Friends of the Department of English Local History

NEWSLETTER

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The cover shows `The Larch Tree' from the Marc Fitch Fund Library's copy of *Silva: or a Discourse of Forest-Trees* (edition of 1776)

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EDITORIAL

This is the last Newsletter to be produced under the *ancien régime* whereby the Friends simply existed as an informal body and struggled by (usually very successfully) from year to year. At the Inaugural Meeting on January 11th the Friends came of age, seven years after our inception. We now have a formal constitution, adopted at the Inaugural Meeting, and soon we shall have elected officers.

Inevitably this, as you will have guessed, leads to a call for people to stand for election at the first A.G.M. on the evening of Monday 18th November at 5.30 p.m. (see below under 'Diary dates for Friends'). We shall need a chairman, a secretary (to service the committee and A.G.M.), a treasurer, a membership secretary, an editor for this Newsletter, a programme secretary, two additional committee members and two student representatives. This sounds big, but that is really the point: we shall be able to share duties around and thereby they will be performed all the better. Each member of this team will have light duties, so please do contact Harold Fox if you wish to stand. Ultimately you will need a proposer and a seconder, but please make informal contact first, if possible by November 1st. Working with Friends can be great fun.

All Friends will be very glad to hear that we now have enough funds to be able to begin our long-hoped-for aim of granting bursaries. This is a result of a great deal of hard work over many years. Congratulations to all who have helped. It is hoped that the first bursaries will be awarded in 1997, to be taken up in October of that year.

Rosie Keep was editor of Newsletters numbers 7, 8, and 9. All readers will have noticed many improvements, such as illustrations, a coloured cover, running titles and innovative headings, all of which crept in during her tenure as editor. We have now lost her because she needs more time to devote to her new post as a professional fund-raiser with Rural Voice. Rosie: we miss you and thank you for all you have done.

THE DEPARTMENT

Seminar Programme 1995-6: Autumn Term

'English landscape art and the Jamaican scene in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' by Professor Barry Higman (University of the West Indies) introduced us to a fascinating series of topographical water-colour pictures of sugar plantations by James Hakewill and other English artists. These were commissioned by plantation owners, often absentees, who demanded symbols beyond maps and plans to show off not only their handsome houses and the exploitation of the land but also the industrial premises for processing sugar and even the housing for the slave workforce.

Alan Everitt, our own former Professor, shared with us 'Common lands: thoughts on their extent and role in "English History"', which should lead to another important book. While agrarian history usually deals primarily with land that is fully exploited for arable or mixed husbandry, he has been concentrating on the rest of the landscape, manorial wastes and commons, mainly used for pasturing animals by one or more local communities. He has focused on the difficult question of their overall extent throughout the country and over the centuries, using all kinds of evidence, especially local place-names. His detailed studies of sample areas

have enabled him to characterize the uses made of commons in different regions according to the variety of natural resources they presented.

While concentrating on questions of outside influence, such as how far inland into Wales the dominion of 'the Lord of the Isles' extended and whether there were Scandinavian settlements in Gwynedd, historians have been tempted to treat the apparent chaos of the Welsh royal family succession as proof that the kingdom itself was chaotic and weak. 'North Welsh dynastic politics and the Irish Sea province *c.*950-*c.*1000' was a plea by Dr Kari Maund (Department of History, University of Leicester) to take the recorded history more at its face value and not to project back onto it our preconceptions of a single king exerting exclusive control over an identifiable nation. The fact that Godfrey is recorded as having taken tribute from Anglesey in 972 is not proof that he had conquered it and had driven out Idwal as its king. Territories of kingdoms were not set and succession was fluid, not by means of established primogeniture.

The planting of new towns and the legal significance of burgage tenure in them have long been appreciated. In 'The topography of medieval towns: evidence from the town plan' Dr Terry Slater (Department of Geography, University of Birmingham) was modest about his achievement. He helped to pioneer the surveying and analysis of burgage plots so as to be able to speculate about the phases of development of a town and the nature of the actual process of planning it. His approach worked for the well-documented town of Stratford-upon-Avon, produced results for the undocumented town of Bridgnorth, coped with the complex development of Ludlow and produced startling theories for Burton-on-Trent. Moreover it has subsequently influenced all historians of our medieval towns, who must ever be on the lookout for burgage plot measurements using the 16½ foot perch as the unit.

'Witchcraft, cunning men/women and fortune tellers in 19th-century urban contexts' by Dr Owen Davies (University of Lancaster) questioned the usual assumptions about the decline of witchcraft in towns based on lack of evidence. The lack could result both from the eighteenth-century attitude that the enlightenment was an urban achievement, and from nineteenth-century folklore studies, which treated rural society as the only available repository of former practices. He has found a few legal cases involving bewitchment and also evidence in newspapers of belief in divination. It could even be argued that the instability of being severed from cultural roots might have compelled townspeople to rely more on superstition.

For historians who deal with questions of urban immigration it was refreshing to hear from a geographer, Professor Gareth Lewis (Department of Geography, University of Leicester), who has been studying the contemporary opposite trend, the suburbanization of the countryside. In his research on 'Counter-urbanization and the rural turnaround' he has had the advantage of being able to study the reasons and motives given by his subjects. An interesting finding was that people moving from town to village usually have some ties with the area they choose or have some personal experience of country life. The general findings confirm that what is happening is a widening of the suburban patterns of 'normal mobility', especially where

young town-dwelling families move on to new employment to enable them to work in a town but to live in a village.

John Goodacre

Seminar Programme 1995-6: Spring Term

The first two seminars of the Spring programme were given by Graham Jones and Mike Thompson, familiar to many among their respective audiences as resident post-graduate students in the Department. Graham gave a fascinating lecture which ranged from the monastery of Mar Gabriel in Turkey to the shrine of St Waerburh in Chester, and from the Iron Age veneration of heads to the broadcasts of Radio Mercia F.M. He gave us an introduction to his study of the cult of saints. By charting not just the dedication of churches, but of side chapels, holy wells and fairs, for example, he has built up an understanding of the regional patterns of cults in the early Middle Ages. The lecture focused on the cults dedicated to saints of the royal house of Mercia: of the 227 Anglo-Saxon saints identified, fully one-third were 'unambiguously royal', and many were of the family of Penda of Mercia. Much erudite discussion ensued about the niceties of terminology, the possibility that Penda was Welsh, the relationship of the Celtic and Saxon churches, and the echoes of pagan practices surviving as *topoi* in Celtic saints' lives. For those already familiar with this territory Graham's lecture obviously provoked thought and comment, and for those of us unfamiliar with the world of Saxon saints it was a lively introduction.

Mike gave us some intriguing glimpses into the lives of the people of the Polden Hills in Somerset who were subject to the lordship of the abbots of Glastonbury in the later thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Having subtitled his talk 'Pintels, Piperwits and Peppercorns: prominent peasant families' he first described the Polden landscape and then in a series of prosopographical sketches, peopled this lost world of peasant villagers. Discovering in the predominantly arable economy hints of proto-industrialism in the concentration of names relating to trades and crafts in one of the five vills of the manorial complex, Mike also touched upon the rise of kulak cottars and the position of women as tenants. In a final section he gave an account of his early researches into the thirteenth-century growth of population as marked by the growing numbers of landless men, and concluded with a well-documented description of the death-toll wrought by the Black Death which wiped out over 50% of this vulnerable section of the community.

Dr Steve Hindle (University of Warwick) described the 'politics of exclusion' in his paper '"Poor strangers crept among us": the politics of poor relief in a Lincolnshire Fenland parish, *c.* 1600-1800'. Using the vestry minute book of Frampton, which contains an almost unbroken record of the amounts of poor relief from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century (a rare survival), Dr Hindle was able to give us an impressively detailed account of village economy, social relations and the exercise of power by the 'better sort of men' (an oligarchy composed of yeomen farmers and lesser gentry in sheep's clothing worn at vestry meetings) over the course of two centuries. Within this period poor relief income and expenditure rose dramatically in the second half of the eighteenth century and some of the draconian ways, used in addition to costly legal resettlement, by which

the vestry attempted to curb the costs were highlighted. In addition to the expulsion of 'loose' men and felons these included the resettlement of many long-resident in the village (one after 35 years) when they were about to become a charge on the parish. Even worse, the unlawful proscription of marriage between villager and incomer was effected by dubious allegations that it gave rise to bigamous liaisons. Dr Hindle's remarkable synthesis drew many questions from his audience who shared his regret that more vestry books, particularly from villages more open than Frampton, have not survived.

Dr Panikos Panayi (De Montfort University) delineated the divisions of class, religion and calling of an immigrant community in his account of 'Class and ethnicity in nineteenth-century Britain: the Germans in London, 1815-1914'. He began by giving a discursive account of ethnicity in relation to indigenous and immigrant groups in general but then packed much detail into his account of that fraction of the 5 million *emigrés* who left their German homelands to settle in London between 1816 and 1914. Dr Panayi covered the whole gamut from working-class waiters to middle-class business men. Political exiles such as Marx and Engels were part of a diaspora which included sugarloaf-bakers and barbers, tailors and furriers, brass bandsmen and bankers, academics and anarchists. Varied as much in their religious persuasions as in their occupations - Lutherans predominated but Catholics and Jews also made up the medley - to some extent affecting all was a philanthropic web concerned with alleviating the lot of the poor amongst them and with preserving their common language. In spite of these unifying elements Dr Panayi concluded that the German community in London remained fragmented and reflective of the patterns of society in the land left behind.

In 'Local land surveyors of Great Britain and Ireland and their maps, *c.*1540-1850', Dr Sarah Bendall (Fellow and Librarian of Merton College, Oxford) gave an illustrated account of her work in continuing the compilation of a directory of land surveyors and map-makers initiated by Francis Steer and carried forward by the late Peter Eden, one-time Senior Lecturer in Topography in the Department of English Local History. The directory, shortly to be republished, is now extended to over 13,000 entries and gives biographical details of those who in increasing numbers practised the ever more scientifically-based art. Dr Bendall traced this development from the early plans of coastal defences commissioned by Henry VIII and the first county-by-county survey carried out under the patronage of Queen Elizabeth I, through the beautifully detailed estate maps of landowners anxious to acquire yet another status symbol, the recording of the Irish (and later other colonial) plantations, the draining of the fens, and Ogilby's first road maps, to the foundation of the Ordnance Survey engendered by the Napoleonic threat. Dr Bendall concluded her talk by describing how individual practitioners and family firms of surveyor-cartographers flourished with the growth of local government, enclosure, tithe commutation and the advent of the railways, until the very excellence of the O.S. brought about their decline.

Mike Thompson and
Sylvia Pinches

Research Students' Workshops

As well as reviewing work in progress by members of the Department, the autumn 1995 and spring 1996 Postgraduate Workshops continued the pattern of including sessions on practical topics led by visiting experts, plus papers by postgraduate students from other departments. The success of the formula was evident in the numbers present, more than 20 on one occasion and just under 20 on the other. Students chose mapping and publication as the practical topics. Thus Dr Peter Fisher of the Geography Department encouraged participants at the October seminar to regard successful maps as those in which information was limited to the essential, and presented diagramatically if appropriate. Dr Fisher also surveyed useful map-drawing techniques and tools, and assessed programmes for analytical mapping by computer.

On April 20, Shaun Tyas, author, editor and proprietor of Paul Watkins Publishing, Stamford, offered encouragement, and cautions, to students interested in getting their work into print. Most of the Department's members find themselves involved in writing for publication at some stage, whether contributing an article to their county society's transactions, helping to compile a parish history, submitting a report to their local newspaper, or turning their thesis into a book. Desktop publishing makes it all sound terribly easy, and certainly brings it within most students' grasp to share their research with a wider public. However, Shaun Tyas, who is widely regarded as local and general history publishing's most exciting and courageous newcomer in the last decade, warned against over-eager assumptions about the market. Even prestigious titles were capable of selling only a few hundred copies. Nor should a captive local readership be assumed: Coventry bookshops were persuaded only with difficulty to stock copies of a recent important volume of essays about the town's abbey. Shaun Tyas brought with him a number of books from his 1996 list, which as well as publications of regional interest, such as *Crime and Criminals in Victorian Lincolnshire* and *The Thurgarton Cartulary*, also includes *A Dictionary of House Names* (by the Department's ex-student Joyce Miles), *Harlaxton Medieval Studies, The Hundred Rolls,* and Florence Harmer's *Anglo-Saxon Writs*.

Work-in-progress papers concerned with modern and early modern topics were presented by Jenny Bhatt ('Women and sexuality: changing attitudes to women and marriage in the 1930s'), Julie Dexter ('Images of the north Somerset coalfield'), Dorothy Fox ('Three parish registers of North Yorkshire to 1750'), Peter Scott ('Railway cottages'), Trevor Hill ('Transport and the location of the iron industry in the eighteenth century'), Elizabeth Robinson ('The lives and experiences of Rugby working women, 1890-1950: oral history and initial research'), and Derek Shorthouse ('Politics and local government in Gloucestershire 1889-1904').

Medieval topics were explored in papers by Terry Finnemore ('Boundaries and settlement units in South Staffordshire'), Teresa Hall ('Minsters and villa sites: reality or myth?'), Jem Harrison ('Brent demesne agriculture: a wetland-edge community in the Middle Ages' and 'Recent thoughts on Brent'), Graham Jones ('Rivers, watersheds and frontiers: a problem area for local historians examined with

reference to the rise of Bristol' and 'Fairings and feasting: how trade followed the calendar'), Philip Masters ('Nineteenth-century sources for eleventh-century history: understanding the work of church restorers' and 'Selsey: the see that never was?'), Lynn Marston ('Glastonbury courts: debt cases'), Tony Rollings ('The origins of Loughborough'), and Michael Thompson ('The building of a barn, byre and carthouse at Street in the 1340s').

Two of the Department's M.A. graduates, Marion Aldis and Pam Inder, entertained as well as intrigued with a joint presentation of their work on a Staffordshire family archive ('The Sneyd diaries, 1799-1890': see elsewhere in this *Newsletter*), while a third, Chris Draycott, outlined her research interest in church sites associated with pre-Christian field monuments ('Towards a Celtic overlap: The Tir n'a Og'). Research degree work-in-progress in other departments was described by art historians Miriam Gill ('Swearing and teaching: anti-blasphemy imagery in England'), Sam Riches ('An alabaster altar-piece of the Virgin and St George') and by John Wallace ('Newspapers in Leicester, 1850-1900').

Postgraduate workshops are characterised by conviviality as well as serious intent. Kate's incredible chocolate cake and Jenny's wine encouraged scholarly fellowship. We even ended up with a small financial surplus.

Graham Jones

New Departmental Research Programme: Saints, Settlements and Cultures

A combination of university and external funding has enabled the Department to begin work on an interdisciplinary, computer-assisted atlas and dataset of the medieval cult of saints in England and Wales. A six-month pilot project, examining Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland, is being conducted by Dr Graham Jones under the supervision of Professor Charles Phythian-Adams and with the cooperation of Dr Alan Strachan of the Department of Geography, Midlands Regional Research Laboratory. It is hoped that the results will attract further funding, so that the national project will be well under way in time for the centenary in 1999 of Frances Arnold-Forster's *Studies in Church Dedications*.

The project addresses a fundamental problem for students in a number of disciplines, including geography, linguistics, anthropology, archaeology, art and architecture, as well as local history, namely the definition of regional cultures. For all periods, spatial distributions of cultural idioms take us to the heart of the senses of belonging, of identity and of community. One of the few quantifiable measures available for any study of society in the medieval period, other than economic and fiscal data, is the evidence of shared beliefs and values as expressed through the cult of saints. The dedications of churches, in particular, form a vital, but often mishandled class of evidence for exploring the chronology, geography and fashionability of cults, as well as a range of wider social and historical issues. Evidence is also available in such sources as medieval wills for devotional practice *inter alia* at subsidiary altars, images, dependent and free chapels and chantries; also in the names of holy wells and in feast and fair days.

At the heart of this project is the application of GIS (geographic information systems) technology to record, map and analyse saints' cults and dedications across England and Wales spatially and chronologically with the intention of producing an interpreted dataset and atlas of use to other researchers. This innovative project involves computer-assisted research and presentation, collaboration across departments, interdisciplinary inquiry and interpretation and collaborative/consultative, inter-institutional collation and assessment of evidence, with significant potential benefits for geographers, especially for the interrogation of spatial patterns and other aspects of multi-dimensional evidence.

The eventual national coverage parallels the department's on-going analysis of regional cultures, particularly the project on 'Cultural regions and religious pluralism, 1676-1851', a pioneering example of the way in which information technology can enhance and inform the range and depth of research concerned with temporal, spatial and qualitative evidence. A database and interpretation of saints' cults in the pre-Reformation diocese of Worcester formed part of a recently completed Ph.D. thesis by Dr Jones; M.A. dissertations in the Department have surveyed the dedications of Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Somerset; Professor Emeritus Alan Everitt has analysed the dedications of Kent; and now *Land of the Cumbrians* by Professor Phythian-Adams makes extensive use of such evidence in the North-West.

It is proposed to hold a colloquium in 1997 to examine the themes and development of the research, and Dr Jones is due to present a day school on cults and their ramifications for regional history at Bristol University on December 15. Preliminary findings of the pilot project suggest that distinct patterns are observable in the east Midlands, involving universal cults such as those of Peter and Paul, John the Baptist, All Saints, and Andrew, as well as more exotic, regional cults such as those of Egelwin and Tibba. Some at least of these patterns appear to predate the Danelaw, while others resulted from currents and concerns of the period leading up to the Reformation. The project may also throw retrospective light on the early lay and ecclesiastical divisions of the region, the understanding of which is still subject to inquiry.

Visitor to the Department: John Atchison

John Atchison is an Honorary Visiting Fellow in the Department from 2 July 1996 until 24 March 1997. He is Senior Lecturer in Australian History at the University of New England. He also tutors as needed in late medieval and early modern European history, reflecting an honours thesis (UNE) in twelfth-century French history. His interest in land policy and land use was focused in his BA (Hons) year by his first real exposure to Australian history under Russel Ward whose book *The Australian Legend* (1958) was a key text with nationalist historians fighting for the autonomy of their discipline out of the shadow of imperial and commonwealth studies. John Atchison's PhD thesis at the Australian National University (ANU) focused on the developmental phase of the sheep and wool, and coal mining, industries. His work as a doctoral candidate with Manning Clark, author of the monumental six-volume *History of Australia*, led to an invitation from

Sir Keith Hancock, as Foundation President of the Australian Academy of the Humanities, to become Research Fellow on a project to establish guidelines for research in Australian place-names and to help coordinate work being done in this field.

John lectures in immigration and migration history and in interpreting the historical landscape to B.A. second and third year students and to graduate students in local history. He also offers the core course on the nature and sources of local history, as well as supervising masters and doctoral students on a range of topics in Australian (including Canadian comparative) history. His most recent doctoral graduate completed a comparative study of Australian and Canadian refugee policy and refugee law, an issue of moment within both countries. He and colleagues in the Department of History at UNE have currently an Australian Research Council Large Grant for 1996-1998 to study the patterns of European settlement, and especially internal migration, between 1851 and 1914 in rural Eastern Australia. The initial hypothesis is that the movement can best be understood as a migration up and down the inland corridor from the Southern Ocean (Victoria) to the Cape (York) and the Gulf (of Carpentaria) and to the grasslands of South Australia rather than from the coast to the interior. The study involves close cooperation with the many family history groups which have flowered over the last twenty-five years and a scale of family reconstruction not yet attempted within Australia.

John and his colleagues are particularly interested in locating sources and identifying individuals, families and groups of British immigrants to Australia and testing the possibilities for ongoing cooperative work, for example between UNE, Leicester and the Menzies Centre, University of London where Carl Bridge from UNE will be Director from January 1997.

John's major project while on study leave is the writing of a book on the process of place-naming within Australia as a prompt to current efforts, in which he is a key player, to establish an Australian National Place-Names Project. This is seen as a major project in the humanities needed to complement the (by now) 14-volume *Australian Dictionary of Biography* and the stables of dictionaries in Australian English which have emerged from the Dictionary Research Centre, Macquarie University (since 1981) and the Australian National Dictionary Centre, ANU (since 1988). A consortium of universities, libraries, government and mapping bodies, companies and private individuals is now working to realise this objective. John has settled well into the stimulating work environment of Marc Fitch House where he is focused on two areas central to English Local History: landscape and debate about the nature of local history. He is especially interested in understanding more of the Leicester School's approach to landscape and testing how far the principles and ideas can be applied to his History 277/377 course 'Interpreting the historical landscape' which focuses on Northern NSW and Queensland. He and Margaret (who joins him in Leicester on 14 October) are keen walkers and local landscapes are already being scouted out for detailed scrutiny.

John Atchison has recently completed chairing (1987-1994) the Committee for Geographical Names in Australia, a technical sub-committee of the Inter-Governmental Committee on Surveying and Mapping. He is one of Australia's foremost authorities on the

history of place-names. He is an elected Director of the International Council of Onomastic Sciences. Recent publications include 'The symbiosis of assimilation and multiculturalism' in S. Gamage (ed.), *A Question of Power and Survival: Studies in Assimilation, Pluralism and Multiculturalism in Australia* (UNE, Armidale, 1993); 'A sense of place', in C. Bridge (ed.), *Manning Clark: Essays on his Place in History* (MUP, Melbourne, 1994); 'Name studies in Australia', in E. Eicher *et al.* (eds), *Namensforschung: Name Studies: Les noms propres: An International Handbook of Onomastics* (Walter de Gruyter, Berlin-New York, 1995).

Tutorials and Datasets

With the advent of the new high-grade PC and flatbed scanner in the departmental computing room - courtesy of Alasdair Crockett - we have the technology to produce more and better tutorials and datasets, both for use in the Department and for wider distribution. Production has been enhanced as our understanding of Toolbook has progressed. All software to run the tutorials is provided on the disks and is suitable for IBM-compatible PCs (386 or higher, 4Mb RAM or more, Windows 3.1x).

The charters tutorial. The first tutorial attempted in the Department, it performs to a very high standard because of the Oxford Text Archive shell used, although the shell allows the producers little flexibility. Content: the text of four charters with synchronous translation, interactive glossary and grammar, bibliography and images; a manual with full-size reproductions of the charters. Format: 3 disks. Cost £7. Sales to date: 18 copies with complimentary copies at Emory and Cornell Universities and the Catholic University of America.

Medieval palaeography. Constructed *ab initio* using Toolbook 3.0, this tutorial was our initial attempt at working from scratch, but with low technology (a greyscale hand scanner and low-powered PC) and with only a rudimentary grasp of Toolbook. It serves its purpose of providing material to recapitulate and expand on the first classes in medieval palaeography. Contents: 3 sections comprising an introduction to palaeolography, a dissection of charters and a discussion of cartularies. Format: 2 disks (note here that it was formerly supplied on 3 disks, but it is now possible to create executable and compressed files for distribution - another trick learned!). Sales to date: 12 copies with complimentary copies at Cornell and CUA.

New charters. Building on greater expertise and the new equipment, this is the *de luxe* model tutorial, with better (photographic quality) images. Contents: images of charters with parallel transcription, translation, notes on structure and contractions and suspensions; a red pointer moves to and through the constituent syllables and contractions when you click on each word. Format: probably 4 disks (under production). Cost: £2 per disk. A prototype can be used on the PC in the departmental computer room.

General availability. The charters tutorial and the medieval palaeography tutorial are installed on the PC in the departmental computer room and the charters tutorial on the PCFS campus-wide.

WinLatin is a shareware tutorial using Classical Latin, for conjugations and declensions, in the form of a game. Distribution: it is available on a single disk for £1, but, like much shareware, a small contribution is requested for the author (in the U.S.A.) (see the ReadMe file).

Medieval calendar. This is the ultimate (but DOS-based) interactive medieval calendar, a superior *Handbook of Dates*, which incorporates the data from the *HoD*, but adds also the Papacy and European Crowns. Distribution: available on one disk for £1; it is shareware, but no contribution is requested.

Bristol datasets. Produced by the University of the West of England using Idealist, these are useful either for understanding the notion of free-text and flexible field-length databases or for research projects. Contents: 1722 Poll Book for Bristol; Bristol Wills and Inventories; 2 late eighteenth-century directories of Bristol. Availability: on the PC in the departmental computer room (not for re-distribution; Dave Postles is the licence-holder).

Leicestershire and Rutland datasets. Comprising data collected for the English Surnames Survey, these datasets form one attempt to make the information more widely available. The datasets have been produced in dBase III+, IV and V, but you will not need this software. From there, the data have been imported into Toolbook 'books' with the basic dBase files. The data can thus be supplied with all the relevant software on a few disks and you do not need to know how to use the software. Manipulation of the data (search, sort, moving between records) is simply by pointing and clicking on buttons and dialogue boxes. Examples are Rutland (rural) 1851 and Rutland ('urban') 1851; the former comprises 7280 records of adult and independent people in rural parishes in some registration districts in Rutland in 1851, whilst 'urban' consists of 2676 similar records for Oakham and Uppingham. Other datasets include: the Leicestershire lay subsidy of 1524-5; the Poll Tax of Gartree Hundred in 1381; the Rutland Poll Tax of 1377; and the Rutland lay subsidy of 1296. Please note these points: the data are held as flatfile databases in Toolbook, losing the relational facilities of dBase; the arithmetic functions of dBase are lost; and the data were produced for the purposes of the Surnames Survey. Availability: on the PC in the departmental computer room; prototype distribution disks (compressed and executable) have been produced and the cost will be £2 per disk (the number of disks will vary with each dataset, between 2 and 5).

David Postles

The John Nichols Prize

This is the time of year again to remind you that the John Nichols Prize is still available for a scholarly essay not exceeding 20,000 words which considers some theme or aspect of English Local History which is sympathetic to the Department's approaches. The closing date for submission is 31 December and we aim to make a recommendation for the Prize by early March. Unlike the National Lottery, there is no roll-over or cumulative sum as a result of barren years, so the Prize remains at £100, but you can still buy one or two books with that sort of money. Submissions for the Prize are also still coordinated

by Dave Postles at the Department, so please contact him to make initial enquiries and for the fuller details and description. This procedure does not apply to M.A. course participants, who, if they receive a distinction for their dissertation, should simply send Dave a note that they wish their dissertation to be considered for the Prize.

Bibliography of Local History at Leicester

Work is now well in hand on the extended edition of *Local History at Leicester 1948-1978* which is to be produced as a contribution to the Department's 50th anniversary celebrations in 1998. We want the bibliography to be as complete as possible but because of the large numbers who have passed through the Department since 1978 it is not possible for the compilers to undertake a search for the publications of past students. We are therefore asking all ex-students to send bibliographical details of their publications to Marc Fitch House marking the envelope 'Anniversary Bibliography' and addressing it to Margery Tranter. It is important that you include title, name of periodical with volume number and date, place of publication, year and page numbers. We also need a brief abstract (about 150 words) indicating the subject in order that each entry may be correctly classified. If you are in contact with past members of the Department who are not Friends we would be most grateful if you would encourage them to get in touch with us. This is your last chance to ensure that the bibliography is complete.

Gifts to the Map Room and Library

Again we warmly thank all those who have helped to build up the Department's collections. Those who have made gifts to the Marc Fitch Fund Library or to the Map Room include A. Archer, D. Armitage, E. Atkins, C. Bennett, M.W. Beresford, E. Edwards, B. Harrild, E. Haydon, K. Hillier, J. Hurst, Leicester University Security, S. Luxton, P. Lynd-Evans, B. McGarva, Nene College, M. Parker, K. and J. Parkin, A.A. Pearce, C. Phythian-Adams, D. Postles, L. Pye, H. Reed, M. Sekulla, J. Snelling, R. Stephens, H. Usher, C. Vials and E. Vollans.

This year we also extend especial thanks to Miss Drusilla Armitage for pointing us in the direction of a collection of Leicestershire books which was being offered for sale. As a result the Leicestershire collection in the Marc Fitch Fund Library has been expanded considerably. Among the new acquisitions is a very valuable set of Farnham's Leicestershire Medieval Village Notes. We are most grateful to Miss Armitage for her foresight.

Midland History Seminar

Each year the editorial board of *Midland History* arranges a seminar to help research students who are working on topics connected with the Midlands, widely defined, or any place or region therein. The seminar for 1997 will be hosted by the Department in Marc Fitch House in February or March. Any research student who has ideas for the meeting should write to Harold Fox, preferably by December 1st.

Departmental Publications for 1995

Please note that for the first time this year we have not been able to include publications written by current students. This is a pity because these columns are a good way in which to publicize such work. Any student with

a 1995 or 1996 publication should write to the Editor giving full bibliographic details (see also the earlier item 'Bibliography of Local History at Leicester').

H.S.A. Fox
'Servants, cottagers and tied cottages during the Later Middle Ages: towards a regional dimension', *Rural History: Economy, Society, Culture* 6 (1995), pp. 125-54.

R. Keep and H.S.A. Fox
eds *Friends of the Department of English Local History Newsletter* 8 (1995), 29pp.

C.V. Phythian-Adams
'W.G. Hoskins and the local springs of English History', *The Historian* 45 (1995), pp. 9-12.

D.A. Postles
The Surnames of Devon (English Surnames Series VI, 1995), xx + 332pp.
'Notions of the family, lordship and the evolution of naming processes in medieval English rural society: a regional example', *Continuity and Change* 10 (1995), pp. 169-198.
'Noms de personne en langue française dans l'Angleterre du moyen âge', *Le Moyen-Age* 101 (1995), pp. 7-21.
'At Sørensen's request: the formation and development of patronyms and metronyms in late medieval Leicestershire and Rutland', *Nomina* 17 (1994), pp. 55-70.
Review of Pamela Nightingale, *A Medieval Mercantile Community. The Grocer's Company and the Politics & Trade of London 1000-1485* (1995), on H-Albion (British and Irish Electronic Network as part of the H-Net Reviews Project, Michigan State University).

K.D.M. Snell
ed. (with E. Bellamy & T. Williamson) *Rural History: Economy, Society, Culture* 6:1 (1995), 123pp.
Rural History: Economy, Society, Culture 6:2 (1995), 125pp.
Review of *Leicestershire and Rutland Within Living Memory* (1994), in *The Leicestershire Historian* 4:3 (1995), p. 33.

Four Recent Departmental Publications Described

Because of the pressures on staff time, gone are the days when all publications were abstracted in this Newsletter. A list of publications for 1995 is given in the previous section. Here we provide brief descriptions of four of the larger recent publications. The description of *Land of the Cumbrians* is from the publisher's flier; that of *The Oxford Companion to Local and Family History* is Anthony Fletcher's review from *T.L.S.* and appears here by kind permission of the author and publisher.

C.V. Phythian-Adams, *Land of the Cumbrians: a Study in British Provincial Origins, AD 400-1120* (Scolar Press, 1996. xiv + 207pp. £40).

The first full-length study of English Cumbria for the period in question, this is a contribution to both English local history and British history. The book blends spatial, cultural and political factors to reinterpret the history of the area (formerly Cumberland and northern Westmorland) in its wider Celtic context between AD 400 and its absorption, as a still partially sovereign region, into the Anglo-Roman realm. The displacement of the Britons of Rheged is seen to have been exaggerated by historians. A persisting Anglo-Celtic polity under new

management thus provides the better explanation of the subsequent Cumbrian episode than conventional views on British recolonisation and domination from Strathclyde in the tenth century. An alternative assessment of the kingship of the Cumbrians, the significance of *Cumbra-Land*, and the impact of the Scots and the Gaelic Norse is therefore also proposed.
Finally, the study reconsiders the partition of Cumbria, the temporary imposition of Anglo-Scandinavian rule and the Scottish reaction as the prelude to Norman occupation. In so doing it casts new light on regional place-name chronology, the date and implications of Gospatric's writ, the antiquity of the great lordships and the changing line of the frontier with Scotland. The book is a major contribution to British history in general and a striking demonstration of the power and freshness of the techniques of local history and the ways in which these can illuminate national history.

D. Hey, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Local and Family History* (O.U.P., 1996. 517pp. £25).

Himself a prolific writer and a product of the famous 'Leicester School', Leicester University's Department of English Local History which has been the powerhouse of the subject for more than forty years, David Hey is well qualified to edit this substantial and invaluable volume. If the word 'family' in the title is a bow to a huge market among genealogists, *The Oxford Companion to Local and Family History* is in fact as comprehensive in the service it will provide to every kind of local historian as one might expect and wish. Hey himself has written more than three-quarters of it: his succinct and pointed summaries, often provided with bibliographical references, exhibit his remarkable range of reading and understanding. The scope of the book includes agriculture, demography, local government, the feudal system, the Church, the law and rural and urban folklore. Technical terms are addressed in brief, but Hey allows himself to expand where the subject entries point this way.

He celebrates progress in English local history from generalizations towards refined and more subtle approaches to many topics, yet he is ready to point at unresolved controversy or work hardly begun. Thus he notes that questions in debate about the living conditions of the rural poor, raised in the last century, have been given new life by social historians associated with the journals *History Workshop* and *Rural History*, and he comments that an adequate history of children has not been written. He includes a series of illuminating pen portraits of the masters in the field, excluding those still living, which runs from Stuart mapmakers and antiquaries like John Speed and Sir William Dugdale to Flora Thompson, George Ewart Evans and, appropriately rewarded with by far the longest such entry, W.G. Hoskins. In certain cases, a leading figure in the current world of local history studies receives deserved publicity through being linked to a conceptual advance which was their initiative; thus an entry on the 'Great Reclothing' refers largely to the work of Margaret Spufford and on the 'Urban Renaissance', to Peter Borsay.

Hey has very sensibly recruited a team of experts to provide short essays on main themes of the volume including the development of the subject of local history in Wales, Scotland and Ireland. The outstanding material in this respect comes from Charles Phythian-Adams, the current head of

the Leicester department, in a series of brilliant evocations of calendar customs, civic ritual, folklore and popular culture. Hey's own commentary on the recent work that Phythian-Adams has published on the subject's future agenda, proposing a division of England into fourteen cultural provinces, stresses his pivotal role in its academic development. Then who better to write briefly but effectively on towns and urban topography than David Palliser, on landowners than J.V. Beckett and on women local and family historians than Joan Thirsk? R.W. Hoyle contributes a useful series of essays on the courts and central government. Ralph Houlbrooke deals nicely with the family and society, noting that its emotional climate has recently been the subject of some wild generalizations and that a mass of material awaits careful analysis. Anthony Camp contributes a more technical and bibliographic piece on family history. John Halstead strikes a note of caution on how to handle concepts of class in the writing of labour history. H.S.A. Fox, in an assertive essay, is caustic about some landscape history and sets high standards for the writing of it in the future. In short, there is something here for everyone. Here is the starting point, among much else, for the investigation of clay tobacco pipes, corpse ways, duck decoys, gleaning, guide stoops, postcards, rough music, water mills and wife-selling.

Anthony Fletcher

K.D.M. Snell, ed., *Letters from Ireland during the Famine of 1847* (by Alexander Somerville) (Irish Academic Press, 1994. 219pp. Available in hardback and paperback).

Alexander Somerville was a Scottish farm labourer by background, who became famous as a Scots Grey at the time of the 1831-2 Reform agitation for the courageous stand he took against the use of the military to crush peaceful crowd protests in the English Midlands. His extensive work *The Whistler at the Plough* was earlier edited and published by Keith Snell (Merlin Press, 1989), and this latest book is his unique eye-witness account of the Irish famine. It has been neglected by historians who were not aware of his newspaper writing, but since its belated publication in 1994 it has been hailed by many Irish reviewers as a masterpiece. One reviewer has described it as the finest book ever published on the Irish Famine.

Somerville's prose is compulsive reading and probably ranks alongside William Cobbett's in its portrayal of rural conditions. Its strengths lie primarily in its descriptions of rural hardship, its efforts to understand why Ireland was suffering, its personal account of the famine, its remarkable use of verbatim evidence, and in Somerville's considerable empathy with the Irish and English poor. His passages of oral testimony were unparalleled in nineteenth-century rural literature, and the obvious sympathy with which Somerville writes makes this book a unique and moving record of the conditions suffered by the Irish poor in the 1840s. In addition it contains a sustained economic and social interpretation of why the Great Famine had come about and what had hindered Ireland's economic advance. It is extraordinary that his account remained unknown for so long.

The book has received very extensive media and scholarly reviewing in Ireland, and Keith Snell has been interviewed by B.B.C. Radio Scotland, Radio Ireland, Midwest Radio, and other Irish radio stations about the life

of Alexander Somerville. Demand has been so great that the book was reissued twice after publication. A German translation is in progress.

H.S.A. Fox, ed., *Seasonal Settlement: Papers Presented to a Meeting of the Medieval Settlement Research Group* (University of Leicester, Vaughan Paper no. 39, 1996. 69pp. £4, available from the Department of English Local History. £3.50 to Friends).

For those who attended the meeting of the Medieval Settlement Research Group held at Marc Fitch House in December 1993 the publication of *Seasonal Settlement* will recall to mind memories of a very stimulating occasion. For those who missed the event the booklet, slim but tightly packed and well illustrated with maps and diagrams, will provide the same fascinating insights into various modes of transhumance as did the distinguished contributors on the day.

There are bonuses for all readers; the paper 'Medieval shielings on the Isle of Man: fact or fiction?' that Gillian Quine was unable to present is included and, in a lengthy introduction of 23 pages entitled 'Transhumance and seasonal settlement', Harold Fox elaborates upon points made by some of the authors. He also provides a bibliography of the subject.

In addition to these items Christopher Dyer's account of his research into the location, nature and usage of seigneurial sheepcotes in the Cotswolds is - as always with this most lucid of historians - a model of detailed clarity. The same can be said for Peter Herring's paper 'Transhumance in medieval Cornwall' in which he argues that the toponymical and archaeological evidence point to transhumance having taken place on Bodmin Moor for perhaps 2,000 years by the time of the Conquest. The consequential effect of the practice on social structures and their development into a four-fold system of household, hamlet, hundred and unified authority, is also discussed.

In her innovative contribution Gillian Quine casts doubt upon supposed Dark Age and Norse origins of certain upland sites, commonly referred to as 'shielings', excavated by Peter Gelling on the Isle of Man. While agreeing that they were indicative of medieval and post-medieval transhumance she argues that they cannot properly be termed shielings which for her were structures with more precise connotations of date and function.

Mary Higham's thought-provoking paper on '*Aergi* names as indicators of transhumance: problems of the evidence' reviews the etymological background and casts doubts on the view that *-aergi* names could be equated with summer shielings. Instancing sites in Lancashire she concludes that, along with other *-aergi* locations, they were more likely to have been places where the diurnal movement of draught animals took place between pasture grounds close to lowland arable settlements where they were required for haulage and dunging throughout the year.

As a tailpiece Harold Fox's early thoughts about the origins and morphology of Devon fishing villages sketched out in some detail in 'Cellar settlements along the South Devon coastline' is, we are led to believe, a foretaste of further inspired reasoning on the subject in publications yet to come.

There is as the editor truly says a 'special fascination and aura' attaching to seasonal sites. While reading this small book may help to explain some

of their mysteries it does not diminish their magic and it is hoped that we may yet see a major work devoted to their history. In the meantime *Seasonal Settlement* provides much fascinating detail and will itself undoubtedly stimulate further research.

Mike Thompson

Recently Completed Theses

Graham Jones

'Church dedications and landed units of lordship and administration in the pre-Reformation Diocese of Worcester' (Ph.D., 1996)

One of the few quantifiable measures available for any study of society in the medieval period, other than economic and fiscal data, are shared beliefs and values as expressed through the cult of saints. The chronology and geography of this phenomenon, of which one aspect is the dedication of churches, forms a vital but often mishandled class of evidence for tackling a range of fiscal and historical issues relative to patterns of settlement, community, lordship and patronage, trans-national as well as insular. This thesis concentrates on a single region, the pre-Reformation Diocese of Worcester, which is generally agreed to have been coterminous with the early Anglo-Saxon kingdom of the Hwicce, because it is both rich in medieval documentary evidence and provides a sufficiently large corpus of evidence to give reasonable amounts of data for statistical interrogation and/or intuitive judgement.

This study therefore exploited medieval documentary evidence, chiefly wills, of which more than 600 were examined, but also including episcopal, legal and other records in transcript and in printed editions, in addition to evidence already published in the Victoria County Histories. The results were collated in a dataset of evidence for the dedications of churches and other foci of religious observance. Since churches operated as integral parts of the medieval systems of community, economy and administration, the study attempts systematically to identify the superior settlements of the region in successive medieval periods, and to suggest a reconstruction of early landed units of lordship and administration within which the region's chronological and spatial patterns of dedication may be further examined. A variety of published sources was used for this part of the investigation. The results of the database collation, set against the evidence for superior settlements and landed units, form the basis for a discussion of chronological and spatial patterns of cult observance. In conclusion, the study identifies areas for further study, and suggests ways in which such an approach may be applied in other regions so as to provide a tool for historians tackling a range of issues. The dataset and spatial evidence form an appendix. The dataset is available on disk for other researchers to interrogate.

Paul Bowman

'Settlement, territory and land use in the East Midlands: the Langton Hundred *c.* 150 BC - *c.* AD 1350' (Ph.D., 1996)

An inter-disciplinary approach has been adopted for the study of historical process in the landscape of one particular area of south-east Leicestershire. The value of combining archaeological data with documentary evidence is that the method has potential for assessing the long-term interplay between human behaviour

and environmental structure. The primary reason for the choice of study area is that it forms a typical East Midland land unit spanning the landscape zones of river vale and hinterland watershed.

The archaeological field survey revealed a densely settled late Iron-Age and early Roman countryside intensively exploited for cultivation but with the late Roman period showing a contraction of settlement in the hinterland. These trends continued into the early Anglo-Saxon period when there was an intensification of settlement in the vale land, whilst a sparsity of finds and the location of minor wold names point to the presence of wood-pastures around the watersheds. The early medieval centuries saw a return to widespread cultivation before the first moves towards enclosure after *c.* 1350.

It is argued that the origin of villages and open fields should be sought in the social and institutional framework of Anglo-Saxon society. A close relationship between taxation, the number of tenant holdings and township size demonstrates that the fiscal carucate was linked to a late Saxon agrarian reality. The duodecimal carucate was also fundamental for the administrative framework of Anglo-Danish Leicestershire with Langton hundred probably being one of twelve territorial tithings within Gartree wapentake. However, it is contended that the Leicestershire carucate was a twenty per cent revaluation of the Mercian hide pointing to a longer-term continuity of land management.

An attempt is made to relate the reconstituted hidages to a putative regio based on the natural territory of the upper River Welland, but it is more strongly argued that township-sized land units were in place by the eighth century. A dispersed settlement pattern had been transformed into a nucleated one by the late Saxon period, whilst the organisation of the open fields of Greater Langton suggests that township-wide rights to common arable predate the tenth century. With possible first moves towards nucleation in the late seventh and eighth centuries, the suggestion is that the rise of Mercian royal authority and its related administration was a critical catalyst shaping the evolution of the village and open fields.

Peter G. Scott

'The influence of railway station names on the names of places in suburbia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: Harrow Borough' (M. Phil., 1995)

This thesis sets out to investigate the particular effect of the influence of railway station names on place-names within the Borough of Harrow in Middlesex. It seeks to discover the extent to which the names of the existing places and the names of the railway stations situated in specific relation to them are in harmony. A means is devised of categorising the station names in such a way as to permit the measurement of any degrees of divergence between the traditional place-name and the station name. If the two names do not agree, questions are asked as to the reasons for the disagreement, and the effects of the divergence are investigated. From a series of case studies it became evident that place-name identities have become distorted through railway influence. It transpires that only 26% of the stations in the study area are named after the local place-name, the remaining 74% being misnamed to a greater or lesser degree. A railway station name is now often looked upon to provide a community with a place-name, instead of

the community providing the station with a name. Place-names have been virtually lost or have had their boundaries physically moved simply because a railway station is inaccurately named. In addition, falsely fabricated station names have become accepted as place-names by local residents, the local authority and even the Ordnance Survey. This thesis draws upon original railway company documents as well as contemporary maps and newspaper reports. It seeks to make a significant contribution to railway and modern place-name studies using a theme that has been previously neglected.

Jenny Bhatt
'Margaret Miller and the campaign for the right of the married woman to earn' (M.Phil., 1996)

The aim of this thesis is to uncover the campaign waged by a woman teaching at Liverpool University in 1932 to continue working after her marriage. It is based upon the private letters of Margaret Stevenson Miller, the lecturer, and papers held at Liverpool University. These papers have been used to reconstruct events between the summer of 1932 and the spring of 1935, during which time Miller waged her campaign against a newly imposed marriage bar at Liverpool. The research resulted in the discovery of the instigation of a national campaign by feminist organisations. The intention of this campaign was to awaken women's consciousness to the threat to their prospects in the 1930's, caused by the assertion of society's belief that a woman's place was in the home.

M.A. Dissertations for 1995-6

Elaine Brown
'Leicester Mechanics' Institute, 1833 - 1870, studied in its local and national context.'

The contemporary purpose of Mechanics' Institutes was the provision of adult education - in particular scientific and technical education - for the working class. Historians, however, have interpreted the significance of Mechanics' Institutes in different ways - the effectiveness of their contribution to educational development, an extension of social control and hegemony, and participation in a notion of 'respectability' and 'respectable society' (in that Mechanics' Institutes were a genuine meeting place for all classes with shared attitudes). How precisely these influences worked may perhaps only be perceived through detailed local studies, in this case by examining the local circumstances behind the establishment, membership, duration and residual legacy of Mechanics' Institutes in Leicestershire and more especially in Leicester, within the framework of national and local socio-economic, political, religious and educational backgrounds and in the context of the Mechanics' Institute movement in general.

An examination of the extant source material pertaining to the Institute at Leicester revealed that its original aims were only partially realised. Although initially science-based classes and lectures were held, financial constraints forced the management to offer a wider selection of topics and entertainment in an attempt to increase membership which tended to attract a higher proportion of middle-class members. Condescension towards working-class members combined with economic distress

contributed to their rejection of the Institute in favour of alternative organisations. The cause that led to the eventual demise of the Leicester Institute appeared to be common factors in the decline of the movement in general. Nevertheless even though the Leicester Institute appeared to have failed in its original aims to provide scientific education in an atmosphere designed to encourage communication between the classes, it did leave its library as a legacy for all classes.

Hugh Burns
'Aspects of the Portsmouth area in fiction, from 1814.'

Portsmouth is renowned as a naval city and former military fortress. Its fame and romantic appeal have resulted in many writers of fiction exploiting it as a background to their work. This particular study attempts to examine some of the books and stories which were produced from 1814, during the great age of sail, until the post-war period, and the value of their work to the local historian and other such researchers.

Colin Davenport
'Daventry's craft companies, 1590 - 1675.'

A significant feature of town life in late sixteenth-century century Daventry was the presence of trade and craft companies. These went through a series of amalgamations culminating in a major restructuring in 1590 when the borough corporation approved the creation of three companies. These survived until 1675 when a revision of the borough charter assigned their major tasks to the corporation. Through the use of borough records and the companies' books a descriptive analysis of the development and organisation of the trades and crafts between 1590 and 1675 was undertaken. This revealed how the granting of new freedoms was flexible enough to meet the changing needs and events in the town. Freemen and apprentices were attracted from a relatively limited area and the numbers involved suggested that most freemen were serving local needs. However there were cloth and leather trading links with other market towns and by 1676 shoemakers were probably producing for a larger market. A wide range of ordinances allowed an examination of the social and occupational duties, behaviour and standards expected of head wardens and members but patchy evidence limited a review of the extent of their implementation. However the demise of the companies in the 1670s suggested their lack of effectiveness in protecting the freemen's interests. Daventry's trade and craft companies were not unique; their amalgamations, structure, business and eventual decline in the post-Restoration period reflected similar developments in other small towns.

Shane Downer
'Settlement rank, status and territory in N. Worcestershire, eighth to eleventh centuries.'

The aim of this dissertation is two-fold. In Part I, the aim is to define within North Worcestershire the rank and status of manors and settlements of the early Norman period from 1066-86, using Domesday Book as the source. Each manor will be assessed by its hide, TRE and 1086 valuations and ranked accordingly. A discussion will then follow on the results, and it will be shown whether geographical and geological factors affected the potential results of each manor. By comparing results, it will be seen which manors and settlements

were the most important in this area in the period 1066-86.

In Part II, by using the results of Part I as a starting-point, and by discussing the landholding origins for each Domesday manor in the area of study, a picture will be built up of which settlements may have been the centres of royal and ecclesiastical administration in the mid and late Anglo-Saxon period. By utilising further ecclesiastical and secular evidence, namely church and chapel links, defining minster churches and analysing church dedications in a territorial light, as well as hundred boundaries and charter and topographical evidence, a reconstruction of the landholding and territorial boundary patterns of the period will be made with some degree of accuracy. Therefore, this will define which of the important settlements of Part I were the centres for *regiones* and why. It will also be shown that these results may well have an impact on how the earlier period of small, tribal territories in this border area of the Mercian and Hwiccian kingdoms is looked at.

Jennifer Hall

'Poems and songs of Staffordshire in the modern period and their depiction of people and regions.'

The aim of this dissertation was to study and analyse the working-class poetry of Staffordshire in the late eighteenth and nineteen centuries to see how it relays a sense of region. What emerges is an eclectic anthology of working class verse from Staffordshire and a study of certain themes which have been the main topics within the verse itself. The collection mainly consists of hymns, ballads, ditties and poems which have been collated from a wide variety of sources including broadsheet publications, oral transmission and newspapers. Methodology is primarily centred around the source material itself. This poetry gives insight into the world of work and the social dimensions of the lives of the inhabitants of Staffordshire. The chosen themes show the cultural concerns, beliefs and attitudes of the working class of the area. Working class poetry helps to demonstrate a sense of the past and what emerges from this study is the beginning of a working class self-awareness generated through notions of territory and belonging. This dissertation shows that images and conceptions of the surrounding environment are compounded of education and experiences and that through an examination of working class poetry this perception of place and region can begin to be reconstructed.

Liz Greenfield

'The social and economic effects of the decline of lead mining on villages in north Derbyshire, 1851 - 1951.'

Lead has been mined in north Derbyshire, probably continuously, from Roman times but by the second half of the nineteenth century the industry was in terminal decline. The traditional occupation structure of the area was a mixture of mining, agriculture and textiles but many villages depended on mining. The aim of this study is to look at the changing fortunes of some of these villages between 1851 and 1891 as they faced the effects of the loss of their main industry. A 20% sample of three censuses, 1851, 1871, and 1891, for eight villages, established general trends in occupation and population and changes in migration patterns. A detailed study, using church registers and other local material as well as census returns, provided a more complete picture of

one village, Bradwell. For most of the villages, the period 1851 to 1891 was a time of unrelenting population decline. They suffered decreased fertility and the collapse of lead mining accelerated the existing process of out-migration. In Bradwell no adequate local alternative was offered to lead mining and the pull from the nearby industrial towns could no longer be resisted. An estimated one-third of the 1871 population had left Bradwell by 1891. There is evidence of abject poverty among many who stayed but a core of small businessmen and entrepreneurs remained, who ran the village. The small villages which had relied on mining never recovered, their population today being no more than a third of their 1851 total, but early this century the larger villages achieved increased prosperity and population through improved transport and the development of other natural resources.

Ken Hillier
'The welfare and education of working-class children in Ashby in the nineteenth century (to the 1880s).'

The study first establishes the fact that there were two societies co-existing in the nineteenth century in Ashby; the Spa Town with 'its beauty with convenience and elegance with comfort' and the rookeries that were the Courts and the 'less salubrious' areas of the Green, Mill Bank and the Callis; the one extolled in the guide books and directories, the other condemned in sanitation and housing reports. It then uses unpublished source material on the William Langley, Blue and Green Coat and Grammar schools to establish that there was minimal provision of elementary education for the working-class child by 1800. Directories, the census returns, log books and local newspapers are used to illustrate the increased provision by the 1880s, when Mundela's Act finally made Elementary Education compulsory to the age of ten. The importance of the Sunday School movement, the part played by the small Workhouse school, and the denominational infighting are all analysed. The conclusion is that much of the 'development' was closely controlled by the Anglican Church, for didactic purposes, with the Non-conformists relying on their Sunday Schools to try and redress the balance. The *quantity* of provision was extended, but the *quality* remained uneven and usually very basic.

David Inglesant
'Retailing furniture, 1850 - 1950.'

This study looks at the retailing of furniture in the two urban centres of Guildford and Leicester, as well as in the country at large, in a century which saw great changes in distribution, from 1850-1950. It takes as its main sources directories, trade journals, the local press and the census returns. Its aim has been to follow the cultural and chronological history of this branch of retailing. Tracing the history of the trade from its roots in the crafts of furniture making as well as in the more specifically retailing skills of furniture broking and dealing, it looks at the retailing of furniture not only through the medium of fixed shops, but also by other means of distribution, such as markets. It follows the course of the trade to the development of the large furnishing houses at the end of the last century, at which time the rise of multiple-shop trading brought different ideas to the marketing of furniture. These new ideas were to use the craft traditions on which the trade had relied, many of which persisted until the middle of the present century.

Using the directories it was possible to reconstruct the rise and fall of traders in the two towns and suggest that those in the smaller town of Guildford were better able to survive than those in the more dynamic town of Leicester. It also found that there were concentrations of furniture traders in certain areas, for reasons other than those dictated by the specific needs of retailing. Using the census returns it was possible to follow family structures through several generations and to establish that there were strong dynastic traditions in the retailing of furniture.

Liz Newman

'Surname development, 1279 to 1332, in the Kineton hundred of Warwickshire.'

The names of tenants in the hundred rolls for Kineton, covering the larger part of the Warwickshire feldon, were analysed and compared with the names of taxpayers in the lay subsidy lists of 1327 and 1332 for the same hundred. Names were analysed both by social and spatial distribution. Various categories of names were examined for the light they might shed on the economy, the frequency of short-range migration, and the culture of the hundred in the early medieval period. Nearly one fifth of tenants had no surname or byname at the beginning of the fifty year period under review, while all but a negligible number of taxpayers had names. The popular forenames of the thirteenth century tended to be adopted, especially in hypocoristic forms, as the new surnames of the early fourteenth century. The pattern of surnames was found to differ significantly on either side of the diocesan boundary which ran through the hundred. Surnames derived from personal names, particularly of the insular kind, were more frequent east of the line, while a more mixed pattern of naming characterised the area to the west. It was concluded that racial differences were reflected in these contrasted naming patterns.

Bob Parsons

'Status, occupations and land holding. The emergence of an independent peasantry in the High Weald of East Sussex in the late thirteenth century.'

The Weald of Sussex has long been recognised as an area of independent craftsmen and small pastoral farmers. A woodland region containing the Royal Forest of Ashdown it is characterised by small hamlets and isolated farmstead. By contrast the coastal and downland pays developed a strongly manorialised regime based on corn and sheep farming. This essay is an attempt to establish the cultural and topographical imperatives which influenced the development of these societies during the late thirteenth century.

Tenurial arrangements, particularly the relative freedoms of tenants, may be significant in the development of the opposing cultures. To establish the role played by tenure in societal developments custumals and minister's accounts were examined, specifically those of the Sussex manors of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Chichester and the Manor of Maresfield. Types of tenure were examined together with the nature and level of villein services. Tallage, labour services and other neif incidents were examined, providing an insight into the relative manorial control experienced by peasants. The role of undertenants in the woodland was also assessed.

Examination of the occupations of tenants in the two pays and their

place in the economic hierarchy suggest that, in the Weald, a class of peasant craftsmen emerged enabled by their relative freedom from manorial control to exploit the resources of the woodland. The role of assarting in this cultural matrix was also assessed.

Migration patterns too were considered in the context of interpenetration of the cultures of the two pays. Suggestions that there was migration between them is not borne out by a cursory examination of the evidence provided by the custumals. The Weald seems to be an isolate community and its relationship with the coast needs further analysis if we are to elicit its exact nature.

Henry Reed

'The Cornish saints in their background.'

This dissertation has attempted to paint a picture of the County of Cornwall in the fifth and sixth centuries, when many of its present place names took their origins from the missionaries who came to preach the Christian faith. The first source of information has been the known documentary lives of many of those saints and this has been followed by what historical evidence is available to back up that information. This has included lists of some of the saints from several sources, some archaeological discoveries of the past fifty years, the language of the place names, and the topography of the areas where Christian sites have been found. Comparisons have been made with related areas in the so-called Celtic lands, but an attempt has been made to show that the monastic emphasis which has been a commonplace of related studies has been over-emphasised and that there are within these earlier times features that suggest that the minster churches of the later Saxon period are not the first parish churches. In the absence of documentary evidence, destroyed either by the Vikings, or the Normans, or by Henry VIII, any remains including Norman architectural fabric and traditions about relics have been pressed into service to authenticate that part of history which is different from the rest of England.

Jane Snelling

'Early modern and modern society reflected in memorials: a local perspective - the Welland Valley.'

Funerary monuments are a neglected part of our cultural heritage and recent historical research is reconsidering the significance of funerary ritual and commemoration to Early Modern and Modern Society. This research concentrated on monuments within a ten mile radius of Market Harborough, an unincorporated town in the Welland Valley which has serviced villages in South Leicestershire and North Northamptonshire for hundreds of years. Over time, this Welland Valley 'border country' has formed a discrete economic and social entity. Henry VIII's break with Rome and the subsequent Dissolution of the Monasteries saw the established land-owning gentry expand its ranks to include those who took advantage of the opportunity to purchase monastery land and establish country seats. These *'nouveaux riches'* keen to embrace the social values of their peers, were at the forefront of appropriating space in their local parish churches and installing family pews and monuments. Furthermore, liturgical changes which accompanied the introduction of protestantism led to a change of emphasis in religious belief and a re-appraisal of death rites and commemoration. Our understanding of the impact of these

changes on this particular localised society is further advanced by examination of the visual and literary culture of monuments.

Nicola Verdon

'Women's work in the inter-war period: a study of Nottingham.'

Although the inter-war years are remembered primarily as ones of depression and dislocation, economic restructuring, sited primarily in the South-east and Midlands, brought prosperity and expanding employment opportunities especially to women who were engaged as unskilled packers and assemblers in the factories of the new industries. In Nottingham the decline of lace was offset by the expansion of alternative sources of wealth - cycles, tobacco, pharmaceuticals and ready-made clothing - broadening the city's industrial base and employment opportunities, most notably for women whose tradition of employment in the textiles trades of the nineteenth century was transposed into the newer consumer industries of the inter-war period. Using oral testimony from a number of women engaged in a cross-section of Nottingham's industries, backed up with information from the censuses, company archive material and business histories, this dissertation unravels the social and cultural context in which women worked. Differences between employment conditions, levels and systems of payment and welfare provision in the 'older' and 'newer' industries are revealed although it is shown that a rigid sexual division of labour existed in all the main industries of the city, confining women lace and hosiery workers to finishing and machining processes and women working at Boots, Players and Raleigh to packing and assembling tasks. In many ways women's experiences of work in Nottingham are shown to be typical of the era: they were young, cheap and temporary workers, engaged in specific processes deemed suitable for women, paid at women's rates with little training and few opportunities for promotion. However, by national standards, women in Nottingham were relatively fortunate and workers in the newer factories in particular were offered comparatively well-paid, secure work with prestigious firms.

Glenys Willars

'A view from the 1/9d's: a sense of place: the English regional novel in film.'

A sense of place is integral to the success and integrity of the regional novel. The re-creation of this sense in film adaptations of such novels has not previously had the academic scrutiny meted out to the novel. This study of the English regional novel in film attempts to redress this neglect. The concentration is on films made from novels published since the Second World War, set against a background of earlier trends, which were mainly productions of Hollywood. Films with a rural setting, mainly made during the seventies and eighties, form one focus. The other major area is that of new Wave realism which, during the fifties and sixties, led to several films with industrial Midland and Northern towns as their setting. It would appear that most film makers are primarily intent on reflecting characters and their relationships within a strong and credible plot. The setting merely provides a framework for the action. The place as a 'character' which can affect people's motivations and actions, which is important to the community as a whole, is not given priority, yet there is great scope for focusing on this

element and consequently giving greater depth to many of the films. Landscape does however have an importance, because film is a visual medium which can make effective use of panoramic shots of England's green and pleasant land. Some of the films are particularly successful in this respect. They present to viewing audiences, national and global, a sense of England, but not necessarily of the specific place where the film is set. A sense of time, through adherence to the accuracy of period detail, is portrayed more convincingly than the sense of place.

Randolph Wise
'Corby: the growth and decline of a steel town: 1930-1990.'

This dissertation aims to study and reflect on Corby's life as a steel town and to observe the changes which have taken place since steelmaking ceased there in 1980. The limits of the period under consideration are set by the expansion of the steelworks by Stewarts and Lloyds in the 1930's, and the development of a diversified local economy in the 1980's and 1990's. To put this period into historical context it has been necessary to note particular features in Corby's history since Saxon times. The period 1930-1980 is well documented and *The Development of Corby Works* by Sir Frederick Stokes is a mine of information on the expansive phase. To give an account of the process of redevelopment, Corby District Council published *Corby Works: A Town in Action.* Whilst this includes some element of propaganda, it is a useful indicator of the spirit of the new Corby. The study was greatly assisted by interviews with a number of people who had been closely involved with Corby's steel-making episode. The resulting conclusions confirm the view that, given the uncertainties of the demand for steel and the pace of technological change, the closure of the steelworks was predictable long before the event. Yet in a fast changing world we are not at the end of a story. There are teasing unanswered questions. For example, with new industrial technology and fresh methods of preventing pollution, might steel-making one day be resumed in Corby?

EVENTS SPONSORED BY FRIENDS

Seventh W.G. Hoskins Lecture

The seventh W.G. Hoskins lecture was given in the hall of St Crispin's School on Saturday, 18th May 1996, to a record audience. The speaker was Maurice Beresford and his subject was 'Over the hedge or chance in research'. A black and white slide of a young W.G. Hoskins ('William') and Finberg ('Herbert') on a field trip, lost, and poring over an Ordnance Survey map, greeted the audience as they took their seats. It was re-assuring to see our mentors in such a familiar predicament. With more slides, a tape of a BBC programme of 1953 with Hoskins and himself discussing deserted villages, and an entertaining commentary, Maurice Beresford took us on an autobiographical field trip of great historiographical interest.

He described the series of 'chances' which shaped his career, from the accident of attending a school where geography was taught so badly that he would have had no chance of achieving the examination results to study his favourite subject at university, through an almost accidental introduction to fieldwork from John Saltmarsh, to the extreme good fortune

of living in Sutton Coldfield, so that an undergraduate vacation essay on the history of his home area could be a survey of a classic infield-outfield system and form the basis of a published paper in the *Economic History* Review in 1943 on what was then a brand new area of study. Many of us must have envied him the apparent ease with which publishers accepted work from young and relatively unknown academics back in the 1940's and 50's, despite the horror story of a publisher's reader who refused to accept theories about deserted mediaeval villages which overturned the received wisdom of her undergraduate days. The bibliophiles amongst us were advised to look out for one of his rare early works *The Hedge and the Plough*, published by Rugby Borough Library in 1947, and now a collector's item.

Beresford talked about his work at Bittesby, his first meetings with Hoskins, and an early attempt at archaeological excavation at Stretton Baskerville in Warwickshire. He explained the series of chances which led him to start work at Wharram Percy: a BBC interview about the Black Death in which he mentioned Wharram Percy as an example of a deserted medieval village, followed by a letter from the schoolmaster at nearby Settringham who knew Lord Middleton, owner of the land on which the site stood, and was able to secure permission for the excavation, and who also offered his schoolroom as summer accommodation for the diggers. This combination of opportunity created an excavation which began in 1950 and continued until 1990. He moved on to talk about his research on new planted towns of the Middle Ages, and explained disarmingly that his work on towns in France was the result of 'sheer lust for finding an interesting way of spending the rest of the summer when I wasn't at Wharram'. We suspected there was more to it than that. He also described, with relish, and apparent surprise, a series of chance meetings in recent years with students and helpers from his early days. Given his expansive personality, it did not seem so surprising that people who had once known him, but whose careers had gone in different directions, should choose to meet him again when the opportunity arose.

It was an assured performance, enlivened by anecdote and dry humour, and an evident appreciation of his good fortune in having been in the right places at the right times. 'Ignorance', he told us, 'is a very good beginning'. It was clear that for Maurice Beresford it was a very good beginning indeed. The afternoon concluded, as usual, with an immense tea and a booksale in Marc Fitch House.

Pam Inder

Summer Outing

Sites in North-West Leicestershire and South Derbyshire attracted a large turn-out of Friends for the June excursion. John Heathcote Ball had kindly agreed to allow us to invade his property and, perhaps wisely, had elected to be in Australia at the time. Negotiating his gateposts with scarcely a scratch on the 49-seater coach, we careered up the long drive to Ulverscroft Priory, causing overhanging sprigs of oak and assorted insects to descend on unwary Friends. Alighting from the coach we were met by Fred Hartley of the Leicestershire Museums Service who reminded us how remote this valley in the midst of Charnwood would have been in the Middle Ages. Urging us not to lean on bulging walls,

he conducted us around this important ecclesiastical ruin, stressing throughout the desirability of English Heritage funding for necessary restorative work. Of particular interest were the essentially thirteenth-century prior's lodgings and the long-horned cattle, reminiscent of eighteenth-century portraits of prize stock, which Harold Fox, anxious now that we should consume our lunch, assured us could gore hapless Friends and subsequently strip them of their clothing.

During a leisurely lakeside lunch, with the May still in full bloom, we celebrated Pauline Whitmore's birthday.

The coach then wended its way to Melbourne, the significance of which will be embedded in the minds of M.A. students from Harold's lecture on 'Landscapes of leisure'. The thus famous gardens were exhibited to us by Howard Usher, many Friends being grateful for the shade afforded by ornamental shrubs and trees on this hot, sunny day. With the hall's dignified front seldom out of view, we were led into an understanding of the garden's early eighteenth-century layout and the story connecting together the lead figures around the lake.

Our party now divided, and while Howard Usher took one group to see the remains of Melbourne's castle, the licence to crenellate having been granted in 1311, another was taken by Lindsay Usher around the Norman church where a demonstration of campanology was in full swing. We then repaired to the tea rooms, and thus sustained, both in body and intellect, we returned to Leicester well satisfied by a stimulating and memorable outing. Special thanks to Harold Fox for his organisation of this highly successful event.

William Bates

Diary Dates for Friends

Eighth W.G.Hoskins Lecture

The eighth W.G.Hoskins Lecture will be held early in the summer as usual. No speaker can be announced yet, because arrangements for the lecture will be in the hands of the new committee yet to be elected. All Friends will receive good notice of this event.

Annual General Meeting

This is formal notice that the first A.G.M. will take place on Monday 18th November at 5.30 p.m., in Marc Fitch House. Elections for officers will take place: chairman, secretary, treasurer, membership secretary, Newsletter editor, programme secretary, two additional committee members and two student representatives. Those who wish to stand for election should write informally to Harold Fox by November 1st.

Summer Outing

This will be organised by the new committee and good notice given.

OBSESSION

The chance discovery by one of us (Pam) of a cache of over 200 diaries all belonging to the same family and spanning most of the nineteenth century in the Special Collections at Keele University was almost too good to be true. That no work had been done on them was even better. Realising that there was too much work for one person she asked Marion Aldis, whose special interest is diaries, if she would like to work with her.

That is a dry and factual *resumé* of the start of what has become a totally engrossing research project. We have worked on the collection for over two years now and from the short, and on the face of it, tedious entries, 'I dined with Mr Heathcote' or 'I called on Mrs Morton' we have uncovered a family story which almost defies belief in its intensity and drama, and a fascinating insight into the thinking and mode of life of a gentry family and its tangled finances in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This is a tale not of rags to riches but of riches to debt on a massive scale. The Industrial Revolution was under way, the old order changing forever, and this family, like many other gentry families, embraced aspects of the new technology at the beginning of the nineteenth century by buying up shares in canals and railways, building roads and succumbing to the mining fever which grasped the imagination of entrepreneurs in this country as much as the gold rush did in America.

They were the Sneyd family of Ashcomb Park in Staffordshire and in the course of our research we have now seen all the houses they owned and have been inside most of them; built up a dossier of family portraits and photographs; discovered family letters, including some describing the early colonial life of one of the younger sons in New Zealand and a huge collection written from a boy to his aunt which cover almost all his school days. Others are of a very personal nature and do much to reveal the position of women in society at that time. For us that has been one of the most interesting aspects, for it was the women in this family who not only provided most of the money but virtually all of the strength and support. In a time when it was almost impossible for a married woman to control her own money they showed how skilful they were. Theirs seems to have been the only sound investments, they bailed out their feckless and ill-advised men-folk, and when the last one with any real influence and money died the family virtually fell apart.

The earliest diary is from 1792 and by the end of it we know that the writer was in debt to the tune of over £50,000 (say two and half million pounds today) and the debts rolled on from generation to generation compounded by rash mining adventures. We have farm accounts giving details of how much a woman earned in a day, say for pulling up couch grass (squitching), what crops were planted, when and how much they were sold for, how often cattle were killed for the table and how much wine was put down! There are vivid glimpses of what it was like to start a mine half way up Snowdon and how the canny Welsh miners were able to swindle them. We are having to get to grips with church and financial law, bankruptcy and sequestration. We have even been to The Kennel Club's library as well as to numerous different county record offices, the British Library and Newspaper Library.

Charles Dickens would be proud of us as we have now turned the research we have done on one of the female diarists into a dramatised reading and have given several performances of it. Her tragic though immensely resolute life included being married to a hermaphrodite (the marriage, not surprisingly, lasted only eight weeks), bringing up her nephew and acting as her eldest brother's housekeeper on the death of his wife and after he had been disinherited by their father to whom he never spoke again. She saw five of her brothers and sisters die in early adulthood, and was the buffer between her two eldest brothers who fought years of acrimonious and entirely futile legal battles over virtually nothing whilst she tried to keep up appearances and hold the household together with ever-dwindling resources. Her nephew started to keep dubious, as far as they were concerned, company (they would not have chosen Oscar Wilde) and he was experimenting with every alternative religion he could lay hands on, ending up, mercifully after her death, as chief Druid in Staffordshire. The brother with whom she lived became more and more reclusive, taking to his bed at the drop of a hat, but she struggled on through chronic rheumatism, chilblains and neuralgia to repair curtains and carpets in the home as well as endlessly mending his clothes. She provided food as cheaply as possible: her household accounts record her buying large quantities of tinned mutton and beef which was very cheap, recommended by Government reports as suitable for the Poor House and probably full of the lead which was used in the early canning process to solder the tins. Moreover she found time and energy to go to church regularly, write endless letters to her relatives and financially support her increasingly eccentric nephew on his forays abroad to get items for his burgeoning 'collection'. A huge chunk of rock from the Giant's Causeway can still be seen in the garden of his house on the Staffordshire moorlands, along with the Druids' Altar and the chapel he made from a converted barn with a lead-lined roof. Yet her life had started in a grand house with a liveried footman and other servants and nursemaids, and included a lengthy tour abroad as a young woman. She lived to see her youngest brother taken before a Consistory Court for getting with child the lady of the manor's young maid (he was 35 at the time, she just 16) and being made bankrupt. He borrowed very large sums of money from her and as part payment gave her a St Bernard dog which he had bred (hence the visit to Crufts) from his champion called Hector. It died aged eighteen months, almost inevitably.

We are grateful to have received support for our research from the Cambridge Group for the Study of Population, The Wellcome Foundation and quite extraordinary help and friendliness from every member of the descendants of the Sneyds whom we have met. We are very excited about our first book which is to be published this autumn, have several more planned and one being considered by a major publisher at the present. We have given talks at Keele University and are to run a Saturday school on the subject of 'Diaries as a Primary Source' next March at Lamport Hall in Northamptonshire. We cannot wait to start on our next project, the diaries of a Leicestershire lady in ... but that would be telling.

Pam Inder and Marion Aldis

TALKING TO FRIENDS: MARGARET SPUFFORD

It was a great pleasure when Professor Margaret Spufford, Research Professor in Social and Local History at Roehampton Institute, agreed to be interviewed for this year's 'Talking to Friends', for she is one of Leicester's own who has become one of the truly great voices in Local History over the past 30 years. It is particularly appropriate that we should be talking to her this year since she was awarded the O.B.E. in the New Year's Honours both for her service to local history and for the provision of access to higher education for disabled people.

Professor Spufford's work has huge breadth, but mainly focuses on the lives of 'the poorer sort' in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England. Her publications are too numerous to list, but perhaps she is best known for *A Cambridgeshire Community: Chippenham from Settlement to Enclosure* (1966), *Contrasting Communities: the English Villager in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (1974, paperback edition, 1979, reprinted 1987), *Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular Fiction and its Readership in Seventeenth-Century England* (1981), *The Great Reclothing of Rural England: Petty Chapmen and their Wares in the Seventeenth Century* (1984) and *The World of Rural Dissenters, 1520-1700* (1995). She has just added *Poverty Portrayed: Gregory King and Eccleshall, Staffordshire* (Keele, 1996). She has also published numerous important articles in journals on a wide range of subjects and in addition to her local history publications has written on theological topics and, most famously, on the problem of pain in her book *Celebration* (1989) which became the basis for several television programmes.

Extraordinary though her academic achievements are, they become even more so when the circumstances of her domestic background are understood. During her second pregnancy, when her academic career had just begun, she was diagnosed as having a progressive bone disease which has since brought pain and periods of immobilisation; to continue her work in the face of this illness demonstrates great courage. Even greater courage was demanded when her daughter Bridget developed a metabolic disease which demanded constant nursing care including a year in Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital and which led in 1989 to her death at the age of 22. Out of Bridget's illness and during her life has come the second strand of Margaret Spufford's achievement, the foundation of a hostel for disabled or chronically sick students attending the colleges of Cambridge University and Anglia Polytechnic University. This hostel, known as 'Bridget's', offers the chance to study for students in need of 24-hour care. The vision for the hostel and much of the fund raising is derived from Margaret Spufford's own extraordinary energy.

It was hard to know where to begin a conversation about such a complex life, so the obvious thing was to return to the Department of English Local History at Leicester where Professor Spufford's historical roots lie. As with so many things in her life, her entry into the department in 1963 was unconventional.

Friend How did you come into the Department?

M.S. It was a saga - I had no first degree, which was a nuisance in terms of general knowledge and was a great

shame. I had been ill, but when I recovered the first thing I did was to go to local history classes run by Dr Esther Moir, who was a pupil of Herbert Finberg. It was she who sent me off to learn palaeography and suggested that I should put in a piece for the John Nichols prize. Although I didn't win it Herbert [Professor Finberg] said he could do something with the work and suggested that I apply for a studentship, which I duly did and was interviewed. There was a large interview panel with the Vice-chancellor and what felt like ten or twelve gentlemen sitting round a huge mahogany boardroom table. Everything seemed to go well and the Vice-chancellor said he thought he would be able to offer me a studentship but sent me to wait outside. So I went outside and waited and heard the sound of a gradually growing rumpus which ended up with the gentlemen shouting at each other and a sudden crash. It was ages later that I learned that the registrar had looked at the university rule book and discovered that I was not eligible for a studentship because I had no first degree - hence the altercation. The Vice-chancellor ended the altercation by bringing his fist down on the table with the crash I heard and the words: 'we make the rules, we can break them'. On that very perilous interview hung my whole career. I was particularly glad of my starred M.A. from Leicester because of this background, and then much later my Litt.D. from Cambridge.

Friend Who was in the Department then?

M.S. Hoskins was not there at that time; there was Herbert Finberg, Alan Everitt and Joan Thirsk. Herbert chose to supervise me by taking me to dinner once a week; he came to Leicester on Tuesdays and went back on Thursdays and on Wednesdays he took me out to dinner and tried to educate me on wines and in broad general conversation. We had nothing academic in common. His main interest was in Anglo-Saxon charters and I was working on sixteenth-century matters. He was a superb supervisor and had an extraordinary instinct for the times when it was best to leave a student alone and the times when it was necessary to write one of his wonderful letters in his own hand-made brown ink to kick one into activity. He taught me to write, which is what I principally owe him - as well as many personal things. I finished Chippenham and handed it to Herbert a fortnight before our first son was due (he was a fortnight late). Exactly six weeks after the birth Herbert wrote sending the whole book back with a note saying: 'This is a most reputable and respectable work of scholarship - such as I would have expected from your pen - it now remains to turn it into a work of art.' He made me rewrite every single sentence and it took me another year to finish. I was not terribly pleased at the time, but I have been since because I have had to review amateur work and realised what good training that was. His own prose style was marvellous and it was from Herbert that I caught this love of craftsmanship because he did so believe in craftsmanship - I suppose he was a William Morris person really.

Friend Did he support you in other ways?

M.S. Oh yes! When our daughter was born and I spent a year in Great Ormond Street Hospital he came once a week to take me out to lunch for the whole of that period to make sure I had a good meal. I was afraid he was going to push Anglo-Saxon charters at me and I was not going to be able to

manage it, but for three months he just fed me once a week, which showed incredible charity; then one day he said 'I would appreciate your ideas on an intellectual problem' and I thought 'Oh! no, I can't do the boundaries of somewhere or other' - but he pulled out a copy of *Humanae Vitae* which he was commenting on for *The Tablet*. He said that in my position he would value my comments and I thought later how clever that was, because it was the beginning of my thinking again. He had chosen just the right thing to help me back - I loved him dearly.

Friend He was more interested in the landscape than in re-creating the people of the past in the way that you are, wasn't he?

M.S. Yes, I think that is my contribution - I started with the landscape but then developed an insatiable desire to people it - I wanted figures in my landscape.

Friend Particularly people below the level of the gentry.

M.S. Yes. It was partly an intellectual thing to find out if it was possible, but also with little Latin and no Greek I could not enter the world of the Renaissance gentlemen. Finberg was fascinated in this enterprise and fostered it and when I collected the manuscript of *Contrasting Communities* after he had read it he said 'I always knew a student of mine would write a great book some day. I am so pleased' - that was typical of his generosity. He was a great scholar who was not enough known. Hoskins was the great popularist who had the gift of spreading the gospel about the landscape. There was a *bon mot* going around Leicester about those two men, that it was strange that one man could manage to do so much with so little and the other had managed to do so little with so much.

Friend He put a lot of energy into other people's work.

M.S. Oh! yes and of course he also founded the *Agrarian History of England and Wales* and was general editor. C.U.P. said they never had such a difficult general editor because of his high standards. He had earlier founded the Alcuin Press and his pride was to print anything from poetry to bottle labels with equal aesthetic pleasure and satisfaction; he took enormous pains over layout which was why he was a nightmare as a general editor. All his letters were absolutly immaculate. You may have seen letters of his with crossings out but I never did.

Friend Who else was in the Department when you were there?

M.S. Joan Thirsk was another person in the Department who was very kind to me when I was a young research student. However I was daunted by her. She asked me to tea: not only could she talk with authority on my own subject area in a way Herbert couldn't because it was outside his remit, but she had baked two or three different cakes and made three different types of sandwiches with home-made bread, which was superb enough, but over tea it emerged accidentally that she made her husband's shirts as well! She is amazing because she has this total range of competence. I met a friend of hers who said she had been present both when Joan swapped knitting patterns with Shetland islanders and also when she was talking fluently with Spanish women about the techniques of olive pressing - of course she is a linguist too. She is an amazing person - there are still giants in local history.

Friend What about your work in the future?

M.S. We have embarked on an ambitious departmental research project at

Roehampton. Firstly we want to produce a computerised base-map of the old ecclesiastical parishes for all the counties of England. This will be used for mapping and analysing the hearth taxes of the 1660s and 1670s and other taxation returns; we also want to analyse the population densities of those taxed and exempt from taxation and produce maps based on the results. There is a range of questions we need to ask of these data and we want, crudely at least, to analyse poverty and wealth. I am also starting work on seventeenth-century clothing for ordinary people.

Friend I find that reading your work is sometimes like reading a novel in that you have the ability to create character and narrative; all you miss out is the dialogue.

M.S. I really value that compliment - but of course I can't do the dialogue, unless I can use court cases because I am circumscribed by the evidence; what is the point of history if it doesn't depict human beings accurately in the past? I try to be as accurate as I can. You are particularly circumscribed if you are dealing with the poor.

Friend Has any of your recent work been particularly important?

M.S. Yes *The World of Rural Dissenters* has been particularly important I think - it hasn't been much reviewed yet so I don't really know - I only know that I went my full length with it as I did with *Contrasting Communities* and I gave it all I had. I have been waiting for twenty years, since I read *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, to summon up the courage to reply with my view about the importance and centrality of religion in the past. It was also important to have assembled together a team of Ph.D. students (known as Spuffordians) to work on the book. Twenty years ago there was an assumption that religion was only of importance to the 'middling sort' because they could read and write, but to me there seemed to be no evidence of this. When I realised the size and scope of the project, I felt that only a team of research students could tackle it. I felt as though I had sketched the outline of a fresco on a wall in charcoal and then when I found the research students I asked them as they came to me which bits of the fresco appealed to them to paint.

Friend Shall we talk about your main non-historical work - *Celebration*?

M.S. Yes I am very pleased that it is being republished this year for it seems to have been very useful to people. I have had letters from men as well as women, from people in prison and nuns who have found reading it helpful to them. I think its usefulness is its honesty. I still think there is such a thing as 'the truth' even if you can't get at it and I thought that the only way to reach any theological conclusion about my own experiences was to be honest about their brutality. It is its truthfulness that makes it a relief to people who have been in situations of great pain - so that is good. It isn't a 'cosy' book with easy answers.

Friend And 'Bridget's' came out of Bridget's life?

M.S. Yes it makes me cross when people say it is a memorial to her - it wasn't. I was working on it long before she died. It was called Bridget's because when she was dying a member of the steering committee suggested it might please her to call the hostel after her. Indeed it did please her, because one of the problems of dying when you are 22 is that you feel as though you have achieved nothing. It was nothing to do with a memorial to her; it was simply that her life made me aware

that there were other young people whose lives were constricted in the same way. I wanted to make provision for any severely disabled or chronically sick student who couldn't be in college because of needing 24-hour care. We have two particularly interesting students at the moment - one is our academic star who has movement in the fourth toe of her left foot and can speak. She is reading classics. I am equally proud and pleased with the young man in his thirties and quadriplegic after a car accident 10 years ago. For 10 years he sat in his bedroom at home in Wales looking out of the window and now he is out in the world, reading history. Even if he doesn't do very well, it doesn't matter; it is triumphant that he is out and living in the world away from home.

Friend Are you still involved in the management in a hands-on way?

M.S. Yes, though of course not in matters to do with entrance which are handled through the usual university entrance procedure. Normally of course people needing such extensive care cannot be in most universities but we still need to make ourselves better known because we have empty rooms. We can accommodate eight students but finances are dreadful at the moment; we are running at a £50,000 a year deficit so I am fund-raising again. No capital grants are available so we are looking for endowment grants for bursaries - I am urgently looking for £800,000!

Friend It has been a great privilege to talk to you - thank you.

Rosie Keep

SPECIAL OFFERS

Paul Watkins Publishing

Paul Watkins Publishing again kindly offers a discount of 10% to Friends. Please write for his very attractively produced recent catalogue to 18 Adelaide Street, Stamford, Lincs, PE9 2EN. This publisher produces a good selection of history including reprints (e.g. Hill's *Medieval Lincoln*, Wheeler's *Fens of South Lincolnshire*), original works (e.g. *We Didn't Know Aught*, women's oral history by Maureen Sutton and *Eleanor of Castile* edited by David Parsons), works of reference (e.g. *A Reader's Guide to the Place-names of the United Kingdom*, a complete bibliography of the subject), local works on Stamford and the proceedings of the Harlaxton Medieval Symposia. Five important recent titles are *Stamford in the Thirteenth Century* by David Roffe, *Gothic to Renaissance* by Phillip Lindley, *Coventry's First Cathedral* edited by George Demidowicz, *The Black Death in England* edited by Mark Ormrod and Phillip Lindley and *Oswald* edited by Clare Stancliffe and Eric Cambridge. His catalogue also announces as 'forthcoming 1996' *A Dictionary of House Names* by the Department's ex-student Joyce Miles. See elsewhere in this *Newsletter* for the activities of Paul Watkins Publishing.

The Needwood Bookshop

Please visit the Needwood Bookshop at 55 New Street, Burton-on-Trent where ex-student Elaine Brown and her husband have a good selection of secondhand and out of print books, including history, topography and archaeology. Friends who declare themselves will be allowed a discount of 10%.

Departmental Occasional Papers

The following Occasional Papers are still available. All are at £4 (post free) except Finberg which is at £2. Please write to Harold Fox at the Department (sending no money in the first instance).

Finberg, *The Local Historian and his Theme*
Thirsk, *Fenland Farming in the Sixteenth Century*
Hart, *Early Charters of Essex* (revised edn)
Allison and others, *Deserted Villages of Oxfordshire*
Hart, *Hidation of Northamptonshire*
Hart, *Hidation of Cambridgeshire*
Merrill, *Cheshire Grand Jury*
Naughton, *Gentry of Bedfordshire*
Moylan, *Form and Reform of County Government, Kent*
Schumer, *Evolution of Wychwood*

The Transformation of a Peasant Economy

Friends are being offered John Goodacre's recent full-length monograph at the very keen price of £33 if collected from the Department or £35 if sent by post. All orders to Dr J. Goodacre, The White House, Ashby Parva, Lutterworth, Leics LE17 5HY.

Seasonal Settlement

Friends qualify for a discount for *Seasonal Settlement: Papers Presented to a Meeting of the Medieval Settlement Research Group*. Contents: 'Introduction: transhumance and seasonal settlement' (H.S.A. Fox); 'Transhumance in medieval Cornwall' (Peter Herring); 'Seasonal settlements in medieval Gloucestershire: sheep-cotes' (Christoper Dyer); 'Medieval shielings on the Isle of Man: fact or fiction?' (Gillian Quine); '*Aergi* names as indications of transhumance: problems of the evidence' (Mary Higham); 'Cellar settlements along the South Devon coast' (H.S.A. Fox). Please order a copy by sending a cheque for £3.50 (made payable to 'University of Leicester') to Harold Fox at the Department.

Back-numbers of the Newsletter

Some of these are still available at a little below cost price (£1.50). Why not try to complete your set by writing to Harold Fox at the Department?

USEFUL ADDRESSES

Membership: Dr Anne Mitson, 61 Trowell Road, Wollaton, Nottingham NG8 2EJ.

Reservations for Seminars: Mrs Pauline Whitmore, Marc Fitch House, 5 Salisbury Road, Leicester LE1 7QR. Tel: 0116 2522762.

Contributions to Newsletters and Books for the Booksale: Please send these, marked 'Newsletter' or 'Booksale', to Marc Fitch House.

EDITORIAL TEAM

Harold Fox (Editor); Sheila Brady, Bob Parsons and Lydia Pye (inputting); Vernon Davis (design); the University's Reprographic Unit; Anne Mitson (distribution); John Goodacre, Ken Smith, Celia Swainson and Mike Thompson (proofs).

QUIZ

Readers of last year's Newsletter will remember the mystery picture, reproduced again here, alongside a map which gives the answer. The first correct answer was given by Alan Fox, M.A. student in the Department, who replied with the following poem. He picked up his winner's cheque but no extra prize was given for the poetry.

The head of the man powerfully built
Looks like the fake Down man of Pilt,
But the shape I would say,
Neither region nor *pays*,
Is more like the old Shire of Wilt.

DEVON FIELD COURSE

This page shows small things seen in Devon last April, in chronological order as follows: pre-Saxon inscribed stone at Lustleigh; Norman window to domestic oratory at Bickleigh; urban improvement at Dartmouth; modern (?) cherub with odd fig-leaf (?) outside The Cherub, Dartmouth's oldest surviving non-ecclesiatical building.

Photographs: John Clarke and Deidre Higgins