

Friends of the Centre for English Local History

NEWSLETTER

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The cover photograph shows a pew end in St Nonna's church, Altarnun, Cornwall. This is one of a series of 79 sixteenth-century pew ends in the church. The photograph comes from the Attenborough collection belonging to the Centre.

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EDITORIAL

On the face of it, the past year would appear to have been somewhat run of the mill, there being no major conferences or international activities to report. But that would be to understate the importance of the work of the Centre and the Friends. The introduction of an alternative means of achieving an MA by distance learning was a significant development for the Centre that matched the objectives of the University as a whole to develop distance learning as an important part of the programme of courses offered.

The Friends have conducted a full programme of activities, starting with a most successful autumn outing to Bakewell. In March we organised a day-long conference under the heading 'Transport'. The conference was so oversubscribed that it had to be transferred to the School of Education as the Centre did not have a room capable of accommodating the number of attendees. The summer outing was a visit to Lichfield. We should thank Maggie Whalley who has been the main organiser of all these events.

In the last three years the Friends have organised visits and study tours to towns in Norfolk, Warwickshire, Northamptonshire, Derbyshire, Shropshire and Staffordshire as well as Leicestershire, thus showing that they have followed the tradition of the Centre and look at local history from a wider perspective than a purely Leicester affair.

The Friends have continued to support the Centre with the provision of financial assistance to students and practical help to the academic staff by way of arranging lunch at MA induction day and the study week.

Despite problems with the visual aids system, Dr Margaret Gelling gave a most interesting Hoskins Day lecture. Following the lecture, a large number of visitors then went back to the Centre for tea and to attend the annual book sale. A record amount of almost £600 was taken. As always, this money has been added to the Friends reserve and will be used to support the work of the Centre and provide financial assistance to students where appropriate.

THE CENTRE

My report on the academic year 2004-5 in last year's Newsletter made the best of a number of difficulties, and in recording this year's events it is easier to be more up-beat and optimistic. I will begin with problems and causes of concern and sadness. Keith Snell, coming to the end of his very successful study leave, in which he completed his book on 'belonging' in the English countryside, decided to drive to Yorkshire. After a collision with a large van, he spent a few days in hospital in Hull, and returned home with his leg in plaster and other injuries. We were all very concerned, and are relieved that he has since made a good recovery.

Just before Christmas Maurice Beresford died after a long illness. He had been a good friend to Local History at Leicester: he knew Hoskins and Finberg well, and in his later years had encouraged Harold Fox and myself. We nominated him for an honorary degree in 2002, and he last visited the Centre in 2004. Harold and I went to his memorial meeting in July at Leeds, which revealed his wide range of interests outside academic life, including his regular Thursday evening class for the 'lads' in Wakefield prison.

Last year we were inconvenienced by a seemingly endless round of building work and redecoration, occasioned by the need for better fire safety. The University's urge to improve itself, and to pay huge sums of money to the building trade, resulted in yet more months of disruption as we were provided with a ramp to allow wheel chair access to the front door. We are all in favour of helping the disabled, but wonder why the whole appearance of the building needed to be transformed, with a ramp and causeway built of garish red brick. Bright yellow stripes were painted on the new hazardous flights of steps to prevent the able bodied joining the ranks of the wheel chair users. Building work in the University Library has caused problems too, as the stock of local history books and periodicals have migrated from one floor to another. This disruption will continue for at least another year.

Now let us turn to some happier events. As the University always seems to be short of money, it was amazing to be told in November that it had been decided to fill 20 new posts, to be called New Blood lectureships, which were allocated to the various departments and centres which were thought to be deserving of expansion and support. History was selected to receive one

of these posts, and a hint was given that this should be located in the Centre for English Local History. After a debate in the School of Historical Studies this hint was accepted and we were able to advertise for an early modernist. We have felt the lack of a specialist in the period since the retirement of Charles Phythian-Adams. Although the field was restricted to those who already had a good publishing record, excluding the newest of blood, there were many applicants, from whom we selected four for interview. In the now established fashion for university appointments, the candidates gave presentations about their research before an audience of staff and students, and were then interviewed in the afternoon. Andrew Hopper (previously of York, East Anglia and Birmingham Universities) was chosen, and will take up his new post on October 1, 2006. He will not, however, immediately begin to teach early modern local history, as under the terms of the 'new blood' appointments, his first year will be devoted to research, and his teaching will begin in 2007-8. We are delighted by this development. We have gained a colleague who is an expert on subjects such as the local impact of the English Civil War, and who plans to work on such subjects as the journal of a much travelled Norfolk sailor, John Secker. The Centre has received a very welcome transfusion!

The University's decision that one of the new blood posts would be located in the Centre indicates that we are well regarded in the higher reaches of the University. Another sign of interest and one hopes approval came from a request that we provide the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Committee with a plan for our future development. We obliged, but have yet to hear a reaction.

The idea of taking study leave spread, so that Harold Fox then arranged to have time off to complete his book on Dartmoor. Instead of replacing him with a series of visiting lecturers, the university decided to appoint a substitute, and in the spring we were able to advertise for a lecturer in landscape history. From the talented field, four candidates were selected for interview, all of whom could have been appointed, and Richard Jones was chosen. He will be with us from July 1 for a year. He is of course a familiar figure from his years on the Whittlewood project, and it is a great pleasure to bring him back after his year at Cardiff University. His veins are full of new blood too, and the average age of the Centre's staff will fall by more than 10 years.

New faces also could be seen teaching the MA course, as we were fortunate, in Keith Snell's absence through continued study leave in the autumn, to welcome a galaxy of talented lecturers: Kate Tiller, Sylvia Pinches, Leigh Shaw-Taylor, Nicola Verdon, and Peter Kitson. And in the spring term, now that Dave Postles has retired, we were very grateful for the help of Peter Foden, who taught the early modern palaeography course. Lucy Byrne was not a new appointment, but her return from a long absence recovering from a broken ankle seemed like a novelty. She has established herself during the year, learning our procedures and strange habits, and being especially friendly and helpful to students.

Another innovation was the appointment of an external examiner to replace Robin Glasscock. Joe Betney has researched and taught local history in the Bristol area for many years, and recently served as President of the British Association for Local History. He has been really helpful, supporting the work of the Centre, and has been very appreciative of students' work.

During the year we continued to vary the pathways by which students could gain our MA degree. We gained recognition from the Economic and Social Research Council, which means that a student who gained funding from that body would be able to take our course, which would be modified by substituting modules in social science methods taught in the Social Science Faculty for some of our modules. This was also the first year of the MA by Individual Supervised Study, which is described in more detail in a separate article.

We have always wanted to revive the series of Occasional Papers. This was a series of books which provided an outlet for the work of scholars in the Centre, and for distinguished outsiders, including winners of the Nichols prize. Harold Fox made a determined effort to find a way of publishing a series of books, which would necessarily mean choosing works longer than the Occasional Papers, as the book trade assured us that thin pamphlets do not sell – the public scanning a bookshop shelf need to be able to read the title on the spine. During the year the first two books in 'Explorations in Local History' have been progressing through to publication, thanks to a partnership with the University of Hertfordshire Press, and we expect that *The Self-Contained Village* (papers from the conference held in July 2004) and a book about Cambridgeshire fields by Susan Oosthuizen will appear in the early autumn.

The 'Explorations' provide another opportunity to raise our public profile. We make efforts to bring our existence to the public, and especially to potential MA students. An article has appeared in the Leicester University alumni magazine, which conveys the interest of our course to thousands of former Leicester students, and readers may have noticed advertisements in national and local outlets which show that we are stepping up our campaign to attract students.

The first phase of the Whittlewood Project ended in the summer of 2005, but Richard Jones returned with a group of Cardiff students to continue the excavation of the manorial outbuildings at Wicken. Time Team made a programme there, which will be shown next spring, with spectacular results in their excavation of the long hidden parish church of Wick Hamon. The book of the Whittlewood Project, *Medieval Villages in an English Landscape*, will appear towards the end of 2006.

We welcomed a succession of visitors through the year. In January Lady Gretton, the Lord Lieutenant, and Squire Delisle came to discuss the revival of the Leicestershire VCH, and we followed this up a few weeks later when the Chairman of Leicestershire County Council came to the Centre. The occasions went well, but progress towards our eventual goal seems painfully slow. In May, Paul and Christine Hutton came to see both the Centre and the

University Library. They are the grandchildren of Tommy Hutton, a business man whose Hutton Collection helped the University to establish a library in its early days, and which provide us with a range of county histories and other rare books. Paul is a history graduate who lives locally, and we hope to see more of him in the future.

To end on a note about my own activities, I fear that I am being drawn excessively into more administrative activities that inevitably come the way of academics who have served for many years. I am much involved in the School of Historical Studies with preparations for the Research Assessment Exercise, which everyone agrees uses so much staff time that they are prevented from doing the research which is being measured and assessed. Outside Leicester, having been a Fellow of the British Academy for more than ten years, I am now on the Council of that body, and am currently chairing a working party examining its structures. More relevant to the Centre, I am chair of the Academy's Records of Social and Economic History committee, which recruits editors for publishing documents. Notable volumes in the past have been Ralph Josselin's diary, the poll taxes of 1377, 1379 and 1381, and Essex pauper letters. Anyone with ideas about prospective editors or suitable documents is invited to let me know.

Chris Dyer



Lady Gretton with members of the Centre's staff

Seminar programme 2005-6

Introducing **Dr Jack Langton** (St John's College, Oxford) to a large audience for the first of this year's seminars, Professor Christopher Dyer mentioned that this was the second time that Dr Langton had spoken at a Thursday afternoon seminar. The subject of his talk this time was 'The clearing of the woods or the running of the deer? Forests and chases in early modern England and Wales'. Dr Langton started by pointing out how little human energy was available in medieval times compared with today. The amount of energy consumed transporting people and goods in the modern world would be incomprehensible to our early modern forbears. Little energy was available so people stayed in the local area. The thrust of this lecture was to explore the role of forests and forest law over the centuries and to show how slowly attitudes change, the Charter of the Forest (1217) not being fully repealed until 1971. Forest law first came into being in medieval times and was 'a territory of woody ground in the safe protection of the king, for his own use'.

Forest law forbade citizens from chasing deer and any activity that might be construed as hindering the free movement of deer, including such things as erecting hedges or fences. Not all forests were royal forests for the King could and did present forests to his most favoured courtiers, in which case the rights of forest law were for the benefit of the new owner. Forest law was quite separate from common law. Generally, heavily wooded areas did not become subject to forest law for the practical reason that it was too difficult to hunt in such territory, the preferred landscape being open woodland. Samuel Johnson defined a forest in his dictionary as 'a wild uncultivated tract of land, with wood'. Anyone could hunt freely outside defined forest areas.

Dr Langton noted that forests had ceased to be contentious by the fifteenth century. Forest law was not written down but in the middle of the sixteenth century attempts were made to write down the case law of the forests, first by Manwood in his *Treatise* of 1592 and later by Cook in his *Institutes* of 1630 and 1640. In this sense forests had become textualised, defined and mapped. By early modern times forest law had become an anachronism and was felt to be incompatible with common law and biblical law, though hunting had become a very popular pastime in the seventeenth and eighteenth

centuries. In 1604, an Act was passed that made it illegal to sell venison. It could only be gifted, thus raising its social value and allowing venison to become a form of patronage.

Illogicality appeared in the eighteenth century when an Enclosure Act allowed enclosure of the fields but not of the hedges. Deer and stag hunting, however, continued to hold great prestige until it was supplanted by big-game hunting in the nineteenth century.

Summing up, Dr Langton considered that modern historians have concentrated on the early history of forests and have neglected to study the changing role of and attitudes to forests and forestation. Though we know a considerable amount about forests in medieval times, very little is known about life in and around forests in the early English period. This lecture was based on Dr Langton's contribution to a conference held in Oxford in 2004 that questioned how we might begin this study. The proceedings of the conference have been published in John Langton and Graham Jones (eds) *Forests and chases of England and Wales c.1500-1850* (Oxbow Books, Oxford, 2004) and includes contributions by past and present members of the Centre for English Local History.

Dr Ben Dodd (University of Durham) chose the intriguing title of 'Medieval bean counting: tithe and agrarian production' for the second lecture in the series. Dr Dodd spoke about the work he is doing to re-evaluate the attitudes of medieval peasant farmers to commercial factors. The conventional approach has been to assume that peasant farmers worked only for themselves, producing sufficient to satisfy the family's needs and pay any tithes that became due. The work Dr Dodd is undertaking at present questions whether this simplistic view was indeed the case, or whether, perhaps, the thirteenth and fourteenth-century peasant might have been somewhat more sophisticated in his approach to decision making when it came to the crops he would grow at any particular time. He mentioned that some South-American peasants with very small holdings that are too small to support a family, will not attempt to grow their own requirements for sustenance, but will grow a higher value crop that may be sold on the market, thus allowing the peasant to purchase his family's basic needs. Having accepted this concept, it then becomes possible to consider the position of the English medieval peasant from a different position.

Dr Dodd is using a series of tithe returns covering the period from 1338 to 1519 from the parish of Billingham, Co. Durham, to determine whether there are any indications that external forces might have had any influence in helping the peasant farmer to decide what crops he should plant. Though the records are not complete and tithe payments are no sure way of calculating exactly what was sown, some patterns are emerging that seem to suggest a distinct relationship between prices of wheat and barley in the previous two years and the tithes paid in the third year. The correlation is not always perceptible, especially in times of dearth or great plenty.

He has also been able to extend his research backwards using demesne records from another village in the county. Demesne records would seem to support the pattern of tithe payments and suggest that farmers would plant more of a particular crop if the price had been relatively high in the previous two years. When the price fell, the question arose as to whether they planted more of an alternative crop, such as barley or legumes.

Of course there are many caveats in any work of this nature, as Dr Dodd acknowledged. Were the peasants of Durham more or less privileged than any other part of the country that might allow them to make commercial decisions as to what crops to grow? To what extent did the rules of an open-field system limit the choice of decision making by the individual? The renders due by peasants seem to have been relatively light compared to other areas; could this have helped? Dr Dodd concluded his talk by saying that, though his work is incomplete and will always be contentious because of the paucity of the information, sufficient evidence is emerging to suggest that the medieval peasant had more entrepreneurial skill than previously thought.

Professor Kevin Schürer (United Kingdom Digital Archive, University of Essex) was the speaker at our next seminar, taking as his subject 'What can surnames tell us about historic regions?' Professor Schürer explained that the talk had been based in an article published in *Local Population Studies* on a subject that is somewhat peripheral to his regular work, but is one that holds out opportunities for further investigation. The work concerns the distribution of surnames listed in the 1881 census for England and Wales.

To set the talk in context, he explained that almost 400,000 different surnames appear in the census. Of this number 158,876 appear only once, while there are 41,203 names that appear more than 25 times. This can be broken down in various ways; 20 percent of the population share just under 60 surnames, 50 percent share 600 names, 80 percent share 4,000 names and 90 percent of the population use only 10,000 of the surnames listed. This means that the vast majority of surnames are seldom found anywhere. Of course, he acknowledged that some names have several variations and should be added to other names. But this fact is unimportant in view of the overwhelming magnitude of a small number of names. The most common names in the 1881 census, Smith, Jones and Williams hold the same position in 1996, as do all the ten prime names.

Having gained some insight into the number and incidence of surnames, Professor Schürer then looked at regional distribution patterns. Some results of this are unsurprising, such as the small number of surnames that appear in Wales and need little explanation. London is the only place where all the top 40,000 surnames are found, thus illustrating the pulling power of the capital city. Names ending in 'son' show a strong north-south divide with a clear boundary across the country from the Wash to the Mersey.

Other results are less easy to explain and throw up more questions than they answer. To illustrate this, he cited names based on occupations connected with textiles; Walker, Tucker and Fuller stand out as being regionally based, Walker in the south west, Fuller in the south east and Tucker in East Anglia. Again, a small number of surnames are to be found in other areas, particularly south west Cornwall, the Kent and Sussex Weald, East Anglia and some parts of the East Midlands. The pattern of surnames in East Anglia shows the region to have the greatest number of names that are to be found only in the region.

Professor Schürer then revealed that he has been offered an enormous amount of information from The Church of Latter Day Saints and some U.K. sources covering periods both before and after 1881 and has received a grant to undertake the next area of research. The current dilemma is to prepare a programme that would investigate areas that might offer leads for future research. Perhaps it is a vehicle that could provide help in identifying historic cultural

regions, perhaps on the lines of watersheds and drainage basins, a subject that has interested Charles Phythian-Adams. There followed a lively discussion with everyone recognising that here was a situation not normally experienced by local historians, a glut rather than a famine of information. Which is easier to deal with? All present will look forward to hearing how Professor Schirer has resolved his dilemma at a future seminar.

Dr Leigh Shaw-Taylor (UCAMPOP, University of Cambridge) spoke on 'The economic and social structure of English regions, 1650-1850'. Introducing Dr Shaw-Taylor, Professor Dyer referred the audience to a previous seminar in October 2003 when Professor Tony Wrigley spoke about a project he was leading that was looking into the levels of industrialisation in the seventeenth century. Dr Shaw-Taylor is the senior researcher on this project and provided an update on the work of the team. The project is trying to build up a picture of occupational structure over a long period. If it builds up a picture, say from the sixteenth century, it would be possible to make much broader conclusions about the development of industrialisation than has hitherto been possible.

Dr Shaw-Taylor explained that the first problem was to categorise occupations in ways that the information could be managed. The problem was recognised when it was noticed that 1,500 different occupations were listed in Lancashire in 1800 though weaving accounted for 25 percent of the number of people counted. They decided to divide occupations into three groups, primary, secondary and tertiary; these headings broadly applied to extractive and agriculture, manufacturing and the supply of services. Most of the analysis has used figures relating to a group of six south-midland counties, Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Huntingdonshire, and Buckinghamshire.

On a national basis, he showed graphs that illustrated the decline of agriculture from 1600, a fact that had been observed by Cole and Deane and others. What is less known is the rapid growth of tertiary activities after 1790. The largest number of workers in this group after 1850 were concerned with transport. The change from primary to tertiary occupations happens to all countries over time as standards of living rise. London, as the wealthiest region, had the largest

percentage of tertiary workers. Individual areas stand out at various times. For instance the secondary sector doubled in Luton between 1821 and 1881 while the north-east mining and heavy industry area stands out as one with its very low levels of female employment.

The project has reached the stage that shows the growth in tertiary employment started rather sooner than historians have previously indicated, but the group has not yet reached sufficient conclusions for them to be published, though that is the objective.

Dr Stephen Hipkin (Christ Church University of Canterbury) addressed the subject of 'The Politics of Dearth in the late Elizabethan Period: the metropolitan grain trade of Kent.' Dr Hipkin began his lecture by setting out the two areas of study, which he perceived as interconnected, namely, an analysis of the grain trade and the nature of popular protest, as exemplified by the Herne Hill conspirators and the so-called 'riots' in Canterbury in 1586-7 and 1595-96. Fisher, writing in the 1930s from the metropolitan point of view, underestimated the importance of the inland grain trade, although Kent proved to be the pre-eminent supplier of grain to London.

Dr Hipkin's research has brought to light a wealth of data from customs accounts, London Granary Bridge House accounts and port books, covering the period 1550 - 1650 and this tabulated data was presented on a series of handout sheets together with a map. The map showed the organisation of the Kent ports. The shipping towns of north and east Kent were organised into four sections administered from Sandwich, Faversham, Milton and Rochester. The term 'grain' included wheat and meal, malt, oats, barley and rye, all measured in quatern. In answer to questions following the talk, Professor Dyer reminded us that the estimated consumption of bread, at that period, was 1.7-1.9 quatern per capita per annum, approximately 400 lbs. While there was some overland transport of grain to London, the bulk was moved by boat from the small ports directly into the city, as the cost of overland transport was estimated at eight times that of shipping. These ports were also exporting grain to mainland Europe. Although very little legitimate overseas trade is recorded prior to 1640, nevertheless there was significant movement of smuggled goods. Grain prices in Europe were higher than in England and in 1593

less than 10 % of grain sent to Dieppe was legally declared.

In all these transactions, the size and quality of the harvests were crucial to the profits of the farmers and merchants and the livelihood of the small producers could be destroyed by the vagaries of climate. The Kent trade was in the hands of those whom Fisher dismissed as 'smaller men'. Of these 481 merchants, there were six major families, five of which were operating from the Faversham sector. Town corporations were dominated by mercantile interests.

In times of abundant harvests the price of grain fell and there was less demand from London dealers so the producing farmers suffered from severe shortage of income and were often left with rotting produce. In times of shortage and high prices, the merchants would send as much as possible to London and overseas, leaving the poor of Kent without the means of sustenance. To combat this, some local justices brought in constraints whereby 2 quarters of low priced wheat was set aside for local distribution out of every score sent to London.

This paternalism led to tension between merchants and the justices responsible for poor relief. Privy Council restraints on the export of grain in times of dearth were lifted in February 1595. The only natural allies of the county bench were the poor themselves and it is likely that the justices discreetly orchestrated subsequent local demonstrations. The bench denied complicity and reported the disorder in order to bring the situation to the attention of the Privy Council.

Every seat in the seminar room in no. 1 Salisbury Road was occupied for the first seminar of 2006 when **Dr John Broad** (Department of History, London Metropolitan University) started his talk on 'Farmers, cottagers and their houses in the seventeenth century'. He acknowledged the early writings of W.G. Hoskins and R.H. Tawney on the great rebuilding of the seventeenth century. In the mid-twentieth century only local and architectural historians were interested in the subject.

By way of introduction, Dr Broad noted that our current interest in barn conversions is nothing new. Every generation has altered or improved existing buildings to suit modern conditions and he illustrated this point with a house in Buckinghamshire that started as a private house in the sixteenth century, was extended and later became a hospital. It was then divided into

two houses and has now been restored to its original state of a private house. The point always to be remembered is that buildings change their use over time.

The cause of the change was mainly the rise of the middle class during that time. The most important developments were the replacement of the great hall with a number of smaller rooms, the introduction of a second storey, introduction of fire places, replacement of thatch by tiles, all of which reflect the rising standards of living that took place.

Rebuilding and refurbishment has always been an important feature in ensuring that buildings survive beyond a fairly short time span. Dr Broad suggested that about 25 percent of the buildings in existence at the beginning of the seventeenth century are still standing and they are, almost without exception, those that have been regularly altered and repaired. Houses needed to be of certain dimensions if they were to have a second floor added, a point illustrated by the fact that only cruck frames over a certain size could accept a second floor.

Dr Broad is particularly interested in looking at how families lived and how they used the spaces created. In addition, to what extent were women involved in the way buildings were designed? These are subjects on which we have relatively little information. It has been calculated that the population increased by about 20 percent during the first half of the century, which would have increased demand for housing and in consequence put pressure on means of satisfying that demand. Only about 30 percent of households had servants, indicating that men of small means were involved in building. Waste and marginal land around settlements was used for building very simple housing. The more popular the district, the more difficult it was for families to find land on the edge of villages on which they could build.

About this time, there is evidence that increasing amounts of land came under the control of large estates. Landowners enclosed waste, tenures were changed and rents increased. Dr Broad is investigating the relationship between the type of tenure and the inclination of tenants to invest in building and maintenance as a farmer was more likely to invest in his building if he had security of tenure.

A lively discussion followed the talk.

Matthew Badcock (University of Central England, Birmingham), a post-graduate student,

was our speaker at the second seminar of the year and chose as his subject 'The regional geography of nineteenth-century elections'. The democratic systems that originated in Britain and France have served as models on which all other countries have based later models, and against which all can be measured.

The electoral picture in Britain changed enormously during the century, from control by a small elite to universal male franchise, from pre-1850 Liberal domination to the rise of the Labour party. Using a number of maps and graphs, he illustrated the strengths and weaknesses of political parties and how relative strengths changed over time. Most notable was the strength of the Conservative party in the south east region, that was almost matched by its absence in Wales. The strength of the parties in local areas often reflected the religious allegiances of the electorate.

However, Matthew pointed out that between 30 and 60 percent of seats were not contested in all elections, which thus effectively removed any element of democracy in those constituencies. Regional patterns of voting can be detected, such as the fact that there was always a higher turnout in Wales than in England or Scotland. By 1895, the trend shows that turnout rose when support for the parties was evenly matched.

In the middle of the century, expenditure on elections was a private matter over which there was no state control. The election of 1880 was the most expensive ever, involving considerable amounts of bribery. Such misuse of privilege and power subsequently caused rules on election expenses to be introduced. Advertising became a significant expenditure during the last quarter.

But perhaps the most interesting aspect mentioned was the different ways in which the parties viewed the electorate and how they would gain the most benefit from the use of limited funds. Funds were used strategically. Ninety percent of all funding was spent in English constituencies, due partly to the greater number of constituencies, and partly to the volatility of voters in some of them. After 1885, the Liberals spent the majority of their allowance on campaigns that they felt likely to win while the Conservatives spent more in constituencies in which they were weak but offered some hope. The Conservative party adopted the use of printed advertising while the Liberals used geographical targeting.

This insight into the development of the electoral system probably left listeners in some doubt as to the efficacy of our present state of democratic development.

Pam Fisher (University of Leicester) spoke on 'The People's Choice: the election of County and Borough coroners c.1750-1850'. This seminar provided an outline of the research Pam has been doing for her PhD. Her work has concentrated more on county than borough elections. The role of the coroner in the eighteenth century was not onerous, being limited to investigation into the reasons for violent deaths, and was usually combined with some other occupation. Coroners were elected by the freeholders and had a large area to cover which, therefore, required a certain amount of travel. It seems that there were few elections, the only nomination usually being elected without difficulty.

The nature of coroner's elections started to change after 1820 as the understanding of and interest in politics became more widespread. Candidates began to announce themselves and actively canvas for votes. The election of a coroner was not constricted by regulations on the amount that could be spent by the candidates, so large sums were spent on hustings and the buying of votes. A candidate in Stafford was said to have spent £10,000 to ensure election in 1826. Dirty tricks were normal and double voting was not unusual. But why should anyone want to spend a large sum of money to obtain a position that paid little and had no patronage? Most coroners earned less than £100 a year.

Pam suggested the answer would seem to lie in the potential that the position offered to the holder. As national politics evolved and more people became freeholders, coroner's elections were a means for anyone interested in contesting a future national election to get themselves known in the area. The successful candidate was able to celebrate his election with large processions round the district and so promote his name for the future.

Borough coroners had traditionally also been mayor or clerk of the town; only occasionally was it a sole occupation. The method of coroner's election in boroughs was somewhat different to that of the counties. The various rules were consolidated during 1835/6. Borough elections had to take place within ten days of the death or resignation of an office holder. Local and national politics became a

factor in the choice of candidate and conduct of the election. Questions began to be asked as to what background a coroner should have. This led to competition between the legal and medical professions, to the extent that the *Lancet* would openly support a medical candidate. Generally, more legal than medical candidates were elected.

Pam considered that the politicisation of these elections was a method of starting political debate, canvassing political views, encouraging supporters, drawing up a list of parliamentary voters, often with the object of mounting a political challenge in the future.

We were pleased to welcome **Dr Aleksandra McCain** (Dept. of Archaeology, University of York) who spoke on 'Local churches and the Norman conquest of the North: elite patronage and identity'. Taking some 300 parishes in the North riding of Yorkshire and south Durham, she has looked at the role of commemorative monuments in the period of transition from Anglo-Saxon to Norman times. Over 700 fragments of Anglo-Saxon cross slabs have been located and examined. She suggested that the sculpture on these fragments may have been intended to display identity and status. The problem for all students is the very limited amount of sculpture that can be deciphered.

The arrival of the Normans brought about a considerable amount of church rebuilding in stone to replace earlier wooden buildings. The Norman hierarchy used funerary monuments to define their position and authority. Many churches were rebuilt during the twelfth century, some of which had been rebuilt within the previous century. Rebuilding had no connection with the Norman conquest. Rebuilding was much more prevalent in the North Riding than in either Durham or Northumbria.

The final talk in this season's programme of lectures was given by **Dr Sam Turner** (University of Newcastle), an émigré Devonian, with the title 'Landscape character and regionality in Devon's ancient countryside'. Dr Turner explained that English Heritage have recently started a programme of character mapping the whole of the country. Though his work has not been directly connected with English Heritage, his techniques are similar and extend their approach.

He explained that the principle of character mapping considered larger pieces of land than a single field at a time. One then sought areas with similar characteristics within a district, county or region in order to build up a broad picture of an area. By using aerial photographs and maps from different ages, it is possible to build up a series of maps and then compare them to find how the landscape has changed over time. It is then possible to superimpose graphs and scatter diagrams for an infinite range of additional activities that might have affected the development of the landscape, such as rainfall, building dates of manor houses, population etc.

The questions and answers after the lecture indicated some questioning by members of the audience as to how character mapping might usefully be used. The broad-brush nature of the method produced generalised maps. Dr Turner mentioned that modern planning authorities use these maps to provide an overview of an area to indicate the original landscape pattern. The problem for historians is to agree on the nature of original or whether we should accept the landscape that has evolved to its present state. Despite the doubts, this was a thoughtful and thought-provoking talk offering a glimpse into the future methods of landscape analysis.



Centre publications 2005

Staff

C. Dyer

An Age of Transition? Economy and Society in England in the Later Middle Ages, x + 293 pp. (Oxford University Press, 2005).

edited, with Kate Giles, *Town and Country in the Middle Ages. Contrasts, Contacts and Communications, 1100-1500*, 330 pp. (Maney, Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph, 22, 2005)

Chapters in books:

'Introduction' (with K. Giles) and 'Conclusion. Making sense of town and country', in *Town and Country in the Middle Ages*, ed. K. Giles and C. Dyer (Leeds, 2005), pp. 1-5 and 313-21.

'Bishop Wulfstan and his estates', in *St Wulfstan and his World*, ed. J.S. Barrow and N.P. Brooks (Aldershot, 2005), pp. 137-49.

'The peasant land market in medieval England', and 'Seigniorial profits on the land market in medieval England', in L. Feller and C. Wickham (eds), *Le Marché de la Terre au Moyen Âge* (Collection de l'École Française de Rome, no. 350, 2005), pp. 65-76 and 219-36.

'Villeins, bondmen, neifs and serfs: new serfdom in England, c. 1200-1600', in *Forms of Servitude in Northern and Central Europe. Decline, Resistance and Expansion*, ed. P. Freedman and M. Bourin (Brupols, 2005), pp. 419-35.

Articles in journals

'Rodney Howard Hilton, 1916-2002', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 130 (2005), pp. 53-77.

'Salt-making at Droitwich in the fourteenth century', *Transactions of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society*, 3rd ser., 19 (2004), pp. 133-40.

'University of Leicester. Centre for English Local History', *Local Population Studies*, no. 74 (Spring 2005), pp. 97-9.

'Reading Britain's historic landscape: nature versus nurture', *BBC History Magazine*, vol. 6, no. 8 (Aug. 2005), pp. 34-9.

Book reviews:

R. Britnell, *Britain and Ireland 1050-1530: Economy and Society*, in *Economic History Review*, 58 (2005), pp. 407-8.

S. Raban, *A Second Domesday? The Hundred Rolls of 1279-80*, in *Midland History*, 30 (2005), pp. 141-2.

M. Bourin and P. Martinez Sopena (eds), *Pour une Anthropologie du Prélèvement Seigneurial dans les Campagnes Médiévales (XI-XIV^e siècles). Réalités et Représentations Paysannes*, in *Historia Agraria*, 35 (2005), pp. 187-9.

P. Stamper and R. Croft, *The South Manor Area*; P.A. Rahtz and L. Watts, *The North Manor Area and the North-West Enclosure*, volumes 8 and 9 in the series of publications *Wharfedale. A Study of Settlement on the Yorkshire Wolds*, in *Medieval Settlement Research Group Annual Report*, 19 (2005, for 2004), pp. 39-40.

A. Longcroft, *The Historic Buildings of New Buckenham*, in *Vernacular Architecture*, 36 (2005), pp. 119-20.

H.S. Fox

'South Devon: economy, society, culture', in *Fishing, Trade and Piracy: Fishermen and Fishermen's Settlements in and around the North Sea Area in the Middle Ages and Later*, eds M. Pieters, F. Verhaeghe and G. Gevaert (Free University of Brussels with West Vlaanderen Province, Brussels).

K.D.M. Snell

(Co-ed.) *Rural History, Economy, Society, Culture*, 16 no. 1 (April, 2005).

(Co-ed.) *Rural History, Economy, Society, Culture*, 16 no. 2 (October, 2005).

Papers presented at conferences, seminars etc.

Staff

C. Dyer

'Kington, a medieval town?' Kington History Group (Sept. 2005).

'The Whitlewood project: landscape and settlement in the middle ages', Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society (Oct. 2005).

'Shopping in Melton Mowbray in the fifteenth century', Melton Mowbray and District Historical Society (Oct. 2005).

'Landscape history fifty years since Hoskins', Cheshire Local History Association, at Northwich (Oct. 2005).

'Political space in the late medieval English village', workshop on 'Political space in pre-industrial Europe', University of Warwick (Nov. 2005).

'Diets in Hospitals and Almshouses', Diet Group symposium on 'Diets of the poor', Somerville College Oxford (Nov. 2005).

'Country goes to town in the middle ages: Wales and England compared', Thomas Jones Pierce Lecture, University of Wales, Aberystwyth (Nov. 2005).

'Vernacular buildings and landscape history', winter conference of the Vernacular Architecture Group.

'Buildings, rebuildings and the vernacular threshold', Royal Holloway College, University of London (Dec. 2005).

'Wealth and poverty in medieval Warwickshire', Warwickshire branch of the Historical Association, Coventry (Jan. 2006).

'The prehistory of the carrier and postal service in the middle ages', Friends of the Centre for English Local History conference: 'Travelling through time', Leicester, (March 2006).

'English peasant agriculture, 1200-1500', Economic History Society Conference, University of Reading (April 2006).

'Medieval houses and their contents', Centre for Wessex History and Archaeology Conference: 'Social history and archaeology of buildings', Salisbury (April 2006).

'Landscape history fifty years after Hoskins', Hoskins Lecture, to the Vaughan Historical and Archaeological Society, Vaughan College, Leicester (April 2006).

'Growing on the edge: Birmingham's formative years', Eric Hopkins Memorial Lecture, Birmingham branch of the Historical Association, Birmingham (May 2006).

'Institutions, households and consumption of pottery', Medieval Pottery Research Group Annual Conference: 'Ceramics cloistered and crenellated', Chester (June 2006).

'What does landscape history contribute to our understanding of economic history?', International Economic History Association Congress, Helsinki (August 2006).

'How our ancestors survived before the poor law', Federation of Family History Societies: 'Putting flesh on the bones. A study of the common man', University of Northampton (September, 2006).

H.S. Fox

'The fishing villages of Devon, with sidelights on Cornwall', Trafalgar Day lecture, Cornwall Association of Local Historians.

'From seasonally occupied settlement to permanent habitation', Athens Institute of advanced Research, Conference on European history.

'Arundell country' and

'The medieval town of St Columb Major' both at Landscape Studies Society, Cornwall Study Weekend.

John Nichols Prize

The John Nichols Prize is awarded annually. The value of the prize is £100. Essays, not exceeding 20,000 words, must be submitted by 31st December. For further information please contact: John Nichols Prize, Centre for English Local History, University of Leicester, Marc Fitch Historical Institute, 5 Salisbury Road, Leicester, LE1 7QR.

This year the Prize has been won by Professor Nigel Goose of the Centre for Regional and Local History, University of Hertfordshire, for a paper on 'Poverty and Charity in Colchester'.

Devon Field-Course: April 2006

I went to Devon like the little boy on the back of the old Fry's *Five Boys* chocolate bars: Anticipation; Realisation – it's Devon! More than one previous student had said, 'You'll enjoy it...' accompanied by a wistful, faraway look, such as comes over the face of an old Devonshire salt as he remembers languid days aboard a West Indian ship riding at anchor off some far-away and long-ago beach.

Over anticipation can lead to disappointment, but not in Devon. Harold's preparatory day school and his meticulous notes, plus his urging us to read as much as possible beforehand, all paid off. Even so, eyes became glazed-over at the end of another day 'on the road' and voices asked, 'What's that church? You know, the ninety thousandth one we saw...'

This year's 'Devon' was enhanced by input from our new Distance Learning fellow-students who joined the group from as far away as Italy and the USA and as close as Wales, London and Leicestershire.

Coming from the Midlands, I was struck first by the quality of the light. No wonder that artists love the West Country. The maritime light, especially in springtime, has a lift and clarity lacking in midland counties. Camellias and early blossoms made us feel on holiday rather than at study.

But the study of Devon's cultural landscapes was the purpose for being there. From our base at Exeter University, Harold had organised a daily mini-bus, with a kindly and amenable driver, so that we could explore and observe from the coasts (both north and south) to the granite upland of Dartmoor. Harold had planned each day's itinerary to encompass, as far as possible, a separate theme. Day one began amongst 'the apothecary's galley pots' of Dartmouth. Bright sunshine and billowing cloudscape appeared to make the little town's houses cling closer above each other, and its ancient castles, guarding the mouth of the estuary, seemed more sombre. We sought out the original line of the seashore, surprisingly distant now from the sea, and admired the exotic and quaintly curved brackets, under the jetties of the seventeenth-century timber-framed town-houses, seemingly more reminiscent of the figure-head of the *Saucy Susan* than of accepted architecture.

Our first day on Dartmoor was blessed with perfect summer weather vividly portraying for us the summer pasturing which may have happened up here, under Housed Tor, in Anglo-Saxon times. We contemplated the visible remains of the walls of later, possibly early medieval, longhouses and enclosures, and imagined a hamlet where animals grazed and grain was grown and dried for winter storage. The grotesque shape of the granite tor rises above the hamlet site, giving protection from the weather and also, perhaps, encouraging tales of magical beasts told around winter fires.

By the close of our third day, which found even the stoutest souls 'comparing notes' in the White Hart, we were beginning to get our eyes around Devon geology and Devon vernacular and ecclesiastical architecture. Devon is rich in building stone, which is almost everywhere. Furthermore, Devon has a greater variety of building material than any other English county, and whether this is stone, slate, cob, timber or thatch, it all arises from the earth and underlying geology. The natural approach into Devon from the east follows the Permian New Red sandstone, a richly coloured band of red finishing alongside Tor Bay but with a westerly finger stretching through the vale of Crediton towards Hatherleigh. From this comes fertile, ploughed soils as well as a rich red stone contrasting spectacularly with white Beer stone when used together, as in the churches of Broadclyst, Cullompton and Tiverton.

Dartmoor dominates much of Devon. Its durable, grey granite has built such sensible structures as Widecombe and Ugborough churches, the old London Bridge (now removed to Arizona), and the pillars of Totnes butterwalk. Totnes itself is fascinating both historically and geologically. Its name says it is a strategic place. Its streets follow the outline of the Saxon burgh. You can still walk under the archway of its medieval north gate, and look down into the town as the Norman conquerors did from the ramparts of their castle. You can find slate-hung houses, a typical Devonian way of weather-proofing, also pleasing to view.

To the north of Dartmoor lie the Culm Measures, the biggest area of Devon geologically. This may be regarded as a grey, poor, damp region but it boasts the most beautiful church in the county at Chittlehampton. The cult of St Hieritha financed a tower with a riot of piercings and pinnacles against which the local brown-grey sandstone is a gentle foil. This stone seems to

attract lichens, mosses and ferns to itself in a way which fits pleasingly into the rather austere surrounding landscape.

At the end of the week, our second day on Dartmoor was under the wing of Dr Tom Greeves for whom the moor is a special area of research. We walked with him to sites of tin mining and a tin mill, east of the stannary town of Tavistock. In contrast with earlier in the week, the weather was damp, and a chilly mist hung over the landscape. It reminded us that getting tin required men and women to be tough. People worked up here in all weathers, shovelling up the alluvial tin-ore deposits and washing away the lighter soils using a diverted stream. Over perhaps five hundred years, every bit of alluvial ore has been dug away leaving the stream bed now a wide, deep scar across the moor. The mill (see photo)

was probably in use from c.1500, or earlier, until c.1700. Strange to imagine that where now heather and grasses grow was once a place of fire, of crushing hammers, of noise, smoke and polluted air, earth and water.

This account is only a fraction of what we saw and did in Devon. I haven't even mentioned Exeter, with its two thousand years of history; nor Harold's thoughts on his painstaking researches into the evolution of coastal fishing settlements. In closing I'm reminded that an army marches on its stomach and that without the team of cheerful and helpful cooks and assistants at Exeter University we couldn't have kept up our strength. They served us good and imaginative meals daily. Altogether Devon was a most enjoyable experience.

Freda Raphael



Dr Tom Greeves with some of the group examining the remains of a Dartmoor tin mill at Merrivale, near Tavistock. It is believed that this site was last in use c.1700.

MA by Individual Supervised Study

Last year we reported that a cohort of students had been recruited for this new pathway to the MA degree. It is designed to allow students who live at a distance to take the MA without attending our regular weekly classes, and it also enables local students who prefer to write a longer dissertation and take less course work to gain an MA. In the event, seven students embarked on the course beginning on 1 April. They came from Virginia, Germany, Wales, Shropshire, London, Derbyshire and Lincolnshire, and their backgrounds were as diverse as their places of origin. They included a professional bee-keeper, an academic theologian, a JP, an Antarctic explorer, and the announcer at Liverpool Street station. They began with the Devon Field Course, and having survived the rigours of trudges across Dartmoor, completed their evaluation, and then assembled in late July for five days of intensive tuition in 'Key Concepts in Local History', landscape history, two field visits and other activities. They will have been stimulated to read around these subjects, and will be assessed in late October. After that they will embark on a 35,000 word dissertation, to be completed by March 2008 (part-timers) or by March 2007 (full-timers).

We all, staff and students, approached the 'intensive week' with a little trepidation, as it was our first experience of such an event. A great deal of planning was involved, including the production of a special version of the Handbook. We were helped as ever by the Friends, who provided a meal on the first day in the common room. We were not assisted by the extreme conditions in the seminar room on the hottest days of the year, and the accommodation we booked for five of the students was not as comfortable as we expected. Nonetheless, a good spirit prevailed, and the students reacted positively to the experience. They were enthusiasts, and their sustained commitment kept them cheerful and responsive through the gruelling conditions of the heat wave. We look forward to good results from their assessments, and some really worthwhile dissertations, and we hope to recruit more students for the future. The staff had to work hard, and we are agreed that we need to assemble at least five students to justify the time and energy that we put into the course.

Chris Dyer

Book reviews

An Age of Transition? Economy and Society in England in the Later Middle Ages.

By Christopher Dyer

The following review by Margaret Yates is reprinted from the *Agricultural History Review*, vol. 54, Part 1 2006, pp. 162-3.

The chapters of this book formed the basis of the Ford lectures delivered by Christopher Dyer in the University of Oxford in Hilary Term 2001. Unbeknown to the audience at the time, sections of the chapters were being condensed into lectures at the point of delivery; a mark of Dyer's skills as an author and lecturer, and testimony to a cool head and nerves of steel. This is a book to be read by anyone with an interest in the later middle ages. The medievalist will be stimulated by the novel interpretation of the social forces for change, the modern historian will find the roots of familiar patterns, and the non-specialist will be guided through the events of this period and their significance. The language is self-consciously accessible, jargon is avoided, and technicalities are explained.

The 'age of transition' in the title provides the vehicle for an exploration of the social and economic tendencies of the period between 1250 and 1550. Dyer argues convincingly for the continuing validity of the concept of a 'transition from feudalism to capitalism' as important shifts occurred in the relationship between lords and tenants, state and subject, agriculture and industry, public and private spheres. These changes were not cyclical as English society and economy were never the same again. Many of the trends had their roots in a much earlier period, whilst there were also links with the society and economy in the centuries after 1500. He places more emphasis than is customary on the ability of medieval people, especially the peasantry, to bring about change and overcome their problems. There is a conscious move to modify the transitional belief that decisions were made by a powerful elite and change was directed from above.

The book is firmly underpinned by research into a diverse range of different manuscript sources from over thirty archives, printed sources, and a wealth of case studies and monographs. The emphasis is on sources that relate to the lower sectors of society, providing us with a perspective 'from the bottom up'. The

research is not confined to documents as it utilises evidence from archaeological investigations including a study of existing buildings. All are handled with assurance and employed as detailed examples to illustrate complex patterns and illuminate difficult conceptual themes and theoretical hypotheses.

The introduction places the book within its broad historical context and outlines the general line of argument and interpretation which are developed in the following six chapters that formed the basis of the lectures. Chapter One presents a particular view of the period which is characterised as being flexible and varied. This 'new middle ages' went through a period of commercialisation in the thirteenth century, emerged from the shocks of the fourteenth century with an enhanced capacity for change, a weakened aristocracy, a mobile and less restricted peasantry and a lively industrial and urban sector. Moreover, many features of the period, from family structures to farming methods, resembled those prevailing in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Chapter Two, 'Community and privacy', engages with the conflicting interpretations of medieval rural life as either one of individualism and private property, or of community and collective welfare and interests. Dyer argues that these could coexist, albeit with different levels of harmony, and examines the problem from very different situations around 1300 and 1500. Various themes are explored, such as the management of common-field agriculture, enclosure, the role of lords and gentry. It is argued that many of the initiatives came from the peasants themselves.

Chapter Three, 'Authority and freedom', is concerned with the impact of lordship and the state of economic productivity. It argues that aristocratic lords were not as influential as they would have wished and the actions of the gentry did not change the economy. The role of legislation and taxation in shaping economic activity is examined. The significance of the state lay in providing a stable context for economic life to prosper. The final section examines the actions of those in social groups just below the gentry and concludes that they were independent-minded, economically-active, related to their community, affluent, and played an important part in bringing about change.

Chapter Four engages with the arguments for a consumer revolution of the eighteenth

century to dispel the myth of the 'medieval void' in the history of consumption. In doing so it demonstrates that consumption changed significantly between 1375 and 1520 with new patterns emerging in the acquisition and use of material goods which had an impact on the economy. Increased expenditure on consumer goods did not prevent investment. Emphasis is placed on the actions of farmers, artisans and entrepreneurs who financed productive enterprises, peasant investment, and general expenditure on the transport infrastructure of roads and bridges to facilitate trade.

Dyer develops the theme of participation in the market in Chapter Five. He draws our attention to the apparent paradox that in a period of recession, particularly the fifteenth century, individuals may have opportunities despite contraction in the volume of economic activity. Towns retained their relative position in the commercial system, although their population fell. It was a mature urban system developing in sophistication and adjusting to new economic influences. Dyer warns that if historians are too preoccupied with the old institutions of charters and boroughs, which give the impression of decline, they will miss much of this new growth. In this chapter a key role is ascribed to farmers of the demesne for adapting and responding to the vagaries of the fifteenth-century market and making a success. Their activities were decisive in reorganising agricultural production and changing the shape of the landscape.

Chapter Six, 'Work and leisure', investigates the existence of a proletariat at the end of the middle ages, and considers the nature of work and employment at this time. The author concludes that working for wages was an integral part of the medieval economy, that there was much flexibility in the manner of employment, and neither employers nor employees came from a homogeneous class. Attitudes towards employment did change as a 'work ethic' can be identified amongst wage earners who hoped to better themselves. Concepts of leisure and social security, previously considered an early modern phenomenon, were emerging in the later middle ages.

Overall, this is a book that is enjoyable to read, scholarly in its approach, and provides a view of the later middle ages from the bottom up.

Why so few? Rebuilding Country Churches in Herefordshire, 1662-1762.

By Derryn Paul

The following is reprinted from the *Ancient Monument Society Newsletter* (Winter 2005/6).

When churches were rebuilt in Herefordshire in the eighteenth century magic could result. Think of Shobdon and Stoke Edith. Dr Paul studies these projects in authoritative detail but then goes on to ask why those examples were not followed elsewhere. And the book brings home increasingly the understanding that some eighteenth buildings, where they took place, were not ostentatiously Classical but rather copies of what came down, much more medievalizing in spirit. She has found substantial rebuilding in a number of churches so self-effacing that Pevsner did not record the reconstruction. This is true of Allensmore, Brobury, Canon Frome, Hope-under-Dinmore, Marston Stannett, St Weonards and Tifney.

A Georgian country Parson. The Rev. John Mastin of Naseby.

By Christine Vialls and Kay Collins
(Northamptonshire Record Society, 2004), xiv + 193pp. £9.50.

The following review by R.J. Moore-Colyer, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, is reprinted from *The Agricultural History Review*, vol. 53, Part 2, 2005.

This volume represents a continuation of the tradition of scholarly publishing long-established by the Northamptonshire Record Society and stands as the first of a series commemorating the life and work of the distinguished local historian Victor Hatley. It comprises the third-person memoirs of the Rev. John Mastin (1747-1829), printed from a manuscript recently deposited in the Northamptonshire Record Office, along with a republication of the first edition of Mastin's well-known *History of Naseby* which first saw the light of day in 1792. The editors have contributed a brief introduction and intelligent footnotes, while Glenn Foard offers an assessment of the value of Mastin's *History* to our current understanding of the pivotal Battle of Naseby.

Unlike most eighteenth-century clerical memorialists, Mastin was the non-graduate son of a grazier who entered the priesthood at the age of 30 after working in various counties as a secretary/servant, valuer, land-agent and farmer.

Nevertheless, he learned his letters well and was reckoned 'a good scholar' at 13 despite (or perhaps on account of) regular thrashings with the birch while suspended from a bacon hook in his father's house, this being the standard punishment for playing truant! Meanwhile he read widely, wrote music, hunted, shot, fell in and out of love and discovered the pleasures of the alehouse, 'which he afterwards regretted'. By his early twenties Mastin was a land-agent in Hertfordshire in vigorous pursuit of a wife. Having played the field with some gusto he eventually settled on a young heiress of 16 and, in the face of bitter opposition from her parents, eloped with her to Gretna Green, for good measure taking along his father as a witness to the wedding. Once his wife came of age, Mastin was able to get hold of her money and to speculate in the land market, concurrently studying Latin, Greek and Hebrew in preparation for holy orders. Meanwhile he lost little time in perpetuating the Mastins and his wife (stoically, no doubt) had borne him seven children before her twenty-fifth birthday. Ordained in 1777, Mastin became vicar of Naseby in 1783, held a number of other curacies and continued to enjoy income from both his own small landholdings and as agent for others. Although he writes sparingly of spiritual matters, limiting himself to commenting upon where and when he conducted divine services, he was probably a pretty rotten parish priest. What with field sports, *fête-champêtres* with the gentry, visiting friends, taking the waters at Buxton, attending the Lord Mayor's Feast at the Guildhall in 1820 (in what capacity?), recovering from broken bones sustained in the hunting field, writing essays for the Board of Agriculture, and farming his glebe, there could have been little time left for pastoral duties.

The tone of Mastin's memoirs are characteristic of their time in the sense that he rarely gives way to any sort of emotion. Typically, when he lost both his wife and his brother on the same day in 1811, he calmly reflected that 'these were events hard to be borne by those not perfectly resigned to the will of God'. The litany of family deaths was probably of less concern to Mastin than the repeated visitations of gout which he suffered as the years wore on. On Easter Sunday, 1814 he collapsed with gout and had to be carried from Naseby church only to recover to take part in the 'fêtes and great rejoicing' celebrating the overthrow of Bonaparte the following month. It is perhaps

typical of a man too stingy to stump up two guineas annually following his election to the society of Antiquaries that he should note sniffily after the village party that 'surely was never money spent more imprudently than such large sums were in pomp, show and extravagant vanity'.

Read alongside the *History of Naseby* with its evocation of the local landscape, agricultural practices and customs, Mastin's memoirs represent a useful addition to the corpus of contemporary descriptions of eighteenth-century rural England. The memoirs, occasionally amusing and always informative, embrace both local and national politics, the contemporary land market and its financing, farming, racing, humpkicking, and, in particular, the complexities of clerical pluralism. *The History*, if by now of peripheral value to students of the Civil Wars, is replete with detailed descriptions of the landscape over which the Battle of Naseby itself was fought. It also offers comments on the state

of the rural economy in Mastin's time, notably the problems of inflation and the advance in poor rates arising from the decline in cottage-based weaving. Although a sturdy promoter of enclosure against the opposition of locals 'blind to their own interests' Mastin makes the interesting observation that poor rates in the 1820s were increasing both in parishes in the process of enclosure and those remaining in open field. Rarely judgemental and always to the point, Mastin's writings are characterized by the sort of common sense and eye for detail which only a sound practical grounding in matters of the land allows. He has been well-served by his editors who have resisted any temptation to modernise the text of *The History* and have confined their editing of the memoirs to the addition of paragraph breaks and sub-headings along with apposite and well-constructed footnotes. If this is a taster for the Hatley Memorial series there is every reason to look forward to future volumes.



MA course field trip to Sudbury, Derbyshire – May 13 2006.
Group outside Sudbury church.
Photo by Keith Snell

Seminar Programme 2006-7

All seminars are held on Thursdays at 2.15pm in the Seminar Room of No 1 Salisbury Road. Please phone 0116-252-2762 to reserve a place. You are invited to tea in the Common Room afterwards.

2006

- Thurs 5 October** **David Hey** (University of Sheffield)
'The landscape history of the grouse moors of the Peak District'.
- Thurs 19 October** **Craig Taylor** (The Guardian)
'Oral history fieldwork, especially in an English village: approaches and tips'.
- Thurs 2 November** **Angela McShane-Jones** (Oxford Brookes University)
'Political and material cultures of drinking in the West Country'.
- Thurs 16 November** **Humphrey Southall** (University of Portsmouth)
'Computerising the districts and parishes of Britain, 1801-2001: what goes on inside 'Vision of Britain'.
- Thurs 30 November** **Naomi Sykes** (University of Nottingham)
'Hunting and poaching in the medieval landscape: the evidence from animal bones'.

2007

- Thurs 18 January** **Nick Higham** (University of Manchester)
'Separating out the kingdoms of pre-Viking England: the search for Northumbria's southern frontier'.
- Thurs 1 February** **Ian Waltes** (University of Lincoln)
'Stretched far away in every direction': artistic depictions of open fields and commons, c. 1730-1850'.
- Thurs 15 February** **Judith Spicksley** (University of Cambridge)
'The "curious old diary of an elderly lady": Joyce Jeffreys, celibacy and money-lending in seventeenth-century Hereford'.
- Thurs 1 March** **Angie Negrine** (University of Leicester)
'Practitioners and paupers: Leicester's Poor Law medical services, 1867-1930'.
- Thurs 15 March** **Adam Longcroft** (University of East Anglia)
'The New Buckenham Project, Norfolk: new light on urban housing'.

Recently Completed Thesis

Celia Cordle

'Hop Cultivation and Marketing: Wealden Kent and Southwark, 1744-2000'.

This thesis endeavoured to expand understanding of the place of hop cultivation and marketing in the lives of people engaged in them. This entailed looking at these activities in the context of where and when they took place, by using oral history, original records, relevant literature and more peripheral sources to obtain as full a picture as possible.

Land structure, early settlement and perceptions of possibilities affected the early location and build-up of hop cultivation and marketing.

The farming chapters looked at changes over time, and at such innovations as wirework, new fertilizers, hop picking machinery, and research on disease-resistant varieties of hops, and on dwarf hops and their harvesting. They included wider matters like the effects of war, living and working conditions, drink and the temperance movement, improved roads, and the advent of rail, as well as local detail.

Hop factors and merchants were middle men in the transfer of hops from grower to brewer. Conflicts of interest and day-to-day working practices were examined, and the clustering of the hop trade in the Borough, and the buildings where the work was done, were considered. Changes to marketing and increased competition after Britain's entry to the European Economic Community affected growers and traders.

Tithe and hop duty were long-resented impositions. The process of tithe commutation in some Wealden parishes was followed, and repeal of hop duty was seen through the eyes of John Nash, a long-time worker in the cause.

MA Dissertations 2003-4.

Audrey Day

'Rutland Churches: location, relationships and change'.

The small rural county of Rutland has no cathedral, city, or other large town and no extensive monastic ruins. It consists of two small market towns and a large number of villages, usually around three to five miles apart, often

with churches that have prominent spires, which, particularly in the west of the county, mainly nestle alongside streams or watercourses or stand proud on a ridge. It was felt it would be of interest and value to carry out an (albeit superficial) investigation into the background and development of the county in respect of its parish churches and any other identified ancient religious sites in order to try to build up a basic understanding of the relationship between religion and *pays* in the county, and the way in which the many parish churches had developed, as well as to discover the extent to which villages and their churches had declined.

Recorded material was studied, where possible from original sources, and much use was made of maps, both ancient and current. Particular emphasis was placed on visits to all extant churches and other identified religious sites within the county.

Sybil Carter

'Leicestershire Mercers 1660-1710'.

The end of war in Europe and the restoration of the monarchy coincided with an increase in road traffic, both stage wagons and stage coaches. These carrier wagons distributed consumer goods from the entrepôt of London - the major English port for imported goods. Imports so often equated to luxuries; particularly from the Levant, India and the Spice Islands. Oils and fruit from the Mediterranean countries had become routine by the date of this study period. Increasingly, cargoes of tobacco and sugar were arriving from the Americas and linen cloth from Germany and the Low Countries flooded the country. The ultimate destinations of these goods in Leicestershire were the market towns and the mercers' shops.

The aim of this study is to consider how these mercers were serving their county by exploring their trading bases, social position, business practice and their merchandise.

A survey of the trade routes into the county, and each mercer's location on the internal road system is mapped, showing how the periodic nature of the markets allowed them to reach out to the people and extend their customer base. Though the Leicester mercers were no Whittingtons or Greshams, their place in society, their friends and associates, and the degree of comfort in which they lived is explored through probate wills and inventories and the Leicester Borough records. Their prosperity is looked at in

the light of investments and expansion, and a comparison made with the parish of Menham using probate records. Finally the mercers' business methods are questioned, their shop goods analysed, and interesting characters revealed.

The world of seventeenth-century shopping in the form of silk, woollen, cotton and linen fabrics, silver and gold fashion accessories, spices, and the recently recognised addictive sugars and tobaccos, were the stuff on which mercers' profits were built. Their merchandise catered for the disposable income of the lower gentry and the ordinary man in the street and their profits raised them to an elevated position in society.

Anthony Haseldine

'Milling: hydro-power in Domesday Lincolnshire'.

Lincolnshire lies in an isolated position to the east of the midland shires, yet in the Domesday survey its power milling capacity was one of the highest in the country. Devon, a county of similar size and position on the periphery of Wessex, had only 98 mills at Domesday compared to Lincolnshire's 380 mills. When juxtaposed, the character of these two counties suggests some interesting anomalies with regard to their suitability for power milling.

The study examines various aspects of milling in Lincolnshire. The county's experience is put into context by comparing it with Devon in particular, but other areas are also looked at briefly. Considerable use was made of the Domesday Book as the main primary source. This was supported by cartographic and archaeological sources plus an element of fieldwork.

Research concentrated on three areas: topography, development and ownership. It identified factors that may have contributed to the prolific number of mills in Lincolnshire. The evidence suggests the more gentle gradients and the good quality arable land, very often reclaimed, absorbed a continually rising population. The rivers were generally smaller, shorter in length and with little fall: they were reduced in power compared to their Devon counterparts. Therefore, a greater number of mills was necessary to achieve the same level of performance. There was also a technological disadvantage in using water of a low volume and height as it was unable to operate the more productive milling machinery.

The study further concludes that the

feudal system and the manorial mill were important influences that generated an element of competition. Initially the watermill was considered more of a labour saving device than qualifying as an asset worthy of investment for a return under a seigniorial lord.

Nathan Murphy

'Devon's supply of indentured servants 1655-1660'.

During the seventeenth century, England populated its American colonies with several types of people. Indentured servants - people too poor to afford passage across the ocean - formed the most numerous group. They sold themselves as servant labourers for four to five years in sugar and tobacco plantations in order to reach the New World. Who were these people? What motivated them to voyage to America as bondsmen?

This study seeks to answer these questions for a group of seventy emigrant servants from Devon who left from Bristol, destined for Virginia and Barbados, between 1655 and 1660. A register called 'Servants to foreign plantations,' was used to identify these emigrants. Most were young single males who voyaged solo; they described themselves as tradesmen and yeomen from all over Devon, with concentrations in East Devon, North Devon, and along the South Devon coast. Half came from Exeter, ports, and market towns, while the other half claimed rural backgrounds. Parish registers, hearth tax returns, protestation returns, probate records, lay subsidies, muster rolls, and surveys of mariners provided additional details about the social origins of twenty of these emigrants. The remainder were not born where they ultimately resided and their geographical mobility made them difficult to track in extant sources. The twenty included children, orphans, a widower (or abandoner), and twelve eldest sons.

Many traditional reasons explaining why English people emigrated in the 1650s do not apply locally to Devon's indentured servants. Enclosure occurred centuries prior to their departures. Over half were not second sons. Discontented nonconformist congregations did not emigrate as groups. Plagues were not spreading through the Southwest. Rising populations did not lead to starvation. On the other hand, bad harvests were rampant, militia garrisoned Devon's towns, grain prices, taxes and rents were high, and according to contemporary accounts, industries were depressed.

Joanne Reed

'The foundation of Mount St Bernard Abbey and its effect on the secular community'

The foundation of a Cistercian community amidst the wild and rocky landscape of Charnwood Forest at a time of intense religious controversy was not without opposition. This work attempts to determine the effect that Mount Saint Bernard Abbey had on the local and secular community in a predominantly Protestant area of Leicestershire. Principal sources include letters and record books at the abbey archives, published communications to the inhabitants of Whitwick, and articles from local newspapers. The Catholic gentry played an important role in the Catholic Revival in Leicestershire, and the establishment of the first Cistercian monastery in the county since the dissolution of Garendon Abbey in 1536 aided this process. Following its successful foundation, the monks of Mount Saint Bernard provided corporal and spiritual support to the local community. They acted as missionaries in the parish of Whitwick, provided relief to the poor, and provided a reformatory school for juvenile offenders from Midland and Northern counties. Designed and built during the Gothic Revival, Mount Saint Bernard Abbey also captured nineteenth century imagination and became a focus for those with an interest in architecture or a curiosity about religious life and for many others from artistic, literary and religious circles. In a society based on religious foundations, Mount Saint Bernard Abbey contributed extensively to the local community as well as providing a place of worship for those seeking to re-establish the monastic way of life in England.

Matthew Smith

'New churches, rebuilding and restoration and their relationship to economy and landownership in nineteenth-century Leicestershire'

This study aims to explore the social and economic basis of the church building and restoration activity that was so widespread in Leicestershire during the nineteenth century. The evidence relating to the church restoration and rebuilding activity is derived from C.N. Wright's *Directory of Leicestershire 1894* and assessed in relation to population and employment statistics drawn from the 1851 Census and the Abstract of Answers and Returns respectively. The county's social structure is explored in terms of landownership patterns and by reference to J.M. Wilson's *Imperial Gazetteer 1874*.

Church building activity for the period 1801 to 1850 is restricted to the growing manufacturing parishes of the western half of the county and therefore reveals a positive link between this activity, the beginnings of industrialisation in the county and economic growth. Church restoration and rebuilding in the county was most intense in the second half of the century when the rural population was shifting from village to town, suggesting activity here was less a product of economic prosperity and motivated more by local trends and the influence of ecclesiology. The influence of the latter is supported by evidence which reveals a high level of chancel restoration and rebuilding for this period.

Population growth and economics did have some effect, however, as the most expensive schemes were carried out primarily in parishes where manufacturing was the main form of employment and where population had increased between 1851 and 1891. The data on landownership reveals a county split evenly between open parishes dominated by only a handful of landowners on one hand and closed parishes divided between many landowners on the other. Statistical analysis and study of contemporary parish records reveals it was the latter category of parish, typically associated with nonconformity and some degree of manufacturing, that was more closely correlated with high spending on church restoration and rebuilding than the former. Contemporary records do show, however, that the distinction in social and political terms between the two forms of parish was in fact not as defined as one might expect.

Kim Taylor-Moore

'The comparative development of Aylesbury and Buckingham up to c.1550'

Aylesbury has been the county town of Buckinghamshire since 1849 when it officially took over the position from Buckingham. This represented the culmination of several centuries of dispute between them, which seemed to begin around the middle of the sixteenth century. There is no evidence that the county functions, and particularly the holding of the assizes, which was the most lucrative, had ever been based solely, or even mainly, in Buckingham and the aim of this study is to investigate the development of the two towns up to about 1550 to determine the real

reasons behind Buckingham's increasingly desperate attempts to secure the assizes for the town. It begins by considering the possible origins of the towns using sources such as hagiography, archaeological reports, topography and Domesday Book, before going on to look at why Buckingham was originally chosen as the county town. The subsequent development of each town is then traced as far as possible through secondary sources, tax records and original documents such as bailiffs' accounts, rentals and deeds.

The study concludes that Buckingham never had the attributes to become as successful a town as Aylesbury, and had only become county town due to the strategic importance that its location briefly held at the time the shires were being defined. By the middle of the sixteenth century Buckingham had suffered a long period of economic decline, a fire had necessitated the removal of the summer assize to Aylesbury, and with the Reformation it lost one of its last remaining sources of income, that arising from the pilgrim trade. There is no evidence of similar depression in Aylesbury and it is concluded that it was differing economic circumstances that led to the apparent loss of status becoming the focus for the discontent of the people of Buckingham.



News of former students

Dr Andrew Jackson, currently a Teaching Fellow in the School of Education and Lifelong Learning, University of Exeter, has become the Hon. Editor of *The Devon Historian*, the journal of the Devon History Society. He welcomes the submission of appropriate articles, and can be contacted at A.F.H.Jackson@exeter.ac.uk.

Deborah Hayter has provided the following information:

The Cartwright Archive – Local Archive, National Importance

The owner of the Cartwright Archive, an exceptionally fine collection of family and estate papers, has decided to sell the whole and has agreed a deal with an un-named American Institution. The archive has been in the Northamptonshire Record Office since the 1960s, but now the Record Office is faced with the challenge of raising £300,000 to match the agreed price.

The archive contains thousands of documents dating from the 13th to the 20th century, which have provided rich pickings for local historians over the last forty years. The family owned large estates in South Northamptonshire and North Oxfordshire, and the records reveal the history of these lands and the lives of all those living in the communities they dominated. There is also much of national and political interest, as the Cartwrights were public figures too, some sitting in Parliament as Knights of the Shire for 200 years, some with careers as diplomats and soldiers.

Local historians will all know how important such collections are for the study of the changing patterns of farming and community life. This archive has also been used by family historians, and by historians of landscape and of political events. At the moment it is freely available for anyone to consult, but if it is sold to America an important part of our cultural heritage will no longer be available to us.

A charitable trust has been set up to help save the archive, headed by the Lord Lieutenant of Northamptonshire, with the aim of raising £50,000 towards the purchase and support of the archive. It is hoped to be able to improve the catalogue and eventually to digitise it, facilitating access to the documents. But the archive has to be saved first, and the deadline is the end of the year.



The old Occasional Papers go to Hertfordshire

The 'Occasional Papers' of the Department of English Local History were started by Herbert Finberg in 1952. They were described by Maurice Beresford, in a review as 'the glory of Leicester University Press' and in Finberg's *Times* obituary as his 'brilliant series'. One can see why, for many of them introduced themes and methods which were new when they appeared, and which have been followed up and imitated in much subsequent work. Such was Alan Everitt's monograph on Kent in the Civil War, Finberg's own on continuity between Roman and Saxon settlement in the Cotswolds, David Hey's on rural by-employment, Charles Phythian-Adams' on early estates and their fission, Christopher Dyer's on the parish of Hanbury and Keith Soell's on the 1851 religious census. Many of the Occasional Papers did not sell well, for they were short in length - around 15-20,000 words or even fewer - and booksellers despaired of the fact that they had no spine, which meant they did not display well.

A new, more substantial, series started in 2001, but the publisher ceased operations immediately after publication of the first volume - my monograph called *The Evolution of the Fishing Village* - and the series lapsed until its adoption by the University of Hertfordshire Press with the title of *Explorations in Local and Regional History*. The series will have three distinctive characteristics. First, it will be prepared to publish work on novel themes and to tackle fresh subjects - perhaps even unusual ones. It is hoped that it will serve to open up new approaches, prompt the analysis of new sources or types of source, and foster new methodologies. This is not to suggest that more traditional scholarship in local and regional history will be unrepresented. The publishers also seek to offer an outlet for work of distinction that might be difficult to place elsewhere.

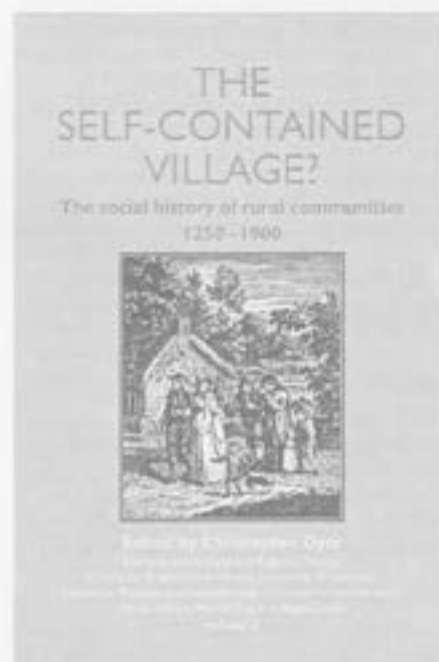
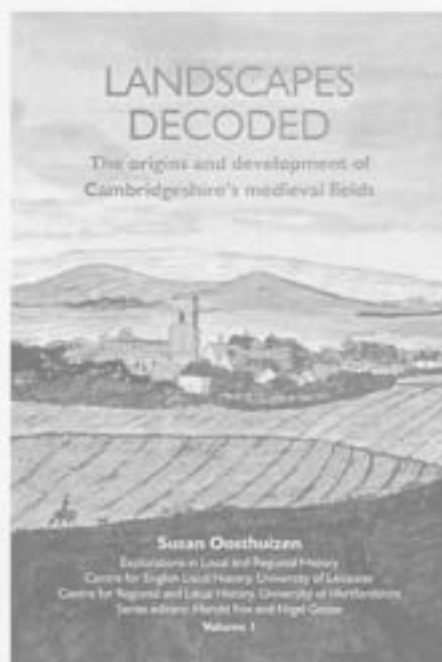
The second feature of the new series will be the intention to publish mid-length studies, generally within the range of 40,000 to 60,000 words. Such studies are hard to place with existing publishers, for while there are current series that cater for mid-length overviews of particular historiographical topics or themes, there is none as far as I know which offers similar outlets for original research. *Explorations*, therefore, intends to fill the publishing vacuum between research articles and full-length books.

Thirdly, while it is expected that this series will become required reading for both academics and students, I hope that it will be of interest and relevance to local historians operating outside an institutional framework. To this end, the price of each volume will be set so that individuals, and not only university libraries, can generally afford. Local and regional history is a subject taught at many levels, from schools to universities. As well as undergraduate modules, there are now numerous MA courses in local history, and a high percentage of PhD theses on English social and economic history tackle themes at a local level. Bookshops without a 'local interest' section where history looms large are now rare and history features ever more prominently in other media such as television and radio, testifying to the vitality of research and writing outside the universities, as well as to the sustained growth of popular interest. It is hoped that *Explorations in Local and Regional History* will make a contribution to the continuing efflorescence of our subject.

University of Hertfordshire Press prides itself on being a quick mover. The first two volumes in the series were essentially ready for the press at the end of last summer and will be published in September and October this year. One is the result of a conference held in the Centre recently - *The Self-contained Village? The Social History of Rural Communities, 1250-1900*, edited by Christopher Dyer. The other is Susan Oosthuizen's *Landscapes Decoded: the Origins and Development of Cambridgeshire's Medieval Fields*. Both will carry, at the end, a list of the old 'Occasional Papers', to prove the pedigree.

For me this has been a long personal journey. It began when I first saw the 'Occasional Papers' shelved together in a Cambridge library. That was in 1966. Then, about ten years later, I came to the Department as Research Fellow in Topography. About ten years after that, I edited the last volumes in the old series and fought, without success, for its survival. It gives me great personal satisfaction, therefore, to say that the proofs of the first two new 'Explorations' are on my desk as I write this. I look forward to the sigh of relief - and a glass of red wine - when the proof-reading is over.

Harold Fox



Price of each volume £14.99.
 Volumes may be ordered direct from Hertfordshire Press
 at the special price of £12.00 each + p&p.
 Order from Tel: 01707-284654 or e-mail: uhpress@herts.ac.uk
 When ordering direct please refer to this Newsletter.

EVENTS SPONSORED BY THE FRIENDS Diary Dates

Saturday 18th November 2006

Guided tour of Victoria Park, London Road and New Walk, Leicester. Meet at Marc Fitch House, 5 Salisbury Road 9.30am for 10.00am start, ending at 12.30pm. For those who are interested a visit to St Bartholomew's Church, Foston, has been arranged for the afternoon.

Thursday 16th November 2006.

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

April in Oxford

It is hoped to arrange a study weekend, based in Oxford, during April 2007. Details to follow.

Hoskins Day Lecture 2007.

Details have still to be finalised and members will be advised as soon as available.

Friends' publications

David Holmes

Ed. *Friends of the Centre of English Local History Newsletter* (2005), 46 pp.

Robert Lee *Unquiet Country: Voices of the Rural Poor, 1820-1880* (Windgather Press, 2005)

Friends' Papers

The following Papers are still in print and available for purchase. Please send enquiries to: Publications Sales, Friends of ELH, 5 Salisbury Rd., Leicester, LE1 7QR.

No.3, Amanda Flather *The Politics of Place: a study of Church Seating in Essex, 1580-1640*. £6.00 + p&p.

No.4, Marion Aldis and Pam Inder, *John Sneyd's Census of Ipstones*. £6.00 + p&p.

No.5, Barrie Trinder, *The Market Town Lodging House*. £7.50 + p&p.

No.6, Mandy deBelin, *Mapping Skills Tutorial*. Price includes disk.

£6.00 + p&p.

No.7, Geoff Wolfe, *Keeping the Peace: Warwickshire, 1630-1700*. £6.00 + p&p.

No.8, Pam Fisher, *An object of Ambition? The Office and Role of the Coroner in Two Midland Counties, 1751-1888*. £6.00 + p&p.

No. 9, S. Pinches, M. Whalley & D. Postles (eds), *The Market Place and the Place of the Market*.

£6.00 + p&p.

No. 10, Derryan Paul, *Why so Few? Rebuilding Country Churches in Herefordshire, 1662-1762*.

£6.00 + p&p.

'Nine Days that Shook Mansfield'

'It was a blazing hot day'. Given the weather we have had this summer, that might sound familiar, but this was Sunday 2nd May, 1926 and the scene was a packed May Day demonstration in Mansfield. Feelings were running high as the miners were facing the twin threat of a reduction in wages and an extension to their working hours. Two days later the general strike was underway. It was a tense and crucial period in the history of this Nottinghamshire mining town.

Barry Johnson, the son of a miner, has written a short, but well researched and interesting book about the general strike in the Mansfield area. Drawing on contemporary newspaper reports and original documents, it is an excellent example of what can be achieved using sources that are often, sadly, overlooked or ignored by historians. *Nine Days that Shook Mansfield* is A5 size, with 77 pages, including a map and 4 photographs, and costs £4.99 if collected from the centre, or £5.80 including UK P&P. Many of you will know Barry, who completed his MA at the Centre in 1999 and has been a stalwart supporter of the Friends since that time. He has kindly agreed a profit-share arrangement with the Friends, so that we benefit to the tune of £1.66 from every copy we sell. If you wish to purchase a copy, please make your cheque out to Friends of the Centre for English Local History, and send it to the Friends at 5 Salisbury Road, Leicester, LE1 7QR, marked Publications sales.

Annual general meeting

Thursday 3rd November 2005

The following is an abbreviated report of the Annual General Meeting. The meeting commenced at 4.15 p.m. with 21 members present. Apologies were received from seven members.

The Minutes of the previous AGM were accepted without comment. There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

The Chairman, Pam Fisher, reported that membership had remained steady with 132 single and 54 joint subscriptions. The number of members who have ticked the Gift Aid box has increased. She urged all members, who are tax payers, to do so as it helps The Friends, costs the individual nothing, but brings in additional income. There has been an increase in the number of people paying subscriptions by direct debit. She thanked Mandy for her efforts in maintaining the records.

A number of events were held during the year, including a study weekend in King's Lynn and a day visit to Bakewell. Dr Tom Williamson gave the Hoskins Lecture.

The *Newsletter*, published in time for the start of the new academic year, was a bumper issue as it included a lengthy report on the Landscape Conference, held in July, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the publication of Hoskins' *The Making of the English Landscape*. The Friends have also published one new book this

year, by Derryan Paul, *Why so Few? Rebuilding Country Churches in Herefordshire, 1662-1762*. Copies are available at £6 plus p&p.

The Friends have continued to provide financial support, both for the students of the Centre and for the Centre itself. Student support was at a similar level to the previous year, with £2,343 awarded. We also supplied £200 initial support towards publicity for the Hoskins conference, which was subsequently refunded.

The treasurer reported a successful year, with income at £5,049.57 compared to £3,268.12 the previous year, while expenses had fallen to £3,170.20. This left a profit of £1,879.37 for the year compared with a loss of £872.75 last time. Funds held are valued at £22,924.93. The accounts have been examined by an independent examiner. The accounts were approved.

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

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

ACCOUNTS

For year ending 30th Sept. 2005

INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
Subscriptions	£1,370.00	Expenses	£ 219.50
Donations	£ 264.70	Student support	£2,343.80
Book sales	£ 830.60	Grants	Nil
Publications	£ 617.23	Hoskins lecture	£ 182.55
Dividends/Interest	£ 639.41	Newsletter	£ 372.35
Events	£ 920.04	Miscellaneous	£ 52.00
Inland revenue	£ 207.59		
Grant refund	<u>£ 200.00</u>		
TOTAL	£5,049.57		£3,170.20
Profit on the year	£1,879.37		
ASSETS			
Balance at CAF Gold & Nat West a/c		£ 7,924.93	
Investments at cost		<u>£15,000.00</u>	
TOTAL		£22,924.93	

Seventeenth Hoskins Lecture

PLACE-NAMES AND LANDSCAPES

The Hoskins Lecture was given this year on 3rd June by Dr Margaret Gelling. Introducing the speaker, our chairman, Pam Fisher, noted that Dr Gelling was well-known to many past and present members of the Centre either personally or through her important published work, especially her seminal book *Signposts to the Past* (1978) and more recently *The Landscape of Place-names* (2000).

Dr Gelling commenced by recalling the time, c.1980, when she realised that if one intended to write about a place with a name such as Green Valley or Green Hill, it might be a good idea to visit the place concerned in order to see what it actually looked like and how it fitted in with its surroundings in the landscape. From this, she realised that it would be necessary to make a systematic record of settlements that owe their name to some landscape feature. From this, she has been able to build up a more detailed understanding of the Anglo-Saxon method of naming settlements in relation to the landscape. She felt that previous scholars had not studied the Anglo-Saxon approach in sufficient depth.

Following extensive study of the subject, she now considers that the Anglo-Saxons consciously developed a method of naming topographical features in such a way that it would be possible for travellers to travel the length and breadth of the country using features in the landscape as markers. It can be shown that similar topographical features were given similar names, irrespective of where they were in the country. The key to this study is the great variety of names used by the Anglo-Saxons to describe different types of hill or valley and so enabled a traveller to distinguish one type of hill from another. Dr Gelling cautioned the audience against interpreting place-names from the modern spelling.

To illustrate her argument, Dr Gelling showed by the use of slides how this was achieved. But it was at this stage that technology sought to limit the power of human endeavour by refusing to run one set of slides. It had been her intention to show two slides simultaneously of similar landscape features with a common place-name origin, but in different parts of the country. Only one set of slides could be shown, but she took this limitation in her stride and was able to

describe the missing slides in such a way that the audience could easily follow the argument that was being made.

The Anglo-Saxons used a variety of words to describe the different types of hill, 'dun', 'beorg', 'crug' etc. Settlement names derived from 'dun' tend to be located in areas lying between 200 and 500 feet. The hill itself is likely to be low, with a fairly extensive, level summit, that could be easily settled. 'Dun' sites are not spectacular but fit in with a generally lowland landscape.

Another example of a low hill in this type of landscape is represented by names such as Garsington or Garsendun, meaning a grassy hill. Other place-names of this order include Steeple Claydon (Bucks), Shottesdon (Salop), Farringdon (Berks).

Place-names originating from 'beorg' are generally rounded hills, often having a single farm or church on the top. Inkberrow (Wores) is an example of a church on a hill. In Lancashire and Yorkshire, the equivalent types of name are Langber or Greenber. The Anglian 'berg' provides names such as Lackbrough.

Yet another word for hill comes from the Welsh word 'crugg' and refers to an isolated spikey hill that makes a visual impact. Place-names using this base may be found as far away as Cricbarrow hill near Taunton, Cruc hill near Droitwich, Creech on the Isle of Purbeck or Caeorny in Montgomeryshire. Other Anglo-Saxon words describe hills with a range of characteristics, such as 'clif', a steeply sloped hill, 'helde', a gentle slope, or 'boh', a heel or spur of land.

Valleys were the other feature discussed by Dr Gelling as these were features in the landscape that enabled a traveller to find his way round the country. In today's world we do not analyse the innumerable types of valley in the same way that our forbears did. For example, 'denu', used in place-names denotes a long valley, usually curving, with a gentle gradient suitable for a road. The Old Norse word 'dale' is similar in meaning, but the area tends to be more rugged and so 'dales' are generally more rugged than 'deans'.

'Camb' valleys, most commonly found in the south west of the country, are on the scarp face of a hill and are enclosed on three sides. They tended to remain small settlements because of the physical difficulty in expanding. The names of another group of settlements originate from the Anglo-Saxon 'hop', which meant a

secret, secluded valley. Ratlinghope (Salop) is a good example of such a settlement. Other types of lesser valley features were mentioned and Dr Gelling concluded with the example of 'coff' meaning a pass, best illustrated by the location of Corfe Castle in Dorset.

Thanking Dr Gelling for a most interesting talk, Dr Sylvia Pinches said that she would now look on a journey down the motorway past Taunton with the understanding of an Anglo-Saxon.

Autumn outing to Bakewell

This year's autumn outing brought some 25 members to the delightful Derbyshire town of Bakewell. Having gathered on a warm, if not particularly sunny day, at the Medway Centre for registration and coffee, we were introduced to our guide for the day, Mr Jan Stetka, Chairman of Bakewell Historical Society.

As with most towns and villages, Bakewell has been influenced by its geology. The town sits beside the river Wye in a wide river plain, which is up to a mile wide below the town. The Wye is a tributary of the Derwent. A gritstone ridge lies to the east of the town while, to the west, the high ground consists of limestone. The two stones are used for all local buildings, gritstone for those of better quality and limestone for the lesser buildings and stone walls. Originally the river Derwent flowed through Bakewell, but following the retreat of the glaciers at the end of the ice-age, the line of the Derwent moved east of the gritstone ridge. An unusual feature is the proximity of hot and cold springs in the area, with the cold springs being at a higher level than the warm. This feature was known by the Romans, who built baths in the vicinity. It also helped to make the local pasture of the highest quality and very productive, which was another reason to attract people to inhabit the valley. Some 1200 families are thought to have lived in the area.

Bakewell came under Dane law in the eighth century and in 924AD was incorporated as a burgh, the last to be created. Jan explained that he has spent much time trying to establish where the burgh was located. A motte and bailey was built on the high ground to the north-east of the town below the iron age fort. He believes he has now established that the burgh was located on a large area of ground near the flood plain south of the

present town. The burgh had a particular significance in Anglo-Saxon times because of its position in the centre of the country, being where the spheres of influence of Norse, Dane and Saxon converged. Roman roads pass by as do older trackways.

Since the eighteenth century the economic and cultural life of the town has been dominated by the two major landowners in the area, The Dukes of Devonshire at Chatsworth and the Dukes of Rutland of Haddon Hall.

Having set the scene for the day, the first visit was to the church. Construction of All Saints church commenced in 1110, replacing an earlier Saxon structure, and like most churches was added to and altered over the centuries. The church also felt the hand of Victorian improvers in 1830 and again between 1841 and 1852. It was during the second bout of restoration that a number of Anglo-Saxon sepulchral remains were found under the floor. There are 57 separate remnants that form the largest collection of Saxon remains in any church and are now located in the porch. Also in the porch are to be seen a large collection of mainly medieval stone coffin lids.

Apart from the remains in the porch, there are two Saxon crosses in the churchyard. The main structure, eight feet high, near the east wall of the south transept, is thought to be eighth century. Jan went into some detail about the significance of the cross and its importance in the transition from pagan belief to Christianity. Jan explained the symbolism of the designs that show how Christianity will overcome Paganism.

The next visit was to Bakewell museum, which is housed in the Old House, the oldest building in the town, the earliest parts of which date back to the 1530s. Jan provided some information on the various occupants of the building over the centuries, including a period when it was owned by Arkwright to house some of the workers from his second mill, situated on the edge of the town. He explained how the building had fallen into disrepair during the first half of the twentieth century and was being demolished in the 1940s when it was noticed that the building was much older than had been appreciated. As a result, the building was gifted by the town council to the Bakewell Historical Society, who have restored it over the last 50 years so that it now forms a wonderful local museum and also acts as the society's headquarters. Friends were impressed at the

success the society has achieved in restoring the building and creating such a good museum.

After an excellent lunch, which included Bakewell pudding, Jan led us on a tour of the town. Rather than try to cover everything, he concentrated on a few features. The first was Bath House, which as the name infers, was the original site of the town baths when attempts were made to turn Bakewell into a spa town. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the house was owned by White Watson, perhaps Bakewell's most illustrious citizen. Watson, a geologist, had amassed a large collection of local geological specimens, which now form part of the museum's collection. The fate of Bakewell as a spa town was sealed when Buxton rebuilt its baths in 1697. William Arkwright, better known for his mill at Croenford, built a second mill beside the Wye at Bakewell. A number of the houses that Arkwright built to house his workers still exist

and serve to show how the original road was realigned by the turnpike trust to speed traffic through the town.

After tea in the Medway Centre, some of the Friends were keen to have a look at the open-field system that still exists near the church. The landscape consisted of disused trackways, enclosed villages, ridge and furrow (only obvious to the discerning eye) and evidence of tracks leading to long-disused pastures on the moors (dredging up memories for those who had completed a field course).

Our thanks must go to Jan Stetka, our indefatigable host and guide, Maggie Whalley and Frank Galbraith who organised the visit and the members of Grindleford W.I. who gave up their time to feed and water us so excellently when required.

Visit to Bakewell



Above: Bakewell's oldest house, now the local museum.

Right: Jan Stetka explains symbols of a Saxon cross.



Spring Conference - 'Travelling Through Time'

This year the day conference organised by The Friends of the Centre for Local History took for a theme the title 'Travelling Through Time'. Speakers were encouraged to interpret the theme as broadly as they wished. Some 75 people, coming from as far afield as York and London, were tempted by the enigmatic titles of the papers that were listed. In fact, so many people indicated their intention to attend, that no room in the Centre was large enough to hold everyone. The conference was therefore transferred to the School of Education, to whom we offer our thanks.

Dr Graham Jones got us off to an excellent start with a paper titled 'To Heaven in a Barrow: Modes of Pilgrimage'. Graham pointed out that pilgrims have travelled to their chosen site since the fourth or fifth centuries, often in conditions of great discomfort. Personal physical and mental discomfort has sometimes been a necessary part of the pilgrimage as a means of experiencing the pain of Christ. To climb Croagh Patrick or travel the final miles to Santiago de Compostela on one's knees with many others was a shared experience that could bring mortal man nearer to God. Locality is at the centre of pilgrimage. Some sites have evolved to be ones of mass pilgrimage while others may be special or private.

Graham then went on to consider St Michael in some more detail. St Michael is often depicted as a hill top personage; seventeenth-century recusants climbed Skirrid to reach St Michael's chapel. Other hill top connections are to be found at St Michael's Mount, Mont St Michel and Mount Gargano. Michael was also thought to have power over water. Examples include Michael sites at Lichfield and Coventry that both overlook water pools. St Michael's Church, Whitwell near Oakham, has drainage holes in the pillars, suggesting it was built over a spring. Graham noted that Michael was the conductor of souls from life to death, which would explain the connection to water.

Another aspect of pilgrimage concerns the routes taken. Some churches were built beside ancient track ways. These could become pilgrimage routes. In time, a complete lattice work of pilgrimage routes was in existence all over Britain and throughout Europe.

The second speaker, Richard Stone, is a current MA student at the Centre. Having already

written six books about the river Trent, it was natural that he should take as his title 'Transport on the Trent through Time'. The Trent must have been used from the very earliest of times as Richard referred to the log boat from the Bronze Age that was found at Shardlow. The fact it was loaded with stone indicates that the river had commercial importance at the time. No Roman finds have been found in the immediate vicinity of the river though the Fossdyke, down stream from Newark, was cut by the Romans.

The Vikings are known to have spent several years on the river. There is mention in Domesday Book of five ferries that crossed the river. By early medieval times, the river was used as a military route. It must also have been in regular commercial use since we know that Nottingham could charge tolls in the thirteenth century.

The next stage of development seems to have been when the first pound lock was built in 1576. In 1699, the Trent Navigation Act extended navigation to Burton, with a minimum depth of 24 inches. Richard then explained how the eighteenth century was the period when the river was at its greatest importance - coal, wool etc. was taken downstream as far as Gainsborough, which became the main port, while hemp, timber and pig-iron was transported upstream. In 1777 the Trent and Mersey canal opened, which added to the commercial importance of the river.

Sailing vessels regularly traversed the river, the last of which ceased trading about 1940. Regular packet boats plied the river during the nineteenth century and survived up to 1914.

'Travelling to the Centre'. The title of PhD student, Liz Allen's paper, considered the position of Saffron Walden as a commercial centre between 1438 and 1490 and its relationship with nearby towns. She referred to the position of the town as a stop on the river route taking in the rivers Lea, Stort and Cam. It was also on an important overland route, the Icknield Way, from Norwich to the west.

The long distance routes were important, but the majority of trade and contact was local. Court rolls provide much of the information, showing that most contact was with the area just south and west of Walden, though there was some contact with Cambridge to the north. The town grew in wealth and importance during the fourteenth century, as evidenced by the import of luxury goods and skilled workers from as far away as Cambridge and Chelmsford.

'Cars and Boats and Planes: Transport in a Hoskins Landscape' was the title of Dr Kate Tiller's paper. This was an intriguing comparative look at the landscape of a small area of Oxfordshire in the early 1950s and today. In *The Making of the English Landscape* Hoskins painted a picture of the area around Banbury as one of gradual change over millennia. The ancient roads of Aikman Street and Banbury Lane followed the Cherwell valley. Drove roads from Wales and the north passed nearby. Little was done in the development of the road system between Saxon times and the turnpike period of the late eighteenth century. Some 54 coaches left Banbury each week at the height of the coaching period.

Kate then considered the changes that have taken place in the same area since 1950 and wondered what Hoskins would have made of them. What effect did closure of the cattle market in 1998 have on the town? How would he have viewed the M40 that cut through some ancient and beautiful countryside as it bypassed Banbury? Perhaps he would have joined the protesters who opposed the damage to ancient woodland at Barnmoor and Otmoor. Would he have been more interested in finding out how villages that were bypassed, have adapted to the change?

Hoskins wrote about canals at a time when they were in gentle decline. To-day the canals are recognised as an important part of our heritage and landscape with the centre of Banbury being refocused on the canal for both commercial and recreational activities.

The greatest change to the visual impact on the area in recent times has been made by the great numbers of factories and industrial warehouses that have sprung up round Banbury and the challenge now is to integrate these into an existing landscape and so satisfy many different demands.

Kate completed her paper with reference to the effect that the war-time airfields had on the landscape. Hoskins did not mention planes. Now most of the airfields are disused and we are left with the remains of a cold-war landscape. The problem for planners and lovers of the landscape is to find the best use for these areas.

After an excellent lunch arranged by Carol Perkin, Chris Dyer provided an insight into 'The Prehistory of the Carrier and the Postal Service in the later middle ages'. Packhorse carriers were making regular deliveries before 1500. Most carriers delivered locally but some

travelled long distances, even as far as London. This was possible because the network of roads and bridges in 1500 extended over most of the country. Carriers' carts were also operating delivery services at this time. Carrying services grew as more people wanted to travel. An increase in the number of inns satisfied the needs of those travellers. The diffusion of knowledge increased demand for goods and so created a demand for delivery services. Carriers gradually developed a two-way role, delivering goods on the outward journey and obtaining others for the return journey. Such services also assisted in the development of literacy and the rapid spread of news.

Chris explained that the realisation of how extensive the carrier system was came when working in the muniment room at Westminster Abbey. The Abbey owned manors in the fifteenth century that were located in many parts of the country. The Abbey needed to communicate with its estates and did so by letter. They had developed a system of letter delivery. This would only have been possible if the infrastructure was already in place.

Alan Fox's paper 'Migration across a Cultural Border' looked at the importance that natural boundaries can have on cultural behaviour. To illustrate this argument, he chose the example of Sewstern Lane, an ancient track way that forms part of the boundary between Leicestershire and Lincolnshire. It also forms a watershed between the rivers Trent and Witham. The area has always been sparsely populated, other than by sheep.

Sewstern Lane seems to have acted as both a cultural and physical boundary, an attitude that exists to the present day. Grantham and Melton Mowbray are the two towns on either side of the boundary. Road names in villages near the boundary are very local in nature and do not refer to a settlement over the border. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Melton and Grantham carriers did not cross the border. Even now, there is no bus service between the two towns.

Pam Fisher was the final speaker, which was probably appropriate as the title of her paper was 'Fatalities, Fault and Forfeiture'. This paper originated from work she is doing for her PhD on coroners courts. Deodand was a legal term for the instrument that caused a person's death. Deodand was administered through coroner's courts and served as a means of apportioning blame for the cause of an accident. Pam gave several examples

of how juries started to assess the level of blame, including factors such as the speed of the horse and the sobriety of the driver as a means of determining fault. Decisions concerning deodand and the level of any penalty that might be applied to the person at fault became more sophisticated at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The coming of the railways spelt the end of deodand as the companies were concerned at the level of damages that might be awarded against them.

This was an excellent day and fully justified all the organisational effort put in by Maggie Whalley, to whom we offer our sincere thanks. The speakers covered a wide range of topics, all touching on aspects of travel during the last two thousand years.

Help for Friends

As with every organisation, the Friends of the Centre for English Local History always require help from members. The rules of the organisation limit anyone to holding an office for a maximum of five years, which means that there is a continuous change in the make-up of the management committee.

Please contact the chairman or any member of the committee if you would like to join the committee. Perhaps you do not wish to be a member of the committee but could offer help with organising some part of the Friends' activities.



Students prepare for the Devon field trip.

Friends' Visit to Lichfield

On Saturday, 22 July, a group of 24 Friends of the Centre for English Local History met up in Lichfield for a study day organised by Maggie Whalley, with the help of Alan Fox and Pam Fisher. In Maggie's absence, we were welcomed to the Cathedral Visitors' Centre by Alan and Val Fox, where we enjoyed coffee and a chat before gathering in the seminar room for our introductory lecture. The guest lecturer was Dr Nigel Tringham of the University of Keele. He has published on the medieval clergy of York Minster and is currently editing the *Victoria County History of Staffordshire*, due for publication in 2007. His subject for the day was development and change in the Cathedral Close from medieval to modern times. The Cathedral Close at Lichfield is one of the best surviving from medieval times.

In the Middle Ages, the Cathedral, the centre of the diocese, was the focus for visitors of all ranks – penitents, pilgrims and ordinary parishioners – attending services and festivals. Documents of 1370 record clashes between rival groups of parishioners over claims of precedence. In the twelfth century, Bishop Clinton fortified the Close, whilst developing the town but much was destroyed in a fire of 1291. The Close, a fortified enclave, was a private, self-governing community and the layout of its buildings and size of plots were commensurate with the dignity of each office in the strict ecclesiastical hierarchy. A useful handout illustrated the ground plan of the earliest buildings. The bishop and senior clergy were men of property and national influence and rarely resident in their houses in the Close. The liturgy of the Cathedral was the responsibility of the vicars choral. At the earliest period, these men were expected to live in the homes of the resident canons, to whom they were assigned as residential clergy. In the early fourteenth century, Bishop Langton provided a plot of land for the building of residences for the vicars choral. These small, shared houses were arranged around a courtyard facing inward and this arrangement can be seen in the North Courtyard, although the oldest remaining dwelling is from the fifteenth century. These clergy were trained singers rather than dedicated priests, often with families, and they had a reputation as unruly rogues, in contrast to the virtuous reputation of the Dean and Chapter. In the fifteenth century, Bishop Birdhill instituted a college for the chantry priests and this

formed the South Courtyard of 1411. There were always some lay residents and in 1380 a widow of a knight is recorded as occupying a house in the Close.

The Reformation saw significant changes in the occupancy of the Close. Chantry priests were dismissed and their quarters used to house clergy, families and widows. Further disturbance came about during the Civil War when the Close suffered two sieges and the Cathedral's central tower was demolished. A survey of 1660 reveals that many of the houses and parts of the Cathedral itself were occupied by squatters, many artisans, pursuing their occupations in the Close – a very different society from that of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The medieval bishop's palace suffered severe damage and although it could have been restored, it was left to decay and replaced by a new palace in 1686 in the style of the period. Now it is used as a school and the Bishop and his staff occupy a more modest house on the south side of the Cathedral. A new Deanery was built in 1707 and Daniel Defoe, in the 1720s, reported that he had observed 'many well-built houses' in Lichfield Cathedral Close. During the eighteenth century the society in the Close improved and became dominated by polite society. Erasmus Darwin, grandfather of Charles Darwin, lived in one of the rebuilt chantry houses, which now houses a museum, and Anna Seward, the esteemed Lichfield writer, daughter of one of the canons, was a resident. Her letters reflect an awareness of the increasing social divisions between polite society and the servants and tradesmen, divisions which would not have been present in the early eighteenth century. At this time the houses in the South Court were altered to face outwards, with a view of the Minster Pool and the city.

1868 brought Bishop George Selwyn to the diocese from New Zealand and he deliberately made the Cathedral a welcoming centre for the Diocese of Lichfield, adding two wings to the Bishop's Palace in 1889 to provide accommodation for meetings of diocesan clergy and others. Opening up the Close to visitors from all parts of the diocese, he brought the Close back, full-circle, to its original function.

After his interesting introduction, Dr Tringham led us around the Close, pointing out features he had described and bringing to life past events and characters. We had the opportunity to visit the Cathedral itself, the fine Gothic building a successor to the first church,

built on the site in 700AD to enshrine the bones of St Chad, whose feast day is 2nd March. The memorial to this shrine is marked in the Lady Chapel. The fine sixteenth-century Flemish stained glass windows were added in 1803, having been bought from the suppressed Abbey of Herkenrode in Flanders by Lord Brooke-Boothby. Another of the Cathedral's treasures, the Lichfield Gospels, is on display in the Chapter House. There are busts of Dr Samuel Johnson and David Garrick, both citizens of Lichfield.

After a pleasant lunch in the visitor centre, Alan Fox, on behalf of the group, thanked Dr Tringham for his enjoyable and informative contribution to the day and the catering staff for the refreshments and service. After some time for personal exploration (shopping!), we divided into two groups and were shown round the town by local guides. From them we learned of the important rôle played by Lichfield during the Civil War and the devastation suffered during the siege in March 1643. From Beacon Park, we went outside the old city boundary to visit the Hospital and Chapel of St John the Baptist without the bars of the City of Lichfield. This was first built in 1135 and staffed by Augustinian Canons to provide food and shelter for pilgrims arriving at the city gates (bars) after curfew. Its original function was reduced when the city

defences fell into disuse and it was refounded in 1495 as a hospital for aged men and a free grammar school. Changes were made but the hospital continued its work and today, its accommodation meeting twenty-first-century standards, still provides for the needy elderly, whose only duty is to attend a daily service in the chapel. The chapel itself has undergone much restoration and its most recent enhancement is the magnificent east window which represents Christ in Majesty, designed by John Piper in 1984.

We emerged from the chapel into a heavy downpour which continued as we made our way back to the town centre, pausing en route to hear about the Friary and, at the 'George', learnt about Lichfield's prosperity in the coaching era. We passed by some fine Tudor and Georgian buildings which give such an attractive character to this town. Our final destination was Dr Johnson's Birthplace, where the curator gave us an introduction to the great lexicographer and where we were able to enjoy the interesting display.

Before leaving, we expressed our thanks to Maggie Whalley and to Alan Fox for arranging such an enjoyable day's programme.

Anne Pegg



Vicars' Close, Lichfield

Obituary: Maurice Beresford, 1920-2005

For his contribution to landscape history, Maurice Beresford may be compared to William Hoskins. His first book, *The Lost Villages of England* (1954), explored a subject which he initially chanced upon when surveying ridge and furrow in a Midland parish and found that there was a gap in the pattern somewhere near its centre. That gap, a deserted village, led him rapidly into a huge field of enquiry, embracing historical demography, social history and agrarian history – as well as the history of the landscape. Many others have been drawn into this field (which was pioneered simultaneously by Hoskins), largely through the enthusiasm of Beresford's writing: and it was he, together with John Hurst, who initiated the long-running excavations of a deserted village at Wharham Percy, where fundamental techniques in medieval archaeology were developed and many innovative ideas emerged, on changing settlement morphology, for example, on types of peasant houses and, latterly, on peasant diet and disease. The influential group now called the Medieval Settlement Research Group, was at first associated with the excavations at Wharham.

History on the Ground (1957) was described by Beresford as 'an ordinary travel book', taking readers – both academics and 'men and women who are curious about their own neighbourhoods' – into fields, market places, villages and parks. It is in fact more than an ordinary travel book because of the depth of the research behind it and because of its enthusiastic sense of discovery, akin to that in Rose Macauley's *Pleasure of Ruins*. It contains a little known appendix on sources for landscape history – still an infant subject in the 50s – as well as Beresford's statement on the twin methods he adopted then and continued to perfect throughout his life: to use visual evidence in order to further understand what documents had already suggested, and to make discoveries in the field which then led back to the archives for further elucidation.

In *New Towns of the Middle Ages* (1967), Beresford again opened up a new subject (previously tackled only with a light hand, by Tout and St. John Hope, for example). It is a monumental book based, as is usual with him, on thorough field work and extensive documentary

research. Medieval plantations in Wales and Gascony are given as full a treatment as those in England, and for all three countries there is a detailed gazetteer, each new town being listed with its principle documentary sources. One only wonders why this fundamental book stops short at medieval towns planned on previously unsettled sites and neglects those appended to older settlements, for they were equally 'new' in the landscape.

It has been possible here to select only three of Beresford's many books. Others include *Medieval England: an Aerial Survey* (with J. K. St. Joseph, 1958 and 1979), *Leeds and its Region* (with G. Jones, 1967), *East End, West End: the Face of Leeds during Urbanisation, 1684-1842* (1988) and *Wharham Percy, Deserted Medieval Village* (with J. G. Hurst, 1991). His *Deserted Medieval Villages: Studies* (with J. G. Hurst, 1971) updates his first book, while *English Medieval Boroughs: a Handlist* (with H.P.R. Finberg, 1973) reveals a love of gazetteers, apparent in many of his works.

Beresford also wrote a flood of papers and pamphlets, some on topics which at first sight seem unlikely, for example on poll taxes and lay subsidies (which he used to gauge the size of deserted settlements) and on glebe terriers (which he used in his work on ridge and furrow). There is a bibliography for Beresford in *Northern History* 37 (2000), pp. 307-20. Many of his papers are collected together in *Time and Place* which also contains an autobiographical fragment, for he liked to publicize his undoubted achievements, especially in lectures where one hour could easily expand to nearly two.

Maurice Beresford had a strongly developed social conscience which led him into social work, adult education and work with young offenders: he listed 'delinquency' as one of his interests. His other interests included music, theatre and literature, the last influencing his style, with its many quotations, evocative passages and love of narrative – as when he described the events of 1296-7 which led up to the rebuilding of Berwick-on-Tweed. Latterly he was rather a shambolic figure, his clothes draped round a large frame rather than fitted onto it. Absent-mindedness was symbolised by spectacles hanging round his neck; once he omitted a whole county from one of his books, because he forgot that the data on it had fallen behind his piano.

Maurice was always good humoured and good company and attracted many friends, some of whom are listed in the dedications to his books (although *History on the Ground* is dedicated to his mother, 'who packed the sandwiches'). Almost the last time I saw him was after a Medieval Settlement Research Group conference at Leicester when I reciprocated his kindness to me by driving him to see the deserted village of Hamilton, first dug by Hoskins in 1948. We walked about on the edge of high-density housing

and near to Leicester's largest 'super-store'. Sometimes, in difficulty, he took my arm to help himself along, but the twinkle in the eye and the wry smile were always there.

Harold Fox

(reprinted with permission from the Society for Landscape Studies Newsletter Spring/Summer 2006)



Maurice Beresford with Harold Fox in the Centre following the award of his honorary degree in 2002.

Ancient Monuments Society and Friends Of Friendless Churches

Tucked away in the medieval street pattern that survives south of St Paul's Cathedral is St Ann's Vestry Hall designed in 1905 by Sir Banister Fletcher. For some 15 years it has been occupied by the offices of the Ancient Monuments Society and the Friends of Friendless Churches, which between them cover historic buildings of all ages and all types and directly own 38 churches which would otherwise have been demolished or butchered.

The AMS was established in 1924 in Manchester but came south soon after the Second World War and is now recognized as one of the six national amenity societies which have to be informed by law of every application for listed building consent involving demolition, however minimal, at listed buildings in England and in Wales. This leads to some 5,000 referrals a year and as we cover all listed buildings regardless of age built in the last millennium casework is the life blood of the AMS. We work closely with our sister societies, indeed until recently we provided the secretariat for the Joint Committee which coordinates their work at a strategic level. The consultations embrace proposals for total demolition which are currently running at some 120 a year but the average case is now one of part demolition, much of it the removal of historic fabric as part and parcel of a scheme of extension or conversion. In the last three months the workload has been as various as it has been interesting - with umpteen schemes for conversion of farm buildings and industrial structures, the more occasional extension, sometimes gargantuan but mostly modest onto historic places of worship, and, an increasingly common breed, schemes of "enabling development". This is in essence new build in the grounds that would not otherwise be allowed but the profits of which are tied to the commercial underpinning of a scheme of repair and conversion of the historic building would not otherwise be viable.

We have an Autumn Lecture series and an AGM in an historic building but the sinews that tie the office with members are for the most part our publications. The volume of Transactions, running to some 150 pages, is annual and offprints are available from most back numbers (please see the relevant page on the website). Not surprisingly as an organization

which has RW (Ron) Brunsell as its President (and former Chairman of both organizations), many of the papers explore the subtleties of vernacular architecture although recent subjects covered in depth range from Jewish architecture to dovecotes, along with the architecture of schools and shops. We are particularly proud to have given space to the definitive catalogue of British riding houses by the late Dr Giles Worsley and a definitive account of that bizarre phenomenon, the roof in tarred paper (written by Professor Malcolm Airs). An illustrated account of the year's casework and a monograph of one of the Friends' churches are both becoming traditions, space permitting.

We also issue three A5 Newsletters of between 70 and 80 pages each. These have been called 'the best newsletter of any [national] conservation society' and they are full of facts on events, new attractions and books, many of them locally published but deserving a national audience. So much is published, some of it with limited marketing ambition, which is extremely good. There is a passion behind our urge to bring these books, pamphlets and websites to as wide an audience as possible. The latest Newsletter will give you the last word on professional photographers in Lancashire 1840-1940, old houses of Shropshire in the 19th century, bridges of medieval England, the building stones of Wales, the history of the British coffee house, the Catholic churches of Britain alongside the latest biographies of William Kent, H.V. Morton, Joseph Gandy, the early Gothic Revivalist Sanderson Millar, and Harrison of Chester. Under the catch-all 'Gleanings' we offer introductions to the recently launched national research project on almshouses, and new places to visit, many of them funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. 2006 sees the opening of the Museum of English Rural Life in its new location in Reading, the new local studies and archives collection at the Woodhorn Colliery in Northumberland, Pallant House in Chichester with its unrivalled collection of modern art, the Grange at Ramsgate, A.W. Pugin's Gothic villa by the sea where the man died, and Oxford Castle. Gleanings covered these as well as HLF offers.

The AMS and the Friends each have their own discrete constitutions and parallel bodies of Trustees. They share a secretariat, a pompous name for myself full-time and four valuable part-time colleagues: Susan and Christopher Dalton,

Caroline Welch and Frank Kelsall. There is some cross-fertilizing subsidy between the two, the AMS bearing the direct cost of salaries and about 300 square feet of offices in the City. The organizations share a Newsletter and membership scheme, both of which bring welcome economies of scale.

The Friends, which celebrate their 50th anniversary in 2007, were set up by Ivor Bulmer-Thomas. The brief was quite clear: to save churches from demolition and, as Ivor saw it, degradation in the form of unworthy conversions. We have soft pedalled our opposition to the latter as sometimes it is the only way forward. Demolition remains the most unpalatable threat. The Friends' capital base is not even £500,000 but with that we now have 38 holdings. Part of the explanation of the effectiveness of this mismatch between resources and ambition is the generous situation in Wales. Half the churches we possess are Welsh and we are accepting vestings at the rate of one or two a year in the context of 70% grant aid from Cadw, the Welsh equivalent of English Heritage, and 30% from the Church in Wales. Since 1999 the budget of £100,000 a year has allowed us to take into care redundant but glorious buildings from Pembrokeshire to Anglesey. Most are medieval with rich medieval screens at Derwen in Clwyd and Llanellieu in the Brecon Beacons, but quality is not necessarily defined by age. At Brithdir we have one of the very few Art Nouveau churches in Wales (designed by Henry Wilson), whilst Llandeilo in Pembrokeshire is largely the result of a 1928 reconstruction by the Arts and Crafts architect, Coates-Carter. We are on the verge of completing works of repair at Llanfair Kilgoddin in Monmouthshire renowned for a complete run of

coloured plaster decoration in sgraffiti executed by Heywood Sumner, the archaeologist, in a style clearly indebted to Burne-Jones. We are able to take former private places of worship and we have two - the 15th century chapel of the Sanford family on the Devon/Somerset border at Ayshford, near Tiverton, and the chapel of St John the Baptist halfway up a cliff at Matlock Bath put up in 1897 to the designs of Guy Dawber, one of the founders of the CPRE. Its foundress was the redoubtable Mrs Harris who after a row with the local vicar retreated to her house appropriately known as The Rocks and provided an elaborate Arts and Crafts treasure house to serve as her own half way to God in the grounds.

Each society has its own website and links between the two. These provide downloadable application forms, associated Gift Aid declarations and Bankers Orders as well as the AMS back list referred to above. All our churches are listed and if you click on the name you will get illustrations and brief histories of each one. Do join, you will be very welcome. We feel confident that if your passion is local history you will find much to elucidate and entertain in the Newsletter and maybe we can help you save and defend an historic building under threat. The maximum annual subscription is £24, modest enough, and that can come with a promise that as we have only just fixed the rates £24 is likely to be set in stone for a good five years. Join us now and you could help us celebrate the 50 years of the Friends in 2007.

Matthew Saunders,
Secretary of the AMS,
Honorary Director of the Friends



Work undertaken by the Ancient Monuments Society and Friends of Friendless Churches
at the church of St Ellyw, Llanellieu, near Talgarth, Clwyd-Powys.
Photos courtesy of AMS.