing too) with a tightly circumscribed and inadequate budget. It was time to move on and the team there was full of initiative still.

When I arrived in Leicester, the impossible act was to follow Richard McKinley, who had devoted more than twenty years to the English Surnames Survey. He was not my immediate predecessor, as Margaret (now Bonney) had held the Research Fellowship between 1986 and 1988. It was something of a gamble for me, as I was appointed on a five-year fixed-term contract. Fortunately, as the five years were about to elapse, Richard Smith and Christopher Elrington took the initiative to make my post permanent for me until my retirement, nominally to 2013, although I explained that my intention had always been to retire at age 60 (2008).

My arrival coincided with the move from the eighteenth floor of the Attenborough Tower to Salisbury Road. We spent the first weeks of October packing and teaching simultaneously, and then the move happened. The end of most days was spent in the evenings unpacking and shelving the books which had arrived from Woodstock for the new Marc Fitch library – Charles, Harold, the indefatigable Ralph, and myself, often to eight in the evening. There was a great sense of both achievement and obligation. Remarkably, it settled down rather quickly, but during the course of the year two new developments were discussed: taking the course part-time to increase the rates of participation; and the establishment of the Friends. So they were hectic but convivial times.

During my time here, of course, there have been many other transformations, but you will all know of those. You might not appreciate some of the earlier ones. For many years, as a satellite site, we were dependent on primitive computers. Print jobs had to be collected from the Computer Centre. We were unable to have the benefit of the PCFS (Windows 3.1 network) because there was no fibre-optic link, only a coaxial cable link. Then, when the area was wired for cable TV, we were also networked to the main campus and the PCFS was triumphantly received. Later, as that service became defunct, one of my greatest satisfactions was the planning and implementation of the CFS in Marc Fitch House, installing the first six PCs and the network printer. In fact, the installation of the network printer was a nightmare because network services in the Computer Centre gave me a rogue TCP/IP address for the printer. The address had previously belonged to a Mac on the main campus which was believed to have been relinquished, but

it had not. Every time the Mac was switched on, our printer refused to print. It was only after I rang Hewlett Packard in the US and they diagnosed the fault as a duplicate IP address that I was able to convince the Computer Centre that there was a problem which could be solved.

Many of the people who have passed through the MA course have dispersed through the Isles. I still keep in touch with that bumper group of full-timers – the five (now three) amigos, of whom Jonathan (Pitt) now works in Leicester, so he is a fount of news. Janette (with Dave, and now Dylan) are in Nottingham after their international travels. Chris and family persist with London. I'm sad that I've lost touch with some other people – the young in particular (but not exclusively) because one can watch their careers develop and that gives great pleasure. For that reason, it's been an immense pleasure to watch the progress of Nicola, and more recently Matt and Kathy. I hope that they will continue to flourish.

Another development which has enriched my working (and social) life has been the integration into the School of Historical Studies. So many people, particularly from the former Department of History, have been such warm colleagues. It has too been wonderful being involved with the learning of young people, the undergraduates, as well as with older postgraduates – and, indeed, I hope to continue to be involved with undergrads. I'm leaving earlier than planned because of the circumstances of recent years. There are some aspects that I shall miss, of course, but I have new challenges ahead, as a househusband, and also as a researcher. Since circumstances have in recent years led me into the excitement of early modern culture and society, I shall be exploring, as a University Fellow in the Department of English (appointment just received), the inter-relationship between early-modern dramaturgical discourse and social practice. Next year, I shall also still be involved in teaching and learning: BA Historical Studies ('People and Places: Thomas Middleton: drama and society'); MA Historical Studies ('Mastering medieval sources'); MA Humanities ('Gender'); and I shall continue with my eight undergraduate dissertationists who are conducting smashing work on early-modern religion, society, gender and culture – and looking forward to those discussions with great expectation.

So it's goodbye from him and goodbye from me.

Dave Postles

Staff distinctions

Chris Dyer has been elected President of the British Agricultural History Society. He has also been appointed as Chair of the Records of Social and Economic History Committee of the British Academy.

Harold Fox has been appointed Chairman of the Society for Landscape Studies. He has also been appointed to the reorganizing committee of the Permanent European Conference for the Study of the Rural Landscape.

EAST MIDLANDS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVE

Two years ago it was reported that the Archive was in the process of closing due to lack of funding. With the help of the University and careful control of costs, work still continues from their base at No.1 Salisbury Road, Leicester. The main collection is now housed at the Leicestershire and Rutland Record Office. In partnership with Leicestershire Rural Partnership, EMOHA has recently completed a project that has provided local history content to seven Leicestershire villages and will work on another group of villages in the coming year.

EMOHA can be contacted on the web as follows:

The EMOHA website is at
<http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha>

The EMOHA catalogue is at:
<http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/catalogue.html>

Schools and education resources are at:
<http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/schools.html>

<http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/leicester>
- a collection of photographs, text and sound about places and buildings in Leicester.

Centre publications 2004

Staff

C. Dyer

'Alternative agriculture: goats in medieval England', in *People, Landscape and Alternative Agriculture. Essays for Joan Thirsk*, ed. R. Hoyle (Agricultural History Review Supplement Series, 3, 2004), pp. 20-38.

'The political life of the fifteenth-century English village', *The Fifteenth Century*, 4 (2004), pp. 135-57.

(with M. Ciaraldi, R. Cuttler and L. Dingwall), 'Medieval tanning and retting at Brewood, Staffordshire: archaeological excavations 1999-2000', *Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society Transactions*, 40 (2004), pp. 1-57.

Reviews of:

J. Landers, *The Field and the Forge: Population, Production and Power in the Pre-Industrial West*, in *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 23 (Jan., 2004).

P. Riden, ed., *The Victoria History of the Counties of England. A History of Northamptonshire*, vol. 5, in *Economic History Review*, 56 (2003), pp. 103-4.

D.V. Smith, *Arts of Possession. The Middle English Household Imaginery*, in *American Historical Review*, 109 (2004), p. 1299.

A. Quiney, *Townhouses in Medieval Britain*, in *Economic History Review*, 57 (2004), pp. 582-3.

T. Williamson, *Shaping Medieval Landscapes*, in *Landscape History*, 26 (2004), pp. 131-2.

Harold Fox

'W.G. Hoskins remembered', *Devon Historian* 69 (2004), pp.4-7 (with M. Havinder and P. Beacham).

'Taxation and settlement in medieval Devon', in m. Prestwich, R. Britnell and R. Frame eds., in *Thirteenth-century England X: Proceedings of the Durham Conference, 2003* (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 167-85.

Richard Jones

'Signatures in the soil: the use of pottery in manure scatters in the identification of medieval arable farming regimes', *Archaeological Journal* 161, pp. 159-188.

'Medieval settlements and landscapes in the Whittlewood area: final report 2004-5', *Medieval Settlement Research Group Annual Report* 19, with M. Page.

Mark Page

'Medieval settlements and landscapes in the Whittlewood area: interim report 2002-3', in *Medieval Settlement Research Group Annual Report*, 18 (2004 for 2003), pp. 27-36 (with Richard Jones).

'Medieval settlements and landscapes in the Whittlewood area: interim report 2003-4', in *Medieval Settlement Research Group Annual Report*, 18 (2004 for 2003), pp. 37-45 (with Richard Jones).

'Prelates, peasants and profits: an introduction to the medieval bishops of Winchester, part 2', in *Farnham and District Museum Society Journal*, 13 (2004), pp. 162-7.

'Select bibliography of works on medieval rural settlement 2003', in *Medieval Settlement Research Group Annual Report*, 18 (2004 for 2003), pp. 80-1.

'William Wykeham and the management of the Winchester estate, 1366-1404', in W. M. Ormrod (ed.), *Fourteenth Century England III* (Woodbridge, 2004), pp. 99-119.

D.A. Postles

'The market place as space in early-modern England', *Social History* 29 (2004), pp. 41-58

'Negotiating bynames', *Nomina* 27 (2004), pp. 41-70.

'What happened to penance in the sixteenth century?' in Kate Holland, ed., *Menders of Disorders. Court and Community in the Archdeaconry of Nottingham, 1560-1756* (Nottingham, 2004), pp. 51-61.

K.D.M. Snell

'Acland, John (1699-1796)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004).

'Bell, Adrian Hanbury (1901-1980)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004).

'Tate, William Edward (1902-68)' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004).

(Co-ed.) *Rural History: Economy, Society, Culture*, 15:1 (April, 2004), 126 pp.

(Co-ed.) *Rural History: Economy, Society, Culture*, 15:2 (October, 2004), 100 pp.

(Co-ed.), *Women, Work and Wages in England, 1600-1850* (Boydell & Brewer, 2004).

Papers presented at conferences, seminars etc.

Staff

C. Dyer

'Economic history approaches to defining regions', *Regions and Regionalism in History*, University of Northumbria, Newcastle (Sept., 2004).

'Village origins in England: the Whittlewood project', *Leicestershire Fieldworkers' Group*, Leicester (Sept., 2004).

(with C. Wickham) 'Archaeology and history of rural settlement – Italy and England compared', *Espace et Société au Moyen Age*, Rosas, Spain (Sept., 2004)

'The material world of the medieval village: new light on peasant England', *North American Conference on British Studies*, Philadelphia (Nov., 2004)

'Conflict in landscape history: the enclosure movement of the thirteenth century',

Perceptions, People and Places : Approaches to European Landscapes, a Conference in honour of Mick Aston, Bristol (Dec. 2004).

'The invisible political life of small towns in the later middle ages', *Seminar on Late Medieval European History*, Institute of Historical Research, University of London (Jan., 2005).

'Origins of medieval villages', *Husband's Bosworth Local History Society* (Jan., 2005).

'New light on medieval peasants', *Café Scientifique*, Leicester (April, 2005).

'A Cotswold wool merchant and his times', *Blockley Antiquarian Society* (April, 2005).

'Country butchers in the later middle ages', *Diet Group*, Somerville College, Oxford (April, 2004)

'The hidden history of English localities in the past', *Wolfson Lecture in Local History*, University of Cambridge (May 2005).

'Rural background to *As You Like It*', *Royal Shakespeare Company*, Stratford-upon-Avon (June, 2005).

Welcoming address, *W.G. Hoskins and the Making of the British Landscape*, Leicester (July, 2005)

H. Fox

'Rural settlement in East Leicestershire', *Hoskins Conference*, (July 2005).

'Human settlement along the South Devon coast during the Middle Ages', *Instituto Internazionale di Storia Economica*, F. Datini, Florence (Sept. 2004) – prepared but not presented.

Richard Jones

'Maps and the medieval village', Hoskins Conference, 7-10 July, with M. Page.

'Power and conflict in the medieval forest', Agricultural History Conference, Leicester (April 2005).

Mark Page

'Power and conflict in a medieval forest', Agricultural History Society Conference, University of Leicester, (April 2005).

'Old-age peasants on the bishop of Winchester's estate, 1260-1350', Local Population Studies Conference, University of Hertfordshire, (April 2005).

'Maps and the medieval village plan: case studies in Whittlewood', W. G. Hoskins Conference, University of Leicester, (July 2005).

D. Postles

Organizer of two panels and chair of one at the North American Conference on British Studies in Philadelphia (October 2004).

'What happened to penance in the sixteenth century?': Conference at the University of Nottingham on the Archdeaconry Court.

'Urban space in early-modern England': Conference on 'Space in Early-modern England', University of Warwick.

'The politics of social address in early-modern England': Economic History Society Conference, University of Leicester.

Students

Matt Tompkins

'Lawyers acting for peasants in fifteenth-century manorial courts', the Fifteenth Century Conference at Royal Holloway College (Sept 2004).

'Lawyers acting for peasants in the fifteenth century manorial courts', Cambridge Medieval Economic and Social History seminar (Dec 2004).

'Peasant landholding patterns in the thirteenth – sixteenth centuries', Economic History Society Conference (April 2005).

'Early peasant agricultural innovation in the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries', Agricultural History Society Conference (April 2005).

'Inter-manorial landholding and subletting in the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries', Oxford Medieval Economic and Social History seminar (Jun 2005).

John Nichols Prize

The John Nichols Prize is awarded annually. The value of the prize is £100. Very briefly, the rules are as follows:

Essays must be submitted on or before 31st December. They must be typewritten, on one side of the paper only, with double spacing for the text, and single or double spacing for the footnotes. They must not exceed 20,000 words in length, excluding footnotes. References should be given at the foot of the page, and preferably in the forms adopted as standard in the publications of the Centre. Communications should be addressed to John Nichols Prize, Centre for English Local History, University of Leicester, Marc Fitch Historical Institute, 5 Salisbury Road, Leicester, LE1 7QR. A stamped addressed envelope should accompany the typescript.

Readers currently on the M.A. course or who have just completed their dissertations should note that unrevised dissertations may be submitted provided that they have achieved a distinction.

Devon field course 2005

Dear feeble idiots!

I trust everyone arrived home safely and that those who have to work for a living are now fully re-engaged with the vulgar worlds of commercialism and local government, while those of us who don't can continue to meander through the groves of academe, Hoskins in hand. As Harold demanded that he should get a copy of our e-mail addresses, I need to emphasise at this point that he was an inspirational and entertaining leader for the week. Additional-mark-generating flattery aside, I think that we gained a lot – I certainly enjoyed it immensely. His psychic talent (as used to communicate his wishes and intentions during the week) means that he already knows how grateful we are without our using the coarse and unsatisfactory medium of words.

By the way, I have become aware that Harold will use the opportunity of his Inaugural Lecture to enhance his already golden scholarly reputation by revealing to the world his recent discovery of the following doggerel couplets by William Browne (1588-1643), "the ghastly pastoral poet" of Tavistock, whose poem on Lydford begins 'I have oft heard of Lydford law'.

*I oft have heard of Harold's lore
To hurl abuse at students poor
But 'pologise soon after.*

*I oft have heard of Harold's loans
Which cause his students moans and groans
But get repaid thereafter.*

*I oft have heard that Nic'las Orme
Views opposite to Fox doth form
But he'll regret it later.*

*I oft have heard that Harold's choice
Of timetable makes all rejoice;
I really don't believe it.*

*I oft have heard the bus will be right there
But when is when and where is where
Is only rarely told us.*

*I oft have heard that Harold's cigs
Admired are in Devon's digs
Tho' they destroy the ev'dence.*

*I oft have heard that Harold's socks
By simple contact can the pox
Transmit; steer clear dear student!*

I am sure that William Browne will also be
pleased to have his work justly celebrated.
Regards,
Michael Busby



Induction Day for MA students, 2004

Book reviews

Glorious Hope: Women and Evangelical religion in Kent and Northamptonshire 1800-1850

By Sybil Phillips

The following review by J.R. Watson, Emeritus Professor of English, University of Durham, is reprinted from *The Church Times* of 24th December 2004.

In her introduction to this study of early nineteenth-century religion, Sibyl Phillips quotes the great Evangelical figure of the age, William Wilberforce, who thought that women were more favourably disposed than men to the feelings and offices of religion. But what, in Wilberforce's time, did they really think about it? How did it affect their conduct of life? What did they read?

Answers can be found, not in the works of the great and the good, but in the intimate communications of those who rest in unvisited tombs. Sibyl Phillips has found some of them, and her study is a fascinating contribution to the study of Evangelical religion and to English local history.

There are three main examples. The first is Anna Maria Lukyn, of Canterbury, daughter of a clergyman, who wrote letters to Margaret Strong, the wife of an archdeacon. She writes of Cowper, Byron and Hannah Moore; of the Bishop of Norwich who would ordain 'any who offered'; of damp churches; and of 'the terrific views' of the local Methodists.

The second is from the village of Creaton, Northamptonshire, where the letters speak of love denied; of people becoming 'decidedly serious'; of serving the Lord; of everlasting felicity. Grotesque characters appear, such as George Bugg, a real-life Mr Slope, and David Owen whose letter proposing marriage might have been written by Mr Collins.

The third example is Eliza Westbury, whose *Hymns by a Northamptonshire Village Female* was published shortly after her death in 1828. She died young after conversion and baptism: her hymns (ignored till now) speak of the importance of the Bible, the sufferings of Christ, of repentance, death, and the future life.

The recovery of Westbury's hymns is a significant achievement. But the whole book is a fine example of what can be done with local resources. For historians of Evangelical religion, this is an account of daily lives, of hopes and

fears, of irritations and exaltations, which should be required readings.

The book is available from Compton Towers Publishing at 102 Northampton Road, Roade, Northampton, NN7 2PF.

Price: £15.50 (0-9545478-0-2).

The following review by Derek Keene is reprinted from *Midland History*, vol.21 (2004).

Making a Living in the Middle Ages: the People of Britain, 850-1520. By Christopher Dyer. Yale University Press, The New Economic History of Britain: (New Haven and London, 2002). ISBN 0 30 0090 609. x + 403 pp. £25.

Modern Europe took shape during the Middle Ages, not least in its economic dimension. Christopher Dyer's new book provides an exceptionally lucid and comprehensive account of this development in Britain and will stimulate reflection both on what we know now and on how we might build on that knowledge in the future. Inevitably, given the survival of sources and the overall pattern of business, the focus is on England, but Scotland and Wales are given good coverage, often with an emphasis on their community of interest with England. Again and again the eastern and southern parts of the island, especially those to the south-east of a line between the Humber and the Severn, emerge as the most economically active, although with some striking developments in more remote regions during the latter part of the period.

Fundamentally, this is a landscape history of a continuous territory. It takes account of the impact of foreign trade, but not of the fact that, for much of the time, the rulers and principal landholders on the island had important territorial and political interests overseas which shaped their sense of the world from which they made a living.

Landscape, the people in it, their management of the land and the changing forms and purposes of their settlements - all closely observed and precisely described - are core concerns. Moreover, the study is framed by exceptionally useful summaries of economic expansion and the emergence of nucleated villages at the beginning of the period and the contraction and desertion of settlements towards the end. The issues that such changes raise concerning the respective roles of powerful lords

and of those who occupied the land or urban tenements are carefully dissected and related to wider debates about social and economic processes. In this respect, the book offers ways forward freed from some of the more sterile controversies of the past. Moreover, it explores questions concerning family structures, taxation and popular protest. Throughout there is a strong emphasis on individual agency, vividly illuminated by particular cases ranging from the lords and their officials who devised policies for the most efficient exploitation of demesnes, to the tenants of a Somerset village who hired a lawyer to bring an action against their lord, and the journeymen spurriers in London who formed an illicit but long-lasting fraternity, one of whose purposes was to raise wages. All this is informed by careful use of the archaeological evidence for consumption, standards of living, buildings and settlement patterns, as well as by the textual sources.

The structure of the book is heavily influenced by traditional approaches to economic and social history. It falls into three parts: 'Origins' up to 1100, 'Expansion and Crisis' to 1350, and 'Making a New World' to 1520. Within each part, separate chapters or sections deal with the exploitation of the land, the interests and policies of major and lesser landlords, peasants, and towns and commerce; there are particular considerations of crises such as the Scandinavian invasions, the Norman Conquest, the Great Famine (1315-17) and the Black Death. In a nice change of emphasis, the priority given to lordship and the countryside over towns and commerce in the first two parts is reversed in the third. The 'new world' that eventually emerged is characterised by shifts in the distribution of income and consumption that followed the Black Death and by the impact of the new dynamism in the commercial cities of the Low Countries, rather than in terms of structural change in social relations. This scheme is mostly convincing, although the more that is discovered about the two centuries after 650 the more it seems likely, at least to this reviewer, that they, rather than the subsequent period, witnessed the 'origins of the medieval economy' in Britain, despite the disruptions of the ninth century. This is just one of many examples of the way in which Dyer's clear approach can assist continuing debate.

Given the fragmentary nature of the evidence and the concerns of past research, the book's thematic arrangement is probably

inevitable. Dyer frequently emphasises the connections and interactions between town and country and states his own distinctive case for a high level of urbanisation in medieval England (although it is one that inhibits comparison with other parts of Europe). But the approach does tend to restrict comprehension of the many lives that were lived in both town and country and of the variety of motives, which may have driven people in their search for a living. While the book succeeds as an exercise in economic history, it provides a less rounded picture of the topic conveyed by the headline in its title. Moreover, we hear relatively little about how some significant minorities in medieval Britain made their way. These include the lesser clergy, both beneficed and unbeneficed; women and children, whose particular constraints and opportunities would have benefited from a more concentrated discussion; and the vagabonds and beggars whose constant presence and stratagems are revealed by a wide variety of sources, including place-names and illustrations. In addition, some further discussion of how contemporaries - even if only intellectuals - perceived such matters as work, skill and discipline would have added a valuable element to the picture. That said (and leaving aside a number of interpretations for which alternatives might be proposed), the book has a special value as a statement of Dyer's wide-ranging yet personal view, shaped by a distinctive Birmingham tradition. He is to be congratulated on a work which one hopes will make a wide readership aware of the significance of the Middle Ages and their relevance for the present, and which certainly demonstrates the lasting value of his own way of making a living.



Visitors to the Marc Fitch Library will notice that it has been tidied up during the summer, layout improved and missing labels replaced.



Seminar Programme 2005-6

All seminars are on Thursdays at 2.15pm in the Seminar Room of Marc Fitch House, 1 Salisbury Road. Please phone our secretary, Lucy Byrne, 0116-252-2762, to reserve a place. You are invited to tea in the Common Room afterwards.

2005

- Thurs 6 October** **Dr Jack Langton** (St John's College, Oxford)
'The clearing of the woods or the running of the deer?
Forests and chases in early modern England and Wales'.
- Thurs 20 October** **Dr Ben Dodds** (Department of History, University of Durham)
'Medieval bean counting: tithe and agrarian production'.
- Thurs 3 November** **Professor Kevin Schurer** (United Kingdom Digital Archive,
University of Essex)
'What can surnames tell us about historic regions'?
- Thurs 17 November** **Dr Leigh Shaw-Taylor** (CAMPOP, University of Cambridge)
'The economic and social structure of English regions, 1650-1850'.
- Thurs 1 December** **Dr Stephen Hipkin** (Department of History, Canterbury Christ
Church University)
'The politics of dearth in the late Elizabethan period: the metropolitan grain trade of
Kent'

2006

- Thurs 19 January** **Dr John Broad** (Department of History, London Metropolitan University)
'Farmers, cottagers and their houses in the seventeenth century'.
- Thurs 2 February** **Matthew Badcock** (Department of Sociology, University of Central England)
'The regional geography of nineteenth-century elections'.
- Thurs 16 February** **Pam Fisher** (Centre for English Local History, University of
Leicester)
'The people's choice': the election of county and borough coroners, c.1750-
1850'.
- Thurs 2 March** **Dr Jayne Carroll** (Department of English, University of Leicester)
'The value of names: the local history on Anglo-Saxon coins'.
- Thurs 16 March** **Dr Sam Turner** (School of Historical Studies, University of
Newcastle)
'Landscape character and regionality in Devon's ancient countryside'.

Recently Completed Theses

Rose-Marie Crossan

'Guernsey, 1814-1914: migration in a modernizing society'.

Guernsey is a densely populated island lying 27 miles off the Normandy coast. In 1814 it remained largely French-speaking, though it had been politically British for 600 years. The island's only town, St Peter Port (which in 1814 accommodated over half the population) had during the previous century developed a thriving commercial sector with strong links to England, whose cultural influence it began to absorb. The rural hinterland was, by contrast, characterised by a traditional autarchic regime more redolent of pre-industrial France.

By 1914, the population had doubled, but St Peter Port's share had fallen to 43 percent. The countryside had undergone an economic transformation, and subsistence farming was replaced by quarrying and commercial horticulture for export to Britain. The country parishes had become more open to the outside world, but their linguistic and cultural distinctiveness was eroded, and, in terms of Anglicisation, they began to converge with the town.

Non-Islanders never comprised less than 20 percent of the population 1841-1901. Most migrants came from England, with a late nineteenth-century influx from France. There was substantial *rentier* migration, but the majority of immigrants were artisans or labourers. English migrants formed the basis of an Anglo-Guernsey proletarian class, which facilitated insular economic growth by fulfilling a demand for manpower that natives, more interested in landholding, were unable to satisfy. This class came to predominate within St Peter Port, and, to a lesser extent, the northern quarrying parishes. Prior to World War I, however, it remained virtually absent from the four purely rural south-western parishes. Anglicisation nevertheless took hold in these parishes, as it did elsewhere. Migrants should not therefore be seen as the primary cause of Guernsey's cultural and linguistic transformation, but as an aspect themselves of the wider process of economic modernisation and cultural homogenisation affecting Europe as a whole. Pre-existing political links with Britain virtually guaranteed that such a process would result in Guernsey's

cultural, as well as economic, integration with Britain.

Vernon Davis

'Charnwood Forest: population, landownership and environmental perception, c.1775-1914'.

Focusing on a district of northwest Leicestershire known as Charnwood Forest, an area of semi-upland which, until enclosure, formed the common waste of surrounding parishes, the study uses data from a county rate revaluation survey of 1837, the Lloyd George land survey of 1910 and the census enumerators' books, to analyse landownership, land occupation and land use in the post-enclosure landscape on a comparative basis and relates these findings to certain aspects of social structure during the nineteenth century.

The area was enclosed during the early part of the nineteenth century. Using the records of a local landowning family, it is demonstrated that the usual explanations of the late enclosure of heaths and moors are not necessarily universally applicable, and that costs, practicalities and the presence of squatters could also affect the timing.'

The opportunity is taken to examine the concept of 'open' and 'close' parishes and the determination made that this was not a simple causal relationship, but the spatial expression of conflicting ideological stances. In an investigation of family structure in selected parishes it is demonstrated that occupation impacted on such variables as nuptiality and the degree of geographically endogamous/exogamous marriage.

A constant theme is the concentration on the ideological motivation for individual action and its modification by local circumstances - particularly relevant in explaining how Chamwood became defined and identified as a 'place imbued with Romantic ideals by a local urban elite. The conclusion is reached that abstracted national 'explanations' of social change are not always helpful when studying reality 'on the ground', and that nineteenth-century Chamwood should be understood as the dynamic outcome of ideological conflict expressed by competing individuals and modified by the local environment.

Ian Hunt

'Rural production in transition: three parishes around Coleorton Moor. north-west Leicestershire, c. 1650-1850'.

This thesis is concerned with the progressive commercialisation of rural production between 1650 and 1850. Its context is mainly, but not exclusively, three parishes in north-west Leicestershire. Together they surrounded Coleorton Moor. One of them, Whitwick, also bordered Chamwood Forest. The parishes nurtured a mixed economy based initially on exploitation of the resources of their common wastes, and more formal agriculture in other areas of their countryside. The thesis examines early modern examples of unspecialised production in the area, as well as the development of more specialised activities in the fields of agriculture, manufacturing and various extractive industries.

The thesis notes the different structures of landownership in the various townships around the moor and discusses their influence on their development. It also examines the organisation of rural production, and the influence of new technologies on the area's production cultures. However, the major influence on trends in rural production, as it became more commercial, was a changing relationship between town and country. Low-cost rural production for commercial purposes, underpinned by cheap rural living, grew in order to supply the consumption needs of the urban labour force. If a landlocked town like Leicester was to grow, it needed to be provisioned with items such as grain and coal carried on lower cost transport. It could then compete more effectively in the mass market to supply its own and more distant workers with cheap goods. The mines around Coleorton Moor equally needed a more economical transport infrastructure to distribute their coal. The achievement of provisioning the landlocked urban centres more cheaply then adversely affected the competitiveness and living standards of the countryside in several areas.

Michael Thornton

'Rural society in the manor courts of Northamptonshire, 1350-1500'.

The lives of medieval English peasants were influenced more by the manor than any other secular institution. Through its court they resolved disputes, received customary holdings, engaged in the land market and were subject to manorial discipline. Where the lord exercised

view of frankpledge, his court licensed them to produce and sell bread and ale, and they presented petty criminals and offenders against by-laws or custom. Better-off peasants, serving as jurors and manorial office-holders, were able to influence the procedures and business of the court.

This thesis identifies the extent to which peasant society remained subject to manorial courts during the 150 years after the Black Death in certain Northamptonshire manors, grouped in three different regions of the county and governed by different forms of lordship: royal, gentry and conventual.

In the royal manors, remote lordship effectively devolved management to members of the local peasant elite: for example, the land market was administered through elected bailiffs. There is no evidence of late survival of the incidence of serfdom, although entry fines on admission to land were relatively high. At Brigstock, notably, the court continued to be used as an effective forum for inter-peasant litigation to the end of the fifteenth century.

On the gentry and priory manors, although attempts to prevent the emigration of the unfree were unavailing, customary tenants remained subject to burdens such as labour services, heriot and the maintenance of redundant buildings. On such manors tenants had largely abandoned the court as a forum for litigation by 1450.

Irrespective of lordship, peasants continued to owe suit, undertake office and assent to by-laws regulating agriculture and social behaviour. Customary tenure remained subject to the court. Particularly where view of frankpledge was exercised through the manor court, its range of business and impact on local people was largely undiminished by 1500.

MA Dissertations

Kate Cooper

'Outmigration from the land, 1850-1912: Cardiganshire'.

Cardiganshire was one of the four English and six Welsh counties whose populations in the 1911 census were less than in that of 1851. Given the rate of natural increase within England and Wales during this period, the decline of these counties suggests considerable outmigration, and the rural character of the counties pre-supposes that the majority of the movement was from the land.

The study examined various aspects of rural outmigration from Cardiganshire between 1850 and 1912, placing the county's experience into the context of England and Wales as a whole. Considerable use was made of contemporary sources, both primary and secondary, such as the censuses from 1851-1911, government reports, and contemporary writings.

Research concentrated on the economic and social background of Cardiganshire and identified factors which might have contributed to the county's population decline. Contemporary evidence suggested that neither the agricultural depression nor mechanisation in farming were major forces, here, in the move from the land; but it was apparent that the county's agriculture could not absorb all of the continually-rising rural population. Moreover, the collapse of the British lead mining industry in the 1870s deprived rural north Cardiganshire of employment, which had been drawing migrants to the area's mines for several decades. The privations of rural life in Cardiganshire provided further reasons for leaving the land. The study also identified push-pull factors that were operating generally in Britain during this period, such as improved communications and cheaper and more accessible travel.

The study further concluded that for a county such as Cardiganshire, with a relatively sparse population and narrow base to the economy, any significant movement from the land inevitably constituted a significant loss from the county itself, and the destinations of the county's outmigrants in this period were considered briefly

Peter Diplock

'The introduction of three utilities (gas, electricity and telephone) into three market towns (Marlow, Oakham and Stamford)'.

Utilities are now so common that we tend to take them for granted. However, most published histories of cities, towns and villages seem to ignore them - perhaps they take them for granted as well.

The introduction of gas, the telephone and electricity into three market towns; Marlow (Buckinghamshire), Oakham (Rutland) and Stamford (Lincolnshire), has been studied. The principal sources used have included business records, town administration records, and local newspapers. Many of the relevant records have either been destroyed or are missing, presumed lost. None of the three places has a 'full set'.

In spite of this, a picture has been put together to show the experiences of the introduction of these three utilities into the towns. A separate chapter describes each utility. Following a brief introduction to the national scene, the way that the utility was introduced in each town is discussed. The dissertation concludes with a discussion of the similarities and differences identified and suggests areas for further research.

Sarah Gilpin

'Growth and development of the rural parish of Flixton between 1841 and 1891'.

This dissertation studies the factors controlling the growth of the small rural parish of Flixton during the second half of the nineteenth century from 1841 to 1891 and briefly considers the period up to 1901. These years divide into three clear periods, static, from 1841 to 1861, expansion as transport improves, from 1861 to 1881, and the change in balance of power between Flixton and Urmston due to rapid urbanisation, from 1881 to after 1891. The parish of Flixton comprised two small townships, Flixton and Urmston and a number of hamlets, Shawtown, Towns Gate and Woodsend and individual farms. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Flixton village with Shawtown, Towns Gate and Woodsend had approximately double the population of Urmston village and although both townships had close familial ties, by the end of the century the position had been reversed. Each chapter covers one time period, making comparisons with other towns and villages in the industrial cotton area of southern

Lancashire. The restriction of comparative places has been chosen deliberately, as Flixton was dependent on handloom cotton weaving to supplement local incomes otherwise derived from farming.

The questions posed are: -

What factors stopped a prosperous community of farmers and handloom weavers from becoming an industrial cotton community?

What factors influenced the sudden expansion of the community after 1871?

How did the rapid expansion of the community differ from other towns and villages in south Lancashire?

Christopher Matthews

'What's the point of a spire? A religious symbol and social tool in Louth on the eve of the Reformation'.

What is the function of a medieval spire? Why did Louth build the tallest parish church spire in England and then rebel against the Reformation during the Pilgrimage of Grace? Was it because Louth was a strong Catholic town or a harmonious pre-industrial community? This is the current debate between contemporary religious and social historians. By analysing both perspectives, this dissertation argues that the medieval spire was both a religious symbol and a social tool, designed to help the people of Louth understand where they belonged in history.

By combining many different sources for one place in one period of history, the dissertation has tried to create a more interesting image of religion and society in England. Using the 1377 and 1524 tax records, Louth's churchwardens' accounts, wills and the fabric of the church, the dissertation attempts to bring different schools of historical enquiry together; economic, social, religious and cultural. This permits the use of a wide variety of methodologies, including urban hierarchy, the social percentage of wealth, and the study of marginalia.

The results of the enquiry are in many ways unique and original. Spires do not prove a strong adherence to pre-reformation Catholicism. Rather, they were a symbol of regional religion, local history and pagan philosophy. The churchwardens' accounts prove that Louth's medieval religion was primarily regional, and the spire was built at the centre of Louthesk and at the meeting point of two regions. Also, the evidence is more suggestive that the parish church was an important centre of local history for the district,

rather than Catholicism. The primary reason why Louth rebelled during the Pilgrimage of Grace was because the people were defending their heritage, not their allegiance to the Pope. The spire was a theological device with pagan origins, symbolising the wheel of fortune and the pagan goddess Fortuna. Socially, the spires were a tool of competition and community identity. Spires were built in a spirit of competition with other medieval towns rather than one of zealous Catholicism. The shape of a spire also helped people to understand the shape of society. But the most important point raised throughout is that they were designed by a community in order to create a community.

Edgar Millar

'Variations in the administrative prevalence of pauper insanity in England, 1850-1900'.

Work on the history of insanity has been dominated by two themes. These are, firstly, the development of special institutional provisions for the insane and, secondly, emphasis on the medical specialists who were the forerunners of present-day psychiatrists. More recently it has been realised that the Poor Law authorities, together with the magistrates, played a key role in dealing with the vast majority of those deemed insane, the 'pauper insane', and were responsible both for identifying who was to be considered insane and how such individuals were dealt with. The work that has been carried out so far on the Poor Law and insanity is reviewed.

This study is based on data presented in the annual reports of the Poor Law Board and its successor, the Local Government Board, taken at ten year intervals between 1850 and 1900 inclusive. It was found that the reported rates of insanity, or 'administrative prevalence' varied very considerably across counties and also that there was appreciable variation in the numbers of pauper insane retained in the workhouse.

Explaining this variation is not easy. The administrative prevalence of insanity was influenced by the degree of industrialisation and/or population density in that, contrary to the beliefs of contemporaries, areas of high industrialisation and/or population density tended to have lower rates of insanity than elsewhere. However, this factor was not sufficient to explain anything like the whole of the variation in prevalence. The extent to which the insane who, with few exceptions, were mainly idiots or imbeciles, were retained in the workhouse did not

appear to be related to the availability of beds in local asylums.

The dissertation concludes that idiosyncratic local factors may well be responsible for much of the variation in prevalence

Pat Roll

'Twentieth century developments in rural life: a study of population change in two Northamptonshire parishes'.

This study explores the features of change in two Northamptonshire parishes as a means of illustrating developments in village life during the twentieth century. Throughout it was the intention to portray the people who have lived in the parishes over this period, even though analysis concentrated on the post-1950 years.

As a primary source of information, 1989 parish appraisals based on self-completion questionnaire surveys were used as these were seen as historical documentation and therefore could be contrasted with census records from 1881. In addition, oral interviews were conducted with incomers and traditional villagers, which allowed perceptions covering the subject of social and economic change to be assessed in each parish.

From the self-sufficient and insular community image presented in the 1881 census to that of the 1989 parish appraisal which painted a picture of almost suburban environments looking elsewhere to cater for their needs, the significant changes which have occurred in the life of the two parishes became obvious. The study concluded that the original agricultural and craft orientated populations had all but disappeared and been replaced by the new middle-class transients representing the social and economic mobility of the late twentieth century, who are now perceived as the dominant element of rural society across the southern area of England.

Erica Statham

'Cromwell's wars to Cook's tours: Leicestershire Baptists, 1650-1850'.

The aim of the dissertation is to consider the origins of the Baptist movement in Leicestershire from the time of the Civil War until Thomas Cook. The Civil War was the catalyst that enabled Baptists and others to begin to achieve acceptance within society although they did not achieve respectability until the mid-nineteenth century. There were a number of

notable (and radical) personalities within the Baptist movement, Thomas Cook being one of these.

Many resources have been used; Baptist material includes the Baptist Quarterly, General Baptist minutes and General Baptist Magazine from the period. Minutes of church meetings and church histories have also been consulted. Other primary source material, such as the Sheldon report from 1669 and the Compton census for Leicestershire were also found to be valuable. It was also thought important to consider the many church buildings that were constructed at this time and so an analysis of some of the many to be found in Leicestershire has therefore been included.

The results were not entirely conclusive. It appears that Baptists came to Leicestershire in the 1640s, probably through the activities of Cromwell's army but had reached a low point at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Under the influence of John Wesley a number of men were converted to Christianity who chose to become Baptists rather than Methodists. They helped form the New Connection of General Baptists, a movement that helped continue the Baptist movement on a national front and from this group came Thomas Cook. Alongside the group were the Particular Baptists, who although apparently not so numerous locally, had a part to play.

Patricia Taylor

'The social history of eighteenth-century domestic medicine in the south Midlands'.

This dissertation examines the social history of domestic medicine in the south Midlands through a study of remedies used in Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire during the eighteenth century, a time of widening economic horizons, technological innovation, and changing cultural sensibilities. Primary sources used were diaries and account books of farmers and members of the clergy, household and recipe books and family papers from the landed gentry, tradesmen's day books and miscellaneous other records. Secondary sources were used to provide a context of social and economic influences on attitudes to illness and disease.

Key questions were concerned with identifying the historical and cultural origins of the sources of domestic remedies; identifying geographical and historical variations in approach and ingredients; relating the theory and practice of

domestic medicine to contemporary scientific discovery; and identifying social roles of healers as well as professional practitioners. Results of the research indicate close similarities in both counties. The origins of the theory and practice of domestic remedies can be traced to the classical concept of humoralism, and they are primarily empiricist rather than superstitious, but with traces of charms, and of seasonal ritual. Widely used across society, they were however more likely to be employed in conjunction with 'professional' medicine in the case of the middling or wealthier population. The sources of recipes included historical herbals, contemporary household self-help books, newspaper and magazine articles, and peer networks. Exchanged by both men and women across geographical and social boundaries, they increasingly incorporated new plant ingredients from overseas, in addition to minerals such as mercury, copper and lead, indigenous cultivated, or locally available, wild plant material, and animal substances. Although the type of ingredients and the complexity of preparation are variable, the approach is consistent across time and place, and there are strong elements of self-help: 'each his own doctor'.

Jean Tomlinson

'A Sense of place in Eden Phillpotts' Dartmoor cycle'.

Eden Phillpotts (1862-1960), a prolific and once popular writer is now largely forgotten. This dissertation examines the sense of place in his Dartmoor cycle which is comprised of eighteen regional novels set on Dartmoor and which was written between 1898 and 1923. The novels are explored in the context of economic and social history and the newer discipline of ecocriticism. Three chapters explore environmental issues which arise from activities on the moor, farming and its development and landscape, concentrating on tors and farmhouses. Phillpotts' status as a regional novelist is also examined. Is there a tourist industry attached to him? Sources used are various and include the Dartmoor cycle and other novels, oral history, trades directories, books on Dartmoor history, field observations and letters written by Phillpotts. The dissertation uncovers a large amount of information, much of which would qualify for further research. Dartmoor is found to be both a place of isolation and of communication which creates a dynamism as the two are juxtaposed. Questions of Phillpotts'

integrity and about his diaries are posed and the importance of 'green' issues is identified.

News of former students

Dr Sylvia Pinches has been appointed by VCH to the post of Team Leader for the England Past for Everyone project, covering Herefordshire. She will be based in Hereford and Ledbury. Part of her responsibilities will be to raise awareness of local history within the county.

Publications

Kate Parkin, *Calendar of Inquisitions Post-mortem and Other Analogous Documents* preserved at the Public Record Office: 1-5 Henry VI (1422-27) vol. 22 (2003).

Robert Lee, *Unquiet Country; Voices of the Rural Poor, 1820-1880*, ISBN PB 1-905119-03-8.



Leicester Explorations go to Hertfordshire.

'Leicester Explorations in local history' was conceived by Harold Fox as a means of continuing the old 'Occasional Papers' that were produced by the Department of English Local History, the first of the series being Harold's own *The Evolution of the Fishing Village: landscape and society along the south Devon coast, 1086-1550*, published in 2001. Following closure of the original publisher, Harold has, after much effort, agreed that the University of Hertfordshire Press will publish further volumes in the series, albeit with some variations. Each volume will be on a novel and innovative theme in local history, the scope of which will be widened beyond the scope of strictly English local history. The first two titles in the new series, due to be published before the middle of 2006 are:

Sue Oosthuizen, *Landscapes Decoded: Prehistoric and Medieval Field Patterns in Cambridgeshire*, and

Christopher Dyer.ed., *The Self-contained Village?*

EVENTS SPONSORED BY THE FRIENDS

DIARY DATES

Saturday 22nd October

Autumn outing to Bakewell

Thursday 3rd Nov. 2005.

The Annual General Meeting will be held after the Seminar, starting at 4.15 pm.

Saturday 6th March 2006

Study Day/Transport Conference

Saturday 3rd June 2006.

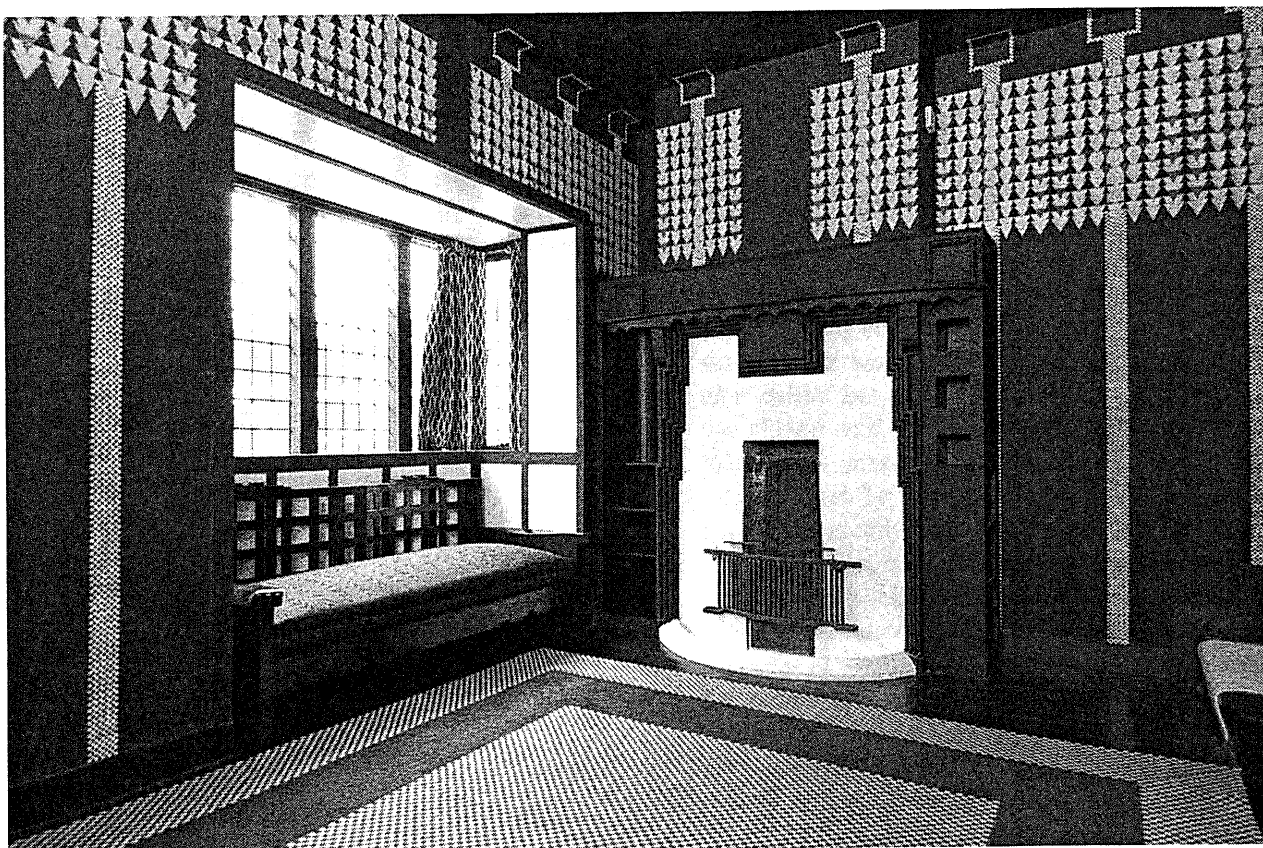
Preliminary notice of the seventeenth Hoskins Day Lecture which is to be given by Dr Margaret Gelling, who will speak on 'Place-Names and Landscapes'.

EDITOR WANTED

The next issue of the Newsletter, due October 2006, will be the fifth under the hand of the present editor. Under the rules of the Friends, the editor serves a fixed term of five years and so a new editor will be required to take over from September 2006. This is a very worthwhile and enjoyable job, is not too onerous and keeps one in touch with the activities of the Centre. Ideally, the new editor should be prepared to assist with preparation of the next Newsletter in order to familiarise him/herself with the format. If you are interested but would like to know more about what the job entails, please contact David Holmes on 0116-279 6010.

LOST PROPERTY

A rectangular plastic food container (no lid) was left behind on Hoskins Day. If its owner is reading this would they please contact Pam Fisher on 0116 231 2475.



The drawing room at 78 Derngate, Northampton.

Annual General Meeting

Thursday 2nd December 2004

The following is an abbreviated report of the Annual General Meeting. The meeting commenced at 4.15 p.m., apologies having been received from three members.

The Minutes of the last AGM were accepted, subject to a very minor amendment. There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

The Chairman, Dr Sylvia Pinches, reported that membership had increased slightly in the past year but it was important to maintain numbers. A new leaflet has been prepared to help recruitment. She gave a brief resume of events organised by the Friends. Sixty people attended the Kineton Study Day that had been organised in conjunction with Kineton History Society; Professor Charles Phythian-Adams gave the Hoskins Day Lecture; Dr John Goodacre welcomed members to his house in Ashby Parva (all reported in 2004 Newsletter); and a visit to Northampton in November (see report on page 29 of the Newsletter) completed the list of events.

Friends Paper, No. 9, *The Market Place and the Place of the Market*, had been published during the year.

She thanked Dave Postles and Pam Fisher for maintaining and updating the Friends website.

During the year the Friends have provided financial support to the Centre in several ways, a contribution of £486 (half the cost) towards a set of 1834 Poor Law Reports, a donation of £200 towards the advance publicity of the Hoskins Conference that will take place in July 2005, and the provision of lunch at the induction day for new students on the M.A. course. In addition, £1,700 has been allocated for student support during the coming academic year.

The Treasurer reported that income was less than the previous year resulting in an excess of expenditure over income of £872.75.

The following were elected to serve on the committee for the next year:

Chairman:	Pam Fisher
Secretary :	Frank Galbraith
Treasurer :	Alan Fox
Editor :	David Holmes
Membership:	Mandy deBelin
Programme	Maggie Whalley
Members	Ann Pegg, Freda Raphael
Staff Representative:	Keith Snell
Student Representatives:	Noel Tornbohm and Paul Oliver

ACCOUNTS

For year ending 30th Sept. 2004

INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
Subscriptions	£1376.00	Expenses	£350.00
Donations	£387.00	Student support	£2400.00
Book sales	£186.17	Grants	£686.00
Publications	£117.93	Hoskins lecture	£131.79
Dividends/Interest	£636.90	Newsletter	£459.64
Events	£405.61	Miscellaneous	Nil
TOTAL	£3268.12	TOTAL	£4140.87
Loss on year	£872.75		

ASSETS

Balance at CAF Gold & Nat West a/c	£6045.86
Investments at cost	£15000.00
TOTAL	£21045.86

Sixteenth Hoskins Lecture

Midland Peasants: how farming made the medieval landscape

Academics do not usually refer to the views of other historians as 'tosh', or call their theories 'bizarre', but Dr Tom Williamson was making a case and was prepared to trash the opposition in doing so. He was interested in the contrast between woodland and champion landscapes (he preferred this nomenclature to Oliver Rackham's 'ancient' and 'planned' countryside), the latter with its open fields surviving into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries until swept away by Parliamentary enclosure, and the former with a more ancient feel, a different and more irregular settlement pattern with fewer nucleations, more interesting hedges and more woodland. Many historians had tried to explain these differences in the past. In the early twentieth century, some had attributed them to cultural or ethnic factors (this is where 'tosh' came in); later historians had looked at social, economic or cultural factors, and Tom Williamson picked out Joan Thirsk's seminal article on the open fields in the 1960s as being particularly significant.

He made a general point about the chronology being different in different areas, but began with the now proved fact that nucleated villages and open fields did not arrive in England with the Anglo-Saxon invaders. In Northamptonshire Glenn Foard and David Hall had shown that the process of nucleation and the laying out of the open fields could be dated to the middle-Saxon, but elsewhere others thought this had happened in the late-Saxon period. Joan Thirsk's article had put forward a date in the early medieval period for the development of regular open fields. She had seen this as the result of population growth leading to the subdivision of holdings, and also the sharing out of newly assarted land. All this would reduce the area of grazing available, necessitating a more efficient use of marginal grazing; therefore intermingled strips would inevitably lead to the communal organization of the fields. In the 1980s Campbell had criticized this model because it did not allow for the 'Grundy factor' (only 'Archers' aficionados will understand this reference). He saw the influence of strong lordship as being vital to the process.

Tom Williamson's area was south-East East Anglia, Essex, Hertfordshire and Leicestershire. He entered several strong caveats that the boundaries between the two landscapes were blurred, and the types intermixed in places. Where nucleated settlements existed, they were not always 'new' – sometimes they were what Christopher Taylor had called 'polyfocal', the result of several small vills coalescing. Also he warned that 'champion', in the seventeenth as in the twentyfirst century, could mean many different things: it could mean 'wall-to-wall arable', with ridge and furrow to the boundaries of the township, or it could mean the landscape of south Buckinghamshire, where the arable was concentrated round nucleated settlements, but there was extensive rough grazing as well, giving rise to typical 'sheep-corn husbandry'.

Similarly, 'woodland landscapes' could refer to several different types of agrarian organisation, though they would all have a dispersed settlement pattern. The first, occurring in northern East Anglia, had much settlement on the edges of commons; the churches tended to be isolated, and there had been open fields, though they seem to have disappeared early through piecemeal enclosure. The strips in these townships tended to be clustered rather than scattered over the whole, making it easier for individuals to enclose. The second, occurring in southern East Anglia, had scattered settlements, some 'greens', usually quite small, and some nucleations. These differences appear to have been developing in middle- to late-Saxon times. Archaeology confirms that, in the late Saxon period, there was a drift of settlement to the greens and commons.

Tom Williamson queried whether the creation of the open fields was really driven by demography and a crisis of resources. Domesday Book shows that East Anglia had the highest population in England, and the strength of lordship (as shown inversely in Darby's map of the frequency of free tenures) does not seem to match the division between the two landscapes. He graphically described how a disastrous attempt to cultivate heavy clay soil in wet weather on his own small-holding had renewed an interest in the mechanics of farming and in the relationship between soils and landscapes. He showed how changes in landscape do correspond to changes in soil-type, but stressed that though this is true locally and regionally it is not true nationally.

Both Thirsk and Kerridge had noted that light land was always champion: here,

intermingled strips appear to have developed early. Possibly the effect of sharing resources of water restricted settlement sites, leading to the need to allocate land in bits. Certainly the need to fold sheep on the arable at night would lead to the communal organization of agriculture – it would be impossibly time-consuming to do this individually, as Kerridge had pointed out; in the Kerridge model soils became the determining factor. In rather the same way the Orwins' study had seen the creation of nucleated villis and their open fields as an inevitable result of co-ration, with farmers coming together to create a full ox-team for the plough. It would be easier to co-operate in this way if farmers lived in the same settlement and followed the same time-scale.

Tom Williamson's sticky clay soil experience caused him to think about the particular problems inherent in cultivating such soils. They are susceptible to waterlogging and puddling if worked when too wet, and in fact in most years the windows of opportunity for ploughing in the winter are very small, possibly only a week. Therefore, he saw this as the crucial factor in the development of nucleated settlements and open fields: if there was only a week to get the plough team together and out into the fields, it made sense to live in close proximity. He pointed out that ridge and furrow which survived into the twentieth century was all on clay soils; it survived where it had been under permanent pasture, and it had been so because it was more suitable for pasture than for ploughing.

The other bottleneck of the farming year was the hay harvest, when it was vital to respond to good weather with all available labour. In the Midlands, meadowland was in fairly large blocks so living in villages made sense. Tom Williamson referred to Bruce Campbell's book, which had taken information from *Inquisitiones post Mortem* to show that champion landscapes had more meadow; in woodland, hay meadows were less common and more scattered. Of course not all river valleys necessarily produced good hay: in north Norfolk it was difficult to create hay meadows, but instead there were extensive woods to use for leafy hay, and as wood-pasture. This explains the drift of the farmers to settle by the common-edge in order to have access to these resources for their animals.

Tom Williamson stressed that most historians generally are not interested in the practical problems of growing and getting food, unlike himself, with muck on his hands and mud on his boots. His own experience, leading him to focus on soil structure and behaviour as determinants of human action, made him focus on the key bottlenecks of the farming year, the winter or spring ploughing, and the hay harvest, as being the key factors which forced midland farmers into communally organized open fields. This was a lively lecture, with lots to look at and think about, and a strong case forcefully made.

Deborah Hayter

The Squire family of 1 Salisbury Road.

The following information and photos on p. 46 have been provided by Pamela Speight.

Samuel Squire (1848-1916) inherited the local firm of Morgan Squire, later sold to John Lewis. He was a man of many parts, an Alderman and active on numerous school boards, a believer in education for women and was, in general, very forward looking. He was an avid traveller, an excellent photographer and recorded all special occasions on a special machine. He seems to have been a great family man and enjoyed entertaining friends. His first wife, Kate, died very young, leaving a son, William. In 1877 Samuel married Annie Maria Starkey Gimson (1858-1948), a member of a large and well-known Leicester family.

Samuel and Annie lived at No.1 Salisbury Road from the time of their marriage and Annie remained there till her death in 1948. Annie bore seventeen children, five boys and twelve girls. An extra floor was added to the house some time before 1897 to accommodate the large and growing family.

Pamela provides several anecdotes of family life in the house. When anyone was ill with an infectious disease, the carbolic curtain was put up over the entrance to the landing on the left at the top of the first flight of stairs, and due to brilliant doctoring by Dr Bond, only one child got diphtheria and two got scarlet fever. From the sickbay they could talk to people through the window into the yard. On one occasion one of the boys attempted to make gunpowder by the basin in the hall and it blew up, leaving him without eyebrows or eyelashes. The doctor ordered him to stay in a darkened room for weeks afterwards. Fortunately he did not lose his sight but the basin remained cracked ever afterwards.

Autumn outing to Northampton

Although the Friends' summer outing for 2004 had been moved to November, I don't think that any of us expected to see snow. Thankfully the thick white carpet that had covered much of Leicestershire just two days before our visit and was still in evidence on the morning of our journey had either not affected Northampton or it had all melted before we arrived. I cannot say that it was warm though, so the tea and coffee waiting for us in the church hall at Holy Sepulchre was particularly welcoming and I think we were all grateful that most of the day would be spent indoors rather than outside.

Holy Sepulchre is one of five surviving round churches in this country (the other four being in London, Little Maplestead in Essex, Cambridge and at Ludlow castle), but its exterior no more than hints at what lies within. Indeed there are probably many Northampton residents who do not realise that this church is round. Standing slightly outside the centre of the town, its dominant feature from the road is its square tower, surmounted by a fine spire. At the other end is an aisled chancel and eastern nave area, about as wide as it is long, forming another, much larger, square. However, between these two extremes the linking walls are clearly curvilinear and appear, from the outside, strangely out of place, almost as if the builders were recovering from a night on the tiles. This is the historic core of the building, a round church, built by Simon de Senlis as a thanksgiving for his safe return from the first crusade in 1099, to a plan echoing that of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Sadly, although the eight stone pillars and their capitals survive from this early church, the arches which span them are now Gothic rather than Romanesque, and their proportions are unsuited to the squat Norman columns. Within this area, and probably reset, is a Norman tympanum, of very narrow proportions, carved with what is believed to be a representation of the forces of good and evil contending for the soul of a man. Here too is an impressive brass to George Coles, who died in 1640, shown standing between his first and second wives and above their twelve children. Moving to the rectilinear nave area, we admired the fifteenth-century wooden corbels, which show some rather strange-looking people playing a variety of musical instruments. In the north aisle the corbels are of stone, for this was once the exterior of the original building, and these depict

faces, both human and animal. Like most churches, the building has been added to and altered over the centuries. The bullet marks on the tower were, presumably, an unwelcome addition to the fabric, and may date from 1642, when the Cavaliers assaulted this Parliamentary town, or may be the result of the ejection of the Levellers from Northampton in 1649. The other signs of military action were more lovingly added. The church is very proud of its regimental colours and windows recalling the campaigns fought, and the men lost, by the 48th (Northamptonshire) and the 58th (Rutlandshire) Regiments.

From Holy Sepulchre we wended our way through the town to the Guildhall. Oriel windows seem to have been popular with the residents of this county town, for we saw many examples. How many times has Sylvia walked this route to perfect the timing? After a few stops to discuss interesting features, we arrived at the Guildhall steps precisely on cue. Replacing a smaller town hall on Abingdon Street, the Guildhall was completed in 1864. The commission was won by a young architect, 27-year old Edward Godwin, whose design was in the Gothic style and is proud Victorian municipal architecture at its best. A sympathetic extension was added in 1889 and appears to have been built at the same time. The modern second extension blends less well. The front of the building bears fourteen statues under gothic-style canopies, mainly of monarchs who visited the town or had some connection with its history. Inside are painted tableaux of important events in the history of the town, including the granting of its charters, the founding of the grammar school and the fire of 1675. We saw the town silver, including the seventeenth-century mace, and our tour included the old court room and the cells beneath, the mayor's parlour and the present committee rooms and council chamber, where modern technology provides electronic voting for the councillors and plasma screens to display the results.

With a short time to spare before lunch, some of us took the opportunity to go into All Saints church, a large town church typical of Restoration-period architecture, and square in plan, with a slightly later portico. Unfortunately our unplanned visit coincided with a Requiem Mass for departed members of the Anglo-Catholic group, Forward in Faith, but we were able to see most of the church, including the mayor's chair and the furniture of the ecclesiastical court that was held there.

After a buffet lunch we repaired to 78 Derngate, our final destination. This was once the home of W.J. Bassett-Lowke, whose name was well-known by many of our party as a manufacturer of high-quality model railways and ships, some of which are on display there. Bassett-Lowke's father bought 78 Derngate for his son in 1916 in anticipation of his forthcoming marriage. Bassett-Lowke junior commissioned Charles Rennie Mackintosh, the famous Glasgow architect and designer, to design the ground floor rooms and the guest bedroom. Major structural work, including moving the staircases through 90 degrees, began almost immediately, followed by the interior decoration, but all was complete in time for the wedding the following spring. The property has now been carefully restored to its original Mackintosh design, thanks to the survival of scraps of the original paint and paper and a significant photographic archive. It is not to everyone's taste, but is certainly original and cannot leave anyone unmoved. The walls and ceiling of the former parlour, converted to a sitting room, are painted black. On the walls are superimposed panels, described by *Ideal Home* magazine, which featured the property in August 1920, as 'a rich, heraldic, design', but which can also (and less pretentiously) be described as naïve depictions of inverted pine trees, predominantly in gold, grouped together in squares and rectangles to form a type of portcullis-design. The room takes its light from a large window, from a wall of square glass blocks between the room and the staircase, and from a vast cream square set into the ceiling from which hangs a light surrounded by a ring decorated with chevrons. The overall impression was intended to give 'a sense of

mystery'. The dining room is lighter, but again has none of the flowing lines that are sometimes associated with Art Nouveau. The guest bedroom is also decorated in black, but this time in stripes of varying thickness, passing up the wall behind the twin beds and on to the ceiling, where they form a bordered canopy. The bedsteads are wooden and pick up the same square motif as can be seen in the dining-room sideboards and beside the fireplace in the living room. One famous visitor, when asked by Mrs Bassett-Lowke if he would have problems sleeping under such a striking design replied that it would not be an issue as he always slept with his eyes shut! The other rooms are more 'normal' and their décor far less 'busy'. A fascinating interior, and I only wish that Mrs Bassett-Lowke's initial reactions to such a dark sitting room had been recorded as faithfully as the design. Clearly there were second thoughts, for a second, lighter, colour scheme was introduced in this room by 1920.

During the day we saw three very different buildings (four for those of us who went to All Saints), each representing a different period and each of the highest quality. Derngate, in particular, was stunning, and is well worth a visit (although, as you may have guessed from the foregoing comments, I should not have liked to live with the décor). Thank you, Sylvia, for organising this, your valedictory outing immediately before standing down as Chairman, and for arranging for the several knowledgeable guides to be on hand at each building. To those reading this who were unable to attend – you missed a treat.

Pam Fisher



Custom House, King's Lynn

Contrasting Cultures: a weekend in King's Lynn, 8-10 April 2004

Our English landscape is ancient, diverse and complex, and none more so than in this corner of Norfolk. King's Lynn itself has a complicated history: a Tale of Two Towns perhaps? Here were two medieval towns, one organic and one planned, with two churches, two market places and two guildhalls. Chronologically it was also two towns, changing its profile and status when it became a river port as well as a sea port in the thirteenth century. The environs to the south-west of King's Lynn are not typical Fenland as may be expected, but a silt-land area called Marshland, with its own distinctive character. All around the town, as well as in the town itself, is new land, contrasting with the ancient landscape.

We assembled at the Duke's Head Hotel, sited on the second of the market places, the spacious 'Tuesday Market Place', for our weekend of exploration of the sandbanks, marshland and reclaimed land of this north-west corner of Norfolk. Even *sans* technology Pam Fisher gave us an illuminating introduction to our venture. We learnt that Marshland is not typical Fenland. Here in this distinctive *pays*, the land is higher, the roads are more winding, the population is denser, and settlements are not necessarily built on islands or roddens. It is an area of dramatic change too. Water encroached from two directions: from the sea to the north and to the south from the lower-lying fens, where defence came from the building of the Old Podike in 1223. Seaward banks have not only protected, but have enclosed new land; there have been numerous intakes. The subsequent protection, and the wealth from sheep farming, fostered the building of unexpectedly large and impressive churches. The soil is yielding though, and many have detached towers.

Seven parishes radiate from an intercommon called the Smeeth. Here sheep were plentiful and profitable and wide drove roads can still be travelled today. A complex manorial system is evident with Domesday showing seven or eight manors in each parish, and also fisheries (probably eels) and salt-works. Between about 1223 and 1275 Marshland experienced its peak in wealth; and floods are recorded numerous times during the next century. From the 1334 Lay Subsidies it is found to have been one of the wealthiest areas in England. In the early sixteenth century it was still fairly prosperous:

Perpendicular details were added to the fabric of the churches and Terrington was rebuilt entirely. Later 30,000 cattle were grazing the Smeeth.

The villages are not nucleated; they straggle and are rendered inconsequential by their magnificent churches. The landscape is different from that of the Fens, having more farms and buildings, with undulating land in places, but still carrying a sufficiently isolated atmosphere for Dorothy Sayers to set her chilling bell-ringing murder mystery '*The Nine Tailors*' here.

At the evening talk Dr Paul Richards told us that, even though the first settlement at King's Lynn was not exactly founded on a sand bank, parts of it were established on sand and mud heaps called salterns that were piled up as refuse from the early salt-making industry. The name 'Lynn' comes from the Anglo-Saxon 'linn' for pool or lake (as in Dublin, Berlin), in this case a salt-water estuarine lake to the south of the village where the salt-making took place. It was a major salt port in Anglo-Saxon times. The reclamation of land and the re-routing of the Ouse in the thirteenth century meant that Lynn took over from Wisbech as the major port in this area. Dr Richards said Wisbech still claims that "they stole our river".

Soupy land was 'inned', built up by nature, lords of the manor and wealthy merchants. Lynn increased in size and stability. Wharfage (still being excavated) was built along the new river bank when the new cut was made. The port participated in the Baltic trade and had strong links with the Hansa, who built their own warehouse here in 1475. Lynn vied with Boston in Lincolnshire, and, listening to Dr Richards, this competitive-ness still flourishes today, as he mentioned several times "Boston doesn't have one of those!" Small boats fished the Wash, while whalers roamed as far as Greenland. Timber and wine were imported, and later coal from Newcastle. Corn was, and continues to be, an important export.

The prosperity of Lynn in this period is shown in the size and quality of its fifteenth century buildings, public, mercantile and domestic. There were four priories in the town, but after the Dissolution, only the arched brick gateways of the Carmelites and Austins and the impressive brick tower of the Greyfriars still stand, the latter being used as a navigational aid to seafarers. The fishermen traditionally lived to the north of the town and Lynn's second church, St Nicholas (patron saint of fishermen), initially a

chapel-of-ease, is situated here. This fisherman's neighbourhood is now the site of the new docks.

Lynn declined slowly through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. However the town's fortunes were tied, not only to the sea but also to its hinterland, which was surprisingly large, reaching as far as Bury St Edmunds and Bedford. Stone from Northamptonshire was carried from here as far as Cambridge to build the new colleges. This strategic importance was diminished with the coming of the railways. But Lynn has retained and increased its place as a regional centre in present days. And eels still abound; in the 1860s the new municipal swimming pool was found to be full of them.

This historical tale came alive for us on our walk around the town the next morning, led by Dr Richards. We could see how the church of St Margaret, built on a saltern, keeps trying to fall down. There was a long-standing feud between Lynn and Norwich. The Bishop of Norwich sent monks to Lynn, and he built a palace just outside the town. Lynn became 'Bishop's Lynn', but this possessive always rankled with the independent seafaring people of the borough (chartered in 1204) and they were thankful when Henry VIII claimed it as his own in 1537.

Just outside the church, in this 'indigenous' first settlement, the Saturday Market place is cramped and encroached on, featuring today only a lonely flower stall squeezed in between the bastion of the church and parked cars. The streets here are narrow and winding, and we walked along a thoroughfare that followed the line of the original sea-bank. Opposite is the distinctive stone and flint chequerboard façade of the Hall of the Trinity Guild, built in 1421, with sixteenth and nineteenth-century additions. The emblem above the door commemorates St Felix who brought Christianity to East Anglia. We saw merchants' houses that once stood on the quay-side (the east bank gradually building up from silt and refuse) with warehouses behind them. The inland street houses tended to be L-shaped with a short street range and a long domestic and warehouse range stretching down to the river. Hampton Court, started in 1350, is a notable example of this type, built on the original curved sweep of the river, becoming a square court of former houses, warehouses and shops. Only a few timber-framed buildings remain.

Changing times: stone from the dissolved priories was used to build important warehouses. But the only Hanseatic warehouse in England is

built mostly of brick, which is noticeably Flemish in origin. The Dutch influence was strong, with many buildings having distinctive stepped gables, and many Dutch names can still be found in the telephone directory. Lynn's famous son, George Vancouver, has a statue in front of the old Custom House. Delving down back alleys was a rewarding experience, with the vernacular, re-used, adapted, but surviving, all around us in the historical tumble of buildings behind the Staith. We even had our lunch in a warehouse, but not fish (nor eel) for most of us!

Though situated on the river Ouse, the sea is ever present. We walked along the Staith to a modern car park on the quay where we found one of the still-operative sea floodgates. We were told that they had been put on alert the night before because of northerly gales. Thankfully I was on the top floor of the hotel!

Returning to the Tuesday Market Place for the bus was like crossing a boundary. The streets widened, the Georgian and Victorian buildings became larger and more self-conscious. Our hotel (built in 1683) originally had a courtyard and we could still see the timbers from the old balcony embedded in an interior wall.

Next we were off to see the large and distinguished churches in the small villages (with big names!) of the Marshland surrounding the Smeeth. Wiggshall St Mary was found down a grassy path, isolated from its settlement, but near the old Hall. This redundant church contained a treasure however, a largely intact and 'readable' painted rood screen. Dr Miriam Gill accompanied us on this tour and she pointed out that the depictions of saints could provide a barometer of who was in favour at the time. Included here we found St Dorothy, East Anglia's 'top' saint, as well as St Mary Magdalene and St Margaret of Antioch, probably painted c.1500. The panels are didactic, saints' cults taught parishioners 'how to behave'.

At West Walton, the church of St Mary the Virgin was a revelation in many ways, its size testifying to wealth in the past. The belltower stands alone, 60 feet from the church. In the church painted swathes of hanging tapestry adorned blank arcades between the clerestories. Dr Gill explained that wall painting was a cheap medium of expression and instruction, and the post-Reformation heraldic roundels on the spandrels between the arches were also painted. The area was still vulnerable to flooding in the seventeenth century; we saw a flood board erected

in 1677. The beauty of the nave arcading and the lightness afforded by the expanse of plain handmade glass was a surprise and delight. Angels float above on the hammer beams of the roof.

Another vast and airy interior greeted us at Walpole St Peter, but only after we had passed through the dark wall of the wood screen across the width of the church. In these perpendicular heights we were once again reminded that painting was the cheap, lowly art, but here some of cheap painting has survived, while the expensive statuary has disappeared. The four panels of the extant painted rood screen depicted the saints most popular in the twelfth century and after, including the Apostles and St Dorothy again. Here local saints make an appearance in chancel carvings, with the wolf finding the head of St Edmund. A tall sixteenth-century font was covered by an octagonal font-cover.

On to Terrington St Clement, where, prosaic but very welcome, tea was served in the church. Like the other churches, its vaulted space is impressive (the nave is reputedly the longest in Norfolk). It is also built with Barnack stone from Northamptonshire. This is a Perpendicular church and is replete with coats of arms of wealthy patrons. The font cover is covered with paintings of probably Flemish origin (the Bentincks owned the manor), the interior still glowing with depictions of various biblical texts. The soft land exerts its influence as the west gable wall where its vast window leans outwards.

We had a real change of pace in the evening with Arthur Paynter talking about his years growing up in the old North End fishing quarter. This was truly a world apart, where families lived tightly packed in yards and everybody knew everybody else, and had done so for generations. Today only two cottages remain, housing the True's Yard Fishing Heritage Museum. The area was served by St Nicholas Chapel (founded in 1146), which is the largest parochial chapel in England.

Sunday was a day of reclamation. Brian Howling told us of the chronological series of sea embankments created as the Marshland was progressively reclaimed. Sea walls were built starting in Saxon times, and we learnt that the 50-mile long "Roman Bank" stretching from King's Lynn to Bicker Haven in Lincolnshire was not Roman at all as post-Roman deposits have been

found on the seaward side of it. Throughout the Middle Ages and later, land was reclaimed between the Nene, Ouse and Welland estuaries, and accelerated during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Dutch were eminent in these endeavours, notably the Bentinck family, who came over with William of Orange and acquired the manor of Terrington. Creating new land was a laborious process, involving digging, carting, building up, and boarding up the soil. By the 1920s steam, diesel and electric power respectively eased the toil. The bank was always made higher on the seaward side, due to inland silt accretion and the danger of being washed away. The salty soil could be used for arable land after a year. By the 1980s reclamation came to an end, leaving wide-open spaces for sea-birds, protected in RSPB sanctuaries, to rove the salt-marshes.

As usual, the best way to understand this was to go and see it, even though the bus had trouble negotiating the narrow strands of straight roads that cross the wide and wind-swept new land. We drove along the Roman Bank, seeing land reclaimed in 1790, and found that there were three more banks between us and the sea. We just glimpsed it in the distance. The flat landscape had a real Dutch flavour, including many large flower nurseries.

Going back inland, we followed the Terrington drove-road, which is one furlong wide with farms and houses set far back from the road, to the Marshland Smeeth and Fen museum situated in an old pumping-station. Now we were in a land of dykes, ditches and drainage. Although we were on the edge of the Smeeth, many of us failed to see that we were on 'higher' land! In the Museum we saw the old hand implements, and a collection of drainage pipes, large-scale maps of the immediate area dating from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries, collections of old photographs, preserved and iron-hard bog oak, and a portrait of Cornelius Vermuyden, a gentleman adventurer, whose name looms large among the gentleman drainers of the Fenland.

New land, old land, old ports, new docks. drove roads, dykes, bell-towers, saints, magnificent churches, warehouses, towers and a Tale of Two Towns brought together a memorable but sometimes surprising week-end in north-west Norfolk.

Maggie Whalley

Friends' publications

Elaine Brown

'Gender, occupation, illiteracy and the urban economic environment: Leicester, 1760-1890', *Urban History*, 31,2 (2004).

David Holmes

Ed. *Friends of the Centre of English Local History Newsletter* (2004), 48 pp.

Marion and Pam break all records

The following is taken from a letter from Marion Aldis and Pam Inder to Harold Fox.

Since their book about the Reverend John Sneyd was published, Marion and Pam have been very busy. They have written two papers for Staffordshire Studies, an 1839 census booklet of Ipstones for the Friends of the Department and Oxford Record Office published a small book in 1998 about another Sneyd - the Reverend Gustavus Sneyd (youngest son of the Reverend John) who was the subject of a Consistory Court hearing in Oxford. He was a particularly nasty piece of work and the records were fascinating. The staff in Oxford couldn't get the documents out quickly enough as they had no idea that they had a verbatim record of a Consistory Court hearing amongst their papers. Their book, *Finding Susanna* (another Sneyd - daughter of the Reverend John) followed in 2002. In 2004 they published a cookery book based on Susanna's own cookery book and involved a large number of people - both adults and children - throughout Staffordshire trying out the nineteenth-century recipes and recalling their own experiences of food as young children at the beginning of the twentieth century.

They have just finished another book about Ralph de Tunstall Sneyd (nephew of Susanna and grandson of the Reverend John). It is with the publisher now and they hope that it will be available in time for Christmas. He has also agreed to publish their next book, which will not

be about the Sneyds but about women managing their money in the nineteenth century.

Finding Susanna, the cookery book and their current one, which they will probably call *Finding Ralph*, are deliberately 'non-academic'. They set out with the aim to write 'popular' history - the detailed research was rigorous but the style light. They have been very encouraged by the favourable public response they have had to them. So as you can see, erstwhile students have not been idle - and they hope that the Centre think their efforts are worthy of the simply superb teaching that they enjoyed whilst they were in Salisbury Road.

Bursaries

The Friends will again provide student support grants to the amount of £1,700 for the coming year.

Friends' Papers

The following Papers are still in print and available for purchase from Mike Thompson, though this will change during the year.

- :
- No.3, Amanda Flather *The Politics of Place: a study of Church Seating in Essex, 1580-1640*. £6.00 + p&p.
- No.4, Marion Aldis and Pam Inder, *John Sneyd's Census of Ipstones*. £6.00 + p&p.
- No.6, Mandy deBelin, *Mapping Skills Tutorial*. Price includes disk. £6.00 + p&p.
- No.7, Geoff Wolfe, *Keeping the Peace: Warwickshire, 1630-1700*, £6.00 + p&p.
- No.8, Pam Fisher, *An object of Ambition? The Office and Role of the Coroner in Two Midland Counties, 1751-1888*. £6.00 + p&p.
- No. 9, S. Pinches, M. Whalley & D. Postles (eds), *The Market Place and the Place of the Market*. £6.00 + p&p.



WHITTLEWOOD PROJECT

Work on this interdisciplinary research project will come to an end (at least for the time being) in July 2005. The aim of the project has been to explain the origin, growth, survival, and decline of the medieval villages, hamlets, and farmsteads in a group of parishes on the Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire border, which was once part of the royal forest of Whittlewood. The project is funded by the AHRB, directed by Chris Dyer, and researched by Richard Jones and Mark Page.

Uncovering a medieval manor

A manorial site in the village of Wicken was partially excavated. The foundations of a medieval dovecote were identified, constructed in local limestone (Figure 1). The stepped base of the external wall and the lack of nails or tiles in the demolition layers suggest that it was 'beehive' in form. An internal cistern for capturing rainwater, with a drain to the outside, indicates that the apex of the roof was left open, providing access for the birds. Separated from the dovecote by a large open ditch was an area containing floors, hearths, and robbed out walls. This building has been interpreted as a malthouse/bakehouse and/or brewhouse. A sunken stoke hole contained large quantities of charred plant remains, including carbonized peas, beans, and lentils as well as cereal grains (wheat and barley), indicating that straw was used as the principal fuel, later recognized as producing a good heat for malting. The ceramic evidence suggests that both this building and the dovecote were constructed in the middle of the thirteenth century, perhaps by William son of Hamon, whose death in 1248 provides our only documentary reference to the dovecote. The discovery of the site is of interest because the Hamon family were previously thought to be non-resident lords, having their principal seat in the nearby village of Wolverton. The likelihood now appears to be that they spent at least part of their time in Wicken, where they possessed a deer park and may have been involved in reordering the village plan. The manorial buildings were abandoned in the mid-fifteenth century, possibly following the unification of the two manors of Wicken by Richard Woodville of Grafton in 1449. The Woodvilles and their successors appear to have used the manor house in Wicken formerly

belonging to the Dive family, leaving that built by William son of Hamon to decay.



Figure 1: The medieval dovecote of William son of Hamon at Wicken.

The long village of Lamport

The place-name Lamport means 'long market-place', but today there are few signs of such a settlement on the eastern edge of the landscape gardens at Stowe. Only a few cottages now survive. The market-place continues to elude us – if it ever existed it was probably eclipsed by Buckingham before the Norman Conquest – but the village plan has been recovered. An earthwork survey of the site was undertaken by Graham Brown of English Heritage which shows that the village was indeed impressively long (Figure 2). The medieval inhabitants, 35 of whom were recorded in 1279, occupied a row of regularly spaced properties extending along the major north-south valley. Ceramic evidence appears to suggest that part of the village was abandoned before the crises of the early fourteenth century. The tenements in the southern part of the village on the east side of the main street may have been the first to be deserted. Nevertheless, Lamport survived the upheavals of the later middle ages – there were 16 taxpayers there in 1524 – finally succumbing to the ambitions of the Temple family to refashion the landscape of their estate between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries.

Historic buildings survey

The study of Whittlewood's vernacular architecture, funded by English Heritage, has yielded some interesting results. Half a dozen previously unknown medieval buildings have been discovered, and new light has been shed on the development of village plans. At Lillingstone

Lovell and Whittlebury there is the possibility that the fairly uniform cottages, in terms of size and plan, dating from the seventeenth century might all have derived from medieval buildings on the same foundations, raising fascinating questions about medieval planning and its influence on subsequent generations. A survey of the area's churches by Paul Barnwell has also proved to be illuminating. Of particular interest is the suggestion that the church at Lillingstone Lovell includes an early eleventh-century porticus, an indication of high status in a village for which there is little evidence of settlement until about this time.

Palaeoenvironmental research

Pollen analysis on a core taken from a peat bog in Biddlesden provided evidence that there was woodland regeneration in the area in the period 400-600 AD, thereby confirming long-held assumptions about landscape change in the post-Roman era. Scots pine was especially prominent, its appearance at this time suggesting a change in land use, and possibly woodland management. The woodland appears not to have been dense, the presence of grass pollen indicating an area of wood pasture, while thistles revealed that some land had been abandoned. The Biddlesden core also shed light on the prehistoric and Roman landscape, indicating prolonged periods of woodland clearance through burning from 7000 BC, and the introduction into the area of sweet chestnut by the Romans. Plant remains in the stoke hole at Wicken revealed evidence of beech, elm, hazel, and plum in the thirteenth century.

Place-names study

Work undertaken by Eleanor Forward on the names of the Whittlewood area has produced some interesting findings. Few names in the project area include the element *tūn*, meaning 'farmstead' or 'settlement', although it is relatively common in the surrounding villages. Nor is there any discernible Scandinavian influence on the names of the area, despite its proximity to Watling Street, which may have formed part of the boundary of the English kingdom with the Danelaw. The element *Witela*, found in both Whittlewood and Whittlebury, has been assumed to be the name of a Saxon nobleman with influence over the area. There is the possibility, however, that *Witela* was a legendary figure, whose name was given to the woodland and the hillfort at Whittlebury by newcomers eager to legitimize their position by appropriating traditions of former power and authority.

Writing up

The research undertaken in the Whittlewood area since the inception of the project in 2000 has produced vast quantities of data. Some of this information has already been published in the form of specialized reports. Other papers are in preparation. Much of the raw data will be deposited as a digital archive with the Archaeology Data Service, based at the University of York. A monograph outlining the main results of the project will be published by Windgather Press in 2006 under the title 'Medieval Villages in an English Landscape: Beginnings and Ends'.

Mark Page

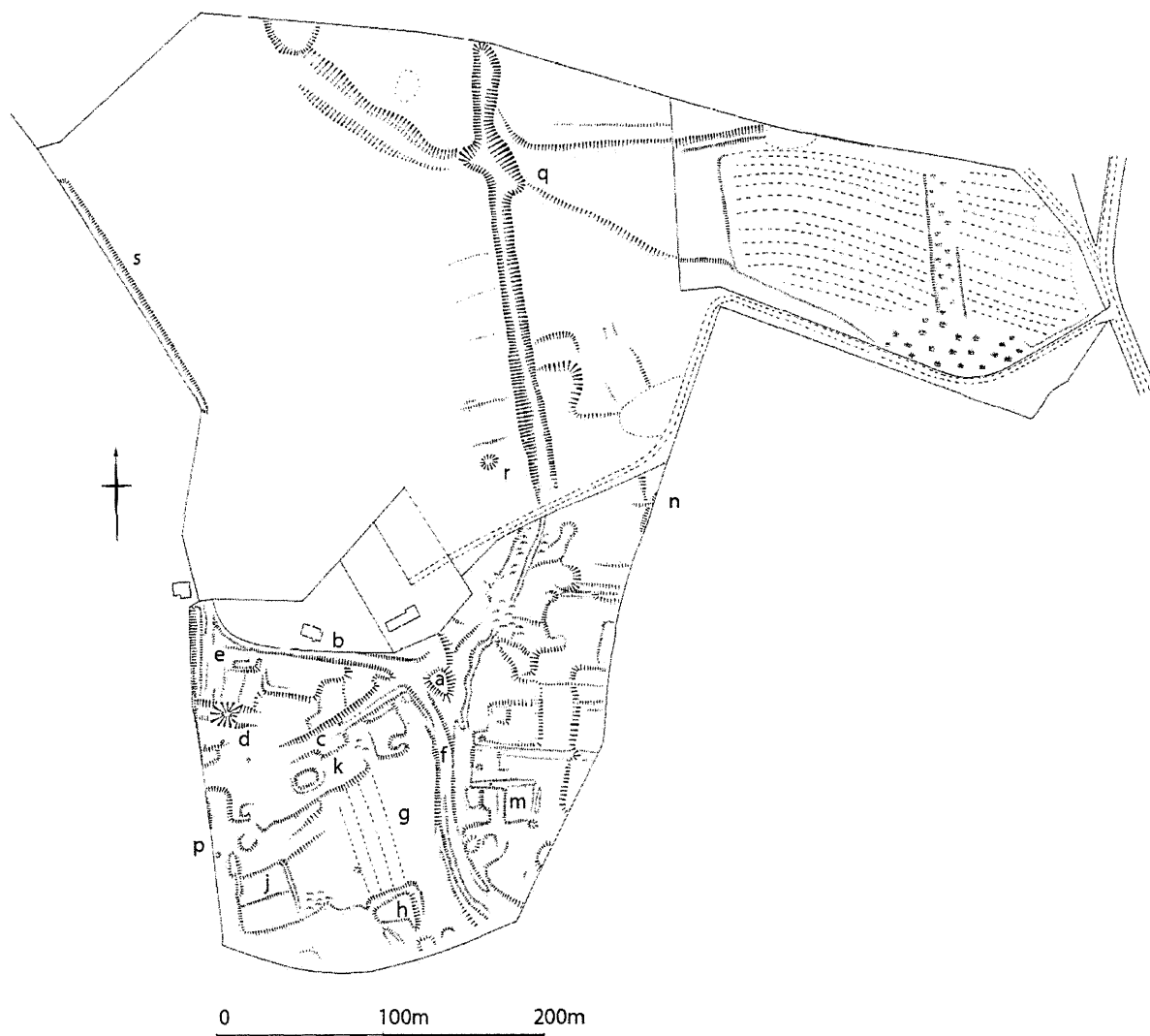


Figure 2: Lamport village layout

CONFERENCES

W.G. Hoskins And The Making Of The British Landscape

A conference, organised jointly by the Centre for English Local History and the School of Archaeology and Ancient History, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the publication of *The Making of the English Landscape*, 7-10th July, 2005.

How does one make a meaningful report of an event stretching over four days and attracting 250 delegates? Between them those attending heard 58 scholarly papers, went to three receptions and enjoyed a choice of guided trips into the Leicestershire countryside. To give the titles of the papers alone would amount to over 550 words. So, those unable to attend, but interested in learning how Hoskins' legacy has inspired successive generations of landscape historians and has been developed in so many revelatory ways, will have to wait until the proceedings are published by Windgather Press hopefully by the end of 2006 or early in 2007. All your reporter can do is to pick out, what for him, were the salient features of the conference and the 30 papers he chose to hear.

Thursday 7th

After registration at the Gilbert Murray Conference Centre, delegates were transported to the main campus where Chris Dyer opened the proceedings by giving a brief account of Hoskins' career and 'his greatest achievement – the founding of the Department of English Local History!' Introducing the first of our keynote speakers, Christopher Taylor, he referred to the fact that the two men knew each other well and reminded us of Taylor's important commentary on Hoskins' *The Making...* which was published in a new edition in 1988.

In his paper Taylor asked why it was that a work of some 200 pages only, and by an obscure academic, had enjoyed so much success and influence. His answer, in short, boiled down to three things; Hoskins' charisma, the fact that the book was beautifully written, and thirdly that it caught the imagination of an immediate post-war generation of ex-servicemen and others who had benefited from the Education Act of 1944 and who were keen to further their knowledge through

adult education courses. He made the point that it was teaching on these courses, and specifically those at Vaughan College in Leicester from the early 1930s, where Hoskins found much of his stimulus and inspiration. This first found expression in a number of papers published in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*, which eventually led to Midland England published in 1949 and prefigured *The Making...* He concluded his talk by saying that although landscape history had now moved on conceptually, Hoskins' 'simplicity of concept' had helped all of those concerned with the environment and that 'the world was better for it'.

The second keynote speaker, Elizabeth Zadora Rio of the Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique in Tours, gave us an interesting account of current landscape research in France. She began by saying that such studies had received a fresh impetus from England after a period when the influence of Marc Bloch, the great French historian, had faded. In her paper she touched upon a variety of subjects including alluvial archaeology, deserted villages, ancient vine-growing and transhumance.

Chris Dyer, in summing up the positions outlined by the two speakers, suggested that new research was making things once seen as simple, to be, in reality, far more complex. Following this opening session the delegates attended the first reception of the conference. This was hosted by the Vice-Chancellor who spoke of Leicester's special place in the study of landscape history, which had its origins in the recognition of W. G. Hoskins' particular genius and enthusiasm for the subject.

Re-assembled back at Gilbert Murray there was little time to spare before dinner at which our guest of honour was Fiona Reynolds CBE, Director-General of the National Trust, invited by Chris Dyer because she had chosen *The Making of the English Landscape* as the book she would take to her desert island when interviewed on Desert Island Discs. In her after dinner talk she spoke of it as a book that 'had changed my life', and then went on to give an account of the priorities faced by the National Trust; in particular the problems accruing to three types of landscape: upland, coastal and urban, where there were particular but differing threats to treasured environments. She said that the Trust's concern was not with preserving isolated structures or

landscapes in aspic, but those in harmony with their surroundings, themselves conditioned by aesthetic and environmental concerns.

Friday 8th

Twenty-four papers were presented on this glorious summer's day. I opted for those grouped under the themes of 'Britain before the English' in the morning and 'Rural Settlement' in the afternoon. As an unreconstructed Hoskinsian (can that be the word?) and someone whose roots are firmly embedded in Leicestershire clay I was drawn to Patrick Clay's thesis in which he suggested that there is much more pre-historic evidence to be unearthed in such terrain than has previously been supposed by most historians and archaeologists alike. I was also impressed by the account of 'Movement and mobility in Neolithic and Bronze Age landscapes' in the valley of the Great Ouse by Jessica Mills, a young post-graduate researcher from Cardiff. In particular her account of the chronology of settlement and the increasing 'tethering of people' to areas along these routeways marked by different types of monument and, eventually, field systems was fascinating.

Richard Hingley, who shared the chairing of the session, wound up the morning by questioning different kinds of origin myth, characterised as the Germano-centric view of W.G. Hoskins and what he termed as the 'prehistoriocentric' account of Francis Pryor. While acknowledging that neither of these views were entirely naïve or simplistic (and in Hoskins' case was modified as more archaeological evidence came to light during his life-time), he argued both for a greater degree of synthesis between the two views, and for the Roman influence on subsequent landscapes not to be underestimated.

In the afternoon we were treated to papers from a succession of very well-known scholars, Brian Roberts on, 'The village: context, chronology and causes', which developed into a plea for the use of distribution maps, such as he had formulated with Stuart Wrathmell, in the development of a scientific approach to landscape studies. Stuart was indeed our next speaker and he suggested that the long-running study of Wharram Percy, with its continuous stream of new finds leading to a re-evaluation of earlier evidence, perhaps made it incumbent upon historians and archaeologists to 'exhume' some earlier research

archives in order to develop an even greater understanding of settlement history.

Next, Stephen Rippon took us to the divide between the central province of England with its nucleated villages and the more dispersed areas of settlement in the south-west. He illustrated that there was much local diversity in this borderland between the Somerset Levels and the Blackdown and Quantock hills and argued that detailed local research could show how this arose. Tom Williamson followed with his own account of diversity within, as well as between, woodland and champion landscapes. He went on to develop his belief that settlement nucleation had its roots very firmly in clay soils, which demanded the ready mobility of substantial plough teams to take advantage of short windows of opportunity when the weather made ploughing possible.

Ian Whyte then took us to the northern uplands. He said that these had been largely ignored by Hoskins and other luminaries in the field such as Oliver Rackham, but although forming a complex landscape it was one with many mysteries awaiting decoding. Piers Dixon's account of research into the area of Strath Don in north east Scotland revealed a lowland, farming landscape of rolling hills where rectilinear fields and planned villages of the nineteenth century had almost obliterated any trace of earlier settlement patterns. However, mapping of the 1696 poll tax returns showed a pattern of over 1600 thriving settlements in the 800 square miles of the region, the main town of which was Inverurie founded as early as 1185 by the Norman Earl of Huntingdon.

For me the most interesting paper was the last of the day. This was the account by Bob Silvester of encroachment on common land by those who he suggested were variously seen as, 'cottars, squatters, rascals, scum of the earth'. Such men and women erected their dwellings overnight and so colonised areas of common land in the Welsh marches of Radnorshire. The landscape they created is now fast disappearing but some remains, and Bob told of successful attempts to have at least part of this protected.

Following these sessions our second reception was held before the Conference Dinner and was hosted by Sir Neil Cossons, Chairman of English Heritage who, along with the University, were our principal sponsors. In an unscripted speech he made much the same points about the problems facing the economy and landscape of England today as those made by Fiona Reynolds

the night before. At the dinner, which followed the guests of honour were W.G. Hoskins' daughter, Susan Hewitt, her husband and daughter. In an after dinner speech David Palliser, who together with Charles Phythian-Adams and David Hey, was one of W.G's remaining PhD students present at the conference, spoke about his affectionate personal recollections of the great man and the enthusiasms he inspired - as well as his dislike of bureaucrats.

Saturday 9th

Another beautiful day packed full of good things from parallel morning sessions concerned with, 'Buildings in the landscape' chaired by Paul Barnwell and 'Status/designed landscapes', chaired by Paul Stamper. I attended the first of these sessions, which began with a stimulating attempt by Mark Gardiner to show how the origins of the manor in England (a notoriously problematical matter) might be assisted by considering the archaeological development of manor houses. Paul Barnwell himself gave us an evocative account of the meaning of lordship as revealed by the topographical setting of Peveril castle; a joint paper by Paul Everson and David Stocker explored the origins and purpose of 'The chapel in the valley', associated with Kirkstead Abbey in Lincolnshire, and Adam Longcroft used the Hearth Tax returns in Norfolk to show how, when considered as a whole and mapped over large areas, they could illuminate differences in wealth as between the 'sheep/corn' and 'wood/pasture' areas of the county. The last two papers of the morning, given by Bryony Mc Donagh and David Neave, were both centred on the landscape of the Yorkshire wolds; Bryony concerned herself with the physical relationships between manor houses, churches and settlements, in an attempt to show how lordly power was manifested, while David looked at the buildings of the area in the planned landscapes of post-parliamentary enclosure.

After lunch the weather was perfect for the guided forays into deepest Leicestershire. Charles Phythian-Adams and Graham Jones led separate parties into the country around the Welland Valley with stops at Hallaton for Graham, and Hallaton and Lyddington for Charles. Meanwhile Harold Fox and Chris Dyer combined to take two coach loads into the Leicestershire wolds, stopping at what is, in normal weather, the aptly named Cold Newton. I went on Graham's trip and, like the rest of the party of over 50 people, was

fascinated by his account of the possible links between the annual bottle kicking, architectural features of St Michael's church, and pilgrimage to the chapel of St Morell. The site of this now lost building is on Hare Pie Bank from where, after a short walk, we could see the site of the very large hoard of British gold coinage pre-dating the Roman occupation and suggestive, perhaps, of votary offerings - to what god or gods one cannot imagine.

Back at Gilbert Murray we barely had time to draw breath before our third reception. This was hosted jointly by Oxbow Books and Oadby and Wigston Borough Council, the mayor of which, Councillor Horsfall, welcomed the delegates to the borough. He spoke admiringly of Hoskins' work and of the beneficial influence of the university in the Oadby area.

After all of this our day was far from over for, after dinner, we again had a choice between papers devoted to 'Ritual and Spiritual Landscapes' or 'Environments and the Landscape'. I chose the former and enjoyed Mary Higham's attempt to adduce evidence for a link between 'hām' place-names in north-west England with early church sites, and also Lucy Franklin's linkage of folklore and myth to certain types of landscape. Graham Jones, showing considerable stamina both physical and intellectual, then went on to develop some of the themes he had opened up during the afternoon tour. These related to the origins of Market Harborough and the possible elevated status of St Mary-in-Arden as a minster church within the soke of Great Bowden. The last paper of the evening was given by Madeleine Gray, but I was so tired by this time that I got lost on the pilgrim routes she traced to Cistercian granges in Wales.

Sunday 10th

The sun was shining as brightly as ever for the last twelve sessions of the conference. I opted for those themed under 'Perceptions of landscape' and regrettably therefore missed our own Mark Page and Richard Jones' joint paper in the 'Mapping the landscape' session. As befitted a Sunday morning on the last day of such a concentration of stimulating discourse I found the papers diverting and relatively easy to digest. Perhaps this was because of a certain literary and aesthetic flavour in Matthew Johnson's evocative account of Dartmoor in 'W.G. Hoskins and The Hound of the Baskervilles'; Nicholas Watkins' images of Leicestershire landscapes as portrayed by Alfred

Munnings, John Ferneley and Lionel Edwards; or the revelation of Francis Kilvert's dark side in Phil Dunham's, 'An Angel-Satyr walks these hills'. Whatever the reason, and even though we ended with very pragmatic views of 'The national farm in World War II', as told to oral historians by those who lived and worked through that period, I felt that this last collation made a fitting end to an extremely stimulating and enjoyable four days.

The conference overall was a triumph of organisation and owed much to the professionalism of the Conference Administrator, Barbara Johnson, to whom amongst others Chris Dyer paid particular tribute on the Saturday evening. However, as Paul Barnwell recognised in a final vote of thanks on behalf of delegates, it was above all to Chris himself that most thanks were due for the way he had inspired and overseen all of the arrangements over a long preparatory period.

Mike Thompson

The Agricultural History Society Annual Conference

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER, 11-13 APRIL 2005

Historians of many persuasions gathered in Leicester at the beginning of April for the conference year's Big Three - the Urban, Economic and Agricultural History Societies' conferences, which ran back-to-back in the same location for a week of AGMs, parallel sessions, dinners and late-night bars sufficient to jade even the most determined networker. The third time is the charm, and sure enough for a Leicester Historian the last of the three was the best - the British Agricultural History Society's annual conference, held on 11th to 13th April.

All three conferences were held at Leicester University's Oadby Halls, a complex of conference centres and student halls of residence two miles south of the main campus. The Oadby Halls site is a leafy mix of modern university Brutalist barracks and some wonderful grand suburban houses built at the end of the nineteenth century in the Arts and Crafts style for wealthy industrialists whose heirs, finding large mansions designed for servant-fuelled lifestyles impossibly expensive in the post-war economic climate, sold them to the university for a song in the 1940s and 1950s. For a time the university considered relocating to the site.

Some 50 delegates attended, and nine papers were presented. Those present included several past and present members of the Centre for English Local History (and four of the ten speakers came from that select community). However the conference was not solely an English, or even a British affair - three speakers came from overseas, and two of the papers dealt with European agricultural and rural history.

The conference was opened by a paper, impressive for the breadth of its geographical and chronological focus, by Dr Fernando Collantes of the University of Zaragoza, who described the transformation of the traditional peasant societies of the upland regions of Spain, France, Italy and Switzerland during the industrialisation of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The next day Dr Bas van Bavel of the University of Utrecht gave a paper outlining the agricultural *pays* of the Netherlands and Flanders and their development between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, full of fascinating correspondences and contrasts with rural English society in the same period.

Professor Alan Everitt led the home-grown contributors, speaking to a mellow audience after the first evening's dinner on 'Leicestershire: portrait of a society', an account of the distinctive nature of the county's inhabitants. Using a variety of sources, such as information in nineteenth century directories on the regular carriers' routes which radiated out from Leicester in all directions nearly to the county's boundaries, but never beyond them, he showed how Leicester was the centre of a distinct cultural and economic territory.

Drs Richard Jones and Mark Page of the Whittlewood Project gave a joint paper summarising some of the Project's conclusions on the influences exerted by the Forest of Whittlewood's special legal status on the region's society, settlements and agriculture.

Papers were also given by Professor Kevin James of the University of Guelph (in Canada), on Irish migrant labour in Scotland between 1890 and 1914, and by Nick Goddard of Anglia Polytechnic University, on the politics of Victorian sewage farming (if they were farming it then it must be agriculture!).

Three new researchers' papers were presented. Coming immediately after breakfast on the second day, they were ordered chronologically by subject period. This gave ELH's Matt Tompkins, who four years previously had wisely chosen a medieval subject, the

advantage of going in to bat first, before a still alert audience. Anyone who fell asleep during the paper he gave in this spring's ELH seminar series now had a chance to catch what they missed on that occasion - he spoke again on the development of the landscape of a north Buckinghamshire village, Great Horwood, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, suggesting that the partial conversion to pastoralism achieved during that period represented the early beginnings of the Agricultural Revolution, in the form which it took on the south Midlands claylands.

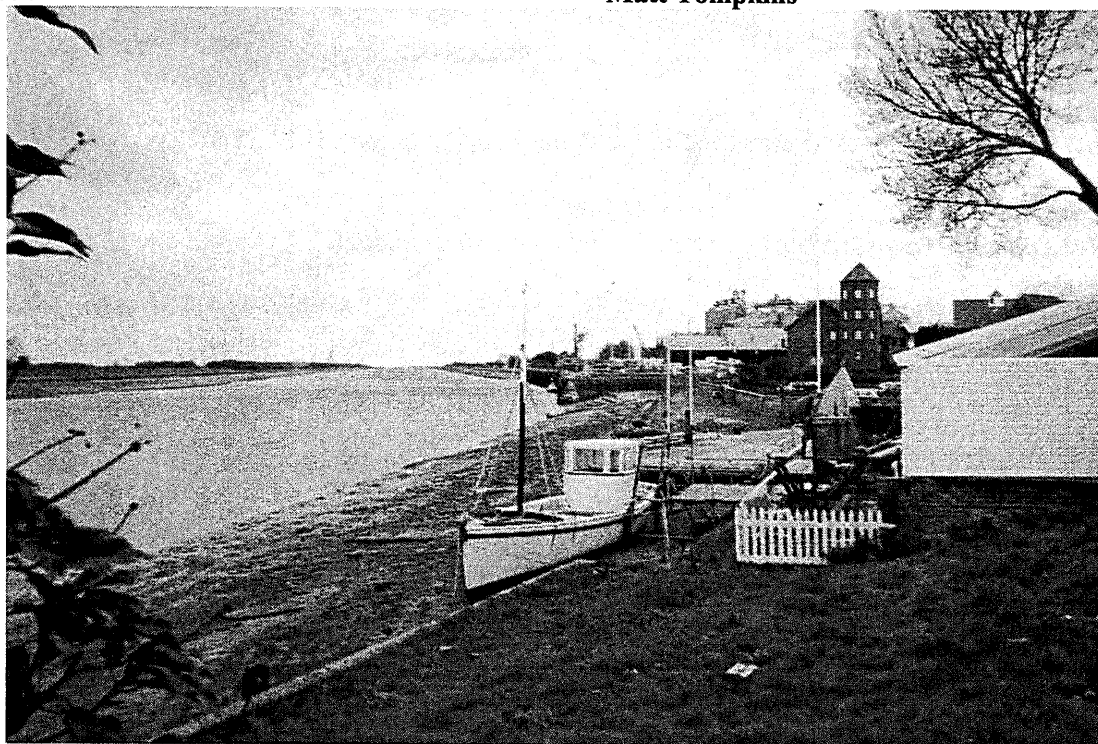
He was followed by Sarah Johnston of the University of Nottingham, who described the process by which the nature and professional qualifications of the land agents employed by the Egremont estates in Sussex and Yorkshire changed between 1770 and 1835. At the beginning of that period they were typically solicitors, socially not too distanced from the estate owners, the Wyndhams, Earls of Egremont, and more interested in tenurial matters; by its end a new breed had appeared, less closely connected to the family, with qualifications in estate management rather than the law and interested in agricultural rather than tenurial improvement. Modern lawyers hearing that part of one solicitor's remuneration package was use of the Egremonts' coach and opera box whenever he was in London can only reflect on the world they have lost.

The third new researcher was Richard Glass of Anglia Polytechnic University, who gave an interesting survey of agricultural self-help organisations - ploughing clubs and the like - in nineteenth-century Suffolk.

The mid-conference outing, a visit to Lamport Hall in Northamptonshire, was organised by Professor Chris Dyer. On the way there he provided a welcome blast of fresh air when he walked us around the earthworks of the shrunken medieval village at Carlton Curliu, bringing the silent humps and bumps to life with his description of the vanished village they represent. And that evening at the conference dinner he enlivened the occasion with a very witty speech on Leicester's superiority over Nottingham in every respect save having an airport named after it.

Coming immediately after the much bigger Economic History conference (200 delegates, from 22 countries, and 104 papers) the Agricultural History conference's atmosphere was noticeably different - a smaller, friendlier, more collegiate ambience prevailed. The focus was naturally on rural history, and all the papers given would have fitted very well into the Centre's Thursday afternoon Research Seminar programme - in fact any Friend thinking of attending a future conference can be assured of a stimulating and enjoyable time.

Matt Tompkins



North End, King's Lynn

CURRENT LIST OF PHD AND M.PHIL. STUDENTS AND RESEARCH SUBJECTS

ELIZABETH ALLAN

'Saffron Walden c 1440-1490: function and context of a late medieval market town'.

MATTHEW BADCOCK

'Measuring democratisation: alternative electoral geographies of nineteenth-century England'.

MAX BAILEY

'The effects of industry on the close village model: Nottinghamshire villages, 1700-1900'.

ANNE BARKER

'Medieval settlement in Essex, A.D.400-1200'.

BETTY BRAMMER

'Holland fen: social and topographical changes in a fenland environment, 1750-1945'.

ANNE CARLTON

'The political culture of early modern Boston'.

ANNE COOMBS

'Some aspects of religious reform in the diocese of Ely at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century'.

CELIA CORDLE

'The culture of the hop in the weald of Kent, c 1700-1945'.

YVONNE CRESSWELL

'Manx folklore: a continuous or changing tradition?'

CATHERINE DACK

'Market towns in Derbyshire, 1700-1900'.

MANDY DEBELIN

'Transitional hunting landscapes: deerhunting and foxhunting in the forests, 1650-1850'.

ANGELA EDMUNDS

'Medicine and poverty: Poor Law Medical Officers and their pauper patients'.

RUPERT FEATHERBY

'A study of an historical landscape: Swaledale in north Yorkshire during the fundamental change, 1500-1750'.

ADAM FENN

'Territorial origins and the evolution of the middle march of Wales, 410-1536'.

PAMELA FISHER

'The office and role of the coroner, 1700-1926'.

DAVID HOLMES

'The boot and shoe industry in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire: structure, development and change 1850-1914'.

KOTA ITO

'Local science and technology in Victorian and Edwardian Tyneside'.

VANESSA MCCLAUGHLIN

'Sokemen communities of ancient demesne in the Midlands, with special reference to the Leicestershire soke of Rothley, 13th-16th centuries'.

DARREN MILLER

'A landscape study of Ombersley, Worcestershire, c 700-1600'.

RHIANYDD MURRAY

'A hosiery town: Hinckley, c 1750-1950'.

PAUL OLIVER

'Provision of housing for the labouring class by landowners in Bedfordshire and the surrounding areas'.

PATRICIA ORME

'Commemoration of the elite: Warwickshire church monuments, 1450-1656'.

CATHERINE ROBINSON

'A history of washing clothes'.

CHRISTINE SEAL

'Poor relief and welfare: a comparative study of two communities (Cheltenham and Belper), 1834-1914'.

DAVID SHEPPARD

'Techniques for reconstructing early landscapes: a study of Allesley, Coundon and Stoneleigh parishes in the Warwickshire Arden'.

REBECCA SWISTAK

'Landscape development in central Derbyshire'.

MATTHEW TOMPKINS

'Peasant society in two contrasting communities in Buckinghamshire 1400-1600'.

SARAH VERNON

'Churchyard monuments as reflections of culture and society in Victorian/Edwardian England'.

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Contributions of books for the book sale

To Pam Fisher at Marc Fitch House.

Purchase of Friends Papers:

Mike Thompson until November 2005. Replacement will be announced shortly.

Newsletter production:

David Holmes (editor), Mike Thompson (editorial adviser), Joan Smith and Ken Smith (proofs), Michael Holmes (technical advice), Mandy deBelin (distribution), University AVS-Print (printing)



The Squire family at No.1 Salisbury Road



Squire children take to their wheels

