

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 an ancient oak in Sherwood Forest

Photo; Alan Fox

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the 2010 Newsletter. If you are a student, you are automatically a member of the Friends of the Centre for English Local History and we look forward to meeting you at the Centre seminars and welcome your attendance at our events throughout the year. Our aim is to support the work of the Centre and, as a registered charity, we do raise money through our activities, as well as providing friendly, enjoyable and stimulating events with high-calibre speakers. The contribution made from year to year by the student representatives on our committee is greatly valued. This year's Newsletter gives an idea of the range of visitors, speakers, places and subjects.

It is particularly pleasing to me, and reflects well on the Centre, that, following a request in the Chairman's letter, a good number of Friends sent details of their recent publications. Pam Fisher has contributed an interview with Chris Dyer to mark his retirement and we wish him many very active, exciting and enjoyable 'post-Centre' years.

As in previous years, I am grateful to all our numerous contributors and to David and Ros Holmes for their assistance in proof-reading and layout.

Anne Pegg

THE CENTRE

This is my last report in the Newsletter of the Friends on the activities of the Centre, as I retire at the end of September 2010. I will not use this to make a farewell, as my Leverhulme Emeritus Fellowship (for research on peasant agriculture) means that I will need to drop into the Centre occasionally for the next two years. Nor will I write at length, as the interview with Pam Fisher has given me more space than I deserve in this year's *Newsletter*.

Our recruitment of students has been much as in previous years – a slight reduction in the number of students taking the 'regular' MA taught weekly has been offset by continuing demand for the MA by ISS, which has had 6 new takers this year. The numbers of students beginning the MA immediately after graduating is

showing a small but noticeable increase – there were 3 this year. But trends are not consistent, and we seem to heading in October 2010 for a larger number of recruits for the 'regular' MA, most of whom are mature students. An unusual number of distinctions were awarded among those graduating in July 2010, and our external examiners praised the quality of our students with even more enthusiasm.

This was a year with some notable seminars and conferences. These included in November 2009 the *Midland History* conference for postgraduate research students working on topics relating to the region, for which Andrew Hopper was the host. Leicester students contributed. In December Andrew Hopper organised a day conference in honour of Alan Everitt, examining particularly his theme of the 'county community'. The papers were concerned to modify the idea, for example by pointing to the role of people below the ranks of the gentry, but showed the continuing regard in which Everitt's work is held. The papers will be published in the Explorations series. Richard Jones's series of seminars on SPASE (Sense of Place in Anglo-Saxon England) ended with a fruitful meeting in Nottingham. The 'Spotlight on the Centre' conference was an excellent initiative of the Friends which provided a showcase for work of students and staff, and made everyone aware of the range and quality of our research.

The Explorations series is gaining momentum, with the publication of *Deserted Villages Revisited* (edited by myself and Richard Jones) in February 2010, soon to be followed by a book on places carrying the name Thorp - Richard Jones is co-author with two former staff of the Names Studies centre at the University of Nottingham. Then the county communities book (edited by Andrew Hopper and Jackie Eales of Canterbury Christ Church University) should be ready in the coming academic year.

Publications which are not in the Explorations series include Harold Fox's book on Dartmoor which has now been accepted for publication by Exeter University Press. Andrew Hopper and myself, with two editors representing the British Association for Local History, have spent the later part of the year gathering in the essays based on papers delivered at the July 2009 Hoskins conference, with the expectation of publication early in 2011. This surge of published

work demonstrates the benefit of team work, involving joint efforts by members of the Centre, and the forging of links with scholars from other universities and organisations.

We appreciate the benefits of collaboration in research funding: from Richard Jones's involvement in the bid to the Leverhulme Trust for a large scale multi-disciplinary project on the 'Roots of the British'; Keith Snell's links with the University of York in an ESRC funded project on cemeteries, and his successful bid with Sally Horrocks of Historical Studies for funding a doctoral student; we have hopes of Andrew Hopper's continued connections with the Naseby Battlefield Project, which may bring us into contact with the Battlefields Trust. The subject gains from people working together, both within the Centre and with scholars outside Leicester.

A distinguished visitor in November was Mick Aston, well known for his role in *Time Team*, though he spoke to us about his long term research project on Shapwick in Somerset. His warmth and enthusiasm was much appreciated by a seminar room filled with MA students, Friends, and visitors from other parts of the University. In January we welcomed the Lord Mayor of Leicester, Roger Blackmore and the Lady Mayoress. We knew already that he was keen on local history, as he spoke at the Hoskins conference in July 2009, and when he visited the University officially he asked to meet us in Salisbury Road. He was received by staff and students, who spoke about their work. In the coming year we will develop even closer links with the City, as Eleanor Davidson, who has finished the MA course this year and intends to begin a PhD, began her year as Lady Mayoress in May. A well-known local historian, David Dymond, came to see us in March, bringing with him a collection of books on Devon that he had inherited from his father, a relative of W.G. Hoskins.

Friends are aware that Michael Wood is making a series of television programmes about the history of Kibworth Harcourt, Kibworth

Beauchamp, and Smeeton Westerby. He has been in touch with some of us and we have helped with the filming and advised on aspects of local history. The accompanying book is due for publication in October. He and his team have visited Salisbury Road, and he has given this year's Hoskins lecture. When the programmes are shown in the autumn we hope that they will raise awareness of local history in general, and perhaps help to encourage students to join our MA degree.

We are continuing to work towards the re-establishment of the Victoria County History for Leicestershire, which was given a second launch thanks to the generosity of Leicestershire County Council. Julie Deeming, Pam Fisher and David Holmes continue to be involved with the recruitment and training of volunteers, and are planning an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The Centre has to steer its way through the rocks and whirl pools devised by the various University bodies to which we are responsible. This year we had to trim our expenditure, which caused some difficulty for Saturday schools. We were again involved in the preparations for the assessment of our research output. At the time of writing this the College is beginning to investigate us and making comments which are not based on the reliable information. One section of the University administration has decided to impose new draconian rules. Fortunately these problems will soon no longer be my concern!

Chris Dyer

Professor Chris Dyer retires on the 30th September 2010. From then Professor Keith Snell will be Director of the Centre. The intention of the centre is to move to rotating three-year period of directorship, so Professor Peter King will take over from Keith Snell in three years' time.

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Distinguished Visitors

The Lord Mayor of Leicester and the Lady Mayoress, Roger and Hilary Blackmore (both graduates of Leicester University), paid an official visit to the University on Tuesday, 19 January 2010. The Lord Mayor asked to visit the School of Social Science and the Centre for English Local History. The local historians were pleased to welcome the civic visitors. We knew that Councillor Blackmore was a keen local historian, as he had welcomed delegates at a reception at the local history conference held in July last with the theme 'After Hoskins'. They were shown round the building, notably the library based on Marc Fitch's donation, and presentations were made by two members of staff, Richard Jones and Andy Hopper, and by two MA students, Ronan O'Donnell and Neil Quinn. Their subjects reflected the range of periods and themes pursued in the Centre: villages called Thorp and the significance of that place-name; the location of churches and the reconstruction of early medieval estates; turncoats in the English Civil War; and a nineteenth-century schoolteacher's diary. Our guests saw a display of publications and posters demonstrating the many activities of the staff and students at the Centre. They were presented with a copy of the bibliography of publications of the past ten years, recently compiled by the Friends of the Centre and a copy of the most recent Friends' Newsletter. The visitors took a lively interest in the work of the Centre and revealed, in their comments and questions, their own considerable knowledge of local history.

Chris Dyer



Photo: University of Leicester

The photograph shows the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress admiring one of the Centre's publications with, from left to right, Dr Andrew Hopper, Dr Richard Jones, Professor Chris Dyer, Ronan O'Donnell and Neil Quinn.

Visit on 20th November 2009 of Time Team's Mick Aston – A Personal View.

On 20th November 2009 Mick Aston, a long-time friend of the Centre for English Local History, visited Marc Fitch House to give an informal seminar entitled: *'In the light of the results of the Shapwick project, how should we have done the research now?'*, a title which, although descriptive, Mick thought could possibly have been simply: *'Should we have bothered?'* Started in 1989, the Shapwick Project was initially a ten-year, multidisciplinary investigation of early and late medieval settlement patterns in the landscape. Now, according to Mick, having completed ten years of project and a further ten of writing they are in a position to begin!

So why did they start the project? Jokingly we are assured, it was little more than an excuse to get out of the office one day a week. In particular, there was no signal for mobile phones and it was in the opposite direction to home. No doubt, in view of the number of site reports, there was also a little academic enquiry. The theory was that Shapwick village and medieval field system replaced a collection of scattered farmsteads, had been planned in the late Saxon period and that the landscape played a distinct part in shaping the settlement and its social structure. The parish is in the centre of Somerset, halfway between Bridgewater and Glastonbury in sight of the famous Tor and covers some 1,284 hectares, one third lying in the peat moors of the Somerset Levels and is liable to flooding but the majority rises to the south over the Nidon Hills and on to the Polden Hills. The regular, ladder-shape of the village lent considerable weight to the idea of it having been planned.

Most of the land thereabouts is owned by Lord Vestry of Dewhursts' fame and it was thought this might hinder obtaining permission to investigate the district. However a sympathetic land agent removed this problem and eventually all of the six tenant farmers were also 'brought around' to allow the project to go ahead. The enthusiasm and cooperation of many of the

villagers was ensured by having a stall every year at the village fete where the annual report was available. Also of importance was the 'outdoor lab' approach to fieldwork which allowed many techniques to be tested and encouraged the involvement of students of various disciplines, the community and local school children.

As with any project of this size, much of the time was spent in solving problems that arose. This was aided considerably by the variety of expertise involved, an interesting example being the challenge that Somerset is known for lack of pottery produced between 500 and 900 AD, meaning that a different approach was required in order to find evidence of habitation. Dr Mike Martin's interest in levels of heavy metals such as lead, cadmium, copper and manganese at sites of habitation and collaboration eventually resulted in the development of the 'Aston-Martin' method for determining possible sites of occupation. Obviously, as with any new technique, there were problems to iron out and Mick found that much time could have been saved by carrying out a geophysical survey and a full elemental study of the whole area first, which enabled digging to begin in identified 'hot spots'.

In addition to problems, there were also many surprises. The moat of Shapwick House was particularly productive and finds included a Malin Jug – valuable, even though broken! Investigation of the site of the gardens surrounding the lost Banqueting House did reveal the pattern of the gardens with fish ponds and the remains of the Banqueting House but also showed the site of an Iron Age settlement. Debate arose regarding the specifics of a project being *multi-disciplinary* as well as *inter-disciplinary*, which included reference to the Whittlewood Project and difficulties involved in ensuring both aspects. Discussion then turned to financial support available (or not) for archaeological investigation in the UK. It was apparent that this was a great disappointment to Mick Aston particularly after the publicity created by the Time Team Series'. None of this has stopped him thinking of the next project at Windscombe, although we were assured he WILL NOT fill in forms to apply for money – no doubt somebody will!

Ann Schmidt



Mick Aston and Teresa Hall, with Richard Jones, Mike Thompson and Matt Tompkins.

Photo: University of Leicester

The team were appreciative of the information on Old Auster tenements received from their appeal in last Year's Newsletter.

A recent gift

The stranger in the Common Room

Anyone who has been in Marc Fitch House within the last few months cannot have failed to notice the large and imposing portrait now hanging in the common room. **Harry Simpson Gee** (1842-1924), the artist's subject, was a substantial benefactor of Leicester University College, a life member of its court of governors, a council member and its treasurer. His son, Percy Gee, who raised the money to erect some of the first buildings on the campus, is remembered today through the Percy Gee Building, now the hub of the Students' Union. Until this year there was no permanent reminder of his father's generosity, but a family member recently offered the University this framed portrait.



Harry Simpson Gee

Seminar programme 2009-10

Richard Maguire (University of East Anglia),
'Norfolk, the Africans and Atlantic slavery'.

This project was initiated to discover the extent of the involvement of Norfolk merchants and gentry families in the slave trade. Seventeenth-century records show some involvement with the West Indies. Barbados was the first of the sugar islands to have slaves. One of the plantations was owned by the Sylvester family, originally from Norfolk. Letters sent home in the 1660s by two of their employees, William Doughty, a failed trader from Hanworth, and Richard Kett from Suffolk, make no mention of slavery as a subject of interest and the word 'negro' was not derogatory but purely descriptive.

Norfolk's rich gentry families and merchants were discouraged from serious investment in the trade because of the dangers and high risk to profits when their land and the wool trade were so profitable. Others did benefit, if only briefly. Thomas Carter of Norwich, a prisoner of war of the Spanish eventually owned land, albeit stony and unprofitable, in Nevis but soon disappeared from records. Nathaniel Uring of Walsingham, second mate on a slave ship out of London, took command of the 'Martha' after the deaths of his Captain and many crewmen off the coast of Africa. He purchased 200 slaves in the Congo and sold them in Nevis for 50/- per man. Once back in London, he was pressed into the Royal Navy, achieving high rank and becoming a rich man at his death.

By the 1700s the Atlantic trade had become more established and profitable which led to an increased activity through King's Lynn. Voyages were made to Jamaica, New England and a few to Mexico. The family of Samuel Brown was a major player in trade with Africa but only one of the voyages made in 1734 is known to have involved slave trading.

The Molyneux family owned 200 slaves on their plantations in St. Kitts and in 1754, Crispin Molyneux, a friend of the Walpole family, arrived in England aiming to become a Member of Parliament to represent the interests of the Caribbean planters. He was forceful in encouraging more trade from King's Lynn to St. Kitts but this trade dwindled, once he was elected, only enjoying a brief resurgence in the 1790s.

Joshua Steele of Norfolk inherited a plantation in Jamaica from his wife. The

conditions there appalled him and he improved the lives of his own slaves by paying them, banning the whip and disciplining them in his own court, an enlightened approach which angered other slave owners. He had children by his black housekeeper and left them the estate. One boy, educated in Norfolk, rose to senior rank in the Norfolk Yeomanry.

Norfolk registers record black persons, referred to as 'Blackamoore', 'moore' or 'mulatto' (one of mixed racial parentage). Only one instance suggests slavery, whereas apprenticeship or a bequest to a servant indicates that most were not enslaved. Several marriages are recorded between black servants and white colleagues and there are nineteenth-century records of the children of these unions living as independent tradesmen.

In conclusion, Norfolk merchants did not gain sufficiently high returns from Atlantic trade, compared with profits from land. Moral qualms about slavery seem not to have been discussed before the campaign for Abolition began.

Charles Watkins (University of Nottingham),
'The ancient trees and woods of Sherwood and Nottinghamshire (c. 1000-1700)'.

Professor Watkins pointed out that, in contradiction to the title, he intended to speak of individual trees and woods that may well date back before the year 1000 and he also proposed to deal with the topic post-1700.

Important sources used to uncover the history of individual trees and woods include maps both ancient and modern, such as the one by Robert Lowe of the soils of Nottinghamshire. This was published in the *General View of Agriculture of the County of Nottinghamshire* in 1798 and may be one of the first ever soil maps. To the east of the county, much of the land was underlain by clays, which produced a very different landscape from the Bunter Sandstone on which Sherwood Forest was situated. Of course the term 'Forest' did not originally refer to continuous woodland but applied to a royal hunting area and this was certainly the case with Sherwood Forest. Nevertheless, while forests usually contained a high proportion of woodland, a certain amount of open landscape was also required to make it suitable for the chase. One can see how hunting tends to create similar landscapes by studying the carvings of hunting scenes on a

tomb from 330 BC of Phillip II or III in Macedonia.

Evidence of the changing extent of woodland comes from old maps and lists. For example John Chapman's map of 1774 can be compared with that of George Sanderson in 1836. The House of Commons Journal of 1792 records the areas of unenclosed wastes in the county. Robert Lowe also lists woods and plantations in his *General View of Agriculture* in 1798. If we use the Sanderson map as a base, it can be observed that from 1835 to 1921 some sections remained as woodland, whereas other areas were newly planted and yet other pieces had been cleared. In very recent times, aerial views provided by Google on the Internet provide useful information. There has been a lot of change but also a lot of continuity with some woodlands never cleared and therefore over 1000 years old.

Professor Watkins then turned his attention to individual trees, particularly the old oaks of Sherwood Forest, including the famous Major Oak, originally called Major's Oak after Major Hayman Rooke. Many of these were a source of pride and aesthetic pleasure for their owners as well as being of commercial value, through their timber, bark, animal food and so forth. All have been mapped and assessments made of their age. The boring of cores for dating purposes indicate that many trees are at least 400 years old, but are probably much older as their hearts are often hollow. Even trees that died in the nineteenth century are still standing.

Professor Watkins finally expressed concern for the future of these old trees. The Government gives grants to landowners who make efforts to preserve them. How long will the existing ones last and is it possible to replace them with newer old trees? Is it acceptable to use genetic stock from abroad?

Alexandra Walsham (University of Exeter), 'Wyclif's Well: Lollardy, Landscape and Memory in Post-Reformation Lutterworth'.

The priest and scholar John Wyclif was buried at Lutterworth in 1384. In 1415 he was posthumously denounced by the Church as a heretic and in 1428, at the instigation of Bishop Fleming, and in accordance with the instructions of the Pope, his remains were exhumed, burnt and the ashes tipped into the river Swift. Yet if the burning of his books and mortal remains was

intended to erase all memory of the man, it failed. Almost four centuries later, John Nichols, in his *History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester*, mentions a local legend that recounted how a person who had been present at the exhumation stayed behind to search for any remaining pieces of bone; on finding one, he ran to his companions, but fell and was mortally injured, 'and from the very place where he fell immediately gushed out a spring of water, which to this day is called St John's Well'. A slightly different tale appears in a later history of Lutterworth, which suggests that a bone fell from the cart that carried Wyclif's remains to the fire and was trampled into the ground; it was found and moved by a labourer some years later, when a fountain of pure water immediately sprang from that spot. Our speaker's paper, which was based on research for a forthcoming book on religion, landscape and memory, considered the legend and the incongruity of a story, so redolent of traditional tales of the miracles of saints, becoming associated with the bones of a man who would later be hailed as the 'Morning Star of the Reformation'.

No contemporary record of the story appears to exist. It first appears in written form in a heresy trial of 1531, and has its basis in an incidental remark made by a Hertfordshire clergyman named Patmore, to a draper. How and why had the legend survived for a century to be recounted then, or was it a more recent creation? Later in the sixteenth century, Wyclif featured prominently in Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, with a woodcut showing his ashes being tipped into the river, despite the fact that he had not been martyred, for his burning was posthumous. Foxe ensured Wyclif would be remembered, and perhaps inspired Thomas Fuller, a seventeenth century historian of the church, to add his own embroidery to the tale of the burning of the bones, by claiming they were carried down the river Swift, to the Avon, thence to the Severn, out to sea and were spread across the oceans, in an apparent analogy to the Protestant faith.

The survival of the legend in folk memory through and beyond the Reformation despite its apparent similarity to hagiographical accounts of the cults of saints, leads to a reconsideration of the extent to which the Reformation changed popular culture and beliefs. The Protestant faith perpetuated the notion of a Providential universe, with messages conveyed by God to man through nature. Rather than trying to

completely change existing beliefs, it may have just aimed to refocus these in a different fashion, as the natural environment remained a repository of memory.

Dr Chris Lewis (formerly Victoria County History), 'Naming Paradise: house-names of the 1920s and 1930s in seaside Sussex'.

Dr Lewis presented a diverting introduction to the particularly English custom of personalising domestic properties with house-names. Familiar to us all, these house-names have attracted little or no scholarly investigation and Dr Lewis's study of the suburbs of Worthing in Sussex goes some way to filling this gap and concludes that similar work for other places could prove equally as rewarding.

The Worthing suburbs had expanded rapidly between the wars when builders were able to buy up for development small rural estates and mansions in neighbouring parishes like Goring by Sea and Angmering. Their location between the coast and the South Downs meant they were attractive to those wishing to move to the seaside and new building was designed to suit a wide range of incomes. The purchasers were mainly white-collar and skilled working class and were generally newcomers to the area and, in fact, new to home ownership. Whether holiday hut (albeit on a good plot) or substantial villa (Angmering) the majority of these new-builds lacked a full address and it was the lot of the new owners to provide one by erecting a painted name board. Being simple painted boards, most of these signs have long gone and probably did not survive the introduction of formal street numbering or transfers of ownership. Evidence of some six hundred names has been found with, potentially, six thousand more in Worthing as a whole. To some of the original owners this naming process appears to have been a chore with little imagination used to produce a name. *Dunroamin* appears altogether nine times and *Dunmoanin* and *Dunno* were, surely, derivatives. In most cases, however, a conscious effort appears to have been made to find something appropriate either to the families' own backgrounds or to the new seaside property.

Dr. Lewis has begun to treat these house-names as any other subject of onomastic study and was able to present paradigms for the categorization of the various verbal strategies used by their creators. Names could be simply

transparent as in *Bungalow*, *Corner House* or *White House*, opaque as in *Dangu* but, more often, the name seems to have been chosen to elicit enquiries from neighbours. Back spellings, puns and newly fashioned compound names abounded with some sophistication as evidenced in the use of archaic or foreign words or in the lifting of place-names from literature, as in *Dingley Dell*, *Rookery Nook* and *Bleak House*. Elements of comfort and calm are common so that names reflecting past happy holidays (their new life was to be one long holiday) will include *Clovelly*, *High Tor* and *Ambleside*, but not *Blackpool* or *Ramsgate*.

Investigation of the more obscure names is essential if overall categorizations are to be made. Thus, electoral registers will reveal that the owners of *Jonlyn* were Jon and Lyn, *Amour* was occupied by Mr. & Mrs. Love and *Tatma* was the home of Tate Servitus Mansford. Many similar interpretations have been exposed but perhaps the most telling was for the new home of a shell-shocked WW1 veteran who called his house *The Better 'Ole* after the subject of a popular 'Old Bill' cartoon (trench humour) by Bruce Bairnsfather. The next occupants for whom the name had no resonance renamed it *Cissbury View*.

Stephen Miles (Oxford University and VCH), 'Parks and Communities in medieval England'.

Dr Stephen Miles spoke on the social impact of park making in medieval England 1100 -1350, the subject of his doctoral research and his recently published book *Parks in Medieval England*. The subject of these parks has, in recent years, received increased attention. The chief question has been 'what was their function?' The traditional answer was that they were reserves in which deer were kept and then hunted. Other suggested possible explanations were that they fulfilled an economic purpose, that they were status symbols or that they were designed landscapes.

Less attention had been paid to the effects of park-making on neighbouring landowners and on communities. Commoners would have lost rights including grazing and wood gathering in these sometimes extensive areas. The lack of documentary evidence hampers such a study. Court records are more concerned with poaching than with issues affecting the unfree population

(about half the population at that time). However archaeological and landscape evidence was available.

Several thousand deer parks – some containing several thousand acres – existed at this time. The greatest concentrations were in the south and south west, in areas of wood pasture, but there were parks throughout the country.

Many of these parks interfered with, or displaced, settlements. The creation of parks at Woodstock and Devizes, for example, impeded the expansion of neighbouring towns. A similar process occurred at Sheffield, Nottingham, Leicester, Bath and Battle. At Godmanchester – a smaller settlement – part of the village was moved to allow the creation of the park.

The beginning of the fourteenth century was a period of land hunger when more land was being brought into use for arable farming. At the same time more parks were being created as a result of rural improvement. However the creation of parks took land out of use. Evidence of this can be seen where areas of ridge and furrow stop at the edge of parks.

Animals such as fallow deer that were supposed to be contained within a park could escape and eat the peasants' crops and damage trees. Edward III ordered the repair of the park pale at Woodstock to prevent such damage. The presence of rabbits in warrens associated with parks made matters worse.

Local communities were affected when roads were stopped up, diverted or access to them controlled. Again documentary evidence is scarce, but topographical evidence is suggestive. At Aldworth in Berkshire the road was diverted up a steep slope in the early fourteenth century.

The loss of access to wood pasture was of particular significance. It is estimated that between 1086 and 1350 the area of woodland and wood pasture in England was reduced by one third and by the fourteenth century twenty per cent of the remaining wood pasture was enclosed in parks. Commoners could no longer graze their animals there or hunt animals. Access to parks was more restricted than to forests. Parkers controlled access and maintained fences and kept gates locked. Parks could also provide facilities for horse studs, while in some places, mineral rights were important, notably in Sheffield which had important reserves of coal and stone.

A number of points were raised during the extensive question time. Dr Mileson demonstrated that the creation of parks in this

period had considerable social impact on peasants living in nearby communities and other local lords and that the subject deserves further research.

Paul Barnwell (Kellogg College, Oxford),
'Transformations in the local church, 950-1150'.

This seminar reflected Paul Barnwell's ongoing interest in how churches of the period were used and how the structures of the buildings reflected religious practice and changes in ritual. Evidence of ritual in worship comes from the study of the buildings and the archaeology. Using the examples of Raunds (Furnells) and Geddington, both in Northamptonshire, the churches of the tenth and early eleventh centuries consisted of two cells, nave and extension. The extension contained a stone clergy seat and the altar was a 4 foot cube of stone, possibly with a canopy, standing before the dividing arch. The east end extension would serve as a vestry or sacristy but there is no way of knowing whether the priest celebrated the Mass facing east or facing the people.

Over the years there was a move towards added theatricality in the liturgy. The church at Bradford on Avon demonstrates that little could be seen or heard from behind the narrow arch so the altar generally was moved in front of the arch and extended in length. The approach of the priest from the dim area behind the arch heightened the drama and resulted in more intimacy with the congregation. The next two hundred years saw a distancing between priest and people. This often resulted in enlargement of the church, as was the case at Raunds c.1100. Following the Conquest there was a phase when an apse, sometimes curved, sometimes square, was added. This form seems to cease during the twelfth century. It appears that the altar remained in the square area with a new arch often decorated with eucharistic symbols. Later the altar was moved to the east end and became rectangular which made the curved wall problematic. Windows in the chancel were enlarged and, by the fourteenth century, were filled with tinted glass to cast a dappled light.

The reason for the distancing of priest and people may be attributable to the doctrine of Transubstantiation, passed by the Lateran Council in 1215. This declared that the host was the incarnation of the Christ Child and raised the importance to worshippers of being close to or in view of the priest as he raised the host. The new ceremony of the Elevation of the Host, between

1190 and 1220, perhaps indicates the period when narrow arches were superseded by wider ones and chancel space was made wider.

There is little evidence for baptismal fonts in Anglo-Saxon churches, apart from Deerhurst (Gloucs) and possibly Little Billing (Northants), as rivers, streams and springs close to the church would be used. Fonts were common by 1220 and in the north porticus of Winchester there is a cistern in the floor, also in Breamore Hants and Potterne (Wilts.). King Edgar instructed that infants should be baptised soon after birth and until the fourteenth century baptisms took place on the day of birth. Holy water meant that fonts were always deemed to be at danger from witches, elves and other spirits and so should be protected. In the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, it was common for a small extension to be added to the church to house the font.

Bells and towers began to appear in the thirteenth century as bells were associated with burial rites. Together with fonts, they denoted the significance of a parish church as opposed to a chapel-of-ease which did not have rights of baptism and burial.

Fiona Stirling, (University of Sheffield), 'Revealing the complex history of two Sheffield cemeteries'.

Rapidly expanding cities, such as nineteenth-century Sheffield, soon filled their graveyards. An Act of 1857 ended the practice of reusing graves, creating the new concept of burial in perpetuity which turned graveyards into wasting assets. Burngreave cemetery opened in 1861 and was the first burial board cemetery in Sheffield. The ground is now full, having received 158,000 burials. Crookes cemetery is on a site purchased by the council in 1909 and remains open for burials. Burngreave was architect-designed, and contains two chapels (Anglican and nonconformist), linked by a covered carriageway with spire, in the typical ecclesiastical-gothic style of the period. There are wide avenues lined with trees and pleasing vistas. Crookes was planned by the city surveyor and has a single chapel. Reflecting the fashions of the period, it was adorned with annual bedding plants, and has fewer trees, which would obscure the views. Only part of the site was laid out, with much of the remainder rented out as allotments, and some left as grass for 'scythe your own' hay.

The speaker's research extends above and below the ground, with individual plots mapped using GIS. Both cemeteries are laid out in an efficient gridiron pattern. At Burngreave, common graves (with up to 18 burials and no memorials) form the first two rows along the paths, allowing trees to be planted to create avenues. Every third plot along each row is also a common grave, giving pathways between the private plots. The private plots were identically priced and the first to sell lie close to the chapels and paths. At Crookes, every fourth plot is a common grave. Private plots were offered at different prices and, in the main, the cheapest sold first. But with some memorials in each cemetery now showing damage, and with graves unable to be reused, these are now largely recreational sites, complex and costly to maintain.

Dr Jan Broadway (Queen Mary, University of London), 'Aubrey and his contemporaries: inventing archaeological fieldwork'.

At the start of her paper Dr Broadway explained that it was an account of work in progress and that the contemporaries were in the main those whom John Aubrey (1626-97) was either associated with, or influenced by, in his early work. His development was influenced by Baconian precepts of scientific methodology and later by the Royal Society (founded in 1660). Dr Broadway detailed how the first example of such an approach took place in Egypt in 1633 when John Greaves made systematic measurements of the Great Pyramid which he published in 1646. Thus began the development of archaeology as espoused by Aubrey and his great contemporaries such as William Dugdale and Elias Ashmole. In the course of their careers they laid to rest many earlier misconceptions about antiquity and in particular about the pre-Roman period. Many of these earlier beliefs resulted from the influence of William Camden which was even greater than that of Francis Bacon. In his *Brittania* first published in Latin in 1580 (1610 in English) Camden had ascribed hill-forts and other large works, even Stonehenge, to the Roman or post-Roman era believing that the ancient Britons were incapable of such large works.

William Burton (1575-1645) was one who still tended to equate the Iron Age with the period of Roman Occupation. In his *Description of Leicestershire* (1622), he supported Camden's

conflation of Ratby and the Iron Age work there with Ratae and over-estimated the importance of High Cross (*Venonis*) while making no mention of Mancetter (*Manduessedum*), which later archaeology proved to be the more important site. In spite of these short-comings Burton did use physical remains in attempts to validate documentary evidence. His and Camden's earlier interest in the Antonine Itinerary was put upon a more substantial footing by William Dugdale and Elias Ashmole who sometimes travelled together visiting historic sites along the route. They employed professional surveyors as for example in their examination of York and Lincoln cathedrals. But it was Aubrey himself who, foreshadowing his involvement as an active member of the Royal Society, deployed more scientific survey methods and the use of specialist survey equipment not only in his work on Avebury, but also elsewhere including Edge Hill in 1653.

In a wide-ranging account of the development of archaeological practice Dr Broadway described various attempts to establish the origins of tumuli and barrows. Dugdale in particular in his *Antiquities of Warwickshire* (1656) recognised the limits of written evidence about them and noted their topographical

separation from the network of Roman roads. Thomas Browne in Norfolk, again following Camden, concluded that funeral urns excavated there were probably of Roman origin although engravings which he had made later revealed these to be Saxon. As an aside it was noted that barrows excavated in the Isle of Man were at the time ascribed to the period of Danish occupation.

In conclusion the importance of gentry support and involvement in archaeological and antiquarian studies was emphasised, as was the impetus given to the subject by the foundation of the Royal Society of Antiquaries in 1717.



The Major Oak, Sherwood

Photo: A. Fox

1605-1686: *His Life, His Writings and His County* (Woodbridge, 2009), pp. 1-9, 232-6.

'Villages in crisis: social dislocation and desertion, 1370-1520', in C. Dyer and R. Jones (eds), *Deserted Villages Revisited* (Hatfield, 2010), pp. 28-45.

'Did the rich really help the poor in medieval England?', in *Ricos y Pobres: Opulencia y Desarraigo en el Occidente Medieval* (Pamplona, 2010), pp. 307-22.

Books (edited)

(with Catherine Richardson), *William Dugdale, Historian 1605-1686: His Life, His Writings and His County* (Woodbridge, 2009).

(with Richard Jones), *Deserted Villages Revisited* (Hatfield, 2010).

Centre publications 2009-10

Staff

C. Dyer

Articles in journals

(with S.Watt), 'Historical and documentary background', in S. Litherland et al., 'The archaeology of the Severn Trent Southam area rationalization scheme, Warwickshire', *Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society*, 112 (2008), pp. 80-1.

(with D. Aldred), 'Changing landscape and society in a Cotswold village: Hazleton, Gloucestershire, to c. 1600', *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, 127 (2009), pp. 235-70.

Articles in edited volumes

'Introduction' and 'Conclusion', in C. Dyer and C Richardson (eds), *William Dugdale, Historian*

Book reviews

Raunds. *The Origin and Growth of a Midland Village AD 450-1500*, in *Medieval Archaeology*, 53 (2009), pp. 443-4.

The Midland Peasant, in *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*, 83 (2009), pp. 231-3.

Poverty and Wealth. Sheep, Taxation and Charity in Late Medieval Norfolk, in *Archives*, 34 (2009), pp. 67-8.

Humphrey Newton (1466-1536): an early Tudor Gentleman, in *Economic History Review*, 62 (2009), pp. 480-1.

The World of the Stonors, in *Economic History Review*, 63 (2010), pp. 530-1.

A. J. Hopper

Article in Journal

'The Self-fashioning of Gentry Turncoats during the English Civil Wars', *Journal of British Studies*, 49:2 (April, 2010), pp. 236-57.

R. Jones

Books edited

(with C. Dyer), *Deserted Villages Revisited* (Hatfield, 2010).

Articles in edited volumes

'Contrasting patterns of village and hamlet desertion in England', in C. Dyer and R. Jones (eds), *Deserted Villages Revisited* (Hatfield, 2010), pp. 8-27.

'Manure and the medieval social order' in M. Allen, N. Sharples and T. O'Connor (eds) *Land and People: Essays in Honour of John Evans* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 217-25.

With D. N. Parsons and P. Cullen, 'Torps and the open fields: a new hypothesis from England', in P. Dam, P. Gammeltoft, J. Grandjean Gøgsig Jakobsen, B. Nissen Knudsen and O. Svensson (eds), *Torp som ortnamn och bebyggelse: Konferensrapport. Tvärvetenskaplig torp-konferens Malmö, 25-27 april 2007. Skrifter*

utgivna av Dialekt- och ortnamnsarkivet i Lund 11 (Lund, 2009), pp.55-76.

Articles in journals

J. Cameron and P. Cavill with R. Jones, 'Upton, Thurgarton Wapentake, Nottinghamshire', *Journal of the English Place-Name Society*, 40 (2008), pp. 23-34.

Keith Snell

Co-edited Journal

Rural History: Economy, Society, Culture, 20:2 (October, 2009), 108 pp.

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Articles in journals

'Parish pond to Lake Nyasa: parish magazines and senses of community', *Family and Community History*, 13: 1 May 2010), pp. 46-71.

'A drop of water from a stagnant pool? Inter-war detective fiction and the rural community', *Social History*, 35:1 (2010), pp. 21-50.

'"Go with the stream": H. E. Bates and social change in Northamptonshire and Kent', *ALSo: Yearbook of the Alliance of Literary Societies*, 3 (2010)

Honorary Visiting Fellows

Martin Marix Evans

Somme 1914-18: Lessons in War, (The History Press, 2010).

Graham Jones

'Church dedications "west of Selwood"', in Katherine Barker with Nicholas Brooks (eds), *Aldhelm and Sherborne: Essays to Celebrate the Founding of the Bishopric* (Oxford, Oxbow Books, 2010).

(with John Langton, eds) *Forests and Chases of Medieval England and Wales, c. 1000 to c. 1500*. A companion volume to *Forests and Chases of England and Wales, c. 1500 to c. 1850* (Oxford, St John's College) (with printers).

'A "common of hunting"? Forests, lordship and community before and after the Conquest', in John Langton and Graham Jones (eds), *Forests and Chases of Medieval England and Wales, circa 1000 to circa 1500* (Oxford, St John's College) (with printers).

(with John Langton), [Introduction] 'Deconstructing and reconstructing the forests: Some preliminary matters', in John Langton and Graham Jones (eds), *Forests and Chases of Medieval England and Wales, circa 1000 to circa 1500* (Oxford, St John's College) (with printers).

'Helena of the Cross, the Queen of Adiabene, and royal myth-making in the Holy City', Misa Rakocija (ed.), *Nis and Byzantium, Eighth Symposium, Nis, 3-5 June 2009. The Collection of Scientific Works VIII* (Nis, University of Nis, 2010), pp.447-470.

[Review article] 'Barrie Cox, *The Place-Names of Leicestershire, Part Four, Gartree Hundred*, The Survey of English Place-Names, vol. 84 for 2006', in *The Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society Transactions* 83 (2009), pp.233-35.

[Review article] 'Stephen James Yeates, *The Tribe of Witches: The Religion of the Dobunni and Hwicce* (Oxford, Oxbow Books, 2008)', in *The Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society Transactions* 83 (2009), p. 237.

Sylvia Pinches

Ledbury: people and parish before the Reformation, (Phillimore, 2010).

Matthew Tompkins

'Individualism, community and lordship: the peasant lessees of Great Horwood. 1320-1610', in Richard Gordon, John Langdon and Miriam Müller (eds), *Survival and Discord in Medieval*

Society: Essays in Honour of Christopher Dyer (Turnhout, 2010).

Papers presented at seminars, conferences etc.

Staff

C. Dyer

'The revival of the Victoria County History of Leicestershire', Cosby Heritage Group, October 2009.

'Victoria County History of Leicestershire', VCH Trust, at BBC building Leicester, October 2009.

'New light on the English peasantry: the furnishings of rural houses in the later middle ages', British Archaeological Association, London, January 2010.

'Deserted villages revisited: new evidence from Warwickshire', Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society, February 2010.

'Pots and towns in medieval England', Things Medieval, a conference in tribute to Alan Vince, Museum of London, February 2010.

'Making connections in the present and the past', Spotlight on the Centre, Leicester, March 2010.

'How medieval peasants made their own history (in Hertfordshire)': the first Lionel Mumby Lecture, Hertfordshire Association for Local History, Welwyn, April 2010.

'Why late medieval English peasants needed towns', Seminar on Medieval Social and Economic History, Oriel College, Oxford, May 2010.

'After Beresford: why medieval new towns are still important', Revisiting 'New Towns of the Middle Ages', Winchelsea Archaeological Society and Queen's University Belfast, May 2010.

'Poverty and its relief in the English countryside before the modern Poor Laws, 1300-1536', Poverty in the Medieval and Early Modern World, UWA Centre for Medieval and Early Modern

Studies and the Perth Medieval and Renaissance Group, University of Western Australia, June 2010.

Plenary summing up, International Symposium on Local History, Institute of Historical Research, University of London, June 2010.

'Fifteenth-century inquisitions as sources for agrarian and economic history', Fifteenth-century Inquisitions Post Mortem, University of Winchester, Sept. 2010.

'English peasant agriculture in an age of crisis', Rural History, University of Sussex, September 2010.

'Les revoltes pageses a les societats baixmedievals', Jaume Vicens Vives i els remences, University of Girona, September 2010.

'Living in medieval peasant houses', Medieval Domestic Cultures, Rewley House, Oxford, September 2010.

Richard Jones

'Invisible functions: the place-name Upton', Sense of Place in Anglo-Saxon England workshop, University of Reading, June 2009.

'Defining Spaces: manure, open fields and medieval rural society'. International Medieval Congress, University of Leeds, July, 2009.

'Elemental theory in everyday practice: food disposal in the later medieval English countryside', Ruralia V111 conference, Lorcás, Murcia, Spain, September 2009.

'Soiled food and food for soil', Medieval Diet Group, St Hilda's College, Oxford, March, 2010.

'Thinking through the manorial affix', Spotlight on the Centre, University of Leicester, March, 2010.

'Place-names and settlement archaeology', Perceptions of Place conference, University of Nottingham, June 2010.

Keith Snell

'Rural History and English Landscape Painting, 1750 – 1850', Rutland Local History and Record Society (Bryan Matthews Annual Lecture), Uppingham, March 2010.

Honorary Visiting Fellow

Sylvia Pinches "An object worthy of your attention": the rhetoric of applicants and referees for places in almshouses', at the Voluntary Action History Society Conference at the University of Kent at Canterbury, 1-6 July 2010.

Prizes, Awards and Appointments

John Nichols Prize

The winner of the John Nichols Prize 2009 was **James Bowen** for his essay entitled, 'A landscape of improvement: the impact of James Loch, Chief Agent to the Marquis of Stafford on the Lilleshall estate, Shropshire, 1720-1820'.

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 31st December. They must be typewritten, on one side of the paper only, with double spacing for the text, and single or double spacing for the footnotes. They must not exceed 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.

Midland History Prize 2010

Susan Kilby has been awarded the *Midland History Prize 2010* for her essay, entitled 'Struggle and enterprise: the experience of servile peasants in Wellingborough, 1258-1322'.

Maggie Whalley has received **The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario and the Heritage London Foundation Heritage Award 2010** ‘for her outstanding contribution to the preservation of London (Ontario)’s built heritage through education, awareness and advocacy, which has resulted in a greater appreciation for historic buildings and streetscapes in our city’.

Eleanor S. Davidson is serving as **Lady Mayoress of Leicester** for 2010-2011. She has written a most interesting article on the office of Lord Mayor on the Centre website.

Devon Field Course: March 2010

This year’s field course saw the formulation and discussion of some interesting ideas while our group was able to enjoy ourselves a great deal. This can be attributed, in no particular order, to the collective intelligence and enthusiasm of the participants, the amicable leadership of Richard Jones as our guide, and the very compliant weather. These qualities were already in evidence during the surprisingly smooth motorway journey. After stopping for lunch at a Worcestershire pub and overwhelming the beleaguered staff with sandwich orders, we made rapid progress to Exeter.

Once the somewhat fraught task of herding the entire group into the minibus early on Sunday morning was complete, the expedition proper began, kicking off with a dramatic river crossing at Dartmouth. The day gave a broad introduction to Hoskins’ homeland, covering a range of terrain and historical periods, from 19th century weavers’ cottages at Ashburton to the evocatively windswept coastal fishing village of Torcross. This provided the backdrop for the first manifestations of a long-running medievalist-modernist feud, to be a subject of friendly ‘debate’ throughout the week.

Monday took us up to the vast expanse of Dartmoor, where, despite the sunny weather, it was easy to imagine the loneliness of the miners once living in the deserted cottages at Haytor, miles from visible civilisation. The deserted village at Hound Tor gave the former archaeologists of the group a chance to deploy their expertise, while much entertainment was provided by the unofficial crowning of a new May

Queen at Lustleigh.

Through the midweek more landscape variety was exposed, ideas were discussed, and the local Wetherspoons continued to turn outstanding profits. The tradition of fish and chips at Appledore was thoroughly observed, while the dog-chasing antics of one of our number caused considerable amusement. The usually peasant-focused Dr Jones succumbed to his inner modernist when showing us the ingenious corn measuring device at Tiverton pannier market, and the Wednesday afternoon in Exeter gave us an opportunity to explore at our own pace, and patronise the local ice-cream shops.

By the end of the week most of the group had, through conversations and musings on the road, at dinner and during , developed their early thoughts considerably. Having provided us with much help and support in this endeavour, Dr Jones took the opportunity to wallow in nostalgia in his old student haunt of Whimble, which in fact proved a good addition to the time-honoured itinerary of his predecessor. After wrapping up with a Friday night outing to the Double Locks pub, we dispersed to our various places of origin. Overall the trip had been a great success, providing few opportunities for the driver to practice his reversing skills, and plenty of good memories.

Neill Quinn



Trooping across Dartmoor

Photo: N. Quinn

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Recently Completed Theses

Betty Brammer

The Holland Fen: social and topographical changes in a Fenland environment, 1750-1945.
May 2009.

Although much has been written about the consequences of drainage work carried out in peat fens, the result of eighteenth-century drainage and parliamentary enclosures in Lincolnshire, silt fens have received little attention other than at a general level. This thesis explores the Holland Fen, to consider how an inflexible configuration of drainage and enclosure procedures in the eighteenth century was able to dominate the topography and all aspects of its social development and economy, for more than two centuries.

Central to this thesis are the complicated and unusual procedures taken by a group of eleven neighbouring parishes to drain and enclose the Lincolnshire fen in which they held undisputed common rights. How radical were these actions, and why were they taken? Particular use is made of contemporary documents including the drainage acts of 1762-6, the enclosure award and maps of 1769, various eighteenth-century London newspapers, and council minutes of a local borough. Data taken from proprietors' lists, census material, annual crop returns, and MAF documents reveal the progression of images of a confined and remote fen. These continue throughout its reclamation, challenges of extra-parochial areas, social development, economic growth and convoluted formation of civil communities.

While most studies of drainage and enclosure are only concerned with the first few years, or perhaps the first half-century after such events, the long-term nature of this topic, 1750-1945, has been determined by the direct interaction of these layouts with other important issues. These include plot sizes, leases, tenant rights, rebellion and social responses, migration, farmbuildings, and farm servants in late-nineteenth century Lincolnshire. Local documents, photographs, diaries, and oral testimony contribute useful insights. Could an unyielding topography also influence religion, education, the triumph of local enterprise in a

depressed economy, emigration, leisure, identity, coastal defences, and national security in wartime? This thesis claims similar research into lesser-known fenlands is more likely to produce that wider range of information needed to fully appreciate the diversity of regional fenlands.

Christine Seal

Poor Relief and Welfare: a comparative study of the Belper and Cheltenham Poor Law Unions, 1780-1914.
December 2009.

There are few local studies of a comparative nature encompassing poor law unions in different regions. This thesis is unique in considering a union in the north midlands and one bordering the south-west, from 1780 to 1914. The provision of relief in Cheltenham and Belper is set in the context of social and economic conditions in these two areas. Were Cheltenham and Belper different in their management of their poor between 1770 and 1914, and how did poor relief in these two unions conform or differ to the specifications laid down in the 1834 Act?

Chapter 1 looks at relief under the old poor law, while chapter 2 considers the manner in which the unions were formed. Chapters 3, 4 and 6 analyse the workhouse and union populations at various times, and chapter 5 investigates charity and its assistance to the poor. Several major themes are looked at including emigration, vagrants, the children and aged.

Cheltenham and Belper managed their poor in a similar manner, except most notably with regard to assisted emigration. Only Cheltenham used this to reduce pauperism. It provided out-relief for a greater number of paupers than Belper, and its expenditure per head was much higher. Workhouse populations were very distinctive in 1851. Belper had a high percentage of children and female able-bodied paupers at that time. By 1911 the workhouse populations had become more similar in both unions, being dominated by the elderly, sick and infirm. The thesis argues for general trends, observes a common trajectory of change, assesses charity alongside formal relief, and shows how interestingly different socio-economic contexts affected the comparative details and nature of pauperism. It thus invites further comparative

research into the varied regional application of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act, using the benchmarks and salient features highlighted here.

M A Dissertations 2010

James Bowen

A Landscape of Improvement: The Impact of James Loch, Chief Agent to the Marquis of Stafford on the Lilleshall Estate, Shropshire, 1720-1820.

In 1810 some farms on the Lilleshall Estate had achieved a degree of consolidation. However, many remained fragmented, dispersed and intermixed in the old enclosed Shropshire landscape. In contrast within ten years a complete reorganisation and consolidation of farm holdings had been achieved by rationalising field boundaries, constructing access roads, improving drainage and replacing traditional farm buildings with new model farms. Building on emerging agendas concerning estate landscapes, this article examines the improvement of farms on the Marquis of Stafford's Lilleshall Estate in Shropshire, providing a case study of the transformation of the rural, agrarian landscape. Focusing on the impact of James Loch (1780-1855), chief agent to the Marquis of Stafford, it seeks to test the thesis that there was a professionalisation of agents reflected in the improved management of landed estates and the growth of a rural elite. Moreover, assessing the farming economy of the diverse estate, together with the funeral trade, religious and secular institutions, and 'Joe Public' gives depth to a *locale* and the transition which the landscape underwent to a planned, improved landscape. Such assessment informs debate surrounding the agricultural revolution, and high farming as its local manifestation, including the adoption of specific farming practices and technical innovations, whilst acknowledging the wide ranging historical continuities evident in the landscape.

Eleanor Davidson

The Evolution and Secularisation of the Funeral in Leicester and Leicestershire, 1830-2010.

Centred on Leicester, this study of the evolution and secularisation of the funeral contributes to our understanding of developments in funerals and

surrounding issues. The words of Leicester people and national figures are gathered from Censuses, newspapers, articles, Council minutes, and trade journals. Oral history interviews drawn from locals connected broad-ranging evaluation of life and death in a plural city. Literary sources have been explored and the work is illustrated with contemporary and recent images and quotations.

Ideologies, conventions, traditions and practices from 1830 to present day are examined alongside scientific advance, environmentalism, and the city's evolving indigenous and ethnic needs for funeral provision. Leicester outgrew the Church's provision for burial in practical, mundane and ideological terms witnessing, in good time, the arrival of municipal cemeteries, crematoria, and 'green' burial. Funeral ceremonies and memorialisation are adopting non-religious values and challenges are being made to the undertaking trade's tight hold on 'convention'.

Consideration is given to academic work on secularisation issues. Although funerals and life-end matters are now largely secular, little work has yet been published on the subject. The study concludes that the now-secularised funeral, as what was perhaps the last bastion of participative religion, has advanced the secularisation of religion.

Heather Flack

The River Severn – Barrier or Bridge? The impact on communities of the River Severn in Worcestershire in the period c.850 to 1500.

The River Severn flows through the heart of Worcestershire. At present, in some places, it is a significant barrier, but what was the situation a thousand years ago? It would appear the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of the *Hwicce* was centred on the river and that it may have provided the 'glue' for the county of Worcester, formed about 1000 AD. The nature of the medieval river has been considered and how easy it was to cross. Worcestershire Record Office has been a rich source for maps and all locations have been investigated and photographed. Numerous tracks leading to crossing places have been identified, most of which have now been lost. The river was also heavily used for transport and for fishing (many fish weir sites have been identified); now there are only some pleasure boats and a few

anglers. The river is thus currently seen mainly as a tourist attraction. The nature of settlement was also considered and the effect the river had on parish boundaries and large estates. It has been discovered that it was at the heart of some estates and a boundary for others. The main sources, beside maps, have been the Anglo-Saxon charters, the Domesday Book and some medieval documents where available. The landscape itself has been a vital primary source. Overall, there can be no doubt the river was the 'glue' of the county.

Margaret Hawkins

The impact of the building of the Grand Junction Canal on selected settlements in Northamptonshire, 1793 – 1850.

This study assesses the impact of the Grand Junction Canal on four Northamptonshire villages from the start of its construction in 1793 till its decline in the 1850s. The settlements have been selected to compare the effect on communities of different types – two estate villages, a large, open village and one with a dominant landowner, but which was not tied to an estate. The study examines the physical, economic and demographic change brought by the canal, the reasons why two of them developed more than the others and how typical their development was of other canal communities.

Secondary sources have included the extensive literature of the canal network as well as works on the economics of transport and histories of the villages under review. The primary sources, though incomplete, have been enlightening. Parish registers are extant for all four villages for at least some of the period, but often lack detail. The Census enumerators' records have been useful but the 1841 returns for one village are missing. Militia lists have given an insight into early male occupations, while the extensive Grafton collection has provided some helpful information. Unfortunately, no records of trade in individual villages have been found.

This study has examined how far the landscape, demographic and occupational changes occurring in each village during the period are attributable to the building of the canal. These changes have been compared with those occurring in canal settlements elsewhere in the country. The study found that while the canal caused one village to become a major inland port and another, the site of a military establishment, two remained

essentially estate villages. These development patterns are largely consistent with those identified by others for settlements in similar circumstances and the major factor determining growth has been found to be location.

Ann Schmidt

Getting there A Review of the Roads and Track Ways of North East Leicestershire: particularly those that may have been used by drovers.

Initially intended as an investigation into the existence of droving or transhumance in north-east Leicestershire it was suggested that the notes Professor Harold Fox left for his next book on Devon, *Alluring Uplands* might provide inspiration. He referred to 'two new methodologies' for investigating routes with respect to animal movement which involved drawing lines between significant settlements. It was decided to carry out the study retrogressively and the Leicestershire Wolds and Vale of Belvoir were identified as suitable contrasting *pays* for this study that are comparable to the South Hams and Dartmoor fringes which Fox explored.

Following a quick look at modern road patterns, the local roads and track-ways were examined from the inception of the Turnpikes, through Enclosure - both early and Parliamentary, Medieval England, the Anglo-Saxon era and finally Roman Britain. Professor Fox's methods were then analysed and applied to the results of 'micro-studies' of Wymeswold, Leicestershire Wolds and Long Clawson, Vale of Belvoir. These villages were chosen as typical of the *pays* in which they lie and particularly because both the Enclosure Acts are available in the LRO. The roads linking markets in and around Melton Mowbray were investigated as well as an area of minor routes near Burton Lazars.

Characteristics of drove routes were found to be directness, 'multi-flex-ness', antiquity and provided with facilities for the drover and his herd. Evidence in north-east Leicestershire was scant but it emerged that, although not on the major, long distance drove routes from either Scotland or Wales, droving did occur. The methodologies of Professor Fox were found to be useful in this study provided it was accepted that animal movement was predominantly transhumance and that the distances involved were small.

Sheila Stewart

The Impact of Enclosure in Leicestershire on the Parson and his Glebe Land 1760-1830: Billesdon, Lutterworth and Rothley.

This dissertation is a study of the impact of parliamentary enclosure on glebe and church land during the period 1760 until 1830 and the place of the clergy within that process. Rarely discussed as a discrete group, the originality of this enclosure study is that it puts the church and its clergy at the centre. A local study within three different socio-economic units and across a period of some sixty-five years, this analysis of the enclosure awards in Billesdon, Lutterworth and Rothley, will consider the impact of enclosure on the clergy and their role in the community they serve. Drawing on details of their individual social and economic backgrounds, as well as their education and ordination into the church, patterns emerge of a clerical hierarchy delineated by wealth, connections and influence. Regardless of theology, personal profiles are significant in the choice of living offered, and accepted. Neglect of pastoral duties and promotion of self-interests are common denominators in the widening gap between the clergy and the community they serve. Parliamentary enclosures were inextricably linked to the enormous social reorganisation taking place during this period. As property rights lost their customary status and became entrenched in law, with hedges the potent symbol of ownership and exclusion, the rural communities sought to negotiate a new identity through the media of cartoon, verse and song.

Michael Tedd

Naming in Anstey 1850-1950: a Mirror of Social Structure.

Some seven hundred nicknames are known for the village of Anstey, Leicestershire, collected by the writer and others over the previous forty years. They represent names most actively used in the interwar years. The high incidence found has not been reported elsewhere in England and the dissertation sets out to examine what relationships may exist between the nicknames and other institutions and practices that came to define the village over the same period. Anstey had undergone a dramatic transition from framework knitting to footwear manufacture in the 1850s and

1860s. Employment opportunities seemed to be ever increasing even as machine work came to dominate from the 1890s. The new factories, built up by Anstey men, were always hungry for labour and new housing continued to be demanded. Relief came in the form of three land societies created at the end of the nineteenth century. These new land societies, working men's clubs and the adult school can be viewed as evidence of an intensely co-operative environment in which the Primitive Methodist teaching will have had an influence. The theme is examined at some length. The village abounded with opportunities to interrelate and most would have had little need to leave Anstey for work, rest or play. The high incidence of nicknames is shown to have been fostered by this densely peopled world. The nicknames were strong and a series of new interviews was able to show that some nicknames had persisted over two or three generations in the same family. It was mainly large families with common names that dominated this world of alternative naming and trees have been constructed using parish registers, voters' lists and the recently released 1911 census. From these, insights also emerged into the mechanisms of surname creation and similar projects for other places are recommended.

Stephen Tyler

The Silk Ribbon Weaving Industry of Coventry, with a Case Study: Bulkington an Outdoor Working Community in the Coventry Silk Ribbon Weaving Trade 1818 - 1863.

The aim of this dissertation is to review the now disappeared silk ribbon weaving industry in the City of Coventry and its environs, which took place for about 200 years commencing early in the eighteenth century. It includes an overview of the trade and its structure in Coventry and a case study of the parish of Bulkington in Warwickshire, which was an 'outdoor' working community within the Coventry trade. Little information on the structure of the industry is known before 1818. Therefore the main focus is on the period from 1818 to 1863 when significant change took place due to the industrial revolution and free trade, culminating in a collapse of the industry and the emigration of some weavers. Other relevant points in time are also included. Sources include the 1840 Assistant Commissioners Report of Joseph Fletcher into Handloom Weaving and the 1841 Census, which

link together. Other sources include the 1851 Census, the autobiography of Joseph Gutteridge, a Coventry ribbon weaver, Warwickshire county records and Bulkington parish records. George Eliot also gives a sense of place based on her local knowledge of North Warwickshire. The sources have been used to give an insight into the occupational structure of Bulkington and include analysis on gender involvement, marriage, family size, moral behaviour, lack of employment and apprenticeships. The aim is also to use these sources to gain a perception of the extent to which a particular community relied upon weaving for its livelihood. The result is that it has been established that ribbon weavers significantly inhabited Bulkington and that it took place simultaneously in three separate settlements within the parish.

MA by ISS

Marion Hardy

Exe-Dart Devon: some social and economic effects of the Newfoundland trade.

This study aims to discover the effects on the Exe-Dart area of Devon of its participation in the migratory Newfoundland fishery and trade, which meant that men were away for six to eight months of the year. Two chapters consider the effects on the population at the parochial level; two on the effects on the participants in the trade and a final one considering some of the wider repercussions for people and the economy.

The major primary resources include census data and information from parish registers, ships' muster rolls, settlement examinations, ship registrations, newspapers and directories, together with a variety of other documents. The use of these resources allows the mapping of male-deficient parishes and the discovery from graphs of distinct patterns of marriages and baptisms. Some idea of the extent of emigration comes from examination of population change over time and local migration is established from settlement examinations by mapping subjects' sequential parishes of residence. Using wills and family-tree information, the leaders of the trade are found to form a mercantile class of substance and influence. Settlement examinations, muster rolls, census and other records provide information for the age characteristics of the 'Newfoundland men'

and the effects of the trade on their lives and those of their families.

The least clear results are those pertaining to the wider effects of the trade; matching manufacturing decline to that of the Newfoundland trade is complicated by other influences.

Some social and economic features of the area seem to be distinctive, but the resources leave the 'middle-class' of the trade under-represented and the relative importance of the trade's effects undetermined due to a web of inter-related factors. These topics require further investigation.

Dorothy Jamieson

Willington: landscape and society from 1380 to 1540.

The dissertation describes and evaluates the evidence of the management of the manor and the landscape by the Mowbrays from the end of the fourteenth century to 1540 and the changes which took place in the lives of the tenants. Original manor court records and accounts have been used, and an extensive study of secondary sources has been undertaken.

There was considerable stability and consistency among the lord's officials, the manor elite and the tenants of the manor as a whole. A local bailiff and a second jury at the manor court encouraged participation, but the courts were dominated by two villein families in the period researched. The development of the landscape from Saxon times has been traced and an early map used to identify the later medieval layout and land use. When leasing out his demesne the lord retained the woodland, but rented out all other assets on a variety of terms. His income reduced by about a half between 1382 and 1483. Population on the manor does not appear to have declined dramatically in the mid-fourteenth century, but was at its lowest level in the early fifteenth century. Customary practices, such as heriots and entry fines, the pledging system and membership of tithings fell out of use, as tenures became more secure and more organized ways of appointing constables and brewing ale developed. It is clear that the prosperity of some families fluctuated over time, but eventually a member of one of the free families of the manor became wealthy enough to buy it and become lord of the manor himself.

Carole Lomas

The dynamics of early medieval town development in Somerset.

The aim of this dissertation is to identify which settlements in Somerset had significance during the early medieval period (400 to 1066 AD) and to propose a set of criteria by which some of them can be identified as towns in 1086. A number of historians have considered what criteria could be used to achieve this, but to date no consensus has emerged – currently for Somerset there is no agreed list of early medieval towns.

In order to develop a list of criteria the origins and development of twenty-six sample settlements were considered and, to maximise the number of criteria that could be used, seven strands of evidence were identified: historical and documentary; place-names; evidence relating to churches; mints; archaeological evidence; topographical, and morphological evidence. Detailed examination of the available evidence found that no single one of these sources could be used in a meaningful way across all the sample settlements, and it was only by considering all seven that an overall view was reached. There are two key findings: the first is that evidence of early medieval roads in a settlement does identify urbanisation, and if such roads are absent, the settlement was not an early medieval town, and the second is that the pattern of development varies across the county.

The development of early medieval towns in Somerset was certainly dynamic, as it is clear that the fortunes of settlements changed frequently, often quite dramatically. This dissertation shows that only criteria that relate to urban functions relevant to the period under discussion can be used to classify towns.

Margaret O'Neill

Medieval Women as Food Providers.

This dissertation aimed to assess the contribution of women to the work of producing and providing food in the later Middle Ages, concentrating on the City of London and the medieval counties of Hampshire and Surrey, during the period between 1250 and 1500. Implicit in this exploration were the issues of reward for their work and the effects on the social and legal status of women as a result of their contribution.

The bulk of the evidence for women as food producers derives from records of

agricultural production. Among the sources consulted were the Winchester Pipe Rolls, the records of Chertsey Abbey, and manorial records from Hampshire and the medieval county of Surrey. For women in the retail food and drink trades, the rich resources of London, together with the records of Winchester and Southampton, provided much detailed evidence.

The examination of these sources, together with relevant literature, has demonstrated the importance to the medieval economy of women's contribution to the provision of food and drink, then the country's major industry. Although women were used as a source of labour in times of shortage, such as the period following the Black Death, their work was generally low in status and poorly rewarded. Some women were able to take advantage of particular circumstances to gain a measure of economic independence during this period, but women as a class did not gain any improvement in their legal or economic position as a result. Women's contribution to the medieval economy, particularly in the area of food provision, was significant, something which is not always acknowledged in mainstream history.

Mary Whitehead

What happened in, and what happened to, Sunday Schools in Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancashire, 1800-2000.

Archival sources and oral testimonies have been used to explore the history of Sunday Schools in Ashton-under-Lyne in order to discover what happened in, and to, these establishments, 1800-2000. The enquiry is divided into chapters dealing with: the rise and decline of Sunday Schools, the changing role of Sunday Schools, Sunday School teachers' responsibilities, the temperance movement and uniformed organisations.

Many secondary sources have been referred to as few authors have written specifically on Sunday schools; primary sources are from Sunday school teachers' minute books, newspaper reports and oral testimonies from people who experienced Sunday school and still attend church.

The growth of Nonconformity with the expansion of the town, culminated in the rising middle classes influencing control of Sunday schools. Control is shown through rules on classroom behaviour for scholars and teachers, through acceptance for welfare assistance, and

through the encouragement of ‘respectable’ leisure activities, including the Band of Hope for young people to learn about the evils of drink, and, during the 1900s, advantage was taken to include uniformed organisations to retain scholars. Oral testimonies show how Sunday schools became centres of secular social activities with a relaxing of control from the church hierarchy. Conclusions show Ashton-under-Lyne Sunday schools closing from the 1960s, although interviewees testify there were still large numbers of scholars. Ultimately, with the loss of a patriarchal hierarchy the church passed the responsibilities of Sunday school to the Sunday School Union, and on its demise the responsibility was left to the teachers and uniformed organisations. Children from the 1950s were attending without parents and there became a shortage of teachers following the Second World War. A reluctance of people to give up their time to Sunday teaching and week-day activities, and the loss of uniformed organisations, were the major elements of Sunday School decline.

The Alan Everitt Memorial Conference

A conference to commemorate Professor Alan Everitt (1926-2008) drew an audience of over 40 delegates to Marc Fitch House on 12 December 2009. The gathering was honoured to welcome from the U.S.A. Alan’s brother, Professor Francis Everitt, and some of Alan’s friends and neighbours. After working as research assistant to Dr Joan Thirsk, Alan Everitt succeeded W.G. Hoskins as Head of the Department of English Local History in 1968, serving until his retirement in 1982. The Conference featured eminent historians whose papers re-examined Everitt’s remarkable book *The Community of Kent and the Great Rebellion* (Leicester, 1966), which advanced the notion that England was ‘a union of partially independent county-states or communities, each with its own distinct ethos and loyalty’. His approach was developed in *The Local Community and the Great Rebellion* (Historical Association Pamphlet, 1969) to focus on the ‘county community’, rather than the wider political nation as a focus of provincial identity and allegiance. The conference revisited the

impact of this hypothesis, exploring the recent approaches taken by current leading scholars in this field. The speakers were Professor David Hey (University of Sheffield), Dr Andrew Hopper (University of Leicester), Professor Jacqueline Eales (Canterbury Christchurch University), Dr Jan Broadway (Queen Mary, University of London), Dr Ian Warren (Queen’s College, Oxford) and Dr Stephen Roberts (History of Parliament Trust). Andrew Hopper and Professor Eales are preparing a collection of the conference papers for publication.

During the day Professor Everitt delighted many delegates with his personal reminiscences of his older brother over his lifetime. He recounted how, walking with Alan in the country around Sevenoaks at the age of 17, he became aware that Alan’s close and acute observation of his surroundings extended to similar observation of and interest in Francis himself. As a Professor of Physics at Stanford, he was once required to act as independent chairman at an adjudication in the department of history and was struck by the reaction of the historians when they learned that he was brother to the esteemed Alan Everitt. He paid tribute to the influence of Sevenoaks School whose headmaster, himself an historian, introduced Alan to research in the sixth form, building on the wide range of intellectual interests accumulated from his family and his grandfather’s extensive library.

Andrew Hopper: Anne Pegg



Professor Francis Everitt (3rd from left) and speakers

Photo: A. Pegg

EVENTS SPONSORED BY THE FRIENDS

Diary Dates

The 2010/11 Seminar Programme can be found at the back of this Newsletter.

Day Conference 'Leaving Home', Saturday, 13 November 2010. See accompanying flyer.

The **Annual General Meeting** of the Friends will take place on **Thursday, 18th November** following the seminar, with wine and chat to follow.

Study Weekend 3rd-5th May 2011. 'Secular and Sacred: exploring the early history of the borough of Trafford, curvilinear churchyards and the ancient estates of Dunham Massey'. Accommodation in Sale.

Hoskins Lecture 2011

To be announced.

Publications by Friends

Marion Aldis with Pam Inder, *Staffordshire Women – Nine Forgotten Histories* (History Press, Stroud, 2010).

Pamela Buttrey, *Silk and Sons* (2009).

Pamela Buttrey, *Lyss Place* (2009).

K.J. Cooper, 'Trefeurig, 1851 – 1891: a case study of a lead mining township', *Ceredigion*, 16 (2009), pp. 81 – 116.

Heather (Fenella) Flack, *Bewdley – The early years*. (2010).

Jane Laughton, 'The Control of Discord in Fifteenth-Century Chester', in R. Goddard, J. Langdon and M. Müller (eds), *Survival and Discord in Medieval Society: Essays in Honour of Christopher Dyer* (The Medieval Countryside: vol.4; Brepols, 2010), pp. 213-29.

Jane Laughton, 'Law-breaking at Hordern in 1503', *The Raven*, 11 (July 2010), pp. 12-13.

Jane Laughton, 'Mapping the Migrants: Welsh and Manx Settlers in Fifteenth-Century Chester', in Catherine A. M. Clarke (ed.), *Mapping the Medieval City: Space, Place and Identity in*

Chester c. 1200-1500 (University of Wales Press, forthcoming).

Angie Negrine, 'The Treatment of Sick Children in the Workhouse by the Leicester Poor Law Union, 1867-1914', *Family and Community History* 13 (May, 2010), pp. 34-44.

Anne Pegg, ed. *Friends of the Centre for English Local History Newsletter* (2009), 39 pp.

Noel Tornbohm, contributions to Bryan Harris (ed.), *Quarndon: Then and Now* (2010).

Anthony A. Upton, 'Tudor Rectors of Southam', *Warwickshire History* xiv no. 4 Winter 2009/10, pp. 156 – 169.

Mary Wiltshire and Sue Woore, *Medieval Parks of Derbyshire: A Gazetteer with Maps, Illustrations and Historical Notes* (Ashbourne, 2009).

Conference Paper

Pamela Fisher, 'Identifying the cause of violent deaths: doctors, coroners and uxoricide, 1790 – 1837', Society for the Social History of Medicine, University of Durham, July 2010.

Friends' Papers

The following Papers are still in print and available for purchase. Please send enquiries to: Lydia Pye, 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>

Recent 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.

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Annual General Meeting 2009

The following officers and committee members were elected:

Chairman	Frank Galbraith	Committee members	Elaine Brown
Secretary	Alan Fox		Eleanor S. Davidson
Treasurer	Lydia Pye		Sarah Gilpin
Membership Secretary	Freda Raphael		Sylvia Pinches
Newsletter Editor	Anne Pegg		Mike Thornton
IT Coordinator	Andrew Wager	Later nominations	Dr Richard Jones (Staff)
Programme Secretary	No nomination		Richard V. Jones (Student)
			Neill Quinn (Student)

It was agreed to add a new office of Information Technology Coordinator to the Committee. As there were no nominations for Programme

Secretary, it was accepted that two to six extra Committee members should be appointed to share this task.

Professor Chris Dyer reported that Harold Fox's Memorial publication had been edited and Matt Tompkins had done the bulk of the work. The necessary money had been collected. Chris is awaiting a response from a publisher and, if the answer is positive, publication should be in summer or autumn 2010.

Pam Fisher had completed her five-year term of office as Chairman. In her report she stated that membership numbers had remained stable. During the past year there had been a day outing to Southwell and a weekend course based at Beverley. She thanked Programme Secretary Maggie Whalley, who had also completed her five-year term.

We have off-loaded quite a lot of second-hand books to bookshop on the Main Campus in the Percy Gee building. We receive some of the money from sales there. Other members of the

Committee were thanked for their efforts including Anne Pegg for editing the Newsletter, Andrew Wager for the relaunch of the website and all those who helped with the new application forms and posters. The new Bibliography was unveiled at the July Conference organised by the Centre. It is primarily an electronic version available free on the Internet. Our appreciation went to Mike Thompson, who did the editing. Pam Fisher and Alan Fox had helped with the proof reading.

The new Chairman Frank Galbraith thanked retiring Chairman Pam Fisher for her five years in the post. She had put in a tremendous effort, had been very effective, successful and forward-looking, and would be a hard act to follow. A bouquet was presented as a token of appreciation.

ACCOUNTS for year ending 30 Sept. 2009

INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
Subscriptions	£1,525.00	Student Support	£4,578.36
Donations	£ 424.00	Hoskins Lecture	£ 133.90
Book Sales	£ 325.90	Newsletter	£ 318.14
Publications	£ 114.55	Brit. Assoc. of LH	£ 58.00
Harold Fox Conference	£ 28.00	Donation VCH	£ 200.00
Other events/visits	£ 706.67	Publicity material	£ 429.20
Dividends/Interest	£ 652.43	General expenses	<u>£ 410.65</u>
Gift Aid	<u>£ 241.35</u>	TOTAL	£6,128.25
TOTAL	£4,017.90		

Restricted Fund:

H. Fox Memorial Fund £78.00

Net receipts/payments for year	(£2,110.35) General fund
	£78.00 Restricted Fund
TOTAL	(£2,032.35)

ASSETS

Balance at CAF Gold & NatWest a/c	£11,073.00
Investments at market value	<u>£13,117.38</u> [Cost £15,000]
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>£24,190.38</u>
[Includes restricted fund total £1,541.00]	

Chris Dyer interviewed by Pam Fisher for the Friends.

In a piece for the October 2001 Newsletter, written immediately before you joined the Centre, you mentioned your 30-year spell at Birmingham University, but also emphasised your long connection with ELH at Leicester, its staff and some of its former students. But I'd like to start by delving further back. What first sparked your interest in history?

My first interest was in archaeology, specifically digging on a Roman site. I became very committed to Roman archaeology by the age of 11, but at 12 I also realised that the medieval period was interesting, and I was gradually drawn to the idea of looking at sites which had both documentary and material evidence.

Tell us a little about your childhood.

I was brought up in a village in south Warwickshire. My father was a carpenter by trade who had become a builder's foreman. My mother was a primary school teacher, and was a powerful influence on me. It wasn't a bookish household, but one where reading was encouraged.

And your education – was it a grammar school and Oxbridge?

No, no. I went to grammar school – King Edward VI Grammar School at Stratford upon Avon, which was Shakespeare's school. I did everything a year early. I passed my 11-plus at 10, left school at 17, and then went to Birmingham University, which was where I did my first degree and PhD.

Why did you decide on an academic career?

There was no alternative; I couldn't think of anything else, it was just such an obvious and natural thing to do.

What were the best words of advice you received in the early stages of your career?

My supervisor, Rodney Hilton, telling me to get things written early and to get things published.

Why does the middle ages have such an appeal for you, and the lives of ordinary people in particular?

I did the Tudors for A-level, but my interest in archaeology drew me to the middle ages. Because I didn't do it at school, it was a slightly mysterious period. My interest in ordinary people stems partly from archaeology, but also because I am a democrat and a socialist. That was an

important influence, because you think the ordinary people ought to be ruling the roost.

Which two academics had the greatest influence on your early research?

Obviously Rodney Hilton, but also Philip Rahtz, a lecturer in archaeology at Birmingham University. He left Birmingham and became professor of archaeology at York. He was a great enthusiast.

Fast forwarding now to your nine years at Leicester, what have you enjoyed most about being here?

The company of colleagues in the Centre and elsewhere in the university, the students, who are really keen and want to do the work, and of course the Friends. When I came to Leicester, I had not really taught in a post-graduate environment before. The difference I really noticed and appreciated was that there was less pressure at Leicester and I was spared the immense stress that there had been in Birmingham.

Has anything surprised you about the Centre?

I thought it was going to be much posher than it has turned out to be. I got the impression through visiting in the 1980s and 1990s that all the students were hunting types with very plummy accents and that the whole place was very elevated socially. So when I came I was very pleasantly surprised to find that people on the whole were just like everyone else. I think it was partly Harold Fox's lofty attitude that had given me that impression.

Do you feel there is still a distinctive Leicester approach to local history and, if so, how would you define its essence?

The Leicester approach is about the work of three people: Alan Everitt, Joan Thirsk and Charles Phythian-Adams. What was distinctive about their work was their search to understand regional difference. We are still interested in that, but it is no longer our driving force. As happens a lot in the historical world, the questions we used to ask are now thought to be unanswerable, and the search to understand regional differences has, I fear, gone out of fashion. But Leicester still ranges more widely than other University local history centres. While they tend to look just at their own county, we study everywhere, which is very important. You look at the variety of localities in a way that is a Leicester characteristic. Neither do we specialise in any

particular period. I've always avoided the M-word – medieval. It puts people off, and it's much more interesting to look at long-term history, including the modern, the middle ages and earlier, and that's something we do really well.

There have been many changes at the Centre since 2001. What do you think has been the Centre's most important achievement in that time?

It has become more expansive. We hold conferences, which bring people in from the whole country and beyond; we go out more to meet colleagues in societies and conferences; we are also gaining a profile with the 'Explorations' series.

Do you think the Centre has the respect it deserves within the University and in the wider world?

The Vice Chancellor respects us enormously, and that has been hugely useful to us, and saved us from difficulty on a number of occasions. I don't think the University as a whole really knows we exist. When trying to recruit students, we blow our own trumpet as much as we can, but while PhD students generally understand what we offer, some MA students don't discover the Leicester tradition until after they have enrolled.

Which do you enjoy the most, research, writing or delivering papers at conferences and to local societies?

Research is always much more interesting and enjoyable than anything else. On Easter Sunday I had tremendous fun planning a site, running round a field with a tape. I also enjoy going to record offices. It's the variety that I enjoy, both in the research and in talking to societies and the public – going to new places, meeting new people. I don't find writing a chore, but it takes a lot of time. I used to be able to do 2,000 words a day but with the advent of word processors, I've now slowed down to 1,000.

How would you answer those who see no point in studying history?

They must be very lacking in imagination. If you abolished history, it would then need to be reinvented. People are always going to ask, how did we get here, what made things the way they are, why is Britain different from France and ask about all the other interesting things that we perceive around us. History is absolutely crucial to understanding the world.

You must have had many eureka moments. Is there one that will always remain firmly implanted in your memory?

There have not been enough! I've had more eureka moments in dealing with material things than with documents. This is not my own discovery, but I particularly remember a research student of mine pointing to a very narrow shop front in the High Street in Stratford upon Avon and I suddenly realised that it was a back lane that had been laid out in 1196, that had had a shop built into it. It was an extraordinary frisson of discovery and realisation that some 800 years later you could still see the echo of the surveyor at work.

Many of us are envious at the way you seamlessly integrate archaeology, documentary research, landscape interpretation and place-name studies, but your work also ranges across many centuries and parts of Britain and covers an almost infinite number of aspects of medieval life, from food, coins, taxation and pottery to salt-making, goats and gardens. Have you always had such a broad range of interests or has this developed over time?

I think once you've decided that you are interested in the non-aristocracy – the people of a lower social rank – then that inevitably takes you into a lot of areas of life. I remember that I first got hooked on living standards for example – that means everything: houses, diet, diseases, farming and buildings, as you've got to take into account all these things. But I'm glad that you mentioned the goats. They were very important. They represent the type of farming you can do in hilly, rather wild, woody regions where sheep couldn't live. You can keep a goat for milking – it's the poor man's cow.

Which of your published books and articles did you most enjoy researching and writing?

It's an article I published in *Medieval Archaeology* in 1995 about sheepcotes. I'd first realised in 1966 that a building visible as an earthwork in Gloucestershire was the remains of a house for keeping sheep, and that no one had ever recognised that before. I kept that in my locker until 1988, and then I started going out to find more of them. It was just enormous fun. The sheepcotes I was investigating were in the Cotswolds, so it was a nice place to go and it took me to parts of the Cotswolds that tourists never see. I did actually look for one at Broadway, but not in the bit of Broadway that tourists visit. It was just a pleasure going out to look for them, and also visiting the Public Record Office and Gloucestershire Record Office for the

documentary evidence, and it was possible to knit the two together. The article just wrote itself.

Many of the papers you deliver are to local societies. Do you see this as an important aspect of your work, or do you simply enjoy it?

We've got to do it. If we didn't enjoy doing it, it would be our duty to do it. The societies, particularly the county societies, are the lifeblood of local history. I have to admit to occasional frustration when I speak to village societies, as they can be difficult audiences to satisfy, but the county societies are the building blocks of local history. They publish a lot of important material and draw together many very able people, both professionals and amateurs.

Looking back, what do you consider to be the highlight of your career?

I think I was probably most productive and had the most good ideas round about 1988! In formal terms, the highlight would have been delivering the Ford lectures at the University of Oxford in 2001, which were subsequently published under the collective title, *An Age of Transition?*

You mentioned in a previous Newsletter your mixed emotions on your well-deserved CBE. Did you and Jenny go to the Palace, and did you derive any pleasure from that?

We did go – you've got to go to the Palace once you've bitten the bullet and accepted the honour. It was a very strange, formal occasion, where you were trained in how to behave and how to address the Queen. The first time you have to say 'Your Majesty' and the second time you have to say 'Ma'am', and after you've been given your gong you have to walk backwards, which doesn't come naturally. I wasn't a very good pupil: I forgot to say 'Ma'am', and I almost turned my back on the Queen. But it was an opportunity for Jenny to wear a hat. It was the second time she's been there, because her father was given an honour too, but she's more republican than I am!

What were your feelings when you were presented with your festschrift volume this summer?

It was a great pleasure. A lot of good people, former students and so on, were involved in it, and I was very appreciative of the work they'd put into it. It sometimes feels that I've spent half my time recently writing festschrift essays for other people, so it's nice to see that they would do the same for me. Unfortunately with these things there were people who might have liked to contribute, but there just wasn't room for them. It wasn't a surprise because I'd discovered three

times over that it was going to happen, but I didn't know *when* it would happen. Indeed, I actually contributed one of the essays! When we were sorting out Harold Fox's papers, there was a typescript of an article and I guessed it was for this volume, and I said to Matt Tompkins, 'I bet they're preparing a festschrift for me, and this is Harold's contribution to it'. I didn't know then that Matt was also involved. An hour later he telephoned the editors and arranged for Harold's essay to be included.

I understand that the bibliography of your writings in the back of that volume adds the words 'So far'. Is that just wishful thinking on the part of the editors, or will you continue to research and publish in retirement?

Well I've published four things since it was completed, and unfortunately it omitted to include some items such as my article in Italian and my essay on 'The great fire of Shipston-on-Stour'. I will be continuing to research and publish in retirement.

What are you working on at the moment?

At the moment I'm writing an article which I've been thinking about for some time on the relief of poverty in the late medieval village, but the piece of work that is nagging at my conscience is the final chapter of my book on John Heritage, the Cotswold wool merchant, which I've not yet written. That will occupy me in the autumn, so I'll be disappearing for two months to do that.

For someone whose research interests are rooted so firmly in the English soil, you also give a lot of papers at overseas conferences. Do you enjoy travelling to new places?

Yes. For a long time I didn't travel much at all, but now I do like giving papers abroad. After all, they pay your fare! It means that when you go to a foreign city, there are plenty of friendly people there, arranging your accommodation and offering to show you round. You also get the benefits of the tourist experience, as obviously you're allowed to go and do other things as well as being at the conference.

Will you be visiting more countries when you retire?

I've already booked to go to Paris and Girona, needless to say for conferences.

What interests do you have outside the worlds of history and archaeology?

I enjoy films and the theatre. I also used to read a lot of novels, but I've slipped out of that habit and I expect to read more novels when I've retired.

Do you have any burning ambitions that retirement will give you the opportunity to achieve?

To be a better historian. What I dread is mental deterioration. That's already started, of course, but I really don't like the thought of losing the ability to put it all together

Will you continue to live in Oadby and will we still see you around Mark Fitch House?

Yes, I'm afraid you will. I'm staying in Oadby because although I don't find it the most exciting place to live, the thought of filling two furniture vans with books again and going somewhere else is too awful to contemplate. And Jenny has got a lot of contacts here now, so she rather likes living here. The day my festschrift was presented to me I received a letter from the Leverhulme Trust informing me that I've become a Leverhulme Emeritus Fellow, so I've got quite a bit of money to spend on research. Roey Sweet has very kindly promised me the corner of an office, so I will continue to drop in, but I'm determined not to interfere. I'm sure people will be wanting to do new things and make innovations and improvements, and I won't complain (in public anyway).

Will your local involvement with the VCH and with the Friends of the Centre continue?

Yes; I really want both those organisations to succeed, and I will help them if they wish me to do so.

And finally, what sort of English peasant do you think you would have made? Would you have happily tilled the lord's soil, or would you have organised a revolt?

I think Alan Taylor's dictum about 'strong opinions weakly held' would have applied to me. I would have grumbled a lot, and been stropky and difficult, but not actually done anything. But I wouldn't have been very good at cultivation, as evidenced by the letter I have just received from Oadby and Wigston Council complaining that my allotment is not well tended. I would probably have starved, or have been reliant on poor relief.

Thank you for your time. May I, on behalf of all the Friends, wish you a very long and fulfilling retirement.

Festschrift for Professor Chris Dyer

Survival and Discord in Medieval Society: Essays in Honour of Christopher Dyer.

Edited by Richard Goddard, John Langdon and Miriam Müller (Brepols, Turnhout, 2010).

Chris Dyer's scholarship, career (to date) and sixty-fifth birthday have been celebrated in a festschrift containing essays by sixteen of his friends, colleagues and students, published by Brepols as volume 4 in its series *The Medieval Countryside*.

In their Introduction the three editors, all former students of Chris, undertake the difficult task of surveying Chris' many and wide-ranging interests, publications and achievements, and a bibliography of his publications (so far), compiled by Richard Goddard, is appended at the end of the book. Like Chris' work, the book's chapters cover a wide range of subjects, places and periods, but are divided broadly between the two themes of the book's title; survival - meaning economic survival, making a living - and discord, the latter ranging from the minor tensions and faultlines revealed by studies of individual local societies to the outright large-scale violence of peasant revolts.

The first three chapters illustrate the temporal range and inter-disciplinary nature of Chris' interests. Grenville Astill provides an overview of the debate on the origins of rural settlement patterns in the eighth to twelfth centuries, considering in particular whether changes occurred suddenly, in short spurts, or gradually over lengthy periods. That is followed by a posthumous contribution from Harold Fox (nearly completed before his death and found among his papers), discussing seigniorial exploitation of Dartmoor's vast pastures between the eleventh and sixteenth centuries, with a case study of the Courtenays' park at Okehampton. Next Richard Britnell contributes to another long-running debate, over whether the fifteenth century was a period of economic growth or decline, with a reconsideration of Michael Postan's arguments in favour of the pessimistic view.

The next four chapters continue the theme of economic survival, but in narrower periods and contexts. Richard Goddard analyses debt litigation in borough courts, principally those of Nottingham and Winchester, to provide evidence

for periods of recession and recovery in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Robert Swanson describes the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield's spiritual income (mainly tithes) from three parishes in Derbyshire's High Peak between 1400 and 1535 - an interesting contrast to the manorial incomes so much more usually studied. John Langdon uses building accounts from four royal castles and palaces to track labourers' wages between 1250 and 1350 (they fluctuated remarkably little, hovering between 1d and 2d a day) and outlines several individual labourers' careers, including four women called Noreys, probably all sisters, who worked at Rockingham Castle between 1278 and 1288. James Masschaele shows how the establishment of the system of peripatetic royal courts in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries influenced urban development, drawing substantial numbers of rural dwellers into the towns where the sessions were held, often to the detriment of their neighbours and rivals.

Discord in small societies is the theme of the next group of six chapters. Phillip Schofield outlines the development of trespass litigation in manor courts in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, and Chris Briggs considers accusations by villagers against their lord's reeve or bailiff (estate manager) recorded in the court rolls of twenty five East Anglian manors during the same period, and in those of Great Eversden in Cambridgeshire in the later fourteenth century. Jean Birrell discusses the disputes between the lord of the manor of Alrewas in Staffordshire and his tenants in the early fourteenth century; in 1341 the tenants took the unusual step of asking for a new custumal to be drawn up to record the terms of a settlement reached with the lord. Matt Tompkins uses the lease of the manorial demesne at Great Horwood in Buckinghamshire, which the manor's tenants held collectively from 1320 until the end of the sixteenth century, to illustrate two frequent themes of Chris' work; individual and communal peasant enterprise. In a brief departure from manors and their records, Jane Laughton describes the mechanisms by which the city of Chester maintained law and order and settled disputes within its population in the fifteenth century. Returning to manors, Miriam Müller analyses the food given to tenants performing boonworks on the demesnes of manors of the bishopric of Winchester in 1211, 1302 and 1410, as part of a wider discussion of long-term changes in labourers' diets.

The two final chapters deal with peasant revolts. Bas van Bavel provides a fascinating survey of a wave of uprisings in the Low Countries in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, triggered by aristocratic attempts to erode the traditional freedoms of communities of free peasants. Some revolts were successful, but others were suppressed bloodily by international armies of noblemen from neighbouring states, in some cases after a crusade had been declared against the insurgents (some of the oppressive lords against whom the revolts were directed were ecclesiastical princes, notably the Archbishop of Bremen and the Bishop of Utrecht). Samuel Cohn examines popular revolts in England, Italy, France and Flanders between 1200 and 1425. He finds that on the continent urban revolts were more numerous than has hitherto been supposed, and suspects that more research might reveal the same to be also true of England, and that the (mostly rural) English revolts tended to be less extreme affairs than on the continent, with more limited aims. English rebels also evincing a greater respect for their hereditary rulers - Napolese rebels threatened their queen with death and derided her as a whore, while the townspeople of Viterbo in Italy rammed their Prefect's face 'up his horse's arse', but the worst case of lèse majesté committed in England was when Wat Tyler had the gall, in the presence of his king, to drink a jug of water and then rinse his mouth with ale.

Matt Tompkins

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**FRIENDS OF ALL SAINTS CHURCH,
BRIXWORTH
UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER**

28th Brixworth Lecture

**WHO SERVED THE ALTAR AT BRIXWORTH?
Clergy in English Minsters c. 800-c. 1100**

DR JULIA BARROW

**Saturday, 30th October at 5 p.m. in the Church
Tea from 4 p.m. in the Heritage Centre**

Tickets £5.00 (Students £3.00)

Email: brixworthfriends@btinternet.com

Events 2009-2010

Southwell, September 2009



The Leaves of Southwell

Photo: A Friend

Friends' events and days out are known for a combination of thought provocation and food. Our Southwell day certainly provided food for thought. We met outside the north door where Friends had time to admire Southwell Minster's Romanesque front and famous 'pepper pot' towers whilst Dr Richard Jones introduced the Minster's history. Entering the Minster through the north porch gave us an opportunity to admire the fine Romanesque north doorway.

Southwell Minster became the cathedral of the new Nottingham diocese in 1884 but its history stretches back at least two thousand years. Were the wells and springs hereabouts spiritual places in pre-Christian times? Incidentally, Southwell is 'South-well' to local people (the young Byron, whose mother lived here, rhymed Southwell with 'mouth well') but 'Suth'll' to foreigners.

The earlier, Saxon Minster dated from the tenth century when King Eadwig gave the Manor of Southwell to the Archbishop of York. Pilgrims came attracted by the relics of Saint Eadburh. Within a hundred years the Saxon Minster was rebuilt, more or less as we see it today. Towers and nave are twelfth century; quire, chancel and chapter house are of the thirteenth century.

Southwell Minster is famous for the Leaves of Southwell, the exquisitely delicate stone carvings in the chapter house and its adjoining vestibule and cloister. Southwell was never a monastery. The manor and minster belonged to the Archbishops of York. With its episcopal

palace and deer parks it was a place of recreation. The carved leaves of the Chapter House reflect this with their riot of vegetation, not just of woodland but of meadow and copse too: oak and maple, hawthorn and bryony, rose and buttercup. Here and there is animated life: dogs cornering a hare, a man plucking grapes, and the mysterious foliate heads. Men's faces gaze out from the leaves with buttercup or hop or ivy leaves sprouting from their mouths. Visitors are entranced by these 'green men' and much has been written about their possible meaning.

Southwell also reminds us that being merciful to the poor is part of Christian teaching. Poor people waited on a pew against the wall of the south transept for their dole of bread. (A glass window set into the floor here allows visitors to look down onto the remains of part of the Saxon church floor made of tesserae from the Roman villa previously occupying this site.) After the Reformation relief of the poor devolved onto parishes and their rate payers who, without the threat of purgatory to loosen their purse strings, became more interested in 'the bottom line'.

We left the minster to make our ways to Southwell Union workhouse passing the elegant and desirable Prebendal Houses, successors to the earlier residences of the prebendaries, i.e. secular canons, of the minster. South Muskham Prebend was the comfortable home of the Becher family for more than one hundred years. The Reverend John Thomas Becher, himself a secular canon, was the mind behind The Workhouse. His 1828 pamphlet, *The Antipauper System*, described how he and George Nicholls, the Southwell parish Overseer, had reduced the Poor Rates by 75% in three years.

Southwell Union workhouse was renamed *Greet House* in 1948 when it became part of the NHS. It remained in use, finally as temporary accommodation for homeless mothers and children, until the early 1990s. This may explain why the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England recognised Southwell workhouse as being 'the best preserved' in England. The National Trust then bought it, restoring it partly to how it would have been in the mid-nineteenth century when the aim of the workhouse system was to deter all but the desperate to seek its shelter. The cold, gloss-painted brick walls and bare rooms are unwelcoming even today. As further food for thought, a NT volunteer had pinned a review from the *Guardian* of Richard Wilkinson and Kate

Pickett's book, *The Spirit Level. Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better*, graphically illustrating that conflicting arguments over the social problems of poverty remain a burning issue today.

The morning's contrasts, contemplation of medieval beauty and Victorian austerity, sharpened Friends' appetites for the spread which Dr Richard Jones and his family generously offered in the beautiful garden of their nearby home. Wearing his chef's apron and stirring an enormous pan, Dr Jones could have been the Workhouse Master himself except that no pauper ever enjoyed glasses of fragrant wine or such a tasty Mediterranean feast.

Freda Raphael



Paupers Unlimited?

Photo: A Friend

Spotlight on the Centre, March 2010

Dr Sylvia Pinches opened the day's proceedings by welcoming Friends and visitors. The day's event was to highlight the research being carried out in the Centre by staff and students.

Chris Dyer was the first speaker, taking the opportunity to review the work of the Centre before describing his own ongoing research. He firmly declared that, both in quantity and quality, the research being carried out and published is something to brag about. He referred to the 10 years' publications listed in the new Bibliography – a service provided by the Friends under the leadership of Mike Thompson. Chris then gave an update on his three main areas of current interest – the Wharram Percy archaeology project, now drawing to a close but still to be published; the topic of 'luxury'; the study of John Heritage of

Warwickshire which he hoped could be published by the end of the year.

Richard V. Jones, a current MA student, spoke of his interest in the prosecutions of Luddites in Yorkshire in the early nineteenth century. He pointed out that, at the height of the disturbances, there were more troops deployed in the Midlands and North of England than Wellington had in the Peninsular War.

Andrew Hopper's research into aspects of the English Civil Wars is familiar to us but he chose to focus on the Hotham family of Hull as 'turncoats and renegades'. Sir John Hotham, M.P. and Governor of Hull recruited many to the Parliamentary cause and achieved fame by refusing the King entry to Hull. The failure to seize the important arsenal of Hull was a significant contributory factor in the loss of the Royalist cause. His later defection did not bring sufficient advantage to the King and he, together with his son, a Parliamentary general, were executed.

Ronal O'Donnell, MA student, bases his study in North Norfolk, using maps and landscape features to investigate the idea of the parish as a sacred landscape. He demonstrated that, at the time of parish organisation, the placing of church buildings had reference to ancient boundaries, with wide views and a distinctive sense of place.

Keith Snell chose to give a detailed report on the topics recently and currently being researched by approximately 55 students. Geographically they extend from Carmarthenshire to the Holland Fen and from Staffordshire and Derbyshire to Kent, with far-reaching topics ranging from welfare and the decline of industry to nonconformist church buildings in Oxfordshire and the oral history of a single street in Ashby-de-la-Zouch. The oversight of all this work for the Centre staff of four is compounded by their teaching of over one thousand undergraduate students.

MA student Maureen Harris reported on her research into discontent in post-Restoration Warwickshire between 1660 and 1720. Conflict between villages, traditionally adhering to Roman Catholic or Dissenting beliefs, and the Established Church imposed upon them, could flare up over many issues, either major, such as tithes, or seemingly trivial, as the removal of a tree from the churchyard.

Richard Jones, 'thinking through the manorial affix', turned our attention to place-names, in particular, why in the twelfth and

thirteenth centuries, attachments were made to existing settlement names. It could be a simple differentiation of size or type of location or a church dedication. Such an identifier would be useful as an administrative device, identifying the holder of a manor, particularly if a parish were split between two or more families.

Our final student speaker, Susan Kilby, focussed on the fourteenth-century manor court rolls for the area of Walsham -le-Wolds. There is much unexamined documentation of cases alleging trespass. This could include slander, damage and bodily harm, whether deliberate or accidental. A scarcity of meadow land was one cause. Peasants often inflicted damage on others of similar status but on many occasions it was demesne land which was the focus of resistance. The intense relationship between land and identity was the main motivation for deliberate damage and some trespass suggested a ritualistic meaning, occurring at significant times of year.

Anne Pegg

Hoskins' Lecture 2010



Dr Michael Wood (R) with Frank Galbraith and Andrew Wager

Photo: A. Pegg

'The English Story'.

A large audience in the Ken Edwards Building welcomed Dr Michael Wood who gave the 21st Hoskins Day lecture. Introducing Dr Wood, Chairman of the Friends Frank Galbraith, noted that it was hardly necessary to introduce one who is so well known for a number of historical programmes produced for television, from 'In search for the Dark Ages' (1979) to 'History of India' (2007). He has also published a number of historical works.

Dr Wood first made reference to the works of W.G Hoskins and R. Hilton and the influence they had on him in forming his understanding of history. Hoskins' approach of looking at history from the perspective of ordinary people had made an indelible impression on him. By bringing together an understanding of the landscape with the people who lived and toiled in it, Hoskins used whatever information he could find about ordinary people and produced a story showing how they lived, which helps us to understand how our communities have evolved. Michael has taken Hoskins' approach and adapted it to television, using the latest technology and techniques available to archaeologists and historians. In this way, it is hoped that people will find it easier to understand how history has shaped the way we live today.

'The English Story' will be a series of six one-hour television programmes looking at the history of Kibworth, an apparently, undistinguished village on the A6 between Leicester and Market Harborough. Dr Wood explained that the original agreement with the BBC was to produce a series that would explore the history of an ordinary village from the Norman invasion to the present day. It was assumed that a year would be more than sufficient to complete the series. But why choose Kibworth, or more accurately, the three linked villages of Kibworth Harcourt, Kibworth Beauchamp and Smeeton Westerby? The answer lay in the extraordinary amount of archival evidence that is available, especially on Kibworth Harcourt, which came into the estate of Merton College, Oxford in 1270. The Hundred Rolls of 1270 no longer exist but did so when Burton wrote his history of the county in 1672 and Burton's notes are published in *Nichol's History of Leicestershire* (1779). The County Record Office holds over 20,000 pre-1600 wills, including a number from Kibworth. In addition, a number of families have remained in the area for three or four hundred years and therefore provide that link between past and present.

Having decided on a location, Dr Wood explained how the production team set about their work after June 2009. The first that most villagers knew of the project was a notice advising that a team of archaeologists from the University of Leicester Archaeological Service, together with Carezza Lewis and a film crew, would be in Kibworth at the beginning of July and villagers were asked to participate and dig test pits

over the weekend. As a result, fifty five pits were dug in the three communities, the majority of which were in Kibworth Harcourt. Finds included Roman pottery, fifth or sixth-century pottery, an Anglo-Saxon bone comb and some eighth-century Ipswich ware at Smeeton Westerby. Some pieces of St Neots and Stamford ware were also found as well as considerable amounts of seventeenth and eighteenth-century items.

While the finds were being analysed, the team were looking for any other evidence of early habitation. They came across evidence of a Roman villa that had been located by Bert Aggass, a local archaeologist and historian, during the 1960s. At this point, the team became aware that the area had a rich history going back much further in time and which offered the possibility of some exciting finds. The BBC agreed for the project to be expanded. A geophysical survey of the area located by Mr Aggass clearly showed the complete plan of a large Roman villa, and in the same field the team found a bronze age barrow. Also in the field is the mound of the first windmill which is known to have been in existence before 1280. Not far away lies a mound, locally referred to as the Munt, which has always been considered to be the base of a Norman motte and bailey. Work undertaken by the survey team now suggests that the mound has a much earlier origin and was originally the burial mound of a Romano-British chief. It subsequently became a motte and bailey in later times.

Turning to later times, Dr Wood acknowledged the work of Dr Cecily Howell whose PhD thesis on Kibworth Harcourt was subsequently published under the title *Land, Family and Inheritance in Transition; Kibworth Harcourt 1280-1700* (Cambridge, 1983). Her work enabled Dr Wood to delve further into the history of the families and buildings and relate them to life in the community today. Much of the research was undertaken at Merton College library and the Record Office for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. A dendro-chronology survey of the Manor Farm house has shown that part of it dates from the period 1320-40. Various open meetings have been held where villagers have brought in all sorts of items that have historical connections with the area. As the area is on the western boundary of Danish influence, some of the families who have stayed in the area were asked if they would take a DNA test to ascertain whether there might be evidence of

families having stayed in the area since the invasion.

Dr Wood ended the lecture by showing a short film clip of the day that test pits were dug. Time did not permit him to talk about the nineteenth and twentieth centuries but this did not seem important as his enthusiasm for his subject and the enormous amount of information that has been uncovered held the audience's attention to the end.

This series of programmes will provide an opportunity to take Hoskins' approach to local history and use the latest technology to describe how communities evolved and so contribute to The English Story. Local historians in towns and villages up and down the country may well wonder how much more could be learnt about their own community if only sufficient money, expertise and time were available. Kibworth is very fortunate in having been chosen for this project because it has elicited knowledge and information that could not have been obtained by the local history society.

David Holmes

Study Day: Bolsover and Hardwick Hall



Photo: L. Pegg

In July a group of 29 Friends and guests gathered at Bolsover Castle for a study day, organised by our Chairman, Frank Galbraith. The weather was perfect – sunny with a gentle breeze. Our guide in Bolsover was distinguished historian (and MA from the then Department of Local History), **Dr Clive Hart, seen above.**

Bolsover is situated on a ridge of magnesium limestone above the Derbyshire coal measures, as indicated in its name – OE *-ofer* meaning a promontory or flat-topped ridge. The castle sits on the defensive earthwork overlooking

the Scarsdale valley, denuded of almost all traces of archaeology by coal mining and extract ion over centuries. The present castle was built by Charles Cavendish (son of Bess of Hardwick) and his son William from 1613 as a secondary home for sociable and pleasurable entertaining. Within its confines lies the 'little castle'. Topped by a lantern tower with panoramic views over the Midland counties, it has a lavishly decorated interior and consists mainly of intimate rooms and spaces, some with remarkable, if somewhat crudely executed, classically-inspired, erotic wall paintings, dating from the early seventeenth century

Another unusual feature of the castles is the conduit house, the upper stage of a mechanism for raising a water supply from pump-houses below the ridge. During the Civil War, the castle was besieged by Parliamentarian forces and partially demolished by shots from across the valley by a 21 foot cannon, 'The Queen's Pocket Pistol', which is now on display at Dover Castle.

Outside the castle, the street plan clearly shows a medieval planned town with a market place immediately in front of the castle and grid-pattern alignments of streets, the whole surrounded by an impressive earthen bank and ditch. Documentation and construction would date this earthwork to post Viking but pre-1235. Bolsover never thrived as a town because it lacked good lines of communication and was overtaken by its rival, Chesterfield.

The parish church lies alongside the old rampart and two major fires have destroyed many ancient features, There remains a Norman doorway and a twelfth-century rounded cross-head gravestone but the finest treasure is a carved stone thirteenth-century reredos, discovered buried under the floor. From the church we made our way to the Assembly Rooms where Mrs Carol Galbraith and the ladies of the Grindleford W.I. served an excellent summer lunch.

Leaving Bolsover we made our way to Hardwick Old Hall where we were joined by our second guide of the day, Professor David Hey, formerly of the University of Sheffield (and another alumnus of the Centre).

The two halls at Hardwick are the work of Bess of Hardwick, Countess of Shrewsbury. Although it might be assumed that the Old Hall was the forerunner of the Hardwick Hall itself, in fact the Old Hall, begun in the 1580s, was still being built when the new hall was begun ten years later. The Old Hall was always used, till the end

of the eighteenth century, as accommodation for family and friends, allowing the new building to be smaller than grand contemporary houses, albeit large in its proclamations of the wealth and status of Bess herself. Professor Hey sketched in the rise of Bess, from one of five children of a minor gentry family fallen on hard times. From her first position as an upper servant at Codnor Castle, four judicious marriages saw her rise to wealth and influence, leaving six children to ally with the dukedoms of Devonshire, Portland, Kingston and Newcastle. Her fourth marriage was to George Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury who, for fourteen years was guard to Mary Queen of Scots. Inside the house are panels of needlework, stitched by Bess and the prisoner queen.

Hardwick is often described as 'more glass than wall' and is the masterpiece of Elizabethan architect, Robert Smithson. Local Derbyshire stone, marble and alabaster are used throughout, notably in the grand fireplaces. The Diana frieze in the Great Chamber has actual saplings, attached to the walls and plastered over to provide the effect of woodland in relief. In 1951 the house was transferred to the National Trust.

After a final 'cuppa' in the Great Kitchen, we left for home after an enjoyable and, thanks to Clive and David, very enlightening day.

Anne Pegg

Leicestershire VCH – an update

Friends may recall from the last *Newsletter* that a trust has been formed in Leicestershire, and registered as a charity, as a step towards completing the Victoria County History volumes for the county. Raising money in the current economic climate is inevitably proving challenging. The difficulty of providing the depth of training that would be required by novice historians on a shoe-string budget has held us back from advertising widely for volunteers to research and write the history of the county's individual towns and villages, but a small number of people have come forward and are now working on the histories of their parishes, with guidance provided to them through detailed notes and a series of workshops. We now have the funds to appoint a part-time co-ordinator to deliver further training and support over the next 6 months (and hopefully beyond, if further money

can be raised) and would now like to expand our band of volunteer historians.

If any readers of this *Newsletter* would be interested in researching and writing the history of a Leicestershire parish for the VCH (which would be published under your name), please get in touch with Julie Deeming via Marc Fitch House. We would also be grateful to hear from anyone who perhaps can't afford the time commitment necessary to produce a parish history, but who has already worked on the history of any Leicestershire parish that's not already included in the VCH (existing volumes cover city parishes and Gartree Hundred) or who would be willing to share their notes, knowledge and/or written pieces with the VCH team. These would be acknowledged within any future publication.

In addition to these village histories, Leicestershire VCH Trust is also currently exploring the possibility of obtaining funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for a specific project on the history and heritage of the Charnwood area. Working with local history and heritage groups and individuals with an interest in the history of their locality, the project would involve volunteers researching the detailed history of each parish from the earliest times to the present day and joining with others to make the fruits of this research widely available through a range of media, including interpretation boards, podcasts and vodcasts, exhibitions, education packs for schools, a paperback about the history and heritage of the Charnwood area and a VCH volume. Applying for funds is a 3-stage process and is highly competitive. To reach the next stage we need to be able to demonstrate support for the project. If you would be interested in joining a specific Charnwood group of volunteers or assisting the Charnwood project in any other way, or if you would like to know more, please contact Julie Deeming at Marc Fitch House.

Pam Fisher

The British Record Society and English Local History

At the recent Annual General Meeting of the British Record Society, Professor Peter Spufford

stepped down as Chairman of the Council of the Society. It is exactly fifty years since he became Secretary of the Society, and twenty five since he became Chairman. In those fifty years the Society published fifty two volumes in all. He is replaced by the well-known local historian, Prof. David Hey, formerly a student in the department of English Local History under Hoskins. At the same time, the Society now has a new Treasurer, Mr James Henderson, and a new Secretary, Dr Patrick Wallis of the London School of Economics, who replaces Patric Dickinson, who has become Norroy and Ulster King of Arms. The two General Editors remain in place, Mr Cliff Webb, for the Probate Series, and Dr Catherine Ferguson for the Hearth Tax Series (who had already replaced Prof. Margaret Spufford, formerly a student in the Department of English Local History under Finberg). The old guard leaves the Society with numerous publications in its pipeline. A Hearth Tax return for Essex and an index to probate records at Lichfield are both likely to appear by the end of the year. For details of recent volumes see the society's web-site:

www.britishrecordsociety.org

Professor Peter Spufford

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Recent Deaths

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

Gwen Jones-Lewitt (Gwen Jones MA 1979-80) of Earls Barton, Northants. Died October 2009. Reported by Steve Lewitt.

Don Steel, historian and genealogist, of Highbridge, Somerset. Died April 2008.

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Seminar Programme 2010-11

All seminars are on Thursdays at 2.15pm 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 afterwards.

2010

- Thurs 7 October **Steve Hindle** (University of Warwick)
Below stairs at Arbury Hall (Warwicks.): Sir Richard Newdigate and his household staff, c. 1670-1710.
- Thurs 21 October **Peter Jones** (Oxford Brookes)
The 'moral economy' of the English poor in the nineteenth Century.
- Thurs 4 November **Matthew Bristow** (Victoria County History)
Non-traditional housing types in a New Town context: the planning and physical development of Corby, Northamptonshire, after 1930.
- Thurs 18 November **Jeremy Burchardt** (University of Reading)
Counterurbanisation, preservation and community in Berkshire, 1900-1950.
- Thurs 2 December **David Griffiths** (Kellogg College, University of Oxford)
Sand, sea and not much sun: medieval climate change and its effects on coastal landscapes and settlement.

2011

- Thurs 20 January **David Appleby** (University of Nottingham)
The Restoration county community: a post-conflict culture.
- Thurs 3 February **Diana Newton** (Teesside)
The impact of reformation on the cult of St Cuthbert in Durham.
- Thurs 17 February **Michael Worboys** (University of Manchester)
Fancy dogs and the dog fancy: manufacturing pedigree breeds in late Victorian Britain.
- Thurs 3 March **Francesca Carnevali** (University of Birmingham)
Microhistory and metanarratives: the example of Birmingham's and Providence's jewellery makers, 1870-1914.
- Thurs 17 March **Bob Johnston** (University of Sheffield) and **Anna Badcock**
(York Archaeological Trust)
Places for protest: the archaeology of an environmental protest camp in Derbyshire.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Reservations for seminars

Lucy Byrne, Marc Fitch House, 5 Salisbury Road, Leicester, LE1 7QR;
Tel: 0116-252 2762, Fax: 0116-252 5769.

Contributions to Newsletter

To the editor (Anne Pegg), e-mail: Eliza93@annepegg.co.uk
Alternatively leave message or contribution in Friends' pigeonhole at Marc Fitch House.

Membership enquiries

To: Freda Raphael, e-mail: freda@historicalsearch.co.uk

Purchase of Friends' Papers

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5, Salisbury Road, Leicester, LE1 7QR.