Friends of the Centre for English Local History

NEWSLETTER

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Friends of the Centre for English Local History - Public Benefit Statement

Our objectives are to provide financial and other support to the Centre for English Local History at the University of Leicester, and to its students, and to support the study of local history more generally.

Membership of the Friends is open to anyone with an interest in local history – no qualifications are needed, and there is no need to have been a student of the Centre for English Local History, or of the University of Leicester. Members receive a number of benefits. These include an invitation to local history seminars and an annual lecture, which are free of charge, and free use of the research library at the Centre. The Friends of the Centre for English Local History also organises a programme of study days, weekends, conferences and outings, which are open to members and non-members alike. The annual lecture is also open to non-members, upon payment of a small entrance fee. These events aim to increase people's knowledge about local history.

The Centre for English Local History at the University of Leicester is widely respected because it helped to found local history as an academic discipline, and because it continues to be a source of high quality research and fresh ideas. It remains unique because it is devoted to the study of local history everywhere in England and Wales. The Friends of the Centre for English Local History provides bursaries and financial support to MA and PhD students who wish to pursue courses or research within the Centre, including payment of, or towards, course fees, the cost of field courses and research-related travel expenses. This helps students in financial need from any part of the world and all walks of life to pursue their interest in English and Welsh local history at the highest level.

The Friends of the Centre for English Local History also assists the Centre by providing volumes for its library, which students and members of the Friends may use for their research, and by assisting both financially and with practical help in the organisation of academic conferences, which further the spread of knowledge and are open to everyone with an interest in the subject. A small publication programme also makes high quality research available to anyone.

The cover picture shows a 14th - century carving of a musician, Beverley Minster.
Photo F. Raphael

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the 2009 Newsletter. There are reports of the many achievements and activities illustrating the Friends' continuing association with and support of the flourishing Centre for English Local History. This year I have been unable to be present at most of the events and I am sure that you, like me, will appreciate the thoughtful reports presented. Please feel able to send me your suggestions for future editions. I know that many Friends engage in writing and lecturing and I would welcome such news to include in our publications section.

On a personal note, an intriguing recent discovery was the result of a test of my mitochondrial DNA which classifies me as of Pictish origin. Perhaps this explains my fascination with Pictish carved stones, which I seem to discover by chance whenever I travel north of the Border. There is such a wealth of history throughout our islands that we who have been able to delve into it through our studies at the Centre are fortunate indeed.

The following pages are the work of so many people and I thank you all for your willing contributions and to David and Ros Holmes for their encouragement and practical assistance in proof reading and computer lay-out. It is also right to thank our chairman and committee members, particularly the officers who will be standing down at the AGM. Pam Fisher has been an outstanding chairman, unflagging in her work for the Friends and Maggie Whalley has organised outings and study weekends which have been memorable indeed.

Anne Pegg

THE CENTRE

For the staff this has been a year of study leaves (for myself and Keith Snell), which of course results in an especially busy time for everyone, as the people on leave have a great deal to do, and their absence from some of their activities means that those left behind have extra duties.

I will begin with the sad events of the year. In December came the death of Alan Everitt, who had been such an important figure in the former Department, and who had continued to attend Friends' events up to 2007. His funeral was conducted according to his instructions, and reflected his attachment to the Plymouth Brethren. Charles Phythian-Adams, and Alan's brother, a distinguished physicist, spoke eloquently. He left his books and papers to the Centre, and the latter included a work of autobiography, concentrating on his childhood in Kent , which we hope can be published. He also was writing a general book about commons, on which he spoke and occasionally published short pieces, and we hope that this will also result in a publication, though his projected book was not at all complete.

Margaret Gelling died in April. She was awarded an honorary degree on our initiative; she belonged to the Friends and visited at least once a year, and recently gave the Hoskins lecture. At her funeral, which was held in Exeter, a notable address was given by Oliver Padel of the English Place-Name Society.

Turning to more cheerful events, we were pleased to welcome the latest addition to Andrew Hopper's family, a second son called Rex.

We welcomed about twenty new students this year, eight of them (the largest cohort to date) in the MA by ISS degree programme. The new pre-modern external examiner took up his post : this was Robin Studd, from the University of Keele. A new procedure was introduced for progressing research student from 'advanced postgraduate' status to registration for PhD. More changes, initiated by the university, will follow, especially in arrangements for supervision.

This was a year with some notable seminars and conferences. These included the usual Thursday seminars, which were well attended and provoked lively discussions, as ever, and the Hoskins lecture, which was given by a graduate of the Department from the Finberg days, Ros Faith. In addition Richard Jones embarked on a series of seminars funded by the AHRC, one held in Leicester and others dispersed over the country, on a theme connecting settlement studies and their names, with the appropriate acronym of SPASE : Sense of Place in Anglo-Saxon England.

December saw the second gathering held in Leicester to remember the late Harold Fox, as the Medieval Settlement Research Group, and the Society for Landscape Studies, organisations which had both been served by Harold as President, came together to hold a day's conference on the theme of the settlements and

landscapes which Harold had studied : coastal, moorland and woodland.

In July we hosted the big event of the local history scene, 'Local History in Britain after Hoskins', in partnership with the British Association for Local History, with an attendance of 180 people, 50 papers, 3 plenaries, 4 excursions, 3 receptions, and an excellent poster display. There will be more reports of this elsewhere in the Newsletter, but those who missed it will get a flavour of its content from an edited collection of the papers which will be prepared for publication in the coming year.

For the near future Andrew Hopper is organising a day conference to celebrate the work of Alan Everitt, focussing in particular on his 'county community' idea, which stimulated debate on the origins of the Civil War, became the basis for much research in the 1960s and 1970s, and now, having passed out of favour, has still left a valuable legacy.

Publications in the pipeline include the book of the Deserted Villages Revisited conference held in June 2008, Harold Fox's book on Dartmoor, unfinished but edited and completed through the noble efforts of Matt Tompkins, and a book of essays in honour of Harold which is being edited by two admirers of his work on the south west, with contributions from Leicester.

A big event in May was the launch of the Victoria County History for Leicestershire, in the grand surroundings of Quenby Hall, which was an occasion designed to make sure that the project was known throughout the county, and to raise money. My fantasy was that a millionaire would step forward with a large enough cheque to give the VCH the resources to begin its work, but so far such a benefactor has bided his time. The red volumes will again appear, but there will be a long fund raising process. The success of the event, and the whole preparation for the creation of a Victoria History Trust for Leicestershire, owes a great deal to the skill and enthusiasm of Pam Fisher and Julie Deeming.

Much else has happened which can be mentioned only briefly. A group of past and present staff and students completed the survey of the historical documentation for the towns of Buckinghamshire. I spent the autumn (the Michaelmas term) as a visiting fellow at All Souls College at Oxford, an episode rich in experiences too complicated and even bizarre to be recounted briefly in print. In a year which involved me in more travel than customary (see my list of papers and lectures) the highlight was my attendance at a conference in Beijing. A brief account is provided separately.

Our reputation was recognised in the Research Assessment Exercise. The Centre, as part of the School of Historical Studies, has planned for the last seven years the presentation of our work to be judged by a panel of historians. When the result came in December it was not in the straightforward and easily understood grades from one to five, as in previous years, but in the form of a rather complicated statistical profile, in which our efforts were embedded among the books and articles produced by all members of the School. The School had a respectable percentage of the publications assessed at grade 4, but rather too many at grade 2 rather than 3. But the School was judged to have presented itself convincingly, and therefore received points for its 'research culture'. A few weeks later we saw verbal comments, which singled out our Centre and the Centre for Urban History for praise – our service to the historical community throughout the UK was mentioned. This implied that, had we been entered for the RAE on our own we would have emerged with a very high rating. Clearly we are a valuable asset to the School as our elevated profile raises their standing in the academic world. This may not always be appreciated and understood by our historical colleagues, but we are confident that the new head of College, which has now replaced the old faculties, is aware of our contribution and will support our endeavours.

We are very grateful to the Friends for organising the new bibliography, covering the publications of the staff, students and associates of the Centre in the ten years between 1998 and 2008. There can be few small groups of academics and students anywhere who could show such an impressive list (in quality as well as volume) in a relatively short period. If anyone asks about our recent record, we can produce very convincing evidence.

There is no place for complacency or basking in old glories. We did good things in the past, we were inspired by brilliant people like Everitt and Gelling, but in the modern academic world you are only as good as your next work. I was interviewed by a journalist recently, who asked me about new developments in the subject, and I mentioned such novelties as GIS, but she yawned (metaphorically) when she learned that GIS had been around for ten years. I asked her for her definition of 'new', and she replied that

she meant some discovery or development in the last month or two, but she preferred a prediction for the future. Her demand was absurd (I pointed out that a good piece of research takes years, not months, and we don't make 'discoveries' like Klondike prospectors). If the Centre is to flourish, however, we must look to new Everitts; we ought to develop ideas as fruitful as the county community, and devise new Leicester based research projects as productive as (to take a more recent example) the Whittlewood project.

Chris Dyer

Joan Thirsk Gift

Joan Thirsk is a very distinguished historian of the early modern society and economy, and especially of agriculture. After a degree in modern languages and a period at Bletchley Park in World War II, she worked on the history of the crown lands and then, on the staff at Leicester, she researched and wrote a book on peasant farming in Lincolnshire. Her greatest achievement as an agrarian historian was to explore and define the regional differences that everyone thought important but few could define. At Leicester in the 1950s a scheme for an Agrarian history of England and Wales was developed and was driven forward by H. P. R. Finberg, who had succeeded Hoskins as the head of the department of English Local History. Joan Thirsk devised a strategy for writing volume 4 of the series, devoted to the period 1500-1640, with such success that it was published in 1967, well ahead of the other volumes. She realised the importance of reflecting in the new volume the variety of the English regions, and a modest amount of funding allowed researchers to be employed to gather documentation from all over England. In particular, the probate registers were systematically calendared and summarised, which provided the best evidence for crops, animals and equipment, and therefore allowed the different farming systems to be identified.

Joan Thirsk went on to a post in Oxford, edited vol. 5 of the Agrarian History, and researched new subjects such as economic projects (including woad cultivation), alternative agriculture (which deals with new products such as tobacco and llamas), and then early modern food. This year she decided to make a deposit in her old university of the data collected for the Agrarian History volumes 4 and 5 and the Special Collections in the David Wilson Library received five boxes of material. These are not the discarded papers of an old project – they provide researchers with the opportunity to make use of a carefully assembled and meticulously transcribed set of records. They were gathered by such well qualified researchers as L. M. Midgley, following a template which enabled comparisons to be made across the country. They contain information which could be used for new investigations, for example, into the layout of houses and the types of farm building, of which only limited use was made in the completed Agrarian History volumes.

It is a privilege for Leicester that Joan Thirsk thought of our library as the natural home for this material and we expect that future researchers will benefit from our custodianship of this deposit of unique materials.

Chris Dyer

Harvest field 2002, Isham, Northamptonshire
Photo. A. Pegg

Seminar programme 2008-9

Dr Lloyd Bowen (University of Cardiff), 'Seditious words and popular royalism in mid-seventeenth century England'.

In his presentation, Dr Bowen examined the accusations and reports of sedition and anti-republicanism found amongst court records, newsletters, popular pamphlet literature and government intelligence, in order to enhance our understanding of the nature and extent of royalist discourse within England and Wales during the Interregnum. The failure of large-scale royalist risings in the 1650s is well known, but the discontent articulated against the Commonwealth and Protectorate governments by the more plebeian supporters of monarchy has not been examined in a concerted manner. The significance of such dangerous talk is underlined, however, by the authorities' sustained efforts to police the 'contemptuous words' uttered against the republic. This research uses comparatively neglected source materials to unpick the political discourses of royalism and anti-republicanism as they were vocalised in the alehouses and marketplaces of England and Wales.

The records reveal that all classes of society were accused of such seditious speech – gentry, clergy, labourers, yeomen, weavers, shoemakers and other independent craftsmen, while women were the accused in 13% of cases examined. The chief claim was that, the King having been executed, Parliament had no legality. There were many cries for revenge for the King's death and the language used to defame Cromwell and his party was as crude and vulgar as anything heard in the farmyard and marketplace.

Seditious words thus provide a useful entry point into the darker corners of political conservatism and royalist alienation during the 1650s, allowing us to scrutinize the form and function of demotic oppositional discourses in a way that has been opened up successfully for the early Stuart and post-Restoration periods, but which has largely ignored the Interregnum. Such a study helps us determine the extent to which republican governments could control and compel the loyalty of their citizens, but also serves to problematise the concept of an emergent 'public sphere' by involving the (often unheard) pro-monarchical voices of the pre-Restoration era.

Finally, Dr Bowen offered a worm's-eye view of David Underdown's path-breaking and hugely-neglected *Royalist Conspiracy*, accommodating the views of those outside of the rarefied milieu of the Court, while also providing an important discussion of the political cultures of resistance amidst the hidden worlds of the royalists during the 1650s.

Dr Nicola Verdon (University of Sussex), 'The contested nature of rural women's work in inter-war England and Wales'.

This was a welcome return to Leicester for Dr Verdon, who had completed her MA in the Department (now Centre) for English Local history. Much of her recent work has been concerned with women's issues and this paper continued the theme and dealt with a subject that is due to be published in the *Historical Review* next year. The main thrust of her talk explored the tensions that existed around the employment of women during the 1920s and 30s, the types of work they did and did not do. As noted later during the discussion session, the tensions between male and female workers echoed those that had earlier been experienced in industrial towns and cities.

The starting point for Dr Verdon was the low level of full-time female employment in agriculture; the 1921 census shows that only two per cent of fully employed females worked in agriculture, a number that had halved by 1931. Within the same period, females accounted for 5.9 per cent of the total agricultural, workforce in 1921, but only 3.8 per cent a decade later. Their distribution round the country varied, with the highest percentage in Northumberland and Durham, where there were large arable farms. Relatively high levels were also to be found in the horticultural and food packing industries located in the fens and in Middlesex.

Of course, such low levels of full-time employment masked the real level of women's contribution to total agricultural output. Much of their work was part time, both indoor and outdoor, mixed in with running a house and family. Seasonal work was also important but is not shown in census figures.

Dr Verdon also touched on the attitude of the Agricultural Workers Union, the male leaders of which were more concerned with ensuring a reasonable level of wages for men so they could support their family. Agricultural Wages Boards

were established in 1924 charged with creating standard wage rates in each district. Of the 48 boards established , only one had agreed a set of female rates six years later. As a result, female wages remained low, characteristically about half that of the male wage. In 1927, the Women's Institute asked the government to write to the Agricultural Boards to consider female working conditions.

Another organisation, The Women's Farm and Garden Association, had been established for some time to help women who wanted to work on the land. This illustrated Dr Verdon's main theme, namely, that the inter-war period was one in which women's aspirations were changing. Many had worked in industry or on the land during the recent war and were no longer content to take a purely domestic role in society.

Prof. Steve Rigby (University of Manchester), 'Urban population in late medieval England'.

Readers of this *Newsletter* are well aware of the difficulties in reaching justifiable conclusions based on information that is incomplete. Such is the problem for historians when discussing levels of population and wealth during the medieval period. The question posed by Prof. Rigby was, did a larger proportion of the population live in towns in 1377 than in 1524? His starting point was to review conclusions reached by several historians, including the Centre's own Chris Dyer, who have based their work on the 1377 and 1524 lay subsidies. Inevitably, a considerable part of the talk appeared destructive though the object was to illustrate how conclusions vary depending on the assumptions used. For example, A Dyer concluded that urban population as a proportion of the national total fell by eight per cent, while J. Cornwall concluded it rose by five per cent during the period. Prof Rigby noted that A. Dyer based his work on 108 towns though only 49 of them appeared in both lay subsidy returns; assumptions were made for those not available in the 1524 return. More recently, Chris Dyer has suggested that the proportion remained broadly static.

Only 100 towns appear on the rolls for both years and they only represent 19 counties. Prof. Rigby was much more in agreement with Chris Dyer's approach in which he calculated the number of urban tax payers as a percentage of the county total for both years. This suggests that urban population either remained stable or fell slightly. Larger towns generally fared worse than small ones.

Prof Rigby used many figures to illustrate his paper so it was appreciated by members of the audience that handouts had been issued in advance. For those who were unable to attend and have a particular interest in the subject, the paper is due to be published in the *Economic History Review,* at a date yet to be finalised.

Dr Anne Winter (Vrije Universiteit Brussel), 'Policies on migration and settlement, 1700-1900: comparing England and Wales with the Continent'.

In 2007 Keith Snell was one of the external examiners of Dr Anne Winter's PhD thesis at Brussels' Free University (a study of inward migration to Antwerp, 1760-1860). Now a postdoctoral research fellow at the Free University, Dr Winter is widening her focus to investigate urban migration, local migration policies and poor relief in Belgium and the Netherlands in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and for comparative purposes in France and England. Her talk was a summary of her findings to date.

Neither France nor the Low Countries had a single coherent legal framework for the control of migration and the provision of poor relief similar to the English Poor Law. Instead there was a patchwork of local systems, varying between regions and localities, in which poor relief often depended more on local charities than state provision. It has been argued that this difference was one of the 'English Exceptions' which allowed the Industrial Revolution to develop in England before the Continent. The argument suggests that because the English Poor Law created a right to relief, operated identically across the entire country and, through the system of settlement certificates and out relief, allowed the poor to move away from their place of settlement, it facilitated the flow of labour to the industrialising areas. On the Continent, however, the more rigid migration controls and uneven provision of relief tended either to suppress migration or to channel it to places where relief was more generously provided, rather than where labour was needed.

Dr Winter's current research investigates the hypothesis that the differences between England and the Continent existed more in legal theory than in actual practice. Her findings so far

– they are still work in progress – suggest that although the legislative frameworks were indeed very different, laws were less important than economic and political factors in determining how local communities controlled migration, regulated labour markets and provided poor relief.

In France the legislative framework consisted mostly of anti-vagrancy laws, whose effect was to limit the free movement of labour, with poverty relief left mainly to an uneven network of religious charitable institutions, biased towards cities and the indoor relief of 'deserving' poor. In the Low Countries the system was a mixture of central, parochial and charitable provision, covering rural areas as well as the cities and providing outdoor as well as indoor relief, but was still an uneven patchwork of local laws and systems.

However, Dr Winter points out that the English Poor Law was not implemented uniformly or evenly. The right to relief was often interpreted in the light of moral notions of the 'deserving poor', though local economic contexts, interests and power relationships were frequently more influential in determining what relief was given, and to whom, than either the law or morality. Parishes differed widely in their attitudes, and evasion and obstruction of law was commonplace. For every open parish operating a relatively generous regime there was a closed parish, manipulating its social structure and employment practices in order to avoid liability under the Poor Law. Pairs or groups of parishes sometimes negotiated private arrangements which circumvented the legal framework. Recent research – for example that of Alannah Tomkins, who spoke at a subsequent seminar – has emphasised how voluntary relief, through almshouses and other charities, were also important in the alleviation of poverty in England.

On the Continent local economies, interests and power relationships similarly resulted in circumvention of the law, even on occasion, where labour was in short supply, in order to create a more generous regime than that imposed by the law.

So the two systems had more in common with each other than their statute books suggest. Nevertheless, Dr Winter's conclusion so far is that there *was* a difference, albeit one of degree rather than kind; the English system *did* create a universal right to relief, if based on moral notions rather than strict legal entitlement, and because it was more elaborate and flexible was better able to deal with the social and economic transformation associated with the Industrial Revolution.

Dr Samantha Shave (University of Southampton), '(Re)constructing lives "on the parish": individuals' experiences of poor relief in the early nineteenth-century English south west'.

Dr Shave introduced her topic as the Old Poor Law, viewed through the attitudes of individual recipients. The aims of the research are, firstly, to challenge the assumption that parish labourers, once 'on the parish' continued to be so and, secondly, to chart reconstructions of the lives of individuals to show at which periods they were in receipt of relief and when not.

The Rowntree analysis of 1902 had identified five alternating periods of want and comparative plenty – the poverty cycle. The times of greatest need fell between the ages of five and fifteen, thirty and forty and then from sixty-five onwards. Previous studies by King on Calverley, Yorkshire 1650-1830 and Stapleton on Odiham, Hampshire 1650-1830 had looked at the statistics at the parish level. Dr Shave explained that her approach is that of microhistory, the reconstruction of key moments in the lives of individuals to solve small mysteries and thereby exploring certain cultural or social phenomena.

Her area of study is centred on the Vale of Blackmore. Dorset was an area characterised by low agricultural wages and seasonal employment. By 1840 cottage industry was in decline, particularly the production of 'the Dorset button' which had traditionally provided work for women and children. Some of the towns had established Friendly Societies but in the countryside relief was the responsibility of the parish. Local formal charities were often reserved for 'the second poor' and only available for distribution on specific occasions.

Dr Shave then showed her data from the parish of Motcombe. The sample consisted of eight individuals – two males and two females baptised c. 1790 and two males and two females buried in 1840. It was apparent that the periods of relief and sufficiency were periodic. Provision of relief was variable and the parish used a mixture of allowances and employment. A married woman with children could receive relief after the birth of the second child, free of obligation, whereas an unmarried mother could be relieved after her first child but only in return for working

for the parish in some capacity, such as parish nurse. One man who became a claimant only in his sixties was given a parish pension, while another, ten years older, had to work for his allowance. The parish had strategies for saving money by using male claimants as stonemen to repair the roads, while women were expected to act as nurses and seamstresses. Children would also be given money in return for small jobs. Funds could also be raised from the profits of parish landholdings rented out to farmers.

Narratives of the poor and pauper letters show that relief was tailored to the individual by those who had a close knowledge of families and their particular needs. Whether it were provision of a spade, 6d for medicine or 1/- for shoes, all had to be claimed 'face to face' from the local officers. Sadly the complexities of administration, in some cases, led to notable absences of relief.

Dr Mark Gardiner (Queen's University of Belfast), 'The expansion of settlement and the possession of nature in high medieval England'.

Dr Gardiner is re-examining the concept that there is a close relationship between assarting and population growth, as postulated by historical geographers and economic historians in the 1950s and 60s and echoed in the 1980s. More recent work has challenged the concept of an upland margin of medieval settlement (Beresford's 'journey to the margin') reached before population contraction in the years after 1300. Dr Gardiner looks particularly at the dynamics of agricultural expansion, noting that it could involve stages. Intensification of usage might mean exploiting cleared or semi-cleared 'wastes' for rough grazing, thus gradually bringing them under cultivation.

There are many difficulties to be encountered in attempting to quantify the area of assarted land in the 12th century and Dr Gardiner finds that the Pipe Rolls, which record fines for assarts in the royal forest, may constitute the best source. Abstracting this information presents difficulties. However, matching up the sums provided by the list of pardons with the charters releasing the land from forest fines, may be a way to understand the basis on which the fines were determined. He has only a few examples of these and we only have county totals for assart fines. Thus, looking at the pardons allows us to get to the detail beneath this. Dr Gardiner finds eight examples where land area pardoned by royal charter can be associated with the land and fine as they appear in the Pipe Rolls, bearing I mind that this may be an imprecise correlation.

To make the best use of this information, Dr Gardiner examines two areas in more detail: the counties of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, a single shrievalty, and the county of Essex. He finds little evidence of pressure on land in the first instance (possibly less than 1% assarted) and much more in the second region (4%), which he concludes may be due to the needs of London for increased levels of food.

Further research will be required to determine the time-scales, and to truly understand how to use these figures teased from the Pipe Rolls, but he believes that they have potential to cast light on the question of extension of arable acreage in a way that has not been possible until now.

Dr Alannah Tomkins (University of Keele), 'We were all happy there'? The experience of workhouse life c.1770-1834.

Dr Tomkins has mined working-class biographies to challenge the traditional view that the workhouse experience was uniformly and always bad. She recognises that this use of personal narratives may not provide rigorous and objective historical evidence but it is a way into workhouse life which furnishes an alternative view from the institutional sources of overseers' accounts and the aspirations of founders or guardians. There is a difference in experiences pre- and post- 1834 (Old and New Poor Law), with the former appearing to engender mostly neutral or positive experiences; the Poorhouse seemed to offer a real refuge. Post 1834, with the Unionisation of workhouses, the experience was bleaker and sterner: families were separated, uniforms worn and diet was sparser.

Dr Tomkins' samples of Old Poor Law narratives are written with a sense of nostalgia; many had found life there better than outside, where they had often suffered abuse at the hands of cruel masters, met with accidents or neglect from parents or guardians. Inmates established friendships and networks that they were often glad to get back to and they seemed to find in the workhouse emotional support, care when sick, and even skills that were useful in later life. She assesses issues of representation: many of the narratives are retrospective, written by aged males, who are fashioning their own histories, and

who consider them worthy of attention. Also they are often written from a self-justifying and self-approving viewpoint by those who have subsequently achieved and prospered in life. Issues of motivation have to be assessed with other variables, such as period, geographical limitations, literacy, and whether they were strategic, i.e. written with a purpose or specific public in mind. They may be self-censored by worries about what masters might think or that the author may have to go back one day.

Post-1834, the tone of the biographies changes: the previous fleeting references to the workhouse life are replaced by a more concentrated focus. The workhouse now seems to have a different role in people's lives and, in a changing labour market, working-class inmates' biographies are liberated from the worry of what their masters might think .

Overall these are personal recollections which may be seen as literary productions, revolving around the intensity of personal experiences, rather than of the institution itself. But they can engender a significantly different view of life in the workhouse.

Dr Jason Peacey (University College London), 'Provincial news junkies: the circulation and consumption of civil war print culture'.

Dr Peacey considered the impact of the print revolution on seventeenth- century popular politics, the subject of the first two chapters of his forthcoming book. He is researching the readership of printed news, and the communication networks of the readers.

What evidence is there for a demand for political news, and to what extent did this extend beyond the major towns and the ēlite levels of society? And how did a potential readership access a source of printed news? To attempt to answer these questions, Dr Peacey has studied catalogues of seventeenth- century libraries as well as wills and inventories of the time, diaries and personal correspondence. Library catalogues tend to lump newsprint into unspecified 'bundles', or else the newsprint content of a library is regarded as valueless ephemera and discarded. Such was the case with the library of Robert Harvey, a minor Buckinghamshire figure whose library nevertheless ran to two thousand volumes plus printed news pamphlets and papers. A more enlightened attitude has recently emerged at the Huntingdon Library in California where there has been a project to reconstruct the complete library of the Earl of Bridgewater, including his printed news items. The problem remains, though, that news is too often regarded as ephemera and so even though George Stantham of Kent, for example, signed and priced the news tracts and printed speeches he purchased between 1641-3, the value of his collection subsequently went unrecognised and was broken up.

Family accounts books can give valuable evidence of patterns in the purchase of printed news. For example, assuming a newspaper cost one penny, the Barrington family would appear to have bought around fourteen thousand news pamphlets over a ten year period, averaging about two per week, with a peak in 1641 of between seven and thirty six pamphlets each week. The accounts of Anthony Wood of Oxford tantalizingly refer only to 'a newsbook' (eg 'cherry tart and a newsbook') or 'idle expenses' whereas the Earls of Leicester and Bath, itemising at least one newspaper per week, convey more vividly the hunger they had for all news. Their news books and newspapers are described as 'reliable' or 'fiery' their desperation to be informed of all political viewpoints. Account books also show that London booksellers had contracts to supply provincial people with news, or they might also send tracts and pamphlets on approval. Personal diaries and letters show that people bought news tracts themselves whenever they were in London, relying on their bookseller supply them when at home in the provinces and countryside.

During and after the civil wars, news circulated far and wide, and quickly. For instance, Sir John FitzJames, merely a Dorset squire, wrote in 1648 asking for copies of the moderate *Intelligencer*. But he was also 'hungry for news' of 'both sides'. In his letters he constantly demands fresh news. In April 1650, his news books 'bring considerable delight'. Evidence from these and other letters shows that, once received, news books, printed pamphlets and speeches were read by, or read to, both men and women from very varied backgrounds. News was lent and borrowed, read and read out loud, re-read and copied out amongst families and friends, in doorways and at inns, and so rapidly passed throughout all levels of society whether people could read or not.

Professor Huw Pryce (University of Bangor), 'Race, geography and the origins of the Welsh: new perspectives on a nation's past, 1880-1930'.

Professor Pryce, who has researched and published extensively in both Welsh and English, on medieval Welsh history used a photograph to introduce his subject John Edward Lloyd (1861-1947). Born in Liverpool of Welsh parents, Lloyd was educated at Aberystwyth and Oxford before being appointed Professor at the University of Bangor in 1889. His major work *'A History of Wales',* published in 1930, was the distillation of 50 years of study and publication on the ethnicity of the Welsh. Professor Pryce's objective was to place Lloyd's ideas in the context of earlier and contemporary theories.

Early attempts to explain the establishment of the Welsh people led to the myths and legends that persist. *'Historia Brittonum'* (829/30) attributed the founding of Wales to the fall of Troy, while Geoffrey of Monmouth, in his *'Historia Regum Britannie'* of *c.*1138 claimed that the three sons of Brutus, Locrinus, Albanactus and Camber gave their names to England (Loegria), Scotland (Albania) and Wales (Cambria). Other writers claimed that the Welsh were descended from the Phoenicians while the Breton, Abbé Paul-Yves Pezron, believed he could detect the ultimate descent from Babel through Japhet and Noah. Writers of popular history in the eighteenth century added druids and bards to the mix.

The early 19th century saw historians such as Thomas Price in *'Hanes Cymru'* (1842), redesignate such stories as imagination. A new understanding of the geological timescale led to interpretations of the racial origins of the Welsh as a Neolithic Celtic people, originating in the Iberian Peninsular, and subsequently developing into the Goidelic and Brythonic groupings up to and after the Roman invasion. The classification of the three stages of archaeology – Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age – was first proposed in Denmark in the 1840s and gained acceptance in England in the 1860s. By 1893, Lloyd in his *'Llyfr Cyntaf Hanes'* made it clear that 'the legends of the fathers' should be passed on to the younger generation but should not be accepted as history, whereas others were still attempting to integrate the two. In his major work of 1911, *'A History of Wales from the Earliest Times to the Edwardian Conquest',* he suggests that the national physique and character are attributable to the Neolithic peoples, the political and social institutions to the Goidelic and that the Welsh language developed during the Brythonic phase.

Lloyd was very aware of the growing acceptance that topography had played an important role in the development of Welsh characteristics and sense of belonging. O. M. Edwards, who was at Oxford at the same time as Lloyd, in his history *'Wales'* in 1901, began by stating 'Wales is a land of mountains' and goes on to claim that the independence and isolation of that environment have moulded its people and, later, 'A land of mountains naturally becomes the early home of patriotism and legend'. Lloyd, in 1912, insisted that the other factors of race, religion and foreign influence must be added to that of environment to fully explain the nature of a people.

The prolonged arguments about the origins of the Welsh were finally resolved by H.J. Fleurie, who recorded the physical types of the Welsh with a sample of 2,500 between 1905 and 1916 and concluded that Wales 'is just as much a mixture of cultural and racial elements as are most countries with a life of their own'. J.E Lloyd's work over 50 years had made a valuable contribution to the historiography of his own people.

Dr Stephen Joyce (University of Nottingham), 'The black economy in the Soar Valley, 1945-1971: an oral history'.

One of the problems which oral testimony presents to the historian is that it is often difficult to extract a theme from the rich but unstructured material provided by many people reminiscing about the past. Dr Joyce has addressed this problem by creating a comprehensive picture of the black economy in the Soar Valley from 113 interviews. The analysis covered the period 1945-1971 and used testimony provided by a broad cross-section of the population from managing directors to refuse collectors and housewives. His local connections and the fact that he was contemporary with the subjects meant that they trusted him and told him of the racier aspects of life including the black economy.

The evidence from his subjects emphasised the difference between society in the post-war period and the present day. Then, there were common attitudes and a solidarity, which even extended to the managers whose firms suffered at the hands of the black economy. They

knew that pilfering was taking place but preferred to ignore it in order to keep a contented workforce. People are now encouraged to 'rat' on benefit cheats and others, but in the study period no one would do this as long as the victim was anonymous or part of the detested system of rationing and tax.

Poaching was widespread, especially on land belonging to the wealthy, with rabbits being the principal target, both for the family table and for sale to local butchers' shops. Pheasants and partridges were taken but mainly sold as 'rich peoples' food'. Dr Joyce found no prosecutions for poaching in the study period and it may be that poachers simply got a good kicking if caught but police were not involved. This did not appear to deter poachers from repeating the offence in the future.

Pilfering from places of work was another component of the black economy, although there was no evidence of it from early in the period. It became common in the 1950s and 1960s when people were relatively affluent. Was this because employers reduced the level of oversight in a period of prosperity or because of changes in people's attitudes? – Angry Young Men were a feature of the period.

Although Dr Joyce validated his material internally by comparing the same kind of story told by three or more subjects, there was little external corroboration. No time series data existed to indicate the scale of the black economy, certainly for the Soar Valley, so no attempt could be made to generalise the findings. The furtive nature of the activity prevented quantification, although Dr Joyce has shown that this does not prevent the historian from drawing valuable conclusions, and contrasting the attitudes to work as evidenced by oral testimony with those in the 'official' aggregate history of the period.

The discussion that followed the presentation featured a number of oral testimonies as members of the audience related their own experiences of the period. They helped to reinforce Dr Joyce's view that history begins with the immediate past and that oral testimony is just as valid as written evidence, provided that it can be validated.

Centre publications 2008-9

Staff

C. Dyer

Articles in journals

'Building in earth in late-medieval England', *Vernacular Architecture*, 39 (2008), pp. 63-70.

Articles in edited volumes

'Costs and benefits of English direct taxation, 1275-1525', in S. Cavaciocchi (ed.), *La fiscalità nell'economia europea. Secc. XIII-XVIII* (Istituto Internazionale di Storia Economica 'F.Datini', XXXIX Settimana di Studi, Prato, 2008), pp. 861-75.

'Place-names and pottery', in O.J. Padel and D.N. Parsons (eds), *A Commodity of Good Names. Essays in Honour of Margaret Gelling* (Donnington, 2008), pp. 44-54.

'Nicholas Brooks at Birmingham', in J. Barrow and A. Wareham (eds), *Myth, Rulership, Church and Charters. Essays in Honour of Nicholas Brooks* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2008), pp. 11-14.

Book reviews

J. Thirsk, *Food in Early Modern England. Phases, Fads and Fashions 1500-1750*, in *Economic History Review*, 61(2008), pp. 237-8.

B. Dodds, *Peasants and Production in the Medieval North-East. The Evidence from Tithes, 1270-1536*, in *Agricultural History Review*, 56 (2008), pp. 100-1.

J. Hatcher, *The Black Death*, in *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 14 Aug. 2008.

A. Catchpole et al., *Burford. Buildings and People in a Cotswold Town* in *History Today*, September 2008.

A. Cooper, *Bridges, Law and Power in Medieval England, 700-1400*, in *Medieval Archaeology*, 52 (2008), pp. 445-6.

Andrew J. Hopper

Book reviews

D. J. Appleby, *Black Bartholomew's Day: Preaching, Polemic and Restoration Nonconformity* (Manchester, 2007), in *Midland History*, 33:2 (2008), pp. 253-4.

J. Beckett, *Writing Local History* (Manchester, 2007), in *History*, 94:1 (2009), pp. 77-8.

S. Carroll, *Blood and Violence in Early Modern France* (Oxford, 2006), in *European History Quarterly* 39:1 (2009), pp. 128-9.

P. Little and D. Smith, *Parliaments and Politics during the Cromwellian Protectorate* (Cambridge, 2007), in *History*, 94:2 (2009), pp. 242-3.

K.D.M. Snell

***Articles*:**

'1841 religion: a time to build and split', *BBC Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine*, 1 (Oct. 2007), p. 65.

'1851 religion: Nonconformists gain ground', *BBC Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine*, 3 (Dec. 2007), p. 71.

'1861 religion: renovation and reflection', *BBC Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine*, 5 (February, 2008), p. 69.

'1871 religion: the end of church rates', *BBC Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine*, 7 (Spring, 2008), p. 67.

'1881 religion: disputes over burial rights', *BBC Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine*, 9 (May, 2008), p. 69.

'1891 religion: tithe causes turmoil', *BBC Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine*, 11 (July, 2008), p. 69.

'1901 religion: church attendance declines', *BBC Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine*, 13 (Sept., 2008), p. 71.

'1831 religion: a church for the workers', *BBC Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine*, 15 (Nov., 2008), p. 69.

'1821 religion: the religious landscape', *BBC Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine*, 17 (Jan., 2009), p. 71.

'1911 religion: Secularisation or revival?', *BBC Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine* (March, 2009), p. 77.

'1811 religion: religious rebellion', *BBC Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine*, 21 (May, 2009), p.77.

'1801 Religion: a nation losing faith', *BBC Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine* (July, 2009), p. 77.

'Will the real farm labourer please stand up?', *The Land*, 7 (Summer, 2009), pp. 42-45.

Co-editor:
Rural History: Economy, Society, Culture, 19:2 (October, 2008), 101 pp.
Rural History: Economy, Society, Culture, 20:1 (April, 2009), 142 pp.

***Books*:**

Parish and Belonging: Community, Identity and Welfare in England and Wales, 1700-1950 (Cambridge University Press, 1st paperback edn, 2009), 555 pp.

Rival Jerusalems: the Geography of Victorian Religion (Cambridge University Press, 2000, 1st paperback edn, 2009), 516 pp.

The Regional Novel in Britain and Ireland, 1800-1990 (Cambridge University Press, 1998, 1st paperback edn, 2008), 300 pp.

[The last three books are new issues, for the first time in paperback, of earlier hardcopy books.]

Honorary Visiting Fellows

Publications

Charles Phythian-Adams

'Popular Culture', 'Folklore', 'Customs', 'Calendar Customs', and 'Civic Ritual', in David Hey, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Family and Local History*, enlarged 2nd edn (2008), pp.156-67, 167-70, 170-73, 173-75, 175-76 respectively.

'Alan Everitt: social historian of English provincial life and its agricultural roots', *Times* obituary, 2 February, 2009.

Jane Laughton

Life in a Late Medieval City: Chester 1275-1520 (Windgather Press, an imprint of Oxbow Books, 2008), 260 pp.
ISBN 978-1-905119-23-3

Sylvia Pinches

Ledbury: A Market Town and its Tudor Heritage (Chichester: Phillimore, 2009) ISBN 978-1-86077-598-7

Papers presented at seminars, conferences etc.

Staff

C. Dyer

'Furnishings of medieval peasant houses', Pautes de Consum y Nivells de Vida Almon Rural Medieval, Valencia, September 2008.

'John Heritage: trading and farming in the countryside c. 1500', Visiting Fellows seminar, All Souls College, Oxford, October 2008.

'Why peasants needed towns in late medieval England', Metropolitan History: Past, Present, Future, University of London, October 2008.

'The medieval origins of capitalism', The Relevance of Dutch History, organised by the Royal Netherlands Historical Society, The Hague, November 2008.

'Why late medieval English peasants needed towns and trade', European Rural-Urban Relations, Aarhus, Denmark, November 2008.

'Harold Fox and the medieval past', Fishing, Transhumance and Woodland in Medieval Britain, joint meeting of the Medieval Settlement Research Group and Society for Landscape Studies, Leicester, December 2008.

'Marginal lands and buildings', Marginal Architecture, winter meeting of the Vernacular Architecture Group, Leicester, December 2008.

'Town and country: how do you tell the difference?', Archaeology seminar, National University of Ireland, Galway, January 2009.

' "A note with a gilt cover …" : artisans and consumers in the midlands, 1100-1550', Made in Middle England, University of Birmingham, March 2009.

'Lords, peasants and villages in England, 700-1700', British-China History Conference, Beijing, April 2009.

'Documentary evidence for medieval farm buildings of lords and peasants', Building and Farming, Rewley House, University of Oxford, May 2009.

'Food allocation within the medieval peasant family and household', Diet Group, Somerville College, Oxford, May 2009.

'Shopping in the middle ages', Jim Johnston Lecture, Bishop Grosseteste College, Lincoln, May 2009.

'How medieval peasants made their own history in medieval England', School of Historical Studies Seminar series, University of Leicester, May 2009.

'Communities and poverty before the poor law', Charity and Community, Roehampton University, June 2009.

'England: a country without regions', International Symposium on Local History, Institute of Historical Research, University of London, July 2009.

'Living in the medieval house', The Medieval House, Essex Historical Buildings Group, Cressing Temple, Essex, July 2009.

'Did the rich really help the poor in medieval England?' Ricos y Pobres: Opulencia y Desarraigo en el Occidente Medieval, Estella, Navarre, Spain, July 2009.

Andrew Hopper

'The Hothams and the military administration of Beverley and Hull during the first civil war, 1642-43', public lecture at The Treasure House, Beverley, June 2009.

'The self-fashioning of gentry turncoats during the English Civil War', Early Modern Social and Economic History Seminar, University of Cambridge, October 2008.

Keith Snell

A public lecture, 2nd April 2009, to the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, entitled: `Churchyard memorials: what do they tell us about the past?'

Posters presented

Andrew Hopper

'Parliamentarian garrisons in the East Riding of Yorkshire during the civil war', Local History in Britain after Hoskins, University of Leicester, July, 2009.

Richard Jones

'Sense of Place in Anglo-Saxon England', Local History in Britain after Hoskins, University of Leicester, July 2009.

Honorary visiting fellows

Charles Phythian-Adams

'From Peoples to Regional Societies: the Problem of Early Medieval Cumbrian Identities', Centre for NW Regional Studies in conjunction with the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, Conference on 'Regional Identities' (April, 2009).

Prizes, Awards and Appointments

John Nichols Prize

The winner of the John Nichols Prize 2008 was **Malcolm Noble**, a PhD student in the Centre for Urban History, for his MA dissertation 'The Languages of Common Good: municipal reform, urban governance and charity administration, Leicester c. 1820-1850'.

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

Essays must be submitted on or before 31 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 20000 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 MA course or who have just finished their dissertations should note that unrevised dissertations may be submitted provided that they have achieved a distinction.

The Richard McKinley Prize 2009 for the best dissertation was won by **Pauline Cowen,** *The Transformation of a Yeoman Society - Windermere 1640-1841.*

BALH Publications Award 2008: joint first-placed article

Penelope Upton, 'Thomas Fisher and the Depopulation of Nether Itchington in the Sixteenth Century', *Warwickshire History*, 13:4 (2006/7), pp. 144-154.

Each year the Reviews editor selects articles from a wide range of journals and newsletters. Ever since the Publications Award began in 1999, BALH have sought to recognize the excellent research and writing which is published in the journals of local and county societies. Penelope Upton's article focused on rural change, depopulation and desertion of settlements and employed detailed and meticulous research to

tease out the circumstances in the case-study village near Warwick.

Dr Andrew Hopper has been appointed Fellow of the Royal Historical Society.

Dr Hopper has joined the editorial board of the journal *Midland History*.

Devon Field Course: March 2009

We are pleased to say that this year's MA field trip exceeded all our expectations for interest and unexpected variety. We had an early intimation of the excitement in store on our outward journey when we passed a host of very interesting landmarks of the Severn Estuary which we had never expected to see. Nevertheless, regardless of our slight detour and a minibus with a speed inhibitor, our congenial driver for the week, Dr Richard Jones, got us to the table in time for our first three course supper at Exeter University campus of Birks Grange which afforded excellent hotel quality accommodation. Fears that we were going to be lonely in a deserted campus happily proved unfounded as we were soon joined by a merry bunch of undergraduates, as well as several hundred delightfully well-behaved Spanish school pupils. The field trip began in earnest with a ferry crossing into Dartmouth which launched us into a fascinating week of prehistoric, Roman, medieval and early modern landscapes and landmarks. In a land of ritual we found ourselves both following in the footsteps of previous years' field trips and developing some bizarre rituals of our own: in the day we climbed Haytor and performed the famed fish and chip ceremony at Appledore; in the evening the Jolly Porter pub provided the backdrop for a nightly session of who could ask the academic the silliest question; meanwhile the peregrinating undergraduates established their own delightful nightly ritual of serenading us in the small hours. The Wednesday, falling on April 1st, Dr Jones wasn't too upset to find a mystery "parking warden" at Chittlehampton had attached a Fixed Penalty Notice to the minibus which turned out to contain some handy route directions! The locals were very friendly and we were lucky enough to encounter at Lydford one ninety-two year old shepherd, Lionel, whose proud boast was that he was born in the village. This meant that he could identify for us the site of long vanished shops in a now wholly residential main street. Lydford was also the site of another of our bizarre rituals, anointing ourselves as devotees of a new cult at the ancient sacred spring. This was a good expedient to ward off the ghost of the Mad Monk of Lidwell Chapel which is said to haunt those who trespass on his territory. Thanks to motorway chaos, our journey back felt at times more like a complete perambulation of the British Isles, but nothing could take away from our enjoyment and gratitude to our expert guide Richard. The weather had held off beautifully, but our experiences in Devon were decidedly worth getting wet for.

Charles Haworth

Fish and chips at Appledore
Photo C. Haworth

Group at Chittlehampton
Photo C. Haworth

Recently Completed Theses

Rupert Featherby
'Partible Inheritance: The family's contribution to Swaledale's ruin? A study of partible inheritance in early modern Swaledale, 1500-1750, and its role in creating the social and economic conditions required for industrialisation.'

The region of Swaledale in North Yorkshire is generally considered to be a good example of the theoretical model of economic and social change during the early modern period known for pre-industrial states as proto-industrialisation. This is not simply because it possessed all those attributes considered necessary for a proto-industrial state but also because of the weight given to the role of the inheritance custom, partible inheritance, as a primary cause of economic decline.

Taken to its extreme, partible inheritance is argued to have broken landholdings down into uneconomic units and forced people into poorly paid secondary employment in an attempt to maintain their standard of living. In recent years the model of proto-industrialisation has come under intense scrutiny and a number of aspects are now being widely questioned, particularly the link between inheritance custom and economic development. Furthermore, research over the last fifteen to twenty years into the development of consumerism has shown that declining land-holding and/or rising involvement in secondary industrial employment is not representative of a declining economy caused by partible inheritance. In the light of such revisions, it seems pertinent that the role of partible inheritance in Swaledale's supposed continuous economic decline in the early modern period be questioned.

This thesis will concentrate on the wills and inventories from 1500 to 1749 of the inhabitants of Swaledale. These documents will be treated not as simple economic fact sheets but as sources of information about social aspects of a testator's life. The testator's material world will be investigated to determine if was growing or declining, helping to identify whether Swaledale society grew poorer or not. The networks of credit, familial or otherwise, will also be examined as, unlike similar sources from other regions in Britain, these sources generally contain both credits and debits. Alongside these, a range of general sources, such as lay subsidies and chancery court cases, will also be examined to add to our picture and identifiable family groups will be carefully examined for evidence to either support or deny the claim that families continued to grow poorer through the practice of partible inheritance.

Angela Negrine
'Medicine and Poverty: A Study of the Poor Law Medical Services of the Leicester Union, 1867-1914'.

This thesis presents a micro-study of the poor law medical services provided by a large provincial union in a rapidly growing industrial town during the central phase of poor law administration. The poor law medical service has been perceived as a second-class service that stigmatised and exploited both medical staff and patients. Working conditions for medical officers were arduous and unrewarding and sick paupers either received limited outdoor medical relief or were treated in institutions that were designed and managed on principles of deterrence and economy. Yet posts were competitively sought after by doctors, who often remained in the service for many years, and it could be argued that sick paupers at least received medical treatment that would otherwise have been denied them. This thesis focuses on local detail and personalities within the Leicester union to provide an insight into the reality of the service as experienced by the medical staff and patients. The thesis begins with a review of the historiographies of the social history of nineteenth-century medicine and the new poor law. Chapter 2 provides the context of the study by explaining the national framework of the poor law medical services and describing the social and economic circumstances of Leicester and its union. The remaining chapters present a thematic exploration of the medical care and treatment provided. Chapters 3 and 4 offer a detailed assessment of the working conditions and practices of the medical officers. Poor law nurses undertook the daily care of workhouse patients, and Chapter 5 explores how nursing developed at this union during this lengthy period. Having considered the providers of medical care, Chapters 6, 7 and 8 examine the perspective of the recipients: the general patients, children, and insane and epileptic patients. Chapter 9 focuses upon the transition at the beginning of the

twentieth century from the workhouse-based infirmary to a purpose-built modern separate infirmary. The final chapter concludes that the stereotypical image of poor law medicine has been confounded by some of the evidence offered in this thesis, which has revealed a more nuanced and balanced view than previously of the benefits and deficiencies of the poor law medical services.

M A Dissertations 2008

Ashley J. Plom
'The Demise of Slavery in Early England, Ecclesiastic Erosion or Economic Evolution?'

Notions of freedom and unfreedom in Anglo-Saxon England are often heavily coloured by the anti-Norman bias of a 'Norman Yoke'. Historiography traditionally emphasises the freeman rank of *ceorl* ('kay-orl' or 'churl') as the fundamental building block of Anglo-Saxon agrarian society. Therefore, it comes as something of a surprise for most to learn of the existence of *þeowas* (pronounced 'thay-aws'), a class of slaves comprising a not insignificant part of the workforce. The aim of this study is to examine what became of the institution of slavery by investigating the processes of change leading to its apparent demise.

In our argument. Church documents will be vital to the study but, in order to get a wider picture of non-Church influences on the institution of slavery, sources such as wills and land charters will be examined.

Finally, Domesday Book will be explored that we might expand the study into the early Norman period, the better to put in context the concept of the Norman Yoke. Through these means we will seek to draw conclusions regarding what had happened to the institution by 1086.

To do so, we will need to comprehend the nature of the *þeowas* legal status as slaves, and to investigate their evolving place in the law codes. Alongside how a slave may be freed (manumitted), we will examine how a freeman may become a slave. Downward social movement will be seen to play a central ,part.

Lois Fletcher
'Local Charity: Its Role and Social Meaning in the Area of the Oundle Poor Law Union, 1800-1900'.

The market town of Oundle in north-east Northamptonshire lay at the centre of a Poor Law Union that comprised thirty-five parishes, of which five were wholly or partly in Huntingdonshire, and two hamlets, treated separately for poor relief. In 1830-1, there were sixty-four endowed charities in this rural area, almost entirely agricultural and dominated by large estates; by the end of the 19th century, the figure had risen to eighty three. In addition, there were a number of voluntary philanthropic societies and a great deal of informal giving.

The aim of this dissertation is to establish the full extent of charitable giving for local purposes in the parishes of the Oundle Poor Law Union, using Parliamentary papers, local- newspaper reports, family archives and the wide range of documents relating to charities in the Northamptonshire and Huntingdonshire record offices. It looks at the endowed charities, which provided many different doles, as well as almshouses, schools and apprenticeships, all of which played an important role in the welfare of the poor. Also examined are the many informal benefactions which helped to alleviate poverty and distress, from church collections for the sick and needy to gifts of blankets or beef for the poor at Christmas.

This dissertation investigates the social meaning of local philanthropy. It seeks to discover links between local charities and poor relief under both the Old and New Poor Laws. It studies the range of donors and the various impulses that may have motivated them. Finally, it assesses the impact of charitable giving on rural communities that were no strangers to poverty and hardship.

Pauline Cowen
'The Transformation of a Yeoman Society - Windermere 1640-1841'.

(Awarded the McKinley Prize 2009 – see above).
During the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the townships of Applethwaite and Undermillbeck, better known today as Windermere and Bowness, underwent a profound change as wealthy outsiders settled in the area, attracted by the

mountain scenery. The dissertation examines the structure of traditional 17th-century society and uses parish records, hearth tax returns and manor rentals to identify individual families and their properties. The history of these families and their tenements is examined in the light of the debate on the decline of the yeomanry in the Lake District, which was observed by Wordsworth and other contemporaries, as well as by modern historians. The dissertation suggests the number of yeomen has been exaggerated and that their decline in Windermere was caused by the extinction of families and growth of alternative employment, which coincided with increased demand for property from wealthy newcomers. Analysis of the 1841 national census shows that while the economic change which resulted from their arrival was largely confined to the village of Bowness, the contrast between the divisive social attitudes of the settlers and the traditional egalitarianism of local society had a long lasting effect.

Catherine Petersen
'The Impact of the Reformation in Derbyshire: the evidence from wills in four communities'.

The aim of this dissertation is to analyse the impact of the English Reformation in Derbyshire over a hundred year period, 1520-1620. This will involve the study of the preambles and bequests of wills from four communities within Derbyshire, those of Repton, Derby, Glossop and Bolsover. The principal sources are existing wills from Lichfield Record Office and any available printed Churchwardens accounts. In addition to this will be evidence of existing church fabric from each of the parishes identified, four in the case of Derby, together with other records available regarding the parishes, in order to gain an overall picture of how extensive national edicts were enforced within each of the communities. Each aspect has been assessed according to several existing studies of other counties and communities, with varying viewpoints regarding the value and interpretation of the evidence consulted taken into account. While more extensive study is clearly required to give a more comprehensive picture, the results do identify a trend towards a slow spread of Protestantism within Derbyshire, not taking hold until the late sixteenth century.

David Dow
'Stockport, the Prototype Mill Town. The Why, Wherefore and Therefore'.

Stockport, situated at the source of the River Mersey, is a town that is generally less well known than the city of Liverpool situated on the estuary of the same river. Despite its relatively low profile, Stockport has played a significant part in the development of the north-west of the country, being a pioneer in the industrialisation of the region. The dissertation does not try and prove that this town was more important than any other, but rather sets out to show that it had its own unique development from a medieval township into an important textile and hat-manufacturing centre of the 18th and 19th centuries. The town's subsequent diversification into other industries and commercial enterprises continued the development to the presen day. Topography, climate and its location relative to other urban centres have all, in the past, been given as reasons for the development of the town. Although all of these factors have made, to a lesser or greater degree, an impact on its development, this dissertation shows that the main reason the town has taken its particular journey has been the right people being in the right place at the right time, with access to the right resources. It was their entrepreneurial skills and innovative thinking that ensured that this journey, on the whole, was successful. No other town will have developed in exactly the same way or for the same reasons as Stockport. It is people making decisions, both individually or collectively in any location, that has had the greatest influence on the direction that a settlement in that location develops. The greatest impact on the development of a town are the individual characteristics and attributes of the people living there, whether employer or employee. Stockport is not and never has been Utopia, but living and working there has, more often than not, proved a rewarding experience. Employers and employees have not always been in accord, but with employers who have shown benevolence in times of hardship and a workforce facing problems and adversities with innovative thinking, the town has always had good reason to retain a civic pride. This has been reflected during the birth of industrialisation and is still relevant today as we witness the slow death of UK manufacturing.

Stockport is special to me, although I suspect, not to the majority of the population. This dissertation shows that the local history of any place is significant in putting together the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle that provides a picture of the development of a country as a whole. This is one unique piece of that jigsaw puzzle of England, it is up to others, to discover their own piece and where it fits.

Ruth Barbour
'Gundogs in 19th-century Warwickshire – a guide to social change'.

Many dog breeds emerged during the nineteenth century. Dog shows and other competitive dog events developed during the last four decades. The Kennel Club was founded in 1873. Warwickshire men played a significant role in all of these developments. This study aims to trace both the development of this new sport in Warwickshire, but, as well, by looking at the backgrounds of those who were closely involved and the interaction of these events on the wider public to identify social change in Warwickshire during the century.

It starts by looking at the development of two breeds of sporting dogs (pointers and retrievers); continues to look at the development of shows and the Kennel Club and finally reviews the careers of six men who played a role in these developments. The individual studies are: Thomas Webb Edge (senior and junior) originally of Sherbourne; S. E. Shirley of Ettington Park; J. H. Hemming of Ipsley; William Lort, born in Birmingham and E. G. Wheler-Galton of Claverdon. Primary sources used include Kennel Club records, dog show catalogues and, very fruitfully, digitalised newspapers, the search of which produced much new information. Records of individuals were also accessed, including Wheler-Galton's scrap book. This study shows that Birmingham was the *cradle* of dog shows and of the Kennel Club. Further it highlights that Birmingham depended on the surrounding agricultural district. The annual cattle show, facilitated by the railway, brought the country into the city. And, as the middle class prospered in Birmingham, members of the younger generations of prospering families moved out to enjoy their inherited wealth as country gentlemen shooting over their pointers and retrievers.

FRIENDS OF ALL SAINTS' CHURCH, BRIXWORTH
UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

27th Brixworth Lecture

ARCHITECTURE, LITURGY AND ROMANITAS
AT ALL SAINTS' BRIXWORTH

DR RICHARD GEM

SATURDAY, 7th NOVEMBER 2009 at 5 p.m.
Tea from 4 p.m. Heritage Centre

Tickets £5.00 (£3.00 students) on the door or in advance from:

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EVENTS SPONSORED BY THE FRIENDS

Diary Dates

The 2009/10 Seminar Programme can be found at the back of this Newsletter.

The **Annual General Meeting** of the Friends will take place on **Thursday 19th November** following the seminar, with wine and chat to follow.

Hoskins Lecture 2010
To be announced.

Spring 2010
To be announced.

Publications by Friends

Anne Pegg

Ed. *Friends of the Centre of English Local History Newsletter* (2008), 45pp.

Pam Fisher

'Houses for the dead: the provision of mortuaries in London, 1843-1889', *The London Journal*, 34:1 (March 2009), pp. 1-15.

'Death, decomposition and the dead-house: the English public mortuary', *Funeral Service Journal*, 124:5 (May 2009), pp. 90-95.

Editor (with M Thompson & A Fox), *English Local History at Leicester: A Bibliography and History, 1999-2008* (Leicester, 2009).

'Preface', in M. Thompson, P.J. Fisher and A. Fox (eds), *English Local History at Leicester: A Bibliography and History, 1999-2008* (Leicester, 2009).

Penelope Upton

'Thomas Fisher and the Depopulation of Nether Itchington in the Sixteenth Century', *Warwickshire History*, 13:4 (2006/7), pp144-154. Reprinted (as BALH first prize winner) in *The Local Historian*, 39:1 (2009), pp. 3-12.

' The Lost Parish Church of All Saints, Bishops Itchington', *Warwickshire History*, 13:6 (2007/8, pp.217-225.

Anthony A. Upton
'Knowle Sanctuary: a case study', *Warwickshire History* 14:1 (2008), pp.3-13.

Papers presented

James P. Bowen

' The Carriers of Lancaster, 1820-1920', Histfest 2009, University of Lancaster, May 2009.

Pam Fisher

'Ethics and expertise in the nineteenth-century court', Conference 'Authority, Experts and the Law', University of Hull, September 2009.

'Emotional responses to the autopsy in nineteenth-century England', International Conference on Death, Dying and Disposal, University of Durham, September 2009.

Posters presented

The following posters were presented at the Conference 'Local History in Britain after Hoskins', Leicester, July 2009.

James P. Bowen : "A Landscape of 'Improvement': the impact of James Loch, Chief agent to the Marquis of Stafford on the Lilleshall estate, Shropshire, 1720-1820".

Mandy deBelin: 'The Hunting Transition and the landscape'.

Heather Flack: 'Houses of Wribbenhall, Worcestershire'.

Maureen Harris: ' "A Schismatical People": conflict between ministers and parishioners in Restoration Warwickshire'.

Mary-Jane Pamphilon: Punishment and the New Poor Law in Kent, with specific reference to the recording and reporting of offences committed in the workhouses, 1835-1914'.

Ann Schmidt: 'Belvoir Angel Slates in the East Midlands'.

Jean Tomlinson: 'Eden Philpotts: a study of his writing on rural England'.

Friends' Papers

The following Papers are still in print and available for purchase. Please send enquiries to: 'Publications Sales, Friends of ELH, 5 Salisbury Rd., Leicester, LE1 7QR. All priced at £6.00 + £1.00 p&p.

No. 4, Marion Aldis and Pam Inder, *John Sneyd's Census of Ipstones.*
No. 7, Geoff Wolfe, *Keeping the Peace: Warwickshire, 1630-1700.*
No. 8, Pam Fisher, *An Object of Ambition? The Office and Role of the Coroner in Two Midland Counties, 1751-1888.*
No. 9, S. Pinches, M. Whalley & D. Postles (eds), *The Market Place and the Place of the Market.*
No. 10, Derryan Paul, *Why so Few? Rebuilding Country Churches in Herefordshire, 1662-1762.*

No. 6, Mandy deBelin, *Mapping Skills Tutorial.*
Now out of print, this can be downloaded from **http://www.le.ac.uk/elh/friends/html/0.07.publications.html**

New Bibliography

Pam Fisher, Alan Fox, Mike Thompson: 'English Local History at Leicester: A Bibliography and History, 1999-2008'.

Published as a free download at the above website. Alternatively, as a CD for £2.00. Paper copies on request.

Bibliography
Margery Tranter, Ken Hawker, John Rowley and Mike Thompson (eds), *English Local History:The Leicester Approach. A Departmental Bibliography and History, 1948-1998.* £6.00 + £1.00 p&p (reduced from £11.50).

Local and Regional History Series (Hertfordshire Press).
Vol. 1 Susan Oosthuizen, *Landscapes Decoded: the Origins and Development of Cambridgeshire's Medieval Fields* .£14.99 + p&p.
Vol. 2 Ed. C. Dyer, *The Self-contained Village: the Social History of Rural Communities 1250-1900.* £14.99 + p&p.

Explorations in Local History Series
Vol. 1 H. Fox, *The Evolution of the Fishing Village: landscape and society along the South Devon coast, 1086-1550.* £13.50 + p&p.

Professor Keith Snell, captured in the village stocks of Sudbury (south Derbyshire), while teaching a Saturday School in April 2009 on the theme of 'estate villages'. This illustration is a visual metaphor for the predicament of the modern university professor.

Photo J. Bowen

Annual General Meeting 2008

The following officers and committee members were elected:

Chairman	Pam Fisher
Secretary	Alan Fox
Treasurer	Lydia Pye
Membership Secretary	Freda Raphael
Newsletter Editor	Anne Pegg
Programme Secretary	Maggie Whalley
Committee Members	Frank Galbraith
	Noel Tornbohm

At that stage the Centre representative and student representatives had not been nominated. Later Dr Richard Jones accepted the nomination as representative for the Centre staff and James Bowen and Eleanor Davidson for the students.

After welcoming members, Chairman Pam Fisher gave her positive report on the year ended, which had seen a small increase in membership to 297. There had been several successful events – a well-attended Conference to honour Professor Harold Fox, the annual Hoskins lecture and a study day in Stamford. Thanks were expressed to Maggie Whalley and many helpers for the arrangements for events, to Anne Pegg for the latest Newsletter and to committee members for their work and expertise over the year. Coming events were announced together with a progress report on the new bibliography being supervised by Mike Thompson. During coming months it is planned to revise the Friends' website.

Membership subscriptions had remained at the same level since 1999 and the possibility of an increase had been suggested. After some debate there was unanimous agreement that **from October 2009** the new rates should be **£12 per annum for single membership** and **£15 for a joint subscription**. Membership would remain free to students in accordance with the constitution.

ACCOUNTS for year ending 30 Sept. 2008

INCOME		**EXPENDITURE**	
Subscription	£1396.00	General Expenses	£ 379.85
Donations	£ 380 .00	Student support	£1776.00
Book sales	£ 374.10	Brit. Assoc. of LH	£ 58.00
Publications	£ 244.00	Hoskins lecture	£ 193.06
Dividends/Interest	£ 838.57	Newsletter	£ 450.79
Harold Fox Conference	£1830.39	Donation Naseby Conference	£ 200.00
Other Events	£ 32.73	TOTAL	£3057.70
TOTAL	£5095.79		

RESTRICTED FUND

H. Fox Memorial Fund £1167.00

Net receipts/payments for year	£2038. 09	General Fund
	£1167.00	Restricted Fund
TOTAL	£3205.09	

ASSETS		**H. Fox Memorial Fund (restricted)**
Balance at CAF Gold & Nat West a/c	£13105.53	TOTAL £1483.00
Investments at market value	£12046.78 [Cost £15000]	
TOTAL FUNDS	£25152.13	

BOOKS, BOOKS, BOOKS

Thanks to all those members who have donated their unwanted books to the Friends, our annual second-hand book sale has provided a useful boost to our funds. The problem is, it is only once a year. I say problem, because some people who might want to purchase a volume or two are prevented from doing so if they cannot attend the Hoskins lecture, and because the stock of unsold items has to be held over until the next year before we have another opportunity to turn our books into cash.

This year we are trying something different. There is a very good second-hand bookshop on the main campus, in the Students' Union (Percy Gee) building. It carries a wide range of stock, in all subjects, and is open Monday to Friday during University terms between 10 am and 4 pm. They have agreed to sell some books for us, on a commission basis, and just four days after the first books were delivered to them, we received our first £16 from sales. Having an outlet for our second-hand books that is open all year should increase our income, and also allows members who live near Leicester a further opportunity to browse and purchase. A further advantage is that the bookshop has an online listing of all their stock, so you can see what is available before leaving home. This new arrangement will not affect our annual 'Hoskins Day' bookstall, which will continue as before, and new donations will be made available for the first time at that event, but some unsold stock will be released for sale through the bookshop immediately afterwards .

The bookshop is presently in the bowels of the Percy Gee building (with limited signposting), but will be moving to smaller temporary premises sometime during 2009-10 as redevelopment work on that building gets underway. The new permanent premises will be larger and better. It may need to shut for a few days either side of the move, the date of which is currently uncertain. Therefore, while we hope as many people as possible will go along and see what there is, do check the bookshop website before you visit, to check where the shop is located, and that it will be open when you intend to call.

Pam Fisher

Midland History Postgraduate Day Conference

Saturday 14 November 2009

at The Centre for English Local History,
Marc Fitch House, 5 Salisbury Road, Leicester LE1 7QR

The conference is sponsored by the journal *Midland History*. All postgraduates and others researching the history of the Midlands are welcome to attend. Lunch and refreshments will be provided and there will be no charge.

If you wish to attend, please send your name, email address and brief details to:

Dr A Hopper
ajh69@le.ac.uk

Professor R Cust
R.P.Cust@bham.ac.uk

Hoskins' Lecture 2009

Dr Rosamund Faith

'Exploring Anglo-Saxon Farms'.

The Friends could not have had a better guide to exploring Anglo –Saxon farms than Dr Ros Faith. Ros obtained her PhD here at the Centre (then Department) of English Local History in 1962 with a thesis on the peasant land market in Berkshire in the later middle ages. She has spent the intervening years studying the English peasantry and the landscape in which they lived and had their being. She is now a fellow at Kellog College, Oxford, and tutor with the Department of Continuing Education. She is writing a book for Oxford University Press on Anglo-Saxon farms.

Following Hoskins' lead on Devon's Domesday farms, which he felt were 'much the same size as the ones he knew, and about the same distance from each other, and in much the same location', she began to explore actual Anglo-Saxon farms. Place names often provide the first clue, in Devon frequently taking the form of a personal name + 'worthy'. More evidence comes from the ancient curving boundaries of farms, the banks on which the walls are built sometimes being very ancient boundaries indeed. With Andrew Fleming, who has studied the reaves of Dartmoor and the landscape of Swaledale, she made a breakthrough in the research at Yadsworthy. The field was bounded by such a low bank and carpeted with bluebells, indicating that the land had been part of the rough woodland grazing of the farm. Ros commented on the rather arable bias of settlement studies, the archaeology of farmsteads often producing evidence for growing crops rather than animal husbandry. However, the ubiquitous loom-weights testify to sheep-keeping. She proposed to work 'against the grain' and look at the settlements from the point of view of animal husbandry. She began by stressing the omnivorous nature of early breeds, compared to the silage and cow-cake diet of their present descendants. These early animals browsed on bushes and young saplings as well as grass, a point made by Oliver Rackham when he said that the key shapers of woodland were not people but animals. Then followed a discussion of the meaning of *leah*, first defined by Margaret Gelling as clearings in woodland, an interpretation later modified by Della Hooke to suggest grazing land interspersed with trees, in short, wood-pasture.

If Anglo-Saxon farming were more pastoral than arable, then what effect did that have on people's mental world and their perceptions of the landscape? Borrowing certain 'tools to think with' from Pierre Bourdieu, notably the concept of 'social capital' (as exemplified in common rights) and the notion of '*habitus*' enables one to attempt an understanding of the mental world of our forebears. Not that Anglo-Saxon farmers were entirely removed from outside influences and even, as is becoming more apparent, from the pressures of the market.

Ros described the settlements along the gravel terraces of the Thames as an example of reading the landscape 'against the grain'. What if these terraces were not settled primarily because their soils were easily ploughed, as is the conventional wisdom, but because they allowed access to a variety of pasture types. The gravels themselves were overlain by rich meadow, as a recent study of Yarnton in Oxfordshire has shown. Beyond that lay a low ridge of heathy soils, backed by wooded hills. At the other end of the Thames, at Mucking in Essex, the available pasture included fen and woodland as well as tidal saltmarsh for the sheep. The *habitus*, 'our place', of these farmers and their families was not confined to the farm yard and the surrounding fields, but would have covered an area of some miles about. These territories might be bounded by rivers, which in turn gave their name to the chief place and the people, like that around the river Walkham in Devon. Similar small territories may be identified in the lathes of Kent or the *scir* which is a widely dispersed place name element. Jolliffe has suggested that these *scirs* 'must be the *regio* of the grants of the eighth century'. The key thing is that the territories had access to common pasture. Where neighbouring peoples and territories had to share such pasture, as on Dartmoor, there developed a complex system of common rights and a clearly defined system of boundaries. Everyone knew 'their place' and its bounds.

Ros then went on to discuss the social importance of the communal turning out and rounding up of beasts. Livestock business was at the core of these meetings, but they were also opportunities for marketing, feasting and match-making. They were also one occasion on which

authority could meet the dispersed population, often in the form of collecting taxation and other payments, usually at a traditional meeting place, a hill or tree, seemingly remote from the settlements. It is possible, as suggested by O.S. Anderson, that the hundreds often derived from ancient districts and that it was the meetings which took place at these sites that gave them their importance. 'The *thing* (meeting) was what mattered … a district centred on the moot rather than the manor.' She acknowledged here the importance of Charles Phythian-Adams' work in reinstating folklore as evidence for past times. The drovers and lookers called on spiritual elements in the landscape, something brought out, too, in the work of Graham Jones.

Having set the Anglo-Saxon farm in a much wider context than just the farmstead and having stressed the importance of animals, Ros acknowledged that arable farming was, however, very important. It was reasonable of the Domesday scribes to enquire how many ploughs there were in each place and whether more could be employed. There was an increase in cereal production after the Conquest and the origin of the communal field system is rightly an ongoing preoccupation of rural history. A more subtle interpretation is possible, though, by acknowledging the relationships of animal and stock husbandry. Different areas had different proportions of animals to crops, and this in turn seems to have been related to different social organisations. For example, the sokemen of the wolds of Lincolnshire did seem to be freer of manorial control than the men who worked the in-field/out/field system in the valleys. Can this close study of farming types help us to understand not only the landscape, but also something of the social structure of the Anglo-Saxon farmers too?

The annual gathering of local historians in honour of their 'patron saint' W.G. Hoskins, in quest of the common right of knowledge, closed with the usual feasting on tea and cakes and the marketing of second-hand books to raise money for the common good.

Sylvia Pinches

Study Weekend: April 2009

Beverley and the East Riding

As we stood on a windy hillside in the Yorkshire Wolds with the sun shining on the southern edge of the Moors we then appreciated the attraction of the East Riding of Yorkshire. And why one of our members spoke so enthusiastically about the area.

Friday 3 April found us taking up residence in the Bishop Burton Agricultural College for our visit to Beverley, Hull and Wharram Percy. On arrival we enjoyed the customary introductory refreshments before listening to an introduction to the East Riding. It was explained that because of its position, almost a peninsular jutting into the North Sea, very few people take the trouble to make a visit.

Called the East Riding from Saxon times until 1974 when Local Government reorganisation decreed that it should a part of Humberside. Later the name was changed again to East Yorkshire; for local inhabitants this was at least a step in the right direction! The origin of the name stems from Saxon or Viking *'austr'* – east and '*priding'* or *'pridungr'* – a third. Until the above mentioned reorganisation, Yorkshire had, of course, three Ridings.

Geologically the area is divided into two distinct regions, to the west is The Wolds – a dissected plateau of permeable chalk with the scarp slope looking westward to the plain of York and the dip slope with a more gentle decline to Holderness – a peninsula of boulder clay with low ridges and mounds of sand and gravel on which the settlements tend to be found.

The River Hull is a notional boundary between these two zones; flowing north to south it has been an important economic factor to both Hull and Beverley forming a trading link between the two towns, Europe and, in particular, Scandinavia.

In the evening after a well cooked meal, served in ample Yorkshire portions, we were introduced to Beverley by Pamela Hopkins a local historian. The significant features of Beverley are two very fine churches, the Minster and St Mary's, each with their respective market places. As a town Beverley prospered between 700 and mid 16c starting with arrival of St John a former Bishop of Hexham and York who founded a college of secular deacons. After his death in 721 the church became a place of pilgrimage bringing

prosperity to the town. King Athelstan visiting on his way to fight the Scots ordered the building of a new church after the sacking of an earlier structure by the Vikings. He also granted a charter, subsequently enhanced by later monarchs so that, at one time, the markets became more extensive than those of York. The Wolds became an important source of wool and the manufacture of cloth brought even further prosperity. After the dissolution of the collegiate church by Edward VI, the shrine of St John of Beverley diminished in attraction and poverty followed. During the 18th century, farming became more profitable and the early beginnings of the Industrial Revolution helped the town expand with the tanning of hides, brick and tile making and shipbuilding.

Dinner at Bishop Burton College
Photo F. Raphael

On Saturday morning we were able to admire, with Pamela's guidance, the glory of the Minster. Completed over three centuries, it is possible to see the development of the architectural styles starting with Early English at its commencement around 1180 through Decorated to Perpendicular at the west end. Altogether this cathedral sized church deserves to be in the top echelon of British ecclesiastical achievements.

During a walk through the busy Wednesday Market and the uniquely named Toll Gavel (the place where market tolls were paid) to the Market Cross of 1724, in Saturday Market, we were able to appreciate the Georgian domestic architecture, above the shop fronts, a demonstration of the prosperity that once again visited Beverley in the 1700's. Passing along the uniquely named Toll Gavel (the place where market tolls were collected) we came to St Mary's church although perhaps less grand than the Minster it is nevertheless most attractive. In fact Pevsner went on to say 'that St Mary at Beverley is one of the most beautiful churches in England is universal knowledge'. High praise indeed but as mentioned above few people actually travel here to sample the beauty and interest. The main part of the church is of the Decorated style with a very fine Perpendicular west window. This was the church favoured by the guilds and on one of the capitals of the nave piers is a lovely colourful carved group of five minstrels.

That afternoon our coach, with informative driver, took us over the Wolds through the village of Wetwang (nothing to do with dampness underfoot but ON meaning the place where judgments were made). Wetwang is the site of a significant chariot burial excavated only a few years ago. Wharram Percy was our destination and here we had an excellent guide in Anne Clark who has been involved in the excavation and interpretation of the site for almost 40 years. Arguably it is the most important Deserted Medieval Village site in the whole country having been recognised as such by Maurice Beresford. One intriguing aspect is that it covers so many historical eras from the Neolithic to Bronze Age to Roman and Saxon then Medieval times. Although earlier finds have been made the first settlement is likely to have been in the Bronze Age, the Iron Age is evidenced by pottery and a burial in the valley below the church. Confirmation of Roman occupation is found in masonry from a corn drying kiln and tesserae. The construction of the church echoes the whole site in its representation of the many periods of architecture starting with the 11th century arch and ending with the short present chancel of the 17th century. The church was the parish centre for a number of nearby settlements until the 19th century when village churches were built in the fervour of the Oxford Movement. The last service was held in 1944.

Excavation started in 1950 and the twelfth volume recording the work and finds is just about to be published; an indication of the extent and effort put into the project. On the ground we were able to see the marked outline of the South Manor and those of some peasant cottages. The finding of the South Manor was typical of the experience of the whole site in that the archaeologists started the investigation of a medieval peasant house and croft and discovered, unexpectedly, a manor house of 12th century and 13th century. In addition finds indicated that there had been an important residence in Anglo Saxon and Viking times.

Wharram Percy
Photo A. Pegg

Later, after another splendid meal, we were treated to an entertaining, lively and well informed lecture on Hull's heritage by Robb Robinson of the Blaydes Institute. This presented some of the aspects of Hull's past that is overlooked even by natives of the city. The full and correct title is Kingston upon Hull a reference to (a) the acquisition of land by Edward 1in 1292 in order to establish a base for his struggles against the Scots and (b) the origin of the name taken from the Danish *'hul'* a hollow.

In terms of personalities the most famous is surely William Wilberforce, well known as the author of the Bill to abolish slavery which was passed just five days before his death in 1809. There are, however, many others, especially explorers and industrialists who deserve to be recognised. For example it is little known that most of the crew of Scott's and Shackleton's expeditions were trawlermen used to the hardships of Arctic waters into which Hull fishing vessels sailed regularly. Other notables range from the poet Andrew Marvell to Sir John Ellerman, who when he died in 1933 left £30 million making him the richest man in Europe. Industrial prominence is shown by Reckitt & Colman remembered for many well known household commodities such as mustard and Brasso (not to be used in the same context!) together with Smith and Nephew makers of the ubiquitous 'Elastoplast'.

Shipbuilding was an important industry that built the hundreds of trawlers through which Hull prospered in the 19th and 20th centuries but some significant vessels were built in Hull, of which the world in general is quite unaware. For instance, the Bounty, of mutiny fame, was built in Hull as was the steam powered passenger and cargo ship on Lake Titicaca, the highest navigable lake in the world.

Our introduction to Hull was continued the following morning (Sunday) by a guided tour of the Old Town with Nick Evans. Sadly, among the gems of Georgian architecture are many gaps cause by bombing during WWII. We started our tour at the foot of the 90ft (28 metres) monument dedicated to Sir William Wilberforce, now placed in front of the 8 storey 1960's technical college. From there we were able to stroll through the original commercial centre to see the mainly Georgian houses of the merchants who would have had their warehouse at the rear with access to the river. Also evident were the staithes or lanes from the High Street to the river. Hull's first dock was the Queen's, built in 1778 (then the largest in Britain), entered from the River Hull – it was filled in to make ornamental gardens two hundred years later.

From the river we moved inland for the riverside to see Holy Trinity church, said to be the largest parish church in England (I think we must have six largest churches in England!) but certainly one of the earliest to use brickwork in the structure. Close by is Trinity House, originally founded in 1369 as a religious guild which became a powerful authority in charge of navigation, pilotage and buoys and as a result very important in Hull's maritime history. The fine building we see today dates from 1753, a little before it became a well-respected nautical college.

Before reaching our final destination we were shown 'the world's smallest window' built into the wall of a public house, The George, measuring 15ins x 1in (37cm x 2.5cm), allegedly placed there so that the approach of excise men could be spied. We were then in the uniquely named Land of Green Ginger. The name is variously said to derive from either the fact that the owner grew ginger in his garden or ginger was the main spice imported and stored there.

Lunch was taken in the atmospheric 'Olde White Harte'. Built in the 17th century, it lies in a narrow alley between Silver Street and Bowlalley Lane. It is said to have been the rendezvous where plotters of the 1688 Revolution met. It retains much of its atmosphere without being twee.

This was a fitting place to end a splendid weekend in this relatively unknown but fascinating part of England.

Frank Galbraith

Conferences

On Saturday 6 December 2008, the Medieval Settlement Research Group and the Society for Landscape Studies came together at Leicester to celebrate the life and scholarship of Harold Fox. Seven papers were delivered after the theme *Fishing, Transhumance and Woodland in Medieval Britain.*

The morning was given over to the issue of wood-pasture. Andrew Fleming presented some provisional thoughts about this landscape type in Powys. Drawing on previous research in other parts of the country, notably Swaledale, Andrew has been able to define five different wood-pasture types: regional intercommons or 'shire' woods; local intercommons shared by a number of communities; community wood-pasture within particular administrative and farming units; wood-pasture shared by a number of farms; and the single farm wood-pasture. Work in Wales is at an early stage, however Andrew signalled the future direction of his work by demonstrating how one might use a combination of map evidence, the testimony of place/field names such as 'plane/plain', and most particularly the identification of ancient pollards and pollard groups, to recognise remnants of this important economic resource.

The focus of the second paper, delivered by Della Hooke, was Anglo-Saxon wood-pasture. A thesis was developed, using the well-known evidence of long-distance estate linkages and drove ways, and further defined by charter evidence for particular types of tree, that suggested the careful management and exploitation of extensive wood-pastures in the pre-conquest period. Notably, Della intimated that the place-name term *leah*, variously defined as wood or woodland clearance, might refer specifically to this type of landscape. In particular she guided us towards the Weald, north-west Worcestershire, and Oxfordshire where the evidence for extensive wood-pasture was most clear.

The final paper of the morning saw Nicola Bannister presenting some recent field survey results from two woodland areas in the Weald – Dering Wood and Bedgebury Forest. She argued that each lay on the boundaries of former dens (wood-pastures), the latter linked to more remote estate centres by drove ways. These lines in the landscape seem to have been perpetuated by their adoption as the late boundaries of manors, parishes and hundreds. Within the modern woodlands it has proved possible to disentangle the complex sequence of earthworks found within, pointing towards localized and changing management and exploitative strategies at different periods.

The afternoon initially took us to the world of fish. James Barrett's extensive investigation of the fishing industries of the Baltic Sea, North Sea, and North Atlantic, using stable isotopic analysis, has revealed some intriguing patterns of production and consumption that chart the rise and rise of marine fishing during the Middle Ages. Unable to use modern specimens for controls, due to recent water pollution, James' solution has been to sample heads for zonal signatures of where fish were caught, and then to sample tails as more likely elements of the fish that would have been traded. The evidence points to an increase in marine exploitation around the first millennium AD in addition to interesting changing temporal and spatial patterns of consumption for species such as cod and herring.

Mark Gardiner took us to Ireland, and in particular to the Mourne 'mountains' via Leitrim and the uplands of Antrim, in search of evidence for transhumance. The most visible evidence is the huts used by seasonal pastoralists. Mark identified two types of hut plans which he associated with different periods of activity: a circular type probably deriving from seventeenth-century transhumance; and multi-celled rectangular buildings associated with a later phase. Their distribution, restricted to the northern slopes of the Mournes merited comment, pointing towards different regional economies and practices of those who inhabited the coastal plain and those who lived in the interior.

Using place-names and documentary evidence, combined with field survey and maps, Angus Winchester explored the function and date of sheilings in the north-west of England. The evidence he presented pointed towards diversity rather than commonality, to the extent that he was able to propose that some sheiling names had little to do with transhumance, but rather referred to agricultural outbuildings such as lambing sheds and peat stores. Complex though the evidence was there were also indications that such names might be coined in the early modern period rather than in the early medieval.

The final paper was presented by Peter Herring. Sumptuously illustrated with scenes

from Devon and Cornwall, Peter explored the evidence for transhumance in the south-west peninsula, suggesting that it both began and ended early. The complexities involved in the movement of people and animals were highlighted and the various scales at which this system might operate – household, hamlet, community, and hundred. And in a final section which Harold himself would have very much appreciated, that placed people back into these landscapes, the experience and the meaning of transhumance was sought.

Richard Jones

Local History in Britain After Hoskins, 9-12 July 2009

This conference, arranged to mark the 50th anniversary of the publication of W.G. Hoskins's book, *Local History in England*, was opened by Professor Christopher Dyer. Welcoming delegates to 'OSV' – Oadby Student Village – he explained that these attractive properties were once the houses of successful Leicester industrialists and factory owners, including one known as the 'Knicker King'. Manor Road, he told us, has been described as once being 'one of the richest roads in Europe', a comment that he said, to much laughter from the audience, did not carry a footnote. This led us nicely into the papers by our two keynote speakers who each, in different ways, spoke about how Hoskins bridged, or attempted to bridge, the 'chasm' between the amateur local historian and the professional.

Local History in England was not a ground-breaking book as *The Making of the English Landscape* had been, but was intended to be 'a book of advice and encouragement' for the 'great army of amateurs' wanting to find out more about their native parish or the place where they lived.

Our first keynote speaker, Dr David Dymond, author of a more recent 'How-to' book, *Researching and Writing History* (1999, but with a new edition launched at this conference) is not only an experienced local history tutor, author and a trustee of the British Association for Local History, but is also first cousin once removed of W.G. Hoskins. He took as his subject 'Fifty years of local history: some personal reflections'. Local History was undergoing a transformation in 1959, when *Local History in England* was published. No longer was it the preserve of antiquarians. Hoskins was writing for a 'great army' of interested amateurs. There had been previous 'how-to' books for local historians, but Hoskins wrote in a far more supportive style than others. He recognised that the best amateur historian could be as good as a professional, and by providing them with guidance and encouragement he advanced the democratisation of the subject. Since 1959 that amateur army has grown larger; today, local history in all its forms is a major leisure interest. But amateurs now, as in 1959, fall into two distinct categories. Some have attended adult education classes in local history, taken diplomas, certificates or postgraduate degrees, or are self-taught from wide reading and hands-on experience with documents. Although not professional historians, nevertheless they have made, and are making, a significant contribution to knowledge. Others, often just as enthusiastic and keen to disseminate their 'knowledge', perpetuate myths, sometimes invent a few of their own, fail to footnote their remarks and, having no interest in the world beyond their particular parish, fail to contextualise their accounts or distinguish between the typical and the atypical. Their 'efforts' have resulted in the words 'local historian' having pejorative connotations among some professionals. Yet although the relationship between some professionals and the amateur can be strained, partnerships are being formed. Across the country major projects are being devolved to sub-groups containing both amateur and professional members. Good examples, include projects such as England's Past for Everyone and the Victoria County History, with professional historians at the helm, working with volunteers to produce high quality local history. The reality is that the two 'sides' can work together in harmony and be inter-dependent and mutually supportive, with local history the beneficiary.

That led us nicely into the presentation by our second keynote speaker, Professor John Beckett, Executive Director of the Victoria County History, who spoke on 'W.G. Hoskins, the Victoria County History and English local history'. In *Local History in England*, Hoskins criticised the writers of many parish histories for 'the excessive space given to the minutiae of manorial history, and at the same time the almost complete neglect of the history of the village itself'. Why then, asked our speaker, was Hoskins instrumental in re-establishing the work of the Victoria County History in Leicestershire in the post-war period, given that VCH parish histories

at that time focused heavily on the descent of the manor?

In 1947, before the foundation of the Department for English Local History, W.G. Hoskins approached the Institute of Historical Research in London, and then wrote to F.L. Attenborough, the Principal of University College, Leicester, with a proposal to re-commence work on the Leicestershire VCH, the last volume of which had been published in 1907. The proposal was agreed, Hoskins was appointed as county editor, and between 1947 and 1952 he was involved in raising the finance, finding authors and editing text. Despite a move to Oxford in 1952, when he resigned the county editorship, his involvement continued. The four volumes published between 1954 and 1964 established a record of productivity for the VCH that remains unbroken, and includes the first volume ever published on a single town (Leicester). Yet Hoskins was to ruffle a few feathers within the VCH. Until then the overall model was one of general volumes on aspects of a county's history, accompanied by a very small number of topographical volumes (just two were planned to cover the whole of Leicestershire), which were mostly written in London. These topographical volumes were, as explained to Hoskins, to contain a small number of pieces 'designed to supplement the comprehensive articles in the "general" volumes, not to stand alone'. However, Hoskins's vision was for a series of parish histories written by keen amateurs, and he recruited a number of people to produce these for Leicestershire.

Hoskins's first external attack on the VCH was in 1952, in *History Today*, where he accused its editors of having a 'lop-sided' view of history, and treating the country as though it contained 'only one social class of any interest'. Pugh issued a response within the pages of the *Amateur Historian*, saying that the VCH was changing. And change it did. Yet change was slow, and Hoskins became disillusioned His desire to 'democratise' local history and develop the skills of amateurs, was of little interest to the VCH in London; the gulf between the amateur and the professional was as wide as ever. But history moves on. Hoskins's vision of linking amateur and professional historians through the work of the VCH is now being realised. Professional historians working for the VCH are now making heavy use of volunteers in producing the topographical volumes. Indeed the old model of VCH county editors being appointed from the ranks of VCH assistant editors is also now breaking down, with the appointment of an editor with no previous professional involvement with the VCH. The question of why Hoskins wished to be involved with an organisation that produced the type of parish history he had once deprecated cannot be answered with any certainty, but his battles with his overlords and his powers to influence have left their mark and remoulded the VCH in terms of both its content and method of production.

As ever at a conference, some of the most interesting snippets of information come from questions and comments from the audience. We were advised that when Hoskins entered a nursing home in his twilight years, a set of 15th-century probate inventories were discovered in his house, that he had borrowed from a local archive in the 1940s! How times change.

The remainder of the conference, from Friday through to Sunday, was divided into eight sessions each with six or seven speakers, and four outings, but run in parallel, so delegates could attend four sessions and an outing. Choosing which sessions to attend was not an easy task, for so many sounding interesting. My personal research interests led me to join any that might mention 'death', and in studying the programme I managed to find plague, fatal burns and battlefield casualties. Not only did the papers range far and wide in terms of place, and also period, but it was particularly pleasing to note the mix of speakers, including Professors, professional historians working outside academia and postgraduate students. Some of the latter had clearly come to the academic study of local history fairly late in life – perhaps from the 'army' of interested amateurs that Hoskins would have been pleased to welcome. It was also good to see the Centre well represented among the poster displays, several current students having been encouraged by Andy Hopper to take the opportunity to present their work to others in this format. These posters, by James Bowen, Mandy deBelin, Heather Flack, Maureen Harris, Mary-Jane Pamphilon, Ann Schmidt, Jean Tomlinson and Andy himself, were a credit to those who created them and also an excellent advertisement for the breadth and depth of the research carried out at the Centre.

On Friday morning I joined the session on 'Culture and belief'. Sheri Olsen's paper was the only one that was not about religion, and she talked about the varied roles of women in 14th-

century Ellington, in Huntingdonshire. Within the manor there were two settlements where women's names predominate in the records. A large proportion of the rector's tenants living in part of the manor known as Sybethorpe were female, suggesting this might have been a deliberate policy on the rector's part, because women were more 'useful'. (Perhaps this might become a footnote in a future history of 'multi-tasking'.) The remaining papers were linked by an overriding theme of competing religious cultures. Mairi Macdonald of Stratford Local Collections spoke knowledgably about Stratford's Gild of the Holy Cross, which attracted members from outside Stratford, partly as a result of an apparent series of recruitment drives from the mid 15th-century. Many of these members were also members of gilds in their home towns, but joined the Stratford gild for the additional 'heavenly pension' it would provide. Claire Cross, Emeritus Professor at York, then described events in the parish of St Thomas, Salisbury, during the turbulent years of the Reformation. The taking down, putting back up, and taking down again of the rood was played out in churches across the country, but in Salisbury there was an added battle over the church dedication. Originally to the former Archbishop, St Thomas of Canterbury, the church was re-dedicated to St Thomas the Apostle in 1538. Under the reign of Mary the parishioners re-adopted St Thomas the Martyr as their patron saint, but following her death the dedication changed once more to St Thomas the Apostle. Religious change was also the topic of the next speaker, Emma Watson, also from York. She described the role of the court of high commission in enforcing religious change in Elizabethan Yorkshire. The court was established in 1561 because Catholicism was widespread in the north, but was of limited effect precisely for that reason, as there were not enough high status Protestant gentry to hold office. Moving swiftly to the 19th century, we were then treated to a well-illustrated paper by Ted Royle on the 'battle of the styles', as nonconformist congregations began to build Gothic-style chapels rather than the classical styles of earlier years. The Dissenters Chapel Act of 1844 was one catalyst and gave congregations the confidence to challenge the Anglicans on their own ground. Although many of these buildings are traditional 'preaching-boxes' inside, from the outside they mimic the new buildings of the Church Commissioners – often with a steeple deliberately constructed one foot higher than that of the parish church to proclaim their equality (or was it to claim superiority?). The final paper from Mark Smith described how Evangelicals living in the Anglo-Catholic parishes in the north of Oxford battled from the 1870s to provide themselves with a place of worship that met their religious needs. This was not a case of providing a new church for an expanding population, but the more thorny issue of creating what was effectively an Anglican church for a 'gathered congregation' living in several parishes in the vicinity, which they wanted to be outside the control of the local bishop, who was known for presenting Anglo-Catholics. St Andrew's was eventually founded in 1905 in a process that would seem to have parallels in the modern Anglican church, with 'flying bishops' now ministering to Anglo-Catholic congregations within Evangelical dioceses.

The choice for Friday afternoon lay between 'Community and society' or 'History of local history', and I chose the former. The range of topics was vast. Glynn Kelso combined archaeological and geographical techniques to 'rebuild' from fragmentary evidence the medieval rural settlement of Springwood Park near Roxburgh. Jennifer Ward then spoke about the relationship between monasteries and small religious communities with the towns outside their doors, a relationship that is often overlooked by local historians, even though the religious houses were often major employers. Their finances were also inter-twined, as parishioners chose between leaving money to the monks or friars, or to the parish church. Judith Mills then described the divisions within Nottingham's governing body in the 16th century. Historians frequently describe power struggles between burgesses and the council, but she has found a far more complex picture, with two opposing factions within the council itself. Most people have heard of Thomas Coram's foundling hospital in London, but many do not realise that for a short period it had branches in a number of places around the country. Our next speaker, Kate Iles, presented a study of the Shrewsbury branch between 1759 and 1772. The branches arose because the foundling hospital had petitioned parliament for money, which was agreed in 1757 (for 3 years) on condition that they took in every child offered to them. Overseers in parishes around the country took the opportunity forcibly to remove illegitimate children from their mothers, bundling them off to London. Needing room for all these

infants, more foundling hospitals had to be opened around the country. Vicky Holmes then talked about fatal household accidents in Suffolk. Using coroners' records and newspaper reports of inquests, she has been able to build a detailed picture of domestic life in 19th century Suffolk, and stressed the importance of neighbours, in looking out for each other and in providing character references for each other when children died. Our next topic was the Lincoln cattle market, presented by Andrew Walker. By the late 19th century it was increasing seen as unacceptable for animals to be driven through the street to market, and his paper was about the sites occupied by the market during its history. There was also a concurrent movement for abattoirs to be located outside town centres. As an aside, we were advised that the word abattoir means 'to cause to fall as trees are caused to fall' – an appropriate comment given the speakers were having to contend with the sound of trees outside the conference hall being pruned or felled and passed through an industrial shredder. The final speaker of the session was Zoe Dyndor, a recent postgraduate of CELH and now in the final stages of a PhD at Northampton. Her findings on community, society and politics in Northampton borough in the 19th century were fascinating and spawned some debate about whether it was a sensible strategy for a parliamentary candidate to issue an election address to shoemakers, or whether this might be counter-productive. Her slides included a handbill issued by 'A Non Elector' to the 'working classes', urging them not to vote for the 'work-house candidate', and to talk to their wives, making sure they asked them whether they wanted to be sent to a workhouse when they became a widow. This seems not only unusual in stressing the role of women as influencers, but also in alluding to the mortality of the voter, perhaps a strange tactic to adopt.

The choice on Saturday morning was between' Family, population and migration' and 'Identity and belonging'. I chose the former, which began with a paper on Rye, Sussex, by Gilliam Draper of BALH, which discussed the mortality pattern in the town in the 14th century and its consequences. Andrew Wareham then presented two case studies of social topography in 17th-century Kent and Surrey, based on the hearth tax returns, in parishes where taxed properties ranged from one hearth to forty. Peter Park from the University of Central Lancashire then talked about the pressure that was placed on people in southern England under the new poor law to migrate to the factory towns of the north under the threat of having their outdoor relief cut or stopped. Having regard to the use of taxpayers' money, the authorities took the view that it was their 'duty' to 'encourage' people to move. Propaganda may have abounded, and in questions, David Dymond mentioned references in Suffolk newspapers to migrants 'singing' as they went on their way. In a figure-rich presentation, Nigel Goose then took us quickly through some divergent demographies in 19th-century Hertfordshire. Contrasting the 'straw plait' districts with the agricultural areas, it became clear that to understand what is happening within a county we need to drill down to individual localities, whose experiences may be completely different. Echoing this, Margaret Escott then presented a study of local migration in Binfield, Berkshire, in the 19th century, where the pattern of kinship varies widely across the parish. Finally, David Killingray, Emeritus Professor at Goldsmiths, spoke on modern immigrant communities and British local history, perhaps a particularly appropriate topic for a conference held in a city that is likely to be one of the first in the country to have more than half of its residents drawn from non-European backgrounds, but where, as he pointed out, those listening all appeared to be white Europeans. How do we engage with other communities and interest them in local history? What does 'local' mean to them? Why do local historians overlook what may be a very long history of immigration in their area? The questions come more easily than the answers.

After lunch we split into four groups for the outings. I had chosen Naseby, and having not been there for 10 years or so was very impressed to see the work that has been done to provide off-road parking, viewing platforms and interpretation boards at the sites where the two sides stood at 8 am on 14 June 1645. The importance of landscape studies in understanding battlefields was immediately apparent – without visiting these sites it would be difficult to appreciate that the Royalists would not have been able to see the Parliamentary army, but that the Parliamentarians could see the Royalists, and hence prepare themselves by choosing the most favourable position for the battle that both contingents knew was inevitable. On reaching the site of the battle itself, it was amusing to see a home-made 'lost' poster seeking information about a missing Cavalier King Charles spaniel. Its owner perhaps

should have known better than to take it to that field. Had it been killed by a Roundhead spaniel? This was an excellent trip, meticulously planned and timed, and benefiting from the expert knowledge of Andy Hopper, who set the scene on the coach, Martin Marix Evans, military historian and vice-chairman of the Naseby Battlefield Project and Peter Burton, local landowner.

We returned to a Plenary Lecture by Sarah Pearson, an architectural historian by training, who presented a summary of the findings of an inter-disciplinary study of Sandwich, a settlement which has been described as 'the completest medieval town in England'. Sandwich was a major town, with a population of around 2,000 in 1086, rising to 5,000 by 1300. The earliest settlement was on the highest ground, at the east of the present town, near St Clement's church, which contains 11th-century work. Properties at that end of the town are set lengthwise along the road. Over time the centre moved westwards, with properties built gable-end to the street. Many of these splendid medieval timber-framed buildings survive to this day. The oldest of these, to the south of Strand Street, are from the 1330s. Open halls were still being built to the late 15th century. Even as the town was facing economic decline, people continued to build, expressing their confidence in the future. For those who want to know more, the book will be published next year by Oxbow.

Sunday, the final day, and for me the most interesting set of papers: 'Sources, methods and techniques' perhaps does not sound as attractive as 'Making a living in town and country', but the six speakers discussed little known sources and new IT projects with great enthusiasm and, in the manner of Hoskins in *Local History in England*, left their audience wanting to explore these areas for themselves. Bill Shannon began with an excellent presentation of how a past landscape can be reconstructed using 'dispute maps' commissioned by the courts in the 16th and 17th centuries to help them understand rival claims to a piece of land or a boundary dispute, and now held at TNA, Kew. Do the residents of the attractive modern detached houses we were shown on one slide realise that Acorn Close, as they know it, was once called 'The Hell Holes'? (It was common land which was 'mined' for its peat on a piecemeal basis to a depth of two feet, creating a network of pits.) Ruth Paley then spoke of the wealth of evidence contained within a class of record that I have used to a limited extent myself – affidavits filed for cases heard in the King's Bench (Crown Side) in the long 18th century. The number of documents varies widely from county to county and the finding aids are poor, but they are very easy to read and contain immense detail about a wide range of criminal actions. Jane Golding then presented a paper describing how she has worked with a group of keen volunteers to investigate the boundaries of a group of parishes in the historic county of Berkshire (but now in Oxfordshire). Nicholas Kingsley's paper was about the information that can be found from the deposited papers of firms of architects, in this case Full James and Waller of Gloucestershire. Two technology papers concluded the session, Paul Ell of Queen's, Belfast, spoke on e-science (which he had to define for us) and the linking and interrogating of e-resources. So many original sources are now being digitised and placed on-line, and many local historians and local history groups are also putting their own information on-line. Yet these sites tend to stand alone, may only be supported for a limited period, and are often stumbled across purely by chance. Apparently only 12 people have found the database of medieval crop yields (www.copyields.ac.uk) yet many would probably find its data useful. The aim is to be able to link all these sites in some way and make them more widely accessible. Finally, Humphrey Southall described some of the new, and also the longer-standing, information about places that is contained within the recently re-launched website 'A Vision of Britain Through Time', and the structure that sits behind it enabling so much information to be discovered just by entering a single place name.

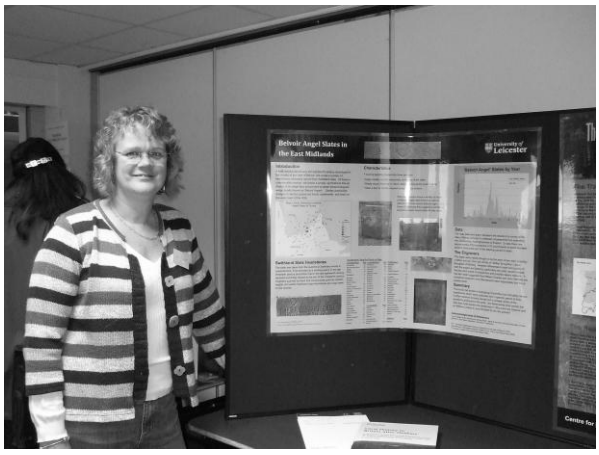
That brought us to the end of an excellent conference (for those, like me, who did not stay for lunch). With so many knowledgeable speakers, at times it seemed only to emphasise how much I don't know, even about local history, never mind other subjects. Throughout the conference groups of people were enthusiastically discussing a range of subjects with speakers they had heard, with people they already knew, and with people they had met for the first time. Contacts were exchanged and friendships forged. The book stalls, including one for the Friends, caused some to leave the conference poorer in cash terms, but everyone will have left far richer in knowledge. Thanks are due to Chris Dyer, Andy Hopper and Danielle Jackson from the University, and members of the British Association for Local History, for making all the

arrangements, and to the conference sponsors for the part they played. When's the next one?
Pam Fisher

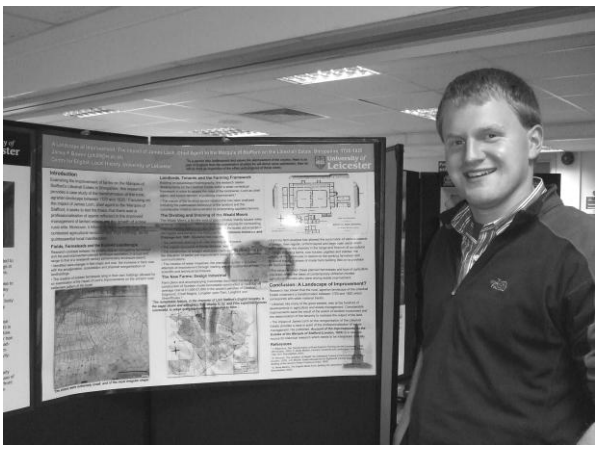
Posters Displayed

Heather Flack
Photo. A. Schmidt

Maureen Harris
Photo. H. Flack



Ann Schmidt
Photo. H. Flack



James Bowen
Photo. H. Flack

Old Auster tenements in Somerset: an appeal for information

At the very end of the research on the Shapwick Project (Gerrard and Aston 2007) it was discovered that a number of the properties in the village had 'old auster' rights attached to them. These gave the holders of the properties extensive pasture rights in King's Sedgemoor, to the south of the Polden Hills. When that area was drained and enclosed in the late eighteenth century, the tenants were compensated for loss of grazing rights (Williams 1970). Recent research in Winscombe parish in north Somerset has thrown up further instances of old properties with old auster rights.

Old auster (or austre), a term which seems to refer to a 'hearth' or 'home', seems to be a type of tenure particularly associated with Somerset where it relates mainly to the pasture resources of the Somerset Levels. Various writers have drawn attention to its main characteristic - unstinted rights of pasture on the Levels in return for work on flood defences and drainage works (Rippon 1997). But this is not the full story since in some parishes, with little or no low-lying land, the grazing rights associated with old auster tenure apply to upland common, commons and greens and roadside grazing (for example in the parishes of Litton, Westbury sub Mendip and Winscombe). Increasingly it looks as if the tenure relates to the original or oldest properties in the settlement, the core in some cases of what might be early medieval planned villages (for example in Wedmore, Blackford and Sandford in Winscombe).

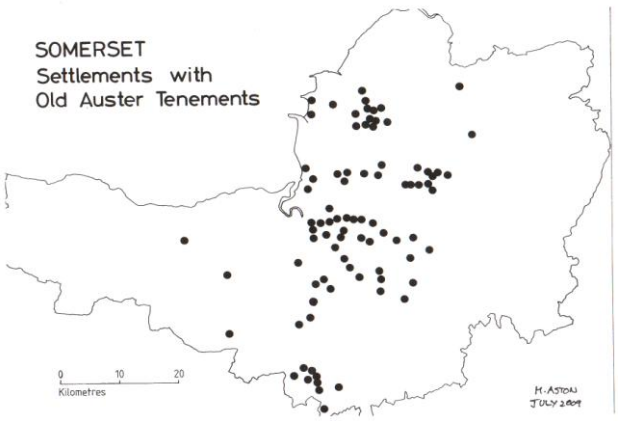
The characteristics of the tenure, as enumerated in a document of the Dean and Chapter of Wells for 1650, are that the widow of a tenant could continue with the tenure, and that a heriot, of the best goods, had to be paid on the death of the tenant. So far research shows that old auster tenancy dates from the 14th to the 19th century and relates particularly to central Somerset and is frequently associated with the lands of the bishop and dean and chapter of Wells Cathedral. To a lesser extent, it is associated with Glastonbury Abbey.

Occasionally in documents the term 'new auster' is found, while 'overland' is used for non old auster lands in documents where old auster rights are listed. Old auster tenure was attached to properties not to individual tenants or families. Even when a property had no house on it - often the term 'roveless' or 'roofless' seems to be used - the rights still remained with the plot of land.

Has anyone else come across this type of tenure in any other counties, or its equivalent even if the same terms are not used? Or has anyone else who is working or has worked on historic Somerset come across the tenure in any other places than those indicated on the map? We would be very pleased to hear from anyone with any ideas.

Mick Aston and Teresa Hall
Farthings Hermitage, Hill Road, Sandford, Winscombe, BS25 5RH
email: teresahallis@hotmail.com

C Gerrard with M Aston 2007, *The Shapwick Project, Somerset: A Rural Landscape Explored*
M Williams 1970, *The Draining of the Somerset Levels*
S Rippon 1997, *The Severn Estuary: Landscape Evolution and Wetland Reclamation*



Recent Deaths

Our sincere sympathy to the families of the following Friend, recently deceased:

Colin Hewitt, husband of Susan, of Okehampton, Devon.

Obituaries

Alan Everitt

Major historian of provincial England

Alan Everitt was the outstanding figure in the academic development of English local and regional history over the last forty years. His scholarly contributions sympathetically illuminated formerly unnoticed but key aspects of traditional provincial life in town and country alike. Simultaneously he substantially enriched our understanding of national history. It was wholly fitting that he was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1989.

Born in 1926, raised and educated appropriately in the old market town of Sevenoaks, Everitt grew up immersed in a distinctive Kent countryside in which he regularly walked, observing its plants, its traditional slow-moving way of life and, despite its apparent proximity, its continuing remoteness from London: a fact that influenced his later perception of provincial identities. A sensitive child, his tendency to introspection was clearly strengthened by growing up under the strict rules of the Plymouth Brethren. This element in his upbringing still scarred him even in his 30s when he left them, though it may well have previously stiffened his determination to remain a non-combatant when required to undertake army service between 1944 and 1948. His removal to the University of S. Andrews, where he took his MA in 1951, must have distanced him from much that was uncongenial to him.

From then on Everitt was committed to academic research and writing. He studied for his University of London doctorate (awarded 1957), partly supporting himself and partly through a Carnegie Scholarship, at the Institute of Historical Research where he was supervised by R.C. Latham and attracted the benign encouragement of R. H. Tawney. This was a time of fierce historical controversy over the 'Rise' or 'Fall' of the gentry during the run-up to the English Civil War. By studying the mechanics of county government and politics in Kent during the Civil War and Protectorate period, Everitt helped to relocate this debate to a more realistic sub-national level. In his book on *The Community of Kent and the Great Rebellion 1640-60* (1966), which evolved out of his thesis, he argued that, with qualifications, 'the England of 1640 resembled a union of partially independent county states or communities'. He had been emboldened to adopt this position by having also published a contrasting study of *Suffolk and the Great Rebellion* six years before, and subsequently he sought further to compare the dissimilar characteristics of the gentry in Northamptonshire and Leicestershire respectively. His contention has been much debated but it cannot be denied that he had demonstrated how provincial history represented much more than a mere pale reflection of assumed 'national' trends.

Everitt's researches now experienced a complete change of direction when, in 1957, he began his association with the unique research and postgraduate Department of English Local History (created originally for W.G. Hoskins) at the University of Leicester by then under the direction of H.P.R. Finberg. Based in London Everitt began by acting (1957-9) as Research Assistant to the eminent agricultural historian, Dr Joan Thirsk, who was responsible for the earliest volume (IV) to appear of the magisterial series entitled *The Agrarian History of England and Wales* under the General Editorship of Finberg himself. Subsequently Everitt went on to become Research Fellow in Urban History (1960-65) to work on Northampton from Leicester. When Hoskins returned briefly to take up a Chair in 1965, however, Everitt was promoted to Lecturer. Three years later he succeeded Hoskins as the Hatton Professor of English Local History and revived the Department's prestigious series of Occasional Papers, until he took early retirement because of ill health in 1982.

Under Thirsk Everitt was directed to new research topics and fresh classes of documentation and eventually to contribute two chapters to *The Agrarian History*: on 'Farm labourers' and 'The marketing of agricultural produce' between 1500 and 1640. From these two themes, and from his association at Leicester with Hoskins who encouraged his eye for the landscape during field

excursions together, nearly all Everitt's subsequent research developed.

The first of these concerns grew out of Thirsk's previous analysis of the agricultural sub-regions of Lincolnshire, an approach that was richly elaborated by her and Everitt when they took a national view in their respective chapters. The strong contrasts that emerged between various types of mixed farming or pastoral countrysides with the economies and societies that were seen broadly to characterize each, led him eventually to a way of understanding England in terms of different species of *pays* (as the French call them) that might be fruitfully compared. Everitt, indeed, was even able to demonstrate similar distributions of Nonconformist allegiances in like countrysides in his highly original *The Pattern of Rural Dissent in the Nineteenth Century* (1972) which he linked to contrasted incidences of landholding. From that period he then moved back to seek the origins of such distinct traditions in the variable forms of land-use and land-holding that he found at different phases of early settlement in Kent in particular and, in the case of wold landscapes, more generally. One outcome of this was the most detailed investigation ever undertaken into the early settlement history of a whole county: *Continuity and Colonization: the Evolution of Kentish Settlement* (1986). Another was a fascination in the ubiquity of common wasteland and the crafts variously associated with it about which he was writing another book at the time of his death.

Everitt's second core concern evolved out of his ground-breaking chapter on agricultural marketing in which he first mapped out the national distribution of this type of town for the early-modern period. This led him backwards to explore the characteristics of 'lost' medieval towns – those that had earlier shed their trading status – and their surviving topographical and socio-economic characteristics. It also provoked his curiosity in what he called 'primary towns' – small towns like Banbury or Melton Mowbray – which he regarded as 'seminal settlements' of great antiquity and extraordinarily persistent in their continuing centrality within their own districts. Looking forwards into the post-Restoration periods he extended his earlier focus on the economic and social importance of the urban inn and its inn-keeping dynasties and elaborated the idea of a broadly contemporary emergence of a class of 'pseudo-gentry' with their new patterns of sophisticated consumption and patronage of assembly rooms in the superior inns. (This was clearly to influence the acknowledgement of what has since become known through the work of Peter Borsay as the 'English Urban Renaissance'.) Finally, Everitt sought to connect his urban inns in the Victorian period with the networks of carriers' routes emanating from them into the countrysides around the towns concerned, patterns that initially he saw as complementing, rather than competing with, the new railway system.

A solitary man dogged by ill health, Everitt lavished his affections on a succession of cats. He was a voracious reader of Victorian literature and twentieth-century detective stories, and in later years dwelt long on the Christ of the Gospels probably as a direct result of his work on the distinguished eighteenth-century Evangelical, Philip Doddridge. But he was formerly also a keen gardener, a precise carpenter, an able cook, and most amiable host.

Charles Phythian-Adams

Alan Milner Everitt was born on 17 August 1926. He died on 8 December 2008 aged 82.

Dr. Margaret Gelling

Photo D. Holmes

A personal appreciation

The world of English Place-Names has sustained a great loss by the death of Margaret Gelling and deepest sympathy must be felt for her nephew Dr Adrian Midgley, his wife Moira, her great-nieces and her wider family.

It is a privilege to have been asked by the editor of the Newsletter to write an obituary of Margaret who was, for more than 25 years, my very dear friend and mentor. It was through the Department of English Local History that Margaret and I met in 1983 when I was a student writing a dissertation on a place-name subject. The external examiner at that time was Professor David Palliser, who was then at Birmingham University. He showed my work to Margaret who, after reading it, asked me to visit her to discuss how I could develop my research further. At our first meeting we 'took to' each other at once and a special friendship was struck up that lasted until her death earlier this year.

Several obituaries have appeared in the National press all listing her truly magisterial contribution to the field of Place-Name studies. I have noted some of them here but I want in the main to reflect on the deeply human and humane woman I knew and loved.

Margaret's nephew, Dr Adrian Midgley, in his obituary of his aunt in *The Economist* described her as 'a neat, keen, merry woman, 'prissy', as she described herself, and sensibly shod and clad in gear that was appropriate for slopping through *slæp*, *fenn*, *myrr* and *slohtre*, or stomping through *leah*, *hurst*, *holt* and *græfe*. Those who knew her found her to be far from prissy, she was tolerant, open-minded and forgiving, as I discovered when I rashly described someone 'as smug and self-satisfied – 'a typical head-girl type'- Margaret replied, "I was head-girl but I wish I hadn't been, I really wanted to kick over the traces!" She certainly had something of the rebel within her and although coming from a staunchly politically Conservative family she herself was firmly of the left. Right up until the shocking surgical emergency that may have shortened her life she was an active member of her local Labour party, canvassing, leafleting, telephoning and 'knocking up' on polling days although she was dismayed and saddened to see how diminished the party had become after its apparently glorious victory in 1997. She totally opposed the invasion of Iraq and lamented not being strong enough to join the protest march.

Margaret's academic life began with her obtaining an honours degree in English Language and Literature at St Hilda's College, Oxford, in 1945, where her tutor, Dorothy Whitelock steered her towards place-name study. In her contribution to the paper entitled 'Notes on the History of the Society' in *the English Place-Name Society Journal* of 1991-92 Margaret writes of her seven years as a research assistant with the Society between 1946 and 1953. At this time the Society's headquarters were one room in the Cambridge house where the Hon. Director and Secretary of the Society Professor B Dickins (who had succeeded Professor Frank Stenton) and his family lived. The house was subject to all the problems of inadequate heating and other shortages which characterised the post-war years. Margaret beavered away in her small cold room whilst Mrs Dickins struggled with incessant domestic crises trying (but not entirely succeeding) not to show her irritation with Margaret who in her own words 'sat there and learnt her trade'. In 1951 when Professor Hugh Smith became the Hon. Director of the Society the headquarters relocated to the uncongenial surroundings of University College London which was in the process of being rebuilt and was hopelessly overcrowded.

Margaret described these years as 'penurious but enriching' as she benefitted from the advice of Professor Dickins, Sir Frank and Lady Stenton and Professor Dorothy Whitelock when they visited. These were the apprenticeship years during which the foundations of Margaret becoming one of the foremost experts in the study of English place-names in the country were laid. It was in Cambridge that she began the work on the names of Oxfordshire and Berkshire which lead to the publication of two volumes of *The Place-Names of Oxfordshire* (1953-4). Here, Margaret broke new ground by presenting a much stronger geological and archaeological background to the names than previously been the case in the county surveys.

Margaret moved with her husband, the archaeologist Peter Gelling, when in 1952 he was appointed to a post in the Archaeology department in the University of Birmingham. This is when they bought the house in Harborne where Margaret lived until her final illness. It was here in her south-facing study that she worked on her many publications, her reputation steadily building as one of the finest scholars of her generation, and yet, she never held an academic post in any university. She regarded herself as supremely fortunate in this as she was able to work in her own steady and methodical way free of the constraints of a full-time academic post. She was also conscious that by doing this she left a space available to be filled by a scholar less fortunate than herself.

Her three volumes on the *Place-Names of Berkshire* (1973, 1974 and 1976) confirmed her as a serious scholar. She also published several innovative studies of particular place-names such as those denoting pagan Anglo-Saxon gods and shrines, or which used the element *-hamm* ('enclosed meadow'), the name Burton, or the the Latin settlement term 'vicus' which used the compound '*wicham*'. She was highly successful and totally in her element when bringing her scholarship to a wide 'adult-ed' audience. One of her classes ran for over 20 years. In 1978 her book *Signposts to the Past: Place-Names and the History of England* was published, opening up the subject to an even wider audience when it was chosen as 'Book of the Month' by a medieval history book club and became, relatively speaking, a 'best seller'. There have been three editions of this book which is still in print.

In the early years of place-name research the focus had been on 'habitative' names that denoted settlements, which were thought to be earlier and more interesting than other place-names, with topographic names being regarded as barely worth a mention. Margaret became increasingly dissatisfied with this approach which she successfully challenged in *Place-Names in the Landscape* in 1984. She went on to develop this work further when in 2000 she published, with the geographer Ann Cole, *The Landscape of Place-Names* in which they clearly demonstrated the precision of the words which had been coined by the Anglo-Saxons for hills, valleys, streams, ridges, hollows; these descriptions of the land-forms that they saw we can still detect in the English landscape today.

Margaret was still giving lectures to various local history groups, societies, conferences, workshops and summer schools right up until she was felled by her last illness. If invited to speak she always tried to say yes. In recent years she published five volumes of the *Place Names of Shropshire*. Much of the material for these had been gathered by her adult education groups in Shropshire, whom she first began teaching in 1959. These she called her 'field-troops' many of whom became her close friends. She had just sent off the manuscript for Volume VI and had begun working on Volume VII when she became ill.

Margaret received many honours for her work, she served as president of the English Place-Name Society from 1986 until 1998, as Vice-President of the International Society for Onomastic Sciences from 1993 to 1999, and she was awarded honorary degrees from the universities of Leicester and Nottingham. In 1995 she was awarded an OBE, she was no royalist but was delighted to go to the palace where she described her meeting with the Queen as 'two elderly and rather dumpy ladies exchanging a few words'. There is a photograph which captures this moment when both are leaning forward and seem to be sharing a secret!

When she last stayed with me, just a few weeks before she became ill, she spoke about her dread of ending her days sitting around the edge of the lounge in a 'retirement home'. I replied that this would never be her fate. "No, she answered" at least not until I have finished Shropshire".

She will be sorely missed by so many of us and I will carry on my own work in her memory.
Jill Bourne

Margaret Joy Gelling, born 29 November1924; died 24 April 2009

Seminar Programme 2009-10

Seminars take place at 2.15 on Thursday afternoons in the Seminar Room of No. 1 Salisbury Road. Please phone 0116-252-2762 to reserve a place. You are invited to tea in the Common Room at No. 5 afterwards.

2009

Thurs 8 October	**Richard Maguire** (University of East Anglia) *Norfolk, the Africans and Atlantic slavery*
Thurs 22 October	**Charles Watkins** (University of Nottingham) *The ancient trees and woods of Sherwood (c.1000-1700)*
Thurs 5 November	**Alexandra Walsham** (University of Exeter) *Wyclif's well: Lollardy, landscape and memory in post-Reformation Lutterworth*
Thurs 19 November	**Chris Lewis** (formerly Victoria County History) *Naming Paradise: house names of the 1920s and 1930s in seaside Sussex* Followed by the AGM
Thurs 3 December	**Stephen Mileson** (Oxford University and VCH) *Parks and communities in medieval England*

2010

Thurs 21 January	**Paul Barnwell** (Kellogg College, Oxford) *Transformations in the local church, 950-1150*
Thurs 4 February	**Fiona Stirling** (University of Sheffield) *Revealing the complex history of two Sheffield cemeteries*
Thurs 18 February	**Kathryn Gleadle** (Mansfield College Oxford) *Identity, land and lineage: Mary Ann Gilbert of Eastbourne and the politics of the poor law*
Thurs 4 March	**Francesca Carnevali** (University of Birmingham) *Microhistory and metanarratives: the example of Birmingham's and Providence's jewellery makers, 1870-1914*
Thurs 18 March	**Jan Broadway** (Queen Mary, University of London) *Aubrey and his contemporaries: inventing archaeological fieldwork*

USEFUL CONTACTS

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