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# Newsletter

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Welcome to this year's Newsletter: a new editor, and a new look! This coincides with a new home for the Centre itself, so there is plenty in this issue about the move, about our new home, and about the resources that are now available to Friends' members.



# AN EVENTFUL YEAR

## EDITORIAL

Yet another Prime minister, a new King, and someone else editing the Friends' Newsletter. Yes, it's been an eventful year. I hope you will enjoy the new look, and still find that the content is up to standard. It's been great to have some 'live' events to report on, with Hoskins Day back, and our first study day in around three years. It's also good to feature some contributions from the Friends themselves: we have almshouses, local art, a not-so-local church, and a review of a book on local railways. Those of you who are already missing the previous editor will be pleased to learn that he is the subject of 'In conversation with...' in this issue.

Finally, some of you may have read about Jacob Rees Mogg's strictures to his Civil Servants about their use of the Oxford comma ('do not use!'). In response to this, you will find the Oxford comma liberally scattered around the Friends' Newsletter. Enjoy.



# OUR LOGO...

## ...IS GOING NOWHERE JUST YET

We have decided to keep the Friends logo as it is for the time being. In respect for the great affection many of our members had for Marc Fitch House, it seems fitting to celebrate its existence for a few years more.

Eventually the time will come to move on and let Salisbury Road fade from our collective memory but, until then, we will continue to celebrate the Centre's association with this property by the use of this design.

(Similarly, we are not changing our name just yet either, more about that later...)

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## Chair's Report

2021 was a difficult year for the Friends with the ongoing covid pandemic preventing face-to-face meetings and the loss of Marc Fitch House depriving us of our spiritual home. Following the AGM in November we had a new committee and we were determined to rebuild from this low point. Although it may not have been obvious at the time, we were rebuilding from a strong base having a robust membership, adequate funds and a sound

working relationship with the Centre. There have been many challenges during the year but there has also been positive progress and as we approach the end of 2022 we are definitely in a much stronger position.

The Centre has established a new base on the main campus with dedicated space within the Attenborough Building. This has enabled much of the existing Marc Finch House library to be set-up and made accessible to students and Friends (the remainder is in safe storage). The new facility was opened on 5<sup>th</sup> October and I would encourage you to take advantage of this convenient location for visits and research. It also has adequate space for meetings and talks, details how to access the new location can be found on the Centre and the Friends websites. The establishment of the new Centre on the main campus would not have been possible without the active support of our members and I would particularly like to thank Karen Donegani and Mary Bryceland for their enormous efforts working with Centre staff.

We felt it was important to get back to in-person events and to engage with members providing opportunities to share some of the latest local history research. In addition to the programme of online talks (reported in the latest Newsletter) we were able to hold the first Hoskins' Day Lecture since before the start of the pandemic. It was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July in the Richard III Centre in Leicester and our old friend and colleague Professor Andy Hopper delivered an excellent lecture of the latest Civil War Petitions research. We also took the opportunity for PhD researchers from the Centre to share an update on some of their ongoing work. On 1<sup>st</sup> October we held our first Study Day since the visit to Newark in 2019. It was a guided tour of the Queens Street Mill Textile Museum in Burnley supported by a number of related talks. I must thank Phil Batman for the original idea and for organising this well attended event.

It has been a good year and one that has seen the membership grow as we seek to offer more



opportunities for engagement with the Centre but there is still a long way to go. The Centre continues to face many difficult challenges into 2023 and beyond and we must continue to provide all the support we can. With a limited number of permanent staff, we can help them through promoting their research and working with them to extend the range of academic services they provide. One project that is currently being developed is to provide students with the opportunity to engage with history and heritage groups across the country. We all have strong links with local museums, libraries and archives that not only could give placement openings to students but would also benefit from the academic input.

We are hoping to launch a local pilot in Lincolnshire in 2023 and if successful to extend it nationally.

To use an old cliché, with challenge comes opportunity and there are potentially very exciting times ahead. We can develop the Friends in conjunction with the Centre but we need your input. The direction we go and the services we provide are in your hands. Tell us what you want from the Friends through the committee members, the website or social media. We are planning to increase the number of member's event in 2023 and we look forward to seeing you and hearing your ideas.

*Michael Gilbert*



# HOSKINS DAY

RICHARD III CENTRE, LEICESTER, JULY 2

Dr Richard Jones became the 'hero of Hoskins' when he filled in at the last minute for one of our scheduled speakers who had had to duck out. Being asked by email at 11:25 and needing to drive to Leicester pretty much straight away, he *ad libbed* an inspiring talk on the continuing relevance of Hoskins.

He produced two recent books as props: 'Landskipping' by Anna Pavord and 'Hollow Places' by Christopher Hadley. Both are popular books, rather than academic ones, but they both mentioned Hoskins (and are far from being the only writers who have done so). W.G. Hoskins still holds a very real place in the history of the English Landscape and of its people. Even our notoriously unread parliament has had cause to mention his name when engaged on making policy for our historic landscape. Richard viewed this continued dominance as a mixed blessing, however. 'The Making of the English Landscape' was published in the 1950s. If it was still so very influential, should the successors of Hoskins (that would be us) really be doing better? Hoskins famously encouraged students of landscape history to look deeper at

any view, and, even more famously, to get mud on our boots. This practical approach was always mixed with use of documents, and more particularly, use of maps. We should never forget this legacy. But Hoskins very much privileged the sense of sight: the view, the physical structure. This partiality permeates into the current trend for landscape characterization, as promoted by local authorities. With this partiality we are missing dimensions and should really be considering our other senses.

Richard believes that Hoskins would be excited by the new technology available to researchers, especially in the area of landscape archaeology. The flight of drones and the use of laser technology in particular adds many extra dimensions. Hoskins was also thought of primarily as an empirical social and economic historian, but in his work he often ponders how the landscape would have been experienced by its inhabitants.

Hoskins's approach does still have relevance today, and landscape is still a fundamental part of the Leicester programme, as is evidence by a current strong cohort of PhD students. The tradition of Hoskins is alive and well, and it is good that his name is remembered annually in the Friends lecture.



## RACHEL SMALL

### Food, identity and humoral theory in early modern England: a case study from Leicestershire

Next up was PhD student, Rachel Small, who studies were demonstrating the multi-disciplinary approach famously promoted by the 'Hoskins tradition'. Rachel was combining finds from the archaeological excavations at Bradgate Park with late seventeenth century account books of Elizabeth Grey to investigate whether there was evidence that elite diets were influenced by humoral theory.

Rachel suggested that modern archaeological studies of food and diet have had some limitations. Plants and animal deposits have been studied separately and investigations largely confined to tracing changes in diet caused by urbanization and the industrial evolution. Physical finds and depositions were not supplemented with documentary sources. Through her work, Rachel is trying to recover not only what the Greys ate, but also what they thought about it.

First, there was some explanation of the theory of humours. This had originated in the classical period but had gone on to dominate medieval and early modern medicine (though its influence was beginning to fade by the seventeenth century). The theory was based on balancing the four 'humours' of choler, blood, black bile and yellow bile. Each humour had a characteristic based on the degrees to which it was 'hot' or 'cold', 'dry' or moist'. Every being tended to be dominated by one humour or another, so an individual diet needed to be followed to maintain their natural balance. In the case of illness, food should be consumed to return the body to balance. Individuals also required food according to their standing. The elite, with their sedentary lifestyle, required more easy-

to-digest food compared to those whose life entailed hard physical work.

The Greys inhabited Bradgate from 1500 to 1750. To what extent did humoral theory influence their dietary choice? Rachel demonstrated that the household account books largely served to support the finds of the field work. There was correlation between the numbers and types of domestic animals, game and poultry. There were some discrepancies, especially in the case of wild fowl. But there was an explanation of this in the fact that the bones of small birds such as larks and fieldfares did not survive to become part of the archaeological record. Also, the depositions covered a much longer period than the four years of the account book. Useful information about plant consumption came from a latrine. This showed that there had been day-to-day consumption of fruit. This was not listed in the household accounts, but there was the expectation that this would have been grown on the estate rather than bought in. Other foodstuffs, such as spices, would appear in the written records but leave no physical traces behind.

Did the evidence from the physical and written sources give evidence of belief in humoral theory? This could be inferred from low consumption of food such as ducks. Ducks were easy to keep and cheap, but their flesh was considered to be 'unhealthy and troublesome' largely because the ducks themselves tended to consume unwholesome food such as frogs and toads. The Greys consumed food such as rabbit, chicken and game birds, which would have been regarded as more suitable for their genteel lifestyle. There were also examples of their maybe going



against the theory. Suckling pigs would have been regarded as too 'moist' and unhealthy, but it was a staple of elite dining and as such did indeed figure in the diets of the Greys.

There was evidence of the theory being used in the treatment of ill health. Elizabeth Grey seemed to have some difficulties in pregnancy or early motherhood. Apothecary bills featured in her accounts, both for blood-letting and for medicines. There were also small quantities of expensive foodstuffs purchased that were thought suited to be suitable for invalids. This included aqua vitae, gudgeons and white bread.

Rachel considered other factors that were evidenced by her research. This included seasonality of consumption, regionality dictating what was available locally. Religion also had an effect. Preserved herrings were consumed at Lent, even though they would not have been regarded as healthy under humoral theory. From this Rachel concluded that several factors affected diet during the early modern period, some practical, some cultural and some theoretical, but that it could be demonstrated that humoral theory did indeed play a role.



## PROFESSOR ANDREW HOPPER

### The Local Politics of Civil-War Military Welfare

The Hoskins Lecture itself was delivered by erstwhile Director of the Centre, Professor Andrew Hopper.

Andy started by noting that Hoskins day this year coincided with the anniversary of Marston Moor and observed what a particularly brutal conflict that had been. This was possibly the largest battle on British soil, with some 50,000 involved (although some suggest that the Towton might have that 'honour'). It saw five armies converge on York, and the subsequent slaughter saw the virtual destruction of the Northern Royalist army.

This anniversary brings a hitherto neglected aspect of civil wars studies into sharp relief. Scholars have spent considerable time and effort debating the causes of the conflicts (with no definitive conclusions reached) and the tactics of the battles, but the human costs and consequences of the war have been largely ignored. The casualties as a percentage of population were higher in the English Civil Wars than in either World War, or in the American Civil War (although this partly reflects the fact that the population was small).

Whereas we might have relied on the Royalist writers to remember the battle at Marston Moor, we should not forget that there were several thousand individuals for whom forgetting was not an option. James Moore was one such individual. A member of the Royalist infantry, 55 years later, at nearly 80 years old, he was still suffering the effects of a bullet lodged in his neck. He presented a petition to the court, supported by the signatures of the chief inhabitants of his parish, and was awarded £2 per annum until further notice. There was evidence nearby of a group of eight old Royalist soldiers together petitioning for pensions between 1700 and 1709. The very last civil war claimant was William Leaver of Aylesbury, with his family petitioning for his funeral expenses in 1718.

The study of the care and welfare of civil war soldiers was trailblazed by Eric Gruber von Arni and Geoffrey Hudson. The former concentrating on medical care, particularly as offered by military

hospitals at the Savoy and at Ely House. Hudson researched the county pension scheme, but concentrated on certain counties. Before these studies, the civil wars tended to be the preserve of political historians while social historians concentrated on poor relief. The project 'Conflict, Welfare and Memory during and after the English Civil Wars, 1642–1710' has moved much further in this new direction. Funded by the AHRC, it started in 2017 and finishes in October this year. Its aim was to investigate how wounded soldiers, war widows and other bereaved family members petitioned for financial relief. It recorded and transcribed petitions from counties across England.

The Centre for English Local History played an important part in the project by the participation of many ex-students as well as Andy's own involvement. The project has produced a website ([www.civilwarpetitions.ac.uk](http://www.civilwarpetitions.ac.uk)) and a conference volume ('Remembering the English Civil Wars'), and taken the project into schools by working with teachers to help them present the material in the classroom. The transcriptions of the petitions will become available in a 5-volume series, which will provide the material in perpetuity (as the website will not last forever). The website offers many options for searching the petitions, as well as the perhaps expected criteria of names and locations, you can also, for example, search on type and location of injury. The site also contains blogs on many aspects of the project.

Pensions and payments were initially available to soldiers who had fought on the parliamentary side and their dependents. After the Restoration, the tables turned and payments were available only to Royalists (and specifically soldiers who had always fought on the Royalist side – changing sides disqualified a claimant). Claims were made at Quarter Sessions, to urban magistrates at Borough Courts, directly to Generals and it was even possible to petition Westminster (although this was an expensive and lengthy process). The petitions themselves were often written on behalf



of the claimant, who could be presumed to be less literate and less educated than the petition itself suggested. This is obvious where the petition sometimes slips from the first to the third person. The scribe is likely to have applied some 'spin' to the narrative in order to maximise the chances of success. Petitioners commonly adopted the strategy of being sufficiently deferential towards the magistrate who were hearing their claim. There is also some selectivity in what is included in the petition, and what is left out.

The petitioners were not necessarily military veterans themselves. Widows often made claims for their sufferings, and those of their children. There are also examples of civilians who suffered from the activities of the armies and sought some redress. There was an example of such a claim from Leicester, where houses were demolished to give defender a better line of fire where the town was sacked by the Royalist army just before the Battle of Naseby in 1645. The social elite were entitled to compensation too. Lady Brooke was a notable example of this: widowed in 1643 she received a grant of £5000 for her son's education, the largest sum awarded.

There is a huge variety of information to be recovered from the petitions. Contested memories of the conflict often came to the fore, with many

occurrences of face-to-face conflict where claimants sought to discredit those already receiving pensions in an effort to take their place. This made healing and settling more difficult, and shows up the everyday politics of the parish, as well as helping with the plotting of a wider map of of population, poverty and allegiance. It also gives a rare insight into the view of the more humble sort of people and the views of women. More petitions survive from Wales than from anywhere else, giving views of the Welsh experience of the Civil Wars.

At a wider political level, the pension scheme had its effect on the governance of the England and Wales. It increased the state's capacity to intervene in the politics of the parish, and increased the politicization of all forms of parish relief. The petitions also give much more insight into the availability and efficacy of medical treatment, confirming recent studies that showed such help was not as hopeless as previously imagined.

Although the project is now nearing its end, there are plans for a follow-on project. Entitled 'Enacting the Armed Forces Covenant: the English Civil Wars and Current Practice', this time engaging the current recipients of military pensions.



Professor Hopper and Dr Pells are delivering a lecture series on the experience of the Civil War soldier, available online and face to face in Oct/Nov 2022. <https://www.ox.ac.uk/event/english-civil-wars-soldiers-experience>

# Centre Report

*Dr Angela Muir, Centre Director*

**Greetings Friends!** I hope this message finds you all well, and that you have all enjoyed a smooth transition back into 'normality' (whatever that is) over the past year. To say the Centre has had an eventful twelve months would be an understatement, with changes both seismic and, at times, glacial. Like the proverbial phoenix, we are emerging from these changes 'reborn' with a new identity (the Centre for Regional and Local History) and in a new space in the Attenborough Building. As we find our feet on this new ground, the basic principles that underpin the Centre will remain the same. One constant during this period of change has been the ongoing support from the Friends.

Despite a fair few challenges, we have plenty of positive successes and strengths to report. This autumn we will welcome a new cohort of funded PhD students thanks to the University of Leicester 'Future 100' centenary scholarships announced last November, and another round of M4C funding. We were successful in securing three of these 'F100' studentships, all of which will focus on different aspects of families and identities across England and Wales in the long-eighteenth century, covering women's history, queer history, and black history. These all represent some of the new and exciting areas the Centre is branching into. Through co-supervision, all three also represent continued collaboration with colleagues across the School of History, Politics and International Relations, and across the University (Prof Roey Sweet in CUH/HyPIR, Prof John Coffey in HyPIR, and Prof Corinne Fowler in Museum Studies (formerly of English)). We also continue to



welcome MA students to our Local History pathway, many of whom are drawn to the University and Centre by our established reputation and expertise.

As Andy Hopper noted in last year's report, the Centre made important contributions to History's submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) for 2021. I am pleased to report that History at Leicester placed second overall nationally for research excellence. Second! This means that the collective research outputs produced by academic colleagues in History at the University of Leicester since 2014 were deemed to be better than the efforts of every other history department in the UK over that same period, other than the University of Kent, beating institutions such as Oxford, Cambridge, and all Russell Group universities. This was a tremendous achievement, which the Centre made considerable contributions to by providing

world-leading publications and two impact case studies. In addition to this, Centre staff continue to be research active, with Richard Jones and myself researching, writing and developing new projects. As ever, the Victoria County History continues with its research, with their current work focusing on towns (the Lutterworth history will be published this autumn, and research into Loughborough now underway). Both the VCH and Centre participated in the

Global History Leicester event hosted by the local branch of the Historical Association at De Montfort University this past spring. We have also almost finished cataloguing our topographic print collection, with Alister Sutherland spending 12 weeks in the University's Archives and Special Collections this spring creating detailed catalogue entries for the prints that were scanned by Juliet Bailey during lockdown. We hope to have this project completed this autumn. Catalogued prints can be viewed on the Special Collections website.

Last summer we welcomed a new Head of School, Professor Krista Cowman. From the outset, Krista

has proven herself to be an ally of the Centre. One of our first significant interactions with Krista was when she suggested relocating *The International Journal of Regional and Local History* from the University of Lincoln (from whence she came) to Leicester and the Centre. After sorting out the logistics with the publisher and existing editors, I am pleased to announce that this is now happening. Richard and I will be taking over editorship of the journal, which we are renaming *Histories of People & Place*. It is still very early days yet, and we will keep the Friends informed about how this progresses. It goes without saying that if any of you are working on articles at the moment, and are looking for a journal to publish in, we would be more than happy to chat to you about them.

Over the past year, the Centre has experienced several significant changes. At the end of last summer, our dear colleague Andy Hopper left us to take up his new post as Professor of Local and Social History in the Department of Continuing Education at the University of Oxford. Our loss was their gain. Given the overall tumultuous time we and our colleagues had experienced in the months prior to this, I took to using the phrase 'Andy has gone to a better place....and by that, I mean Oxford.' We continue to keep touch with Andy, and to build our connections with his new department, and they have invited me to serve as external examiner for their Advanced Diploma in Local History. We are also hoping to plan joint events together in future. This spring, we successfully appointed Michael Gilbert and Karen Donegani as Honorary Fellows of the Centre and University, which grants them both access to University IT resources and spaces, and further strengthens the links between the Friends and the Centre. We are hoping to make further appointments in future. Please do contact me if you are interested in applying to become an Honorary Fellow. I am also pleased to say that many of the disruptions that plagued the University, and thus the Centre, last year have subsided for the time being. The global academic boycott of the University has lifted, and at the time of writing, the UCU is not on strike (although members are currently being balloted).

Overall, we are in a slightly better position than last year.

Perhaps the biggest change the Centre has undergone is the final move out of Marc Fitch House to the Attenborough Building on the main campus. The process of clearing the old space and setting up the new has been long, complicated, and drawn out, but I can now report that it is nearly finished. I can state with complete earnestness that the move would not have been successful without the immense voluntary contribution of the Friends. Many of you helped create digital records of old card catalogues, which has been invaluable. For that, we are grateful. We also owe an immense debt of gratitude to Karen Donegani and Mary Bryceland, who oversaw the clearing, moving out, moving in, and setting up of the entire Centre library (as well as the Centre for Urban History library). I cannot overstate how tremendous their contribution has been in terms of hours, hard labour, and expertise. We simply would not be where we are at now if it were not for them. Thank you. Thanks to their efforts, and the work of Estates Services, we now have two new research spaces. The Centre for Regional and Local History is now based on the eighth floor of the Attenborough Tower, along with the Centre for Urban History (including the East Midlands Oral History Archive), and the HyPIR staff kitchen and common room. Richard and I have offices on the eighth floor, and room 802 is one of the two new library spaces. This library holds the collections of the Centre for Urban History, and part of the Regional and Local History collections, and there are study desks for library users. On the first floor of the Attenborough seminar block, in room 101, we have the remainder of our collections (bar items in storage such as theses and dissertations), as well as a 'flexible use' seminar/research space that will have AV equipment (this has been delayed by the ongoing chip shortage). Our hope is that the Friends will use this space (or other suitable seminar rooms nearby) to hold seminars and events, which we will of course support. All Centre staff, students, and fellows will have key card access to Att 101 and 802. Any Friends who wish to use the space can make arrangements through Richard or myself. On



5 October we are holding a launch event for the Centre, to which all of the Friends are invited.

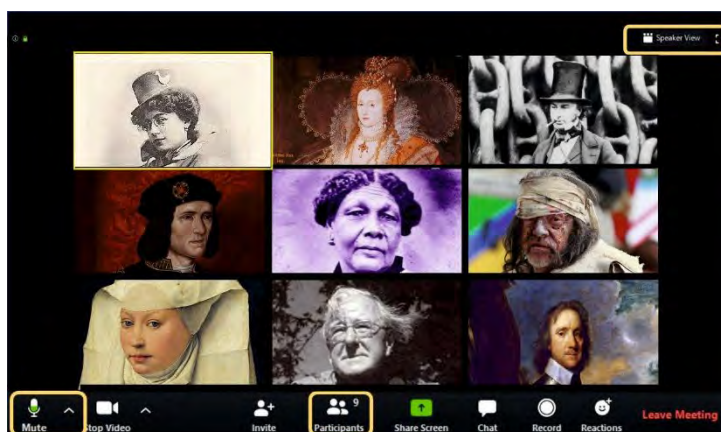
Many of you may recall Andy reporting on our successful Centre review held last summer. We received written confirmation of that successful review from the College in October, and shortly thereafter we were notified that the University was undertaking a 'survey' of all existing research centres, whilst also inviting new research centres to apply. We submitted our paper work that outlined our accomplishments and vision for the future, and were invited to interview. It was only at that interview that we were informed of possible outcomes: We could either be awarded 'accredited' status, 'development' status, or have our status as a research centre taken away completely. In July we were informed that we had been granted 'development' status, which came as a surprise. I have been personally assured by the Pro-Vice Chancellor of Research that this is a positive outcome. What this means is we have two

years to work with the College to achieve accredited status. We feel this is achievable, and have meetings with colleagues in the College in October to draft a strategic plan. Through this process we hope to work closely with the Friends. We see you as central to our history and our future success, and we benefit greatly from your ongoing support and contribution. We will, of course, keep the Friends informed along the way.

Our plans for the immediate future involve finalising the details of our seminar series for the upcoming year, which will likely be held remotely or 'hybrid'. We also hope to find new ways of engaging with the Friends in person and online. I have very much enjoyed my first ever year as Director of the Centre for Regional and Local History, and forging new connections with the Friends. I look forward to what the next year holds and do hope to see all of you at some point either online or in person.



*Seminar Room (which is also the Topographical Library and Map Room) is at right-hand end of first floor.*



# Friends online

2022 saw the Friends continue with their successful online talk series. Our sessions were well-attended, and always concluded with stimulating discussions.

## THE VILLAGE LOCK-UP

*The Friends' February talk was by our erstwhile treasurer, Robert Mee.*

Robert is a regular on the local history speakers' "circuit" and had warned us that this would not be an academic talk, but that there would be lots of "pretty pictures". Well, he certainly met his promise with regard to the number of illustrations shown, but it was also clear that much research had gone into the preparation of this history of the village lock-up.

Robert began with looking at the wide variety of terms used to describe these places of temporary incarceration – one of the commonest, "roundhouse", is first recorded in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. He also explained their regular usage, in dealing with persons locked up by the village constable during the night, and in particular for securing drunks until the morning. It was the responsibility of the constable to keep their prisoners secure, and in places where there was no specific cell accommodation, the barns of inns were used, with the cost being met by the parish.

Looking at his home county of Derbyshire, Robert detailed an instruction from the Quarter Sessions in 1790 that every village in the county was required to have a place to secure prisoners rather

than being housed at inns, etc. Some already existed, but in many places this resulted in a small building, often only large enough to hold a single prisoner, being constructed; in other towns and villages, an existing building, or part of a building, was adapted for the new use. The vast majority of these no longer exist, but we were then given a series of slides showing the variety of structures which have survived – in a number of cases, the village lock-up, maintained by the constable, would be located next to the pinfold for stray animals, maintained by the pinder.

Although slightly beyond the scope of the talk, Robert also explained how changes to the legal system in the 1840s saw the establishment of larger, county-funded lock-ups. One of these, at Wirksworth, was shown – it is now a bed and breakfast establishment, and one of the former cells is an en-suite bathroom! This lock-up was visited by H.M. Inspector of Prisons in 1850, and the report was explained.

Following Derbyshire, we were then taken on a tour across the entire Midlands, county by county, though Rutland has no known surviving lock-ups and several counties only have one. For each one we were given details of what (little) is known about the individual buildings. Occasionally they were commissioned by a single landowner, such as at Alton in Staffordshire (the Earl of Shrewsbury),



and Cromford, Derbyshire (the Arkwrights), but rarely do we have details of who was responsible for their development.

Lock-ups generally ceased to be used once the county police forces were established. There were exceptions to this though. The Edwinstowe (Nottinghamshire) lock-up was still being used in the 1920s – the building no longer survives, but the original shackles and their fixing points can still be seen. After their original purpose had ended, most lock-ups were demolished, but others were kept on for storage. During the Second World War several were used by the Home Guard. Quite a few have been moved in more recent times, to avoid demolition (and the Women's Institute at Gnosall in Staffordshire refused to allow the County Council to take theirs to the county museum). Some lock-ups have had a strange variety of roles in more recent times, from a bus shelter to a pizzeria, from public toilets to a wedding venue!

Across England as a whole, there are some 200 surviving lock-ups, though the pattern of their survival has been very haphazard. Robert accepted that he has not studied other counties beyond Derbyshire in any detail. But if the pattern in Derbyshire, where every village had to have a lock-up, were replicated elsewhere, there will have been thousands of lock-ups around the country.

After the talk, there was some useful discussion regarding individual lock-ups known to members present. So, do you know where your local lock-up was? And if not, your homework is to try to find out!



## MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS DURING THE ENGLISH CIVIL WARS

*The Friends' April talk was from Ismini Pells*

Ismini's paper was also concerned with the Civil War Petitions project (as featured in the Hoskins Day lecture) but Ismini was focussing on one aspect of the information that can be recovered from the source material, specifically the medical care on offer during the Civil Wars.

In the popular imagination, early modern medicine was extremely bad. Practice was dominated by

superstition, consisted of barbaric operations in unsanitary conditions and, of course, leeches. Military medicine was, in particular, considered to do more harm than good. Ismini has used the petitions as a source to disprove these assumptions. Arguing that there is evidence of a dramatic improvement in standards of treatment and care, one that was competitive with European practice. The period saw the publication of medical manuals in England, in particular works by the Royalist surgeon Wiseman and the Parliamentary surgeon Cooke. Another question Ismini's work has pursued is was the work of these two men exceptional? Were the majority of civil war surgeons, without the fame and reputation of



Wiseman and Cooke, less capable and more brutal?

The petitions presented to the quarter sessions claiming relief were often accompanied by certificates that provided additional evidence as to the nature and impact of veterans' wounds. There are some 4000 petitions and certificates estimated to have survived, with tens of thousands of payment records in addition. Ismini's talk demonstrated how this material gave evidence of the wounds received, how they were treated, and how this compared to the 'gold standard' embodied by the practice of Wiseman and Cooke, and to military medicine in Europe.

The Civil War Petitions website enables the user to search how wounds were received, and separately by wound location. There are six categories of injury source: shot injuries, blade injuries, burn injuries, exposure and disease, old age, and psychological injuries. Gunshot was the most common cause of injury, which was hardly surprising because of the preponderance of firearms amongst the armies. The largest part of the infantry comprised musketeers, the cavalry also had pistols and firearms, and dragoons were mounted soldiers who dismounted to fight from the ground, most commonly with carbines. Firearms were neither powerful nor accurate in this period. The range of a musket was around 180 metres. Pistols were close-range weapons, with cavalymen often waiting until they were at arms-length to discharge them. But while the firearms were of low velocity, they could cause considerable damage because the soft lead projectiles deformed as they hit their target and caused large cavities. They also often failed to exit the wound. Many gunshot survivors are seen to have lived out their lives with a bullet still lodged in them. Musketeers had no armour, not even helmets, while the breastplates and buff coats worn by troopers would often see off pistol bullets but could be pierced by musket fire. Artillery fire was, of course, generally more deadly, with heavy iron cannon used in sieges, and lighter brass pieces deployed in the field. But the petitions show that even artillery-inflicted wounds were survivable in some cases.

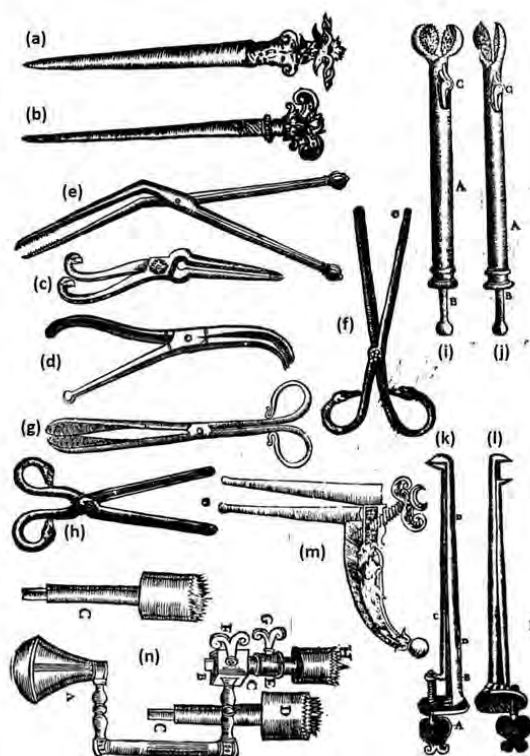
In contrast, wounds inflicted by blades were less common. These could originate from pikes (around one third of the infantry comprised pikemen), low quality infantry swords, or the much higher quality swords carried by the cavalry. Infantrymen generally carried swords for use in self-defence or for finishing off injured enemy. They were also reputedly used in the gathering of firewood. But despite being of poor quality and often abused, as weapons they were still capable of inflicting significant injury. The swords carried by cavalymen were of much higher quality, able to cut to the bone or even sever limbs, especially with the weight of a horse behind them. (At this point Ismini shared a film showing the effectiveness of bladed civil war weapons on the carcass of an unfortunate pig.)

Of the other sources of wounds, some 2% were down to accidents, which included such mishaps as a fall from a horse. There was an amount of burn injuries. These were often accidental and could be caused by such events as powder stores blowing up, or the barrels of muskets exploding. Old age was the most common ailment mentioned in the petitions, with its tendency to exacerbate the effects of wounds suffered during the conflict. Various diseases were made worse by the privations suffered during military campaigns.

There are six categories of injury location: head wounds, torso wounds, arm and leg wounds, foot and hand wounds, eye wounds and ear wounds. So far as location was concerned, the most common were arms, legs, and hands. This largely reflected the survivability of the wounds, but also that such injuries would compromise the ability of veterans to earn a living through manual labour, and so were likely to be represented in the petitions. Injuries to the chest, abdomen and head were much harder to treat, a fact that was recognised by both Wiseman and Cooke. This did not deter surgeons from trying, however, and some 9% of petitioners' wounds were head injuries. There were even records of patients receiving nutrition through tubes inserted through holes in injured jaws. Enteral nutrition can be complex even in modern medicine but was not unknown in the early modern period. Abdominal wounds also appear to have a degree of

survivability, with kidney wounds being considered fairly treatable.

The records allow some names to be given to other competent surgeons who were active during the civil wars. They also illustrate that such competence was by no means unusual. Study also shows that some features that might have been regarded as illustrating neglect, for example leaving bullets in wounds, were the result of considering whether removal might be more likely to lead to greater harm or death. Gangrene was, unsurprisingly, a widespread problem and could fester again some time after the original injury. But in the final analysis, Ismini concluded that the evidence showed civil war surgeons to be capable and competent, with the obscure using the same treatments as the more famous among their number. While many of the veterans never fully recovered from their wounds, there is very little evidence of them feeling bitterness about the treatment they received.



## THE MULTICULTURAL MIDDLE AGES

*The Friends' May talk was by Chris Mitchell.*

This talk aimed unashamedly at busting the historical myths that many of us had been taught at school, based on a particular vision of the past. This was a history of 'goodies' versus 'baddies', 'heroes' versus 'villains' and one where multiculturalism was viewed as a purely modern phenomenon. This attitude is somewhat understandable arising from the society that it did. It arose at a time when society was much more homogenous. Chris illustrated this with some figures about Leicester. In 1951, 99.8% of the population of the city was non-Asian. By 2017, the figures were 62.9% non-Asian and 37.1% Asian. But Chris's research into scientific studies in the medieval world had revealed far more diversity than previous views would lead you to expect.

The talk started with the Roman empire, citing the Twitter spat over a BBC Schools' portrayal of a black high-ranking soldier being stationed in Britain as a demonstration of how some people can get very agitated by a suspicion of 'political correctness' in an historical narrative. But the governor Quintus Lollius Urbicus was a Berber and could lay claim to having been Britain's first black ruler. For high-ranking Roman officials, their adoption of Roman culture was more important than their actual ethnicity. Our culture had in fact been guilty of 'whitewashing', for example, in persistently portraying Jesus as a white European rather than as a Palestinian.

After the fall of the western Roman empire (often taken as the start of the medieval period) ethnic diversity continued to be driven by the four forces of religion, trade, education, and war. Conquest and conflict might most readily spring to mind when contemplating cultural mix in this period. Chris took us on a tour incorporating the effect on native Britons of the arrival of Angles, Jutes, and Saxons, then the effect of the arrival of the Vikings, and finally the Normans. But the picture of these waves of invasion was not as simple as has popularly been thought. Scientific evidence

suggests that Britons were married as well as murdered or driven into the West. The Vikings settled after a period of bloody raiding, the Normans were themselves ethnic Vikings rather than French and William had family connections to the Anglo-Saxon rulers.

Religion has often been conflated with conquest and war, with opponents seeking to spread their faith as well as assert their dominance. But once again the picture of cultural mix was often more subtle and nuanced. Christianity spread through England which had its own effect on the mixing of cultures. King Canute was a Viking but was also a Christian and saw himself as English. Elsewhere in Europe, Spain became an Islamic state, but one where Christianity was tolerated. William the Conqueror introduced Jewish scholars to England, in part because of their Islamic contacts. Even the Crusades were not the straightforward religious conflict that they're often viewed as. Christians sacked Constantinople in the fourth crusade, and tension between Shia and Sunni saw some Muslims fight with Christians rather than against them.

International trade was a well-established feature of medieval England. While the country required spices that came from hotter climes, in return they could offer jewellery, textiles, and mineral resources such as Cornish tin. Such commercial transactions would inevitably involve the interaction of different cultures.

The area of cultural interaction that was of most interest to Chris, however, was undoubtedly that of education and learning. Here again we find a story somewhat at odds with the more traditional historical narrative. The early medieval period was long known as the 'dark ages', in the belief that the

fall of Rome inevitably ushered in a period of ignorance. This rather ignores the achievements of Persian, Indian, and Chinese culture in these periods. The rise of Islam and Arabic culture was especially important to scientific learning. They preserved a knowledge of Greek, and many scholars went to Persia where texts were not condemned, and in Spain later Christian scholars could learn Arabic and gain access to scientific texts. Christianity itself had some requirements that directly stimulated astronomy and mathematics. The need to predict when Easter would fall in any given year (so that 40 days of fasting could be properly scheduled) served to establish monasteries and Cathedral schools as centres of such learning. After the Norman invasion, education developed more rapidly in



England, and this period generally brought a rediscovery of scientific learning for Christian scholars, with Hereford Cathedral becoming a centre of science. The 12<sup>th</sup> century saw the perambulations around Europe and the near East of the Jewish scholar Abraham Ibn Ezra, which brought him eventually to England. In a story of diversity that would earn modern applause, he cooperated with an English scholar and a Croatian scholar, thought to be in a same-sex relationship.

Chris finished with words of warning for the liberals amongst us whose hearts had been warmed by tales of multicultural cooperation. Such scholars were a wealthy and favoured elite. For the vast majority of people, life consisted of hard physical labour, with little opportunity to discover whether travel could broaden the mind. At the very highest levels of society, cultures did indeed mix, but that was emphatically not the experience of the bulk of the population.



# Goodbye *to* Marc Fitch House



Early on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022, a removal team arrived at 3-5 Salisbury Road to start moving the library and other resources of the Centre for English Local History and the Centre for Urban History to the Attenborough Building on the main campus. This marked the end of the Centre's association with Marc Fitch House and a return to the Attenborough Building after 33 years.

During the next two weeks the removal team, supported by the Centre's staff and Friends volunteers, packed the library and map collections into crates, unpacked them onto shelves in their new locations and boxed up materials to go into store. We lost count of the exact numbers but over 400 crates and 300 boxes of research resources were moved in addition to slide collections, map chests full of maps, and other resources.

In the second week of the move, the walls were stripped of artwork which was then professionally wrapped and carried to the University's art store. The famous antique cabinet that stood outside the Seminar Room was swathed in bubble-wrap and moved along with the carved wooden table from the Topographical Library, protected by a leather cover. The stained-glass light in the hallway, the bronze dedication plaque, and even the door plates were among the other treasures packed and moved. And, of course, we did not forget Marcus Aurelius and his pedestal.

Preparations for the move began way back in November 2021 when staff and volunteers gathered at Marc Fitch House to commence a programme of regular working parties. Over the next six months we put the books in order, reviewed the contents of filing cabinets and storage cupboards, tackled the Map Room shelves and the Frances Steer Room (the little room at the back of the Topographical Library) and looked at what was on shelves in corridors and offices. Using floor plans provided by the University's Space Planner we were able to work out in advance what would not fit into the new locations and so could designate in advance those collections to be placed in storerooms in the Attenborough Tower.

We packed up coffee mugs, boxes of wine glasses, and a host of useful items like door stops, kick stools, window hooks, and book ends and made special arrangements for the transport of the teapots, jugs, and tray hand-crafted by ex-students and dedicated to the Centre.

Whilst this was going on, a group of volunteers from the Friends kindly gave their time and efforts to capture over 7,000 entries from the library catalogue into an Excel workbook. Their efforts have already proved invaluable as this spreadsheet made it feasible for us to work through a considerable backlog of new acquisitions and donations over the summer, assisted by two recent graduates employed temporarily by the Centre.

We have had some setbacks including COVID-19 illnesses and the discovery of asbestos in the new Seminar Room but thanks to the efforts of all concerned with the move, we look forward to the launch of the Centre's Resource Room and Seminar Room in October 2022.

We hope the accompanying photographs will be of interest to you and will bring back fond and happy memories of Marc Fitch House. And finally.... before anyone asks, yes, we did check the attic spaces but there was no sign of the legendary WGH diaries.

*Karen Doneganí & Mary Bryceland*



*Staff and associates have been busy as ever with papers and presentations:*

**Dr Angela Muir**

*Publications:*

'Material Encounters: Alternative Uses of Tobacco Pipes in England and Wales, c. 1600-1900' (co-authored with Sarah Inskip, submitted to *Historical Research* July 2022)

'Sex Work and Economies of Makeshift in Eighteenth-Century Wales' in B. Jenkins, P. O'Leary and S. Ward (eds), *Gender in Modern Welsh History* (University of Wales Press, forthcoming, full manuscript submitted to publisher July 2022)

**Dr Richard Jones**

*Publications:*

'The Viking diaspora: historical genetics and the perpetuation of national historiographical traditions', in P. Bauduin and E. D'Angelo (eds), *Les Historiographies des Mondes Normands XVII<sup>e</sup>-XXI<sup>e</sup> Siècle: Construction, Influence, Évolution* (Caen: Press Universitaire de Caen, 2022), pp. 233-245

'A landscape transformed: the English countryside during the long thirteenth century', in M. Müller (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Medieval Rural Life* (London: Routledge, 2022), pp. 351-368

*Conferences:*

16-17 June 2022, 'Feeling place through names', Peasant Experiences, University of Cardiff/MSRG

9 December 2021, 'Early medieval place-names and fluvial geomorphology: the case of wæsse 'land by a meandering river that floods and drains quickly'', Paysages Fluviaux, Université de Bordeaux-Montaigne.

*Media:*

BBC Radio 3 Arts and Ideas Podcast 'New Thinking: Flooding and Energy'  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0c723ms>

**Professor Chris Dyer (Emeritus)**

*Publications:*

*Peasants Making History. Living in an English Region 1200-1540* (Oxford, 2022)

'Small towns and rural landscapes in the later middle ages; insights from an English region', in A.M. da Costa and S. Prato (eds), *Pequenas Cidades no Tempo. O Ambiente e Outros Temas* (Lisbon, 2021), pp. 35-58

'The revolution in constructing peasant buildings in Britain, 900-1300', *Archeologia Dell'Architettura*, 26 (2021) (special issue entitled *Il Paesaggio Pietrificato* edited by F. Giovannini and A. Molinari), pp. 265-273

*Online:*

Christopher Charles Taylor, 7 November 1935 – 28 May 2021 British Academy website.



**Book reviews:**

D. Crouch (ed.), *Howden. Victoria County History, East Riding*, 10, pt 2, in *Northern History*, 58 (2021), p. 312-14.

A. Margetts, *The Wandering Herd. The Medieval Cattle Economy of South-East England*, in *Medieval Settlement Research*, 36 (2021), pp. 115-16

A. Young, *Eckweek, Peasedown St John, Somerset. Survey and Excavations at a Shrunken Medieval Hamlet 1988-90*, in *Medieval Settlement Research*, 36 (2021), pp. 109-10

C. King, *Houses and Society in Norwich, 1350-1660: Urban Buildings in an Age of Transition*, in *English Historical Review*, 137 (2022), pp. 243-5

**Presentations:**

'Before Wat Tyler: peasant rebellions in the east midlands in the thirteenth century', Scarborough Lecture, Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society (on line) September 2021

'Migration and the English Village, 1200-1540: History and Archaeology', Medieval Settlement Research Group Winter Seminar (on line), December, 2021

'Immigrants in Warwickshire 1200-1525', Warwickshire Local History Society (on line), April 2022

'Midland History, vol 1, no. 1, 1971. Was it a good idea?', New Voices in Midlands History, Birmingham, June, 2022

'Alvechurch in the middle ages', Bromsgrove Summer School (on line), July 2022

**Professor Keith Snell (Emeritus)****Publications:**

'Angels in English and Welsh churchyard and cemetery memorials, 1660–2020', *Family and Community History*, 24: 2 (2021), pp. 85-119 (with Rachael Jones)

'A realist evaluation of loneliness interventions for older people', *Age and Ageing*, 50: 6 (Nov. 2021), 2246-2253, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ageing/afab188> (with Simon Conroy)

'Ronald Blythe: 'Just a voice for his time'', *Rural History*, 32: 1 (2021), pp. 3-22.

'Parishes, pandemics and paths to take: post-Covid-19 historical options', *Family and Community History* (Aug. 2022), doi: 10.1080/14631180.2022.2095734

Professor Snell is currently working on a book about Africa and we look forward to that.

**Professor Kevin Schürer (Emeritus)****Publications:**

A. Reid, E. Garrett, H. Jaadla, K. Schürer, K. & S. Rafferty, 'Fatal places? Contextual effects on child mortality in early twentieth century England and Wales', *Social Science History*. (Accepted, submitted June 2022).

K. Schürer, H. Jaadla, A. Reid, & E. Garrett, 'The migration of East European women to England and Wales in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and demographic change', in B. Zucca & N. Roman, *West meets East: mobility of people, exchange of knowledge. Female migration in Europe from the sixteenth to the twenty-first century*, (Cambridge: University Press, submitted June 2022)

H. Jaadla, A. Reid, E. Garrett, & K. Schürer, 'Continuity and change in spatial patterns in the UK fertility: the case of London', in Kreager, P. & Hilevych, Y., *Low Fertility in the Past and Present: Studies in Compositional Demography*, (Oxford: University Press, submitted July 2022).

Having left the University of Leicester in April 2021 to become Professor Emeritus, Prof. Schürer has subsequently been appointed as Principal Research Officer at the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, Cambridge University where he is working on two ESRC-funded research projects: 'Britain's first demographic transition: an integrated geography', for which Prof Alice Reid is PI, and the 'Integrated Census Microdata – 1921' project, for which he is PI.

### Dr Susan Kilby

#### *Publications:*

(With J. Baker and J. Carroll), 'Place-names, people and landscape in medieval Staffordshire' in I. Atherton, M. Blake, A. Sargent and A. Tomkins (eds), *Local Histories: Essays in Honour of Nigel Tringham* (Staffordshire Record Society, Stafford, forthcoming 2022)

#### *Papers:*

Jan 22, 'Naming Elton's Medieval Fields: a Scientific Perspective?', Huntingdonshire Local History Society

Feb 22, 'Bending the Rules: Trespass in Medieval Lakenheath', Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History

Feb 22, 'Flood! Lessons from the past on living with water in the present', Natural Horizons Symposium, Midlands4Cities

Apr 22, 'Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them: the Romanesque Capitals of Castor Church', Middle Nene Archaeology Group

Jul 22, 'Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them: the Romanesque Capitals of Castor Church', St Kyneburgha Buildings Trust

Sep 22, 'Peasant perspectives on the English medieval landscape', Manorial Documents Register Conference organised by The National Archives at the University of Nottingham

Sep 22, 'More on *mōr*', Institute for Name-Studies Seminar, University of Nottingham

In other news, we are pleased to report that **Dr Ismini Pells** (previously of the Centre) has been appointed to a Departmental Lectureship in Local and Social History in the Department for Continuing Education.

<https://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/news/introducing-dr-ismini-pells>

# Ashby Parva Almshouses and School

## *A history of the Goodacre Charity*



**John Goodacre** tells us how the women in his family worked to provide social housing for widows in the Leicestershire Village of Ashby Parva in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

### Foundation 1832

Ashby Parva, as its name implies, has always been a small village. At the enclosure of its open fields in 1665 the villagers abandoned for good their farming of the fields in common and all land in the parish became private property. This change offered new profitable opportunities for yeoman farmers, especially those who raised livestock for the London market. At the same time it emphasized the contrast in the community between them and landless labourers. In a couple of generations the Goodacre family prospered, acquired considerable property in the district and was accepted among the county's gentry.

On the death of John Goodacre II in 1768, his elder son John Goodacre III (1733-1817) inherited the Ashby Parva estate and from the middle of the eighteenth century occupied the Manor House that stands in the centre of the village. Thomas Goodacre, his younger brother (1734-1817), took over the family estate in the neighbouring village of Leire. After his marriage in 1769 Thomas and his wife Lucy lived in the Old Home there. Of their four children only one son survived, another Thomas, who married and had one son, another John. In her old age Lucy lost not only her husband Thomas in 1817, but their son

Thomas in 1818 and their grandson John in 1829; so at her death in 1832, at the age of 90, Lucy Goodacre was the sole survivor of this branch of the Goodacre family.

The Leire properties passed back to the head of the family, John Goodacre IV, owner of the Ashby Parva estate. Lucy, however, still had very substantial personal wealth of her own. In her will she left well over a thousand pounds in cash legacies to a variety of deserving people and causes. The rest, however, she left to Sarah Bowyer.

Sarah Bowyer was Lucy's niece, the daughter of John Goodacre III. She had married a clergyman but was now herself a widow. Her legacy from her aunt was 'to dispose of to such charitable uses as she should think fit'. We may imagine that these two Goodacre widows were aware of the plight of their poorer neighbours, who could not afford schooling for their children or to make provision for their widows, and that they had discussed and planned what charitable uses were needed for their two villages.

Sarah immediately set about the plan of establishing in Ashby Parva both a free school and almshouses for poor widows. The legacy amounted to £6,571 10s. 11d., all of which she



had paid out within months. The plot of ground for the school, opposite the Rectory, she purchased for £28. For the almshouses she paid John Goodacre V (1757-1831) £230 for a plot at the south end of the village, on which there were already two cottages, which she extended to form the row of eight. To endow the Charity with perpetual income she purchased the family's original farm in Stoney Stanton from her nephew Robert Goodacre of Ullesthorpe (1803-1872) for £4,847. For building the school and almshouses and for work on the house and buildings on the Charity's farm she paid £1,168 10s.

Within two years Sarah was ready to hand over all these assets to trustees, together with a detailed scheme of how they were to be used.

The school was to be the residence for a schoolmaster and schoolmistress and, under the same slate roof, two school-rooms. Poor boys and girls between the ages of six and twelve were to be taught free of charge (except for 'Books Pens Ink Paper and Slates'), the boys learning 'Reading Writing and Accounts', the girls the same and in addition 'Knitting and Sewing'. For their trouble in teaching the poor children, the master and mistress were each to receive £15 a year.

Each of the eight almshouses, under the one slate roof, consisted of two rooms, with a fireplace and oven in the living room downstairs and a small grate in the bedroom above. Sarah had already arranged their occupation by eight poor widows and was paying them weekly alms, which amounted to £16 each a year.

The rent of the Charity farm brought in £150 a year, which easily covered these payments and other expenses. Although she had handed everything over to trustees, Sarah Bowyer continued running the trust herself right up to her death in 1841, at the age of 78. Only then did the trustees hold their first meeting.

## The first century 1841-1939

### The Almshouses

Throughout the nineteenth century the

almshouses fulfilled their function in accommodating a steady succession of widows appointed as almswomen. It was made clear in the 1889 revision of its scheme that the Charity was never concerned with the destitute, who ought to be cared for by the Poor Law system and the Lutterworth workhouse. It was directed at the deserving poor, widows of good character from families that had contributed to the community but who were in reduced circumstances and no longer able to work to support themselves. It provided accommodation for them to stay in the village, subsisting on the weekly alms paid by the Charity. Between 1885 and 1891 this was raised by steps from three shillings and sixpence to six shillings a week.

### The School

The small school had its ups and downs. Its most successful period was when the teachers were Henry Tarry and his wife Sarah. They were there in 1841, if not before, and stayed until 1866. It must have been a busy household, as it was not only the school but also the post office. In addition Henry was the parish clerk and, when a survey was needed for the apportionment of tithes in 1848, he surveyed and mapped the whole of the parish, field by field.

The teachers were at liberty to enlarge the school by taking in paying pupils, although there were probably never more than ten boys and fifteen girls at any one time. The 1851 Census shews that the Tarrys had with them five young pupils and a milk boy. Their daughter Elizabeth was still with them, as yet unmarried. She had been a pupil there in 1841 aged twelve. Perhaps she was then a monitor and was now still helping her mother as a teacher. In 1861 Elizabeth's own nine-year-old daughter was there on her own as a scholar.

Maintaining the income of the trust throughout the changes in the economy during the century was always a challenge for the trustees, particularly when a tenant had difficulty in paying the rent for the farm or died. The trustees also had the problem of balancing the rival demands of the school and the almshouses. In 1881 they were reduced to

lowering the salary of the schoolmistress, who was teaching on her own, from £30 to £25; but in the following year they were unable to continue funding the school and gave her notice to resign her situation. The closure of their school at least enabled them to make the increase in payments to the almswomen mentioned.

In 1895, on the initiative of the then Rector and with the help of donations and voluntary subscriptions, the school building was re-opened as a Church of England School. It qualified for an Education Department grant and was eventually run by a board of managers under the Education Act of 1902. The stalwart mistress was Miss E. Hamblin and she had an average attendance of twelve pupils. In 1907 the local authority closed the school as a Public Elementary School; but the Board of Education agreed to it carrying on as a Certified Efficient School. When Miss Hamblin retired owing to ill health in 1915, however, the trustees, noting that there were only eight schoolchildren and no prospect of increase, closed the school for good. In respect of her twenty years service they awarded Miss Hamblin an extra half-year's salary of £20 and allowed her to remain in the school house at a nominal rent of two shillings a quarter.

### The Trust

From its foundation the school room was used for other purposes as well, such as for the Parochial Church Council, the Parish Meeting and the Charity's own trustees. The Parish Meeting paid two shillings and sixpence but any educational use was free of charge. There were also the usual village events such as concerts and socials as well as clubs. So long as the whole building existed as a living household, it was simple to arrange cleaning, coal for the fire and oil for the lamps. Once the school was closed for good, however, the

income the trustees drew from all these uses made of the room could hardly pay for the upkeep of the premises. At least in 1919, when Miss Hamblin moved to No. 2 Almshouse, they could draw rent by letting the school house on the understanding that the tenant would act as caretaker.

The trustees were able to take advantage of the arrival of electricity in the village in 1929 and installed electric lighting for the school as well as the almshouses. In 1931 they also improved the usefulness of the school room by adding the extension on the front of the school to provide an indoor toilet. This was on the initiative of the chairman Hugh Goodacre (1865-1952), who commissioned a design to blend with the existing building.

In general, however, the Charity was in difficulty. At a meeting in 1932 the chairman pointed out that it looked as if they would be celebrating its centenary by reducing its activities, as the four fifths of their income was insufficient to support the full number of almswomen. During the World War that followed the Depression the trustees could not afford the expense of maintaining the farm, which also suffered bomb damage. Eventually in 1944 the Charity Commission gave permission for the trustees to sell it and invested the £3,300 proceeds in 3½% War Stock. At least the income was now constant; but subsequently it seemed that the farm had been sold at the worst time possible and that the investment, out of the control of the trustees, had been unwise.



*Miss Hamblin and pupils outside the School  
detail from postcard c.1910*

After the War the Charity's buildings were not the only ones unimproved and in need of repair. During the reconstruction of housing across the nation under the Welfare State it looked as if almshouses, relics of private patronage, might best be allowed to wither away. The Almshouse Association, however, which started as a movement in London partly

to save historic and attractive old almshouses, began to campaign across the nation that almshouses still had a role in providing retirement homes within, and supported by, local communities – something which the state could not do.

John Goodacre VIII (1905-2002) and Jacqueline his wife (1909-1996) made contact as trustees with the Director of the Association. From 1958 onwards the Director gave advice as to how the trustees could obtain funds to renovate and improve the accommodation offered by the almshouses and, instead of paying alms, charge residents a sum, less than market rent, as a contribution towards maintenance. This is best read in my mother's own account, which follows.

As for the school, he pointed out that the fifth of the Trust's income allotted to it could hardly maintain it, let alone improve its usefulness. If there was a need for it as a village hall, it would be best for it to be run by a separate charity trust and it could then qualify for a grant from the Department of Education.

Mrs Goodacre was already involved in activities in the village which proved such a need did exist. Lutterworth Community College was holding all kinds of adult education classes in the town and villages. She drummed up support for classes in Ashby Parva, such as for painting, keep fit, handicrafts, dressmaking and drama (performances by The Ashby Parva Players), as well as lectures on first aid and nuclear war precautions, so that the Old School

became a regular outpost of the Community College.

Instead of handing over the building to the village in its existing state, the strategy was for the trustees to prepare a design for its improvement, with estimates, and then appeal for funds so that a new village trust could have a flying start in taking it over. The grant work had to be limited to £400, half of which was to be match funded. The proceeds from many village events contributed to the Old School Repair Fund, which within months exceeded the £200 needed. There were hitches in the application and in the end a more ambitious project was undertaken, extending the hall into the dwelling house and replacing the ceiling with a floor so as to form two usable rooms. All this could not have been achieved without the help of Anthony Stuart, the Director of the county's Rural Community Council. In 1968 the building in its improved state was handed over by the Goodacre trustees to become the Village Hall.

Following on her involvement with The Almshouse Association, Mrs Goodacre agreed to serve on the Association's Executive Committee. She regularly attended the meetings in the guild hall of one of the London livery companies. At one meeting in 1966 she formally expressed the gratitude of the Ashby Parva Almshouse trustees to the Association. After she had retired from the Committee and the Trust, her long service to both was recorded in the Association's Gazette.

## **Account of my Almshouse Charity Trusteeship** by Mrs N. J. Goodacre, September 1991

*Shortly after our marriage in 1929 and coming to live in the White House I was appointed as the Almoner by the Goodacre Charity Trustees. The Secretary was then my father-in-law Hugh George Goodacre and he drew out the Alms from the Bank each month and I distributed them to the Almswomen. There were only four widows in receipt of Alms, which amounted to thirty shillings per calendar month each, and that was all the charity funds could afford. The other cottages were "let" at fifteen shillings a quarter to individuals the Trustees considered to be deserving cases, not necessarily widows – there was an old widower among them.*

*Lucy Goodacre's original endowment of the School and the Almshouses had been a farm at Stoney Stanton but the tenant farmers were often unsuccessful and their rent had been reduced*



more than once. This farm was sold in the late 1940s and the money invested in undated Government stocks, which produced an income of about £120 p.a. That was all there was to maintain both the Almshouses and the Old School.

I was appointed a Trustee and Honorary Secretary in 1954-5 and I happened to read a newspaper article about John Betjeman's concern to preserve architecturally interesting almshouses. The article also mentioned the existence of the National Association of Almshouses, to whom I wrote for information. Their Director, Mr Leonard Hackett, was touring the English Counties holding meetings to which he invited interested charities. John and I attended one such in the Leicester County Rooms in 1957. The Charity joined the N.A.A. for a yearly subscription of ten shillings and Mr Hackett visited the Almshouses the following year. He was highly critical of their condition, the way the money had been badly invested and the extent to which their Charity scheme of 1889 had been ignored instead of being brought up to date by referring to the Charity Commission.

He advised us to get an up-dated scheme sanctioned forthwith and to invest the money in the fund set up by the N.A.A. especially for almshouse Charities. He said that in order to bring the condition up to an appropriate standard we could apply for a housing grant and mortgage the property to the local authority. He suggested that we approach some member of the local authority to become a Trustee. He pointed out that we could then charge the widows weekly contributions, since in the Welfare State there was no place for private pensions.

All these measures advised by Mr Hackett applied only to the Almshouses. He counselled us to off-load the Old School building by applying to the Ministry of Education with the purpose of making it into a Village Hall maintained by its own Committee. Colonel Jock Atkins was Chairman of the Trustees and was invaluable in his willingness to shoulder all these responsibilities. It was at his suggestion that Mr McNaught the local council Surveyor became a Trustee, and he proved an excellent source of practical advice. The N.A.A. appointed one of their advisory architects to prepare improvement plans.

The mains water and drainage had reached Ashby Parva in 1956; so the residents no longer had to fetch water in cans from Gilberts Farm across the road or pump rainwater from the butt at the back of the entry. We had fitted each one of them with a cold water tap above their sink in their cubby-holes under the stairs which passed for kitchens, but the only sanitation was four brick built bucket closets out in the garden. There was everything to improve.

Personally I found the ensuing paper-work endless and rather terrifying and was only sustained by the confidence of Colonel Atkins and Dr Rowan Mitchell and Mr McNaught. I had no secretarial training or ability and I relied heavily on the advice given by the N.A.A. and on a succession of exceedingly helpful Westminster Bank Managers at Lutterworth, who did the accounts in their spare time.

Before doing up the Old School as a Village Hall we concentrated on the improvements to the Almshouses, until we had achieved bathroom-lavatories partitioned off from the bedrooms, new coal grates in the living-rooms, total re-roofing, a damp-proof course round the entire building, little electric cookers in the kitchen-cubby-holes and electric water-heating.

We had fearful hitches along the way. We had never got along well with the architect and the builder went bankrupt halfway through the work, which entailed further expense when it had to be re-estimated to be finished off by Walter Wright of Ullesthorpe. We had as a result to increase our

mortgage. But all was concluded – and much appreciated – by 1966. Mr McNaught died and we appointed Mr Roger Keene architect of Leire as Trustee and from then on he has designed all our improvements. The N.A.A. introduced us to Baron Davenport's Charity of Birmingham, which was most generous in sponsoring first the front porches, then the proper kitchens in the extension along the back, further off-peak electric heating, telephone alarm system, and now a further extension of downstairs loos and a store.

I have not had any of the work to do for these last up-to-date improvements and am grateful to have been able to admire how well the new Secretary and the Chairman have been tackling it all. I was always able to rely on my Chairman's co-operation during my 37 years of being secretary. I have worked under four, Col Atkins, Mr McNaught, Dr Mitchell and Mr Roger Hippisley Cox. The N.A.A. has been unremittingly helpful when dealing with the Charity Commission on our behalf and suggesting ways we could improve our Charity financially and practically. They appointed me to their National Committee in London, where I always tried to represent small country almshouse charities of no particular architectural importance but of great human value in a country village.

As neighbours our family all took great interest in the residents. As soon as we had Charity Commission permission to charge them a weekly sum, I called on each one regularly on an arranged day of the week to give them receipts and I much enjoyed our weekly chats. When I was very young some of them overawed me, the manner of their upbringing being so very formal compared to my own, and I consciously avoided all contentious subjects. I took care to start a fresh topic of conversation at each house and never to quote any one of them to another for fear of giving offence or causing arguments among them. They gave me advice and recipes, they knitted garments for my recurring next baby and they helped us eat up our own surplus home-grown vegetables or windfall apples from our garden so that nothing was wasted. As we all got older together I lost my awe of them and I shall always think of them as the many friends we were lucky to have just outside our garden gate, a row of individual grandmothers whose old age it was a pleasure to take some trouble to make more comfortable.

*Slate plaque on the front of the Village Hall*



## The Almshouses today

After nearly two centuries, the Charity founded by Sarah Bowyer out of her legacy from her aunt Lucy Goodacre survives, divided into its two branches. Its original buildings, the School and the Almshouses, both grade II listed buildings, continue their central roles in the village community, managed as separate charity trusts, namely The Ashby Parva Village Hall (No.521384) and Goodacre's Almshouse Charity (No.218757).

An account of the success of the Ashby Parva Village Hall Management Committee in providing the venue for pre-school activities and all sorts of village meetings, courses, concerts and events, is beyond the scope of this text.

The Almshouses are run by the trustees, who are unpaid volunteers and are responsible for implementing the revised scheme of governance made by the Charity Commission in 1960. This scheme was also modified in 2001 to remove the restriction which limited the appointment of residents to widows only. There are at present six trustees, including the Chair, Treasurer, Minutes Secretary and the current Rector. The trustees have also never lacked a member of the Goodacre family.

The main strength of the Trust is that the trustees are local neighbours of the Almshouse residents. They meet approximately six times a year, usually in the evening. Additionally they operate a rota, by which each month there is one trustee who undertakes to visit or otherwise check on each resident to ensure their wellbeing or to pick up any concerns.

Apart from care for the residents, there is the challenge of maintaining the structure of these old cottages and adapting them to modern requirements and to the needs of the residents. A list summarising what has been achieved since the 1960s follows.

To maintain the continuity of the Ashby Parva almshouse foundation into the future and to

deal with the natural turnover of members, the trustees are looking for new neighbours who would like to volunteer and join them for a time in this rewarding double task.

The trustees have a declared aim to make daily life as easy as possible and to encourage neighbouring residents to help and support each other, make friends and share a wider social life. In this they are following the lead of The Almshouse Association, which has defined the current role of almshouses and aims to spread awareness of how they continue "to provide a strong sense of community; offering safety and security, and making it possible for those in need to continue to live independently, in a locality of their choice, often near to families."

### **Ashby Parva Almshouses** *Improvements to the premises since the restorations completed in 1962*

1976	Rear access from Dunton Lane to back garden
1977	Front porches
1979	Back kitchen extensions under porch roof
1980	Back garden tree planting
1991	Back lobby and downstairs toilet extensions
1999	Fountain in back garden
2007-2008	New kitchens and cookers
2013	Secondary glazing to front windows
2014-2020	Baths replaced by electric showers
2015	Replacement rear windows double glazed
2016	Replacement front windows double glazed
2020	Gas central heating

### **Since 2001, the scheme has stipulated:**

"The almswomen shall be women in need generally with a preference to be given to applicants who are widows in need."





*Almshouses 1 to 4 back view 1977*



*Almshouses 5 to 8 back view 1979*



*Almshouses 1 to 4 back view 2021*



*Almshouses 5 to 8 back view 2021*

# A Life in the Day of Coventry Artist Sydney J Bunney, 1877-1928.

**Stewart Fergusson** shares the story of an artist whose topographical sketches left a record of a Coventry that has disappeared due to WW2 bombing and relentless redevelopment.

Coventry has a legacy of native topographical artists. It is not unique, nor can it boast artists of the first rank such as J.M.W. Turner. But the work of these Coventry artists has a distinct character and is an important source for local history depicting the physical character of the City and its surrounding countryside before relentless redevelopment and the ravages of the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war changed it completely. This artistic tradition owes much to the influence of the Coventry School of Art founded in 1843 which served as a training centre for designers associated with the weaving industry but also flourished as centre for local artists and painters.

The city is also blessed that much of this output of topographical painting, drawing and etching has been collected in the Herbert Art gallery. Of some 4,700 works listed in the Herbert's handlist of its permanent collection over 1200 are views of Coventry and its environs. Many works have been donated since 1945 by people aware of the sudden change in the physical characteristics of the city. Others have been purchased to add to this record of the old City. In the local archives there are also the 10 volumes of drawings by Nathaniel Troughton, recently digitised.

The early topographical artists included Henry Jeayes, the son of a Coventry ribbon maker, working at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. He illustrated a new edition of Dugdale's *Antiquities of Warwickshire*. There are also the watercolours of Edward Rudge, a Birmingham artist, who depicted Coventry and Warwickshire in the first two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In the next two decades, David Gee and Samuel Lines produced images of Coventry, with David Gee also noted for his depiction of the annual Lammas Day ride and the Godiva procession.

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century we have the evocative and large collection of Nathaniel Troughton's sketches, the close studies of architectural features of old Coventry buildings by David Waters and the photolithographs of G R Webster.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Coventry School of Art produced some noted native artists, prominent amongst them Herbert Cox and Florence Weston, an amateur local historian who gave talks on various old buildings often illustrated with her glass plate photographs that are held in the local archives. But the most original artist of this period was Sydney J Bunney. So, who was Bunney and what distinguishes his work?

In late spring 1916 Britain was preparing for the great offensive of the Somme. Coventry was at the heart of this effort. There was not just the recruitment of soldiers to fight, but Coventry's engineering firms were switching from the manufacture of civilian transport to filling military contracts for vehicles, planes, guns and munitions.

One such firm was William Hillman's The Auto Machinery Company of Hillfields that made steel balls and ball bearings. 1916 was a busy time for the company as they sought to fill government armament contracts and recruit people, particularly women, to replace the men who had just been conscripted into the forces. Amongst their employees was Sydney J Bunney a clerk in accounts.

Bunney was born in 1877 at Paynes Lane where his father worked in the ribbon top-shops. In 1916 this devoted family man and churchman was living at 154 Albany Road in the Coventry suburb of Earlsdon. He was entering his fortieth year and does not seem to have been caught by the military conscription introduced in January 1916.

The Auto Machinery Company gave him a living but his real passion was painting and drawing. As a teenager in 1892 he had been a student at Coventry School of Art studying first under John Anderson, a noted landscape oil painter in the manner of the popular Pre-Raphaelites, and then William Henry Milnes. Milnes recognised his talent and in 1899 probably secured him a studentship at South Kensington Art School, now the Royal College of Art, where Milnes had also studied.

In 1907 Milnes set up the Coventry School of Art Sketch Club and Bunney became its first secretary. He held this post until 1909 but remained a member of the Club until 1916.

Up until 1913 Bunney's artistic output was limited, just a handful of pictures a year mainly careful drawings and paintings of streets near his boyhood home in Hillfields, Christchurch Steeple and an interior of St Mary's Guildhall.

But from 1913 his more distinctive and original impressionist approach emerged. Milnes had encouraged his students in '...Turner's manner of making notes, as it were, quick sketches of certain things under varying conditions, and thereby gaining a better knowledge of nature in all her various moods...' and he went on that Coventry's buildings were ideal for representing the effects of light. Inspired by Milnes, Bunney would walk the streets of Coventry sketching in paint several views of the same scene, from different angles and under different light.

He seems to have spent every spare moment from 1916 sketching and painting his City. When interviewed by the Coventry Evening Telegraph in March 2000 his 94 year old son Wilfred, noted that 'Father carried a pad of water-colour paper with him wherever he went' and 'whenever he saw something worth recording he would sketch the scene and finish colouring it at home' He averaged 42 compositions a year during the war years and in the 1920s 45 a year with 1922 being his most prolific period in which he painted 124 scenes from Coventry

He dated every one of his sketches and despite the demands of war work, in the second half of

May 1916 Bunney was out regularly on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays sketching different views of Gosford Street. On Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May, a warm spring day, he did a study of a row of shops that serves as an interesting social as well as topographical record of this old Coventry thoroughfare. Using Spennell's Annual Directory of Coventry and District for 1912/3 we can determine the owners of this row of buildings. There was Sydney Fancott the butcher next to Mrs Booth, provisions dealer. Henry Ames was a wardrobe dealer '...for Good Left Off Clothing...' then Henry Suter a confectioner and William Guest a motor fitter. In June he was at Butcher Row, soon to be demolished to make way for Trinity Street; and in November of that year Cook Street and Swanswell Gates were his preoccupation. Bunney was an active churchman in his local community and was deeply concerned about the social issues of the day. He kept a hard backed exercise book with his thoughts on, amongst other things, poor housing in the city and the politics of the General Strike.

He had difficulty exhibiting his work in major exhibitions, as his sketches were invariably small. He was painting Coventry right up to his death in 1928.

His corpus of work of over 500 paintings and drawings held by the Herbert Art Gallery covers Coventry's landmark historical buildings, detailed architectural features of doorways, gates etc, street scenes, inns and taverns, early industrial buildings and open spaces in and around Coventry. They have become an important source for architects and historians as accurate records of Coventry in the first three decades of the twentieth century.





© Herbert Art  
Gallery and  
Museum  
Coventry

Gosford Street. A social as well as a topographical record: 'There was Sydney Fancott the butcher next to Mrs Booth, provisions dealer. Henry Ames was a wardrobe dealer '...for Good Left Off Clothing...' then Henry Suter a confectioner and William Guest a motor fitter.



© Herbert Art Gallery and Museum  
Coventry

Cook Street Gate



## St Nicholas & St Cyriac, South Pool

*Richard Stone shares the details of a delightful church he encountered this summer*



My summer holiday was spent in the delightfully secluded village of South Pool, at the head of one of the tidal creeks that stretch like fingers off the Kingsbridge/Salcombe estuary, in South Devon. I stayed in a converted Church House. In the medieval period people met in the nave of their parish church for secular purposes such as festivals, fairs, and fund-raising church ales. Usually, it was the only building large enough to accommodate a gathering of any size. By the late 15<sup>th</sup> century secular use of the church, particularly where drinking was involved, became increasingly frowned upon. After the Reformation the introduction of pews restricted space in the nave. Many villages responded by building a separate church house, the equivalent of a modern church hall. Devon has more church houses than any other county. Many, as at South Pool, have outside stairs to an upper floor where presumably

events were held with the ground floor reserved for brewing and storage.

The parish church, dedicated to St Nicholas and St Cyriac, built of local slate rubble, contains much of interest as well as raising some interesting questions. A noticeboard says 'dedicated in 1318' and much of the fabric fits that date. A three-stage tower with a stair turret and south aisle were added during the 15<sup>th</sup> century. However, the four-bay north aisle is clearly earlier, as is the south porch which contains evidence of a porch altar on the east side with a niche for a cross in the centre. A primitively carved waisted-tub font can be no later than 1200.

Throughout the medieval period the church porch was commonly used for secular business transactions, especially anything involving promises or oaths. Marriage vows were

frequently exchanged in the church porch. Before Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1754 'for the better prevention of clandestine marriage', simple consent was all that was required for a marriage to be legally recognised. It was not necessary to marry in the church itself. Think of it as similar to an engagement today. In Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* the Wife of Bath has had five husbands 'at the church door'. If a couple did marry in church, the service would begin in the porch before the couple were led into church by the priest for a blessing at the altar. The porch was where women awaiting 'churching' after childbirth, those undergoing penance, or not full members of the Church, for example those receiving instruction, were allowed to hear and take part in services at one remove.

The 15<sup>th</sup>-century rood screen no longer has its cross but has otherwise survived the Reformation fairly intact, along with the stairs to the rood loft, a gallery once reserved for

singers and musicians. Some limited restoration of the parclose screen has taken place but much of the original painted decoration remains.

There are memorials to a former rector, Thomas Bryant d.1540; and in alabaster to local MP Leonard Darre, d.1615 and his wife Joan. A much earlier effigy of an unknown lady is carved in low profile, a style suggesting it is no later than 1320, and may be associated with the recorded dedication and presumably re-dedication given the earlier elements, of the church in 1318. The prominent local gentry at the time were the Scobbahull family. She may be Margery, wife of Thomas Scobbahull and mother of Sir Robert.

A fascinating church off the beaten track, more easily accessible by sea than by land. St Nicholas, the co-dedicatee, is appropriately the patron saint of sailors among others.







# Friends news

*Highlights of what Friends have been up to in the past year.*

## **Richard Stone**

### *Book reviews:*

Tristram Hunt, *The Radical Potter: Josiah Wedgwood and the Transformation of Britain*, in *The Historian*, 151 (Autumn 2021) p.4.

Lelia Packer and Ashok Roy, *Frans Hals 'The Male Portrait'*, in *The Historian*, 151 (Autumn 2021) p.4.

Fay Blanchard and Anthony Spira (Editors), *Laura Knight, A Panoramic View*, in *The Historian*, 152 (Winter 2021/22) p.35.

Simon Jenkins, *Europe's 100 Best Cathedrals*, in *The Historian*, 152 (Winter 2021/22) p.4.

Mike Rendell, *The Grand Tour*, in *The Historian*, 153 (Spring 2022) p.4.

## **Hubertus R Drobner**

The University of Leicester conferred the degree of Doctor of Letters on 19 January 2022. On 15 October 2021, Pope Francis reappointed Hubertus a Member of the Pontifical Commission of Christian Archaeology for five more years.

### *Papers:*

"The challenges of a new chronology of Augustine's sermons", Villanova University, Philadelphia, USA, 21st September 2021

"Beyond reasonable doubt: The core of the debate on the chronology of Augustine's Sermons", at the Annual Meeting of the North American Patristics Society, Chicago, 28th May 2022

"Augustine the Preacher: ancient words – modern message", Arrupe University, Harare, Zimbabwe, 20th September 2022

### *Publications:*

Augustins Predigten: „Dokumente prallen Lebens“. *Animation zu frischer Lektüre*, in: *Römische Quartalschrift* 116 (2021), pp 1-13.

Love and Fear – Antitheses and Interdependent Complements in *Augustine of Hippo*, in: *Studia Patristica* 116 (2021), pp. 27-36.

Treacherous transmission: The Case of Augustine's Sermons 151-156, in: *Making and Unmaking of Ancient Memory*. Edited by Martine De Marre and Rajiv K. Bhola (Routledge Monograph in Classical Studies), London-New York 2022, pp. 241-255.

## **Carol Cambers**

### *Publication:*

R. Adam, C. Cambers, P. Lidiker and A. Newman, *Sharing Our Heritage* (Leicester, 2022)

## **Stewart Fergusson**

### *Paper:*

*Robert Beake: Coventry's Godly Magistrate*. Midland History Conference. University of Birmingham, June 2022

# Friends & news

## Yvonne Cresswell

### Book review:

Simon Parkin, *The Island of Extraordinary Captives: A True Story of an Artist, a Spy, and a Wartime Scandal* (2022), Isle of Man Studies: Proceedings of the Isle of Man Natural History & Antiquarian Society (forthcoming publication)

### Guided Walks:

*Tour of WW2 Douglas Promenade Camps/ Mooragh Camp (Ramsey) & WW1 Knockaloe Camp*, Jewish Renaissance Group Tour to Isle of Man 'Enemy Aliens on Isle of Man', Isle of Man, 27th-30th March 2022.

*Tours of Mooragh Camp*, Ramsey, Isle of Man, 11th & 13th July 2022

*Tour of WW2 Mooragh Camp*, Ramsey, Isle of Man, Bushey U3A Group, 6th September 2022

*Tour of Isle of Man's Second World War Internment Camps*, Isle of Man, 13th September 2022

### Papers/ Presentations/ Talks (in person):

*Living with the Wire: Civilian Internment in the Isle of Man during Two World Wars*, 'Introduction to the Isle of Man' module/ BA (Hons) History & Heritage, University College Isle of Man, 5th January 2022

*Living with the Wire: Civilian Internment on the Isle of Man during the Second World War*, Laxey Miner Birds WI, Laxey, Isle of Man, 1st March 2022

*My Favourite Bits of the National Art Collection*, Peel Heritage Trust, Peel, Isle of Man, 16th March 2022

*A Place to Nature Manx Art: History of the Douglas School of Art*, Friends of Manx National Heritage, Manx Museum, Douglas, Isle of Man, 21st March 2022

*Manx Art & Design: Manx National Art Collection*, 'Introduction to the Isle of Man' module/ BA (Hons) History & Heritage, University College Isle of Man, 5th January 2022

*Living with the Wire: Civilian Internment on the Isle of Man during the Second World War*, Jewish Renaissance Group Tour to Isle of Man 'Enemy Aliens on Isle of Man', Douglas, Isle of Man, 27th March 2022

*Second World War Internment Art Collection (lecture & workshop)*, Art UK/ Manx National Heritage (part of 'Art That Made Us Festival'), Manx Museum, Douglas, Isle of Man, 20th April 2022

*Living with the Wire: Civilian Internment on the Isle of Man during the Second World War & Mooragh Camp*, Bushey U3A Group, Ramsey, Isle of Man, 6th September 2022

### Papers/ Presentations (online):

*From Internee to Art Collector: Tribute to Ruth Borchard*, Insiders Outsiders Festival online lecture series, 30th September 2021

*Not Just a Pretty Picture: Art as a Historical Source*, Leicester Vaughan College, 18th November 2021

*Living with the Wire: Civilian Internment on the Isle of Man during the First World War, Part 1*, Anglo-German Family History Society, 11th December 2021



**Maureen Harris**

Launch of the Warwickshire Civil War 'Loss Accounts' database, 26 March 2022, Maureen writes:

"After setting up and leading the 'Loss Accounts' 'Public History' project (2018-2020) funded by NLHF, the database was officially launched on 26 March. It's a transcription by volunteers and me of nearly 200 'Loss Accounts', the first time a whole county's 'Accounts' have been transcribed in full. The database was digitized and is maintained by Warwickshire County Record Office on: <https://heritage.warwickshire.gov.uk/civilwaraccounts>. I'm now editing the transcription for a volume to be published by the Dugdale Society in 2023."

*Publications:*

'Living Through the English Civil Wars: The Warwickshire "Loss Accounts" Project' *Midland History*, Vol 46 No: 3, November 2021, pp. 341-343 (an account of how this project started and its impact)

'Civil War Loss Accounts' *Who Do You Think You Are?* magazine, Issue 195, September 2022, pp. 46-48 (explains what the 'Accounts' are and includes a facsimile page with notes and further resources)

"'A crack'd mirror': reflections on 'godly rule' in Warwickshire in 1662", in Fiona McCall (ed.), *Church and people in interregnum Britain*, (London 2021) pp. 245-274

**Pam Fisher***Publications:*

*St Andrew's Church, Coston, Leicestershire: A History and Guide* (Leicester, 2021), 52pp.

*Talks:*

'Ibstock: More than just a Mining Village', to Evington History and Heritage Group, October 2021

**Jeremy Lodge**

*A Rural Railway: The Midland Railway – Lincoln to Newark Line*, ([www.nottinghambooks.co.uk](http://www.nottinghambooks.co.uk), 2022) - reviewed on page 56



*News from the*

# Victoria County History

It has been another busy year for the Victoria County History, based with the Centre for English Local History, now in Attenborough Tower. The office move went as smoothly as can be expected, and we have now also taken over many of the items that were held by the Charnwood Roots project (which finished in 2017), with the test-pitting equipment given to ULAS (University of Leicester Archaeology Services) for use in other community archaeology projects.

We were sorry to lose Dr Andrew Hopper from the Executive Committee and as Chair of our Volunteers and Research sub-committee last autumn, but were pleased to welcome in his stead, and as a trustee, Dr Richard Jones, Associate Professor of Landscape History in ELH and known to many readers of this Newsletter.

Research, as ever, has been concentrated in a small number of parishes, with funds stretched to maintain as much momentum as possible. We are always trying to increase awareness of our project across the county, as the number of regular donors is declining. This has largely been done through social media, as events have not yet recovered to pre-pandemic levels, and we are heavily reliant on a very small number of people to give talks or take displays around the county.

We were pleased to attend the Global History Leicester Festival at De Montfort University in April, where we heard some interesting talks that will be relevant to our Loughborough

research, and were able to display some of our initial research into the religious and cultural diversity of Loughborough. We also had a stand at a heritage open day at Snibston Colliery and another in Heather at the invitation of Ibstock Historical Society. Only one talk has been delivered, on the history of Ibstock to Evington History and Heritage Group, by Dr Pam Fisher.

Our paperback history of Lutterworth, by Dr Pam Fisher and Dr Andrew Watkins, has been completed, and will be published in October 2022. This is the first history of a market town to be published in the Leicestershire VCH series since 1964, and tells the history of Lutterworth from earliest times to the present day. The need for VCH histories to run to the present day caused a few last minute changes as the country came out of the pandemic, with the United Reformed Church, for example, which has its roots in the Civil War period, having closed permanently during the lockdowns.

A project to help the villagers in Coston (in NE Leics.) learn more about their church and the 'humps and bumps' in the field opposite concluded at the end of 2021, with a guide book and leaflet about the church written by Dr Pam Fisher delivered to the church (with copies deposited at the Record Office). This research has also been structured as two VCH parish history sections and these are available online at

<https://www.history.ac.uk/research/victoria-county-history/county-histories-progress/leicestershire/coston>

We are very grateful to Dr Alan Fox, who has produced a draft parish history of Brooksby, which is also available online, at <https://www.history.ac.uk/research/victoria-county-history/county-histories-progress/leicestershire/brooksby>. Brooksby parish is bisected by the road from Melton Mowbray to Leicester and is perhaps best known today for being the campus of an agricultural college. The manor was owned by the Villiers family, and the village was depopulated in 1492 when Sir John Villiers enclosed 160 acres of open-field arable land. The family sold the estate in 1711 to absentee landowners. Brooksby Hall was purchased 200 years later by David Beatty (later admiral and 1st earl Beatty). He commissioned a monument in the church in memory of the (named) officers and (unnamed) men who were killed in the Battle of Jutland, 31 May 1916.

Dr Andrew Watkins has been researching medieval Loughborough for the VCH and is currently writing up his findings. He is uncovering some interesting information about trade and piety, and a walk round the town has helped him to visualise the topography. More will be revealed in the next Newsletter!

Dr Pam Fisher has begun to research the social, cultural and religious history of Loughborough since 1750, which is to be our main focus of the Trust now the Lutterworth history has gone to press. This is a major project, and the Trust will need to attract substantial additional funds to complete this work, which it is hoped will be published as a paperback. Preliminary work, including establishing contacts with all the (many) present places of worship in the town, and identifying all the past and present schools, is nearing completion and will provide a framework for the more detailed research which we hope will follow. Events in 2022 to

mark the anniversaries of Indian partition (75 years) and the arrival of Ugandan Asians (50 years) have provided opportunities to explore these topics, as did a busy South Asian Heritage Month (mid-July to mid-August), which included a chance to learn to make samosas and dress in a sari.

*Dr Pam Fisher*



*Pam models a sari*



*Gurdwara Sahib (Guru's Door). Opened for worship in 1982*



# Centre for Regional and Local History Launch Day

**Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2022**

On the afternoon of 5<sup>th</sup> October, the Friends joined the staff, students, alumni and well-wishers for the launch of the Centre for Regional and Local History and to celebrate the opening of the new Resource Centre. It was great to see so many Friends there despite the rail strike and the decidedly autumnal weather.

The Centre for English Local History is now renamed the **Centre for Regional and Local History** with offices and a library on the eighth floor of the Attenborough Tower and a Library/Map Room on the first floor of the Seminar Block which will also be the venue for the Centre's seminars. Colleagues from the Centre for Urban History, East Midlands Oral History Archive and Leicestershire Victoria County History are located nearby and will share the Centre's resource rooms.

Guests were able to browse the library collections and workspaces and take away a few choice volumes from the book stall. The Centre's facsimile copy of the Domesday Book took centre-stage in Room 101, laid out on the "Domesday Table" which sat for many years in the Topographical Library at Marc Fitch House, hidden under its protective cover. Much needed refreshments were provided in the foyer area outside Room 101 where guests reunited with friends and colleagues.

Dr Angela Muir welcomed everyone and explained that the decision was made to rename the Centre in order to better describe its evolving strategic purpose which is to teach and research history at the highest academic level through the lens of local studies, with a broader geographical remit and a more diverse approach. To support the post-graduate and research students, the Centre has provided more and better workspaces within the Centre and is maintaining resource libraries. She

expressly thanked the Friends for their support over the years and made special mention of the volunteers who digitised the card catalogue and set up the libraries. On behalf of the Centre, Richard Jones presented flowers and wine to Karen Donegani and Mary Bryceland in appreciation of their assistance in the relocation and set up of the libraries.

Professor Roey Sweet, the Director of the Centre for Urban History, also welcomed the opportunity to provide workspaces and resources for postgraduate and research students within the Centre, a sentiment echoed by Professor Teela Sanders, Dean of Research and Enterprise for the College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities.

Information on how to access the Resource Rooms are now open and information on how to access the Centre's libraries is provided on the Friends' website

<https://www.englishlocalhistory.org/wp/library>.

You can read more about the Centre's strategic approach on the University Website

<https://le.ac.uk/news/2022/october/local-history>.



*Karen and Mary*



*Entrance to room 101*



*Guests arriving*



*Stairwell*



*Roey and Simon*



*Room 101*

# MA Dissertations

Sarah Cooley

## **‘Tenne peeces of pewter’: Material Culture in Early Modern Wales**



Pewter, traditionally researched by the enthusiast to provide a vade mecum for the avoidance of counterfeit items is now used by historians of seventeenth and eighteenth-century material culture. It is a good example of a traditional possession with which to compare the ownership patterns of later wares such as china or glassware. Much information on pewter and its ownership comes from probate records notably, inventories which due to the detailed information they contain, have been recognised as a valuable research source since the mid-twentieth century.

However, a detailed examination that brings the strands of probate and pewter ownership together for early-modern Wales is lacking; consequently, the ability to understand the patterns of pewter ownership in Wales in the period thereby allowing comparison and contrast with the English experience is limited. This dissertation uses probate inventories for Wales for the period 1580-1640 to fill this gap and looks to answer questions concerning the availability and physicality of pewter in Wales, and patterns of ownership and highlights research avenues down which to explore further. Within the limitations of the data sample, it demonstrates that while pewter ownership in Wales did not reach the extent of its English neighbours, due in part to reduced availability ownership patterns were broadly in line on both sides of the border. It also identifies inferences that can be made about the form and function of Welsh owned pewter and that for the middling sort, like in England, the outward presentation of their pewter was an important part of their identity.

Emily Cotton

## **“I am eternally reminded of you”: Love, loss and longing amongst the Robinson siblings, 1758-92**

The history of siblinghood in England has received increased attention in recent years, with novel works focusing on emotional ties between brothers and sisters. However, a narrative still strongly prevails that sees eighteenth-century siblings ties as weak, hostile, or emotionally void. Using four decades of personal correspondence, this paper focuses on the Second Baron Grantham and his siblings, an elite eighteenth-century sibling group, to address this disparity. In line with recent studies, the dissertation argues that the siblings of this study enjoyed a deep emotional bond that prevailed and strengthened against significant tragedy. The paper examines how the siblings recognized and expressed their affection, obligation and protective duties to one another in order to establish the depth of feeling present amongst the brothers and sisters in a varied sibling hierarchy, illustrating that a deep emotional bond existed over an understudied part of the life course. Secondly, by assessing two significant challenges to these sibling ties the dissertation will investigate how the relationship was impacted by prolonged separation and bereavement, hurdles sufficient enough to make the ties between siblings vulnerable and which could lead to estrangement. However, this article will reveal not only that a deep emotional bond existed between the siblings, but that this bond ultimately prevailed and arguably strengthened in the wake of challenge, and across time and space. The dissertation therefore shows that the ties between siblings was more than economically centred and cold. It was instead, in many cases, enduring and powerful, of which Grantham and his siblings serve as a prime example. Within this, the dissertation will also explore what affection and expression reveals about questions of emotion, gender, and epistolary form in the late eighteenth century.



Denise Greany

**'We Did Not Go'; Domestic Sociability in an Early Nineteenth' Century Provincial Town**

Early nineteenth-century women are often described as existing within a separate, domestic sphere. A cult of domesticity is said to have dominated female sociable lives, removing them from productive labour and the sites of commercial public leisure, and reframing them instead as regulators of private havens. There are, however, few accounts of provincial female sociability in the early nineteenth century. The 1820s, in particular, seem to disappear in the apex between the long eighteenth and long nineteenth centuries. Those accounts that do exist, centre the experiences of elite, urban or literary women. This study of the diary of a lower middle-class woman in a rural provincial location seeks to complicate the narrative of economically disengaged and domestically constrained female social lives. It traces the operation of female visit culture from the roads around the town, through the urban spaces of local public culture and into the parlours, kitchens and sick rooms of female activity. In doing so it suggests that the domestic realm was more expansive, productive and heterosocial than other studies have suggested, characterised by widespread female mobility and agency. This dissertation suggests that care for the sick provided as significant a motivation, location and routine for provincial female sociable lives as courtship, religious observance and commercial activity.

Judy Somekh

**The Left Behind: The Story of the Wives of Convicts Transported from Britain to Australia, 1830-1850.**

This dissertation studies the transportation of British convicts to Australian penal colonies from the perspective of the wives of married convicts who were 'left behind' when their husbands were deported in the 1830s and 1840s. A life-writing approach is used, weaving together fragmentary evidence from a variety of sources to identify some of the specific issues 'left behind' wives faced and to detect their agency in facing these challenges. The study examines some of the negative imagery arising from different sections of the anti-transportation movement, together with tropes and stereotypes about transported convicts and their families in popular literature, to suggest reasons why these women might have wanted to avoid attention. An examination of the law applicable to convicts and their wives identifies some specific ways in which the civil status of 'left behind' wives remained linked to that of their husbands and the legal disabilities which followed from this. Evidence of official attitudes towards the 'left behind' by those responsible for the administration of poor relief is traced against a backdrop of changes in Poor Law policy. The study shows how the existence of 'left behind' women in the space between metropole and colony raised some important questions about the nature of punishment, the role of women and what empire meant for ordinary people in early Victorian society.

## Hoskins-Duffield fund recipients

This year, the Centre awarded Hoskins-Duffield funds to three postgraduate students to support their research this summer. This pot of money has sat dormant for the past couple of years, but the Centre was able to convince the University to allow them to spend some of it to support student research activities. The hope is to continue to do so at least twice per academic year. This year's recipients discuss their projects below:

Emily Cotton (UoL MA student 2021-22, and Future 100 PhD student 2022-2025)

*(Emily was awarded funds by the Friends and the Centre)*



My MA Dissertation focused on love and affection between an elite, eighteenth-century sibling group: The Second Baron Grantham, his brother Frederick, and sisters Anne and Theresa. My dissertation built on recent historiography around sibling relationships and utilized concepts from the history of emotions to illustrate how affection was expressed between the siblings, and then how their affection was challenged by significant emotional hardships over four decades.

The siblings' correspondence, which served as my primary source base, was undigitized and held primarily in Bedford and Plymouth archives. Funding from the Friends therefore aided three research trips between July and August: two to the Bedfordshire Archives and one to Plymouth Archives. The trips to Bedford meant that I could photograph the letters I had previously chosen for the study via the National Archives website, and then transcribe them later on. In Plymouth I spent three days at The Box where I identified the correspondence I wanted to look at, then transcribed the letters on site.

Being able to undertake these trips meant I was able to take adequate time to identify, view, photograph and transcribe over a hundred letters written by the siblings. Such scope, I believe, provided me with a significantly deep understanding of their relationship over a long period of time – being able to look at so many of the sources meant I could track the brothers and sisters' relationship across time and space, to seriously understand their emotional expression and exchange that I could only do with a large sample of letters. By the end of my research, I had observed the workings of a relationship that spanned from the siblings' adolescence to the end of their lives. I could therefore show through my dissertation that Grantham, Frederick, Anne, and Theresa enjoyed a loving and devoted relationship in which they navigated a significant number of challenges together as they overcame prolonged separation and multiple bereavements. Through these challenges their bond emerged ever stronger, their affection ever deeper in 1792, I would argue, than it was in 1758.

[Carrie Laverick \(UoL PhD Student\)](#)

#### **Trip to The National Archives, London**

My research involves exploring the history of the treatment of lunacy within Victorian Leicester for those who were considered 'paupers'. These individuals were unlikely to be able to pay for care themselves and so their place of treatment was funded, and selected, by the Board of Guardians for the Corporation of Leicester, which had similar responsibilities to that of today's Leicester City Council. My research has already taken me to the depths of the local archive of Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (LLR), but in order to understand more regarding the care scandals mentioned in these records, it was important to explore the records held at the National Archive, London and with the help from the Hoskins-Duffield Fund, I was able to travel and stay in London, to view documents from the governing bodies of the Poor Law, and of Lunacy to gain a full picture of the circumstances that could affect the pauper lunatics of Leicester in the nineteenth century. Before the Leicester Borough Lunatic Asylum was established in 1869, the pauper lunatic could not only experience treatment and care at the local Leicestershire and Rutland Asylum, they could also be admitted to private and public asylums across England, as well as the local Union Workhouse. There are references within several documents at the local LLR archive, from concerns relating to the high numbers of deaths of Leicester patients in private asylums, to the low rates of recovery for the pauper lunatic within the Union Workhouse. The records at the National Archive feature many of the reports made by the Clerk to the Leicester Board of Guardians, and the Commissioners of Lunacy, that go into detail about these concerns and on some occasions even provide the name of the patient themselves which is incredibly valuable to my research, and the aim of being able to trace the lifecycle of insanity for the Borough of Leicester patient. Finding this level of detail in some of the records was very unexpected but very

fortunate as it means that I will be able to trace back through the lives of some of the pauper lunatics who were admitted to the Leicester Borough Lunatic Asylum, and explore where they may have resided before this purpose-built provision, and to see what caused family members to seek help from an institution for their loved ones. As with any trip to an archive, I now have so many more avenues to explore and I will be using the information I've gained from this one trip, for the remaining few chapters of my PhD dissertation. I cannot thank the Centre for English Local History enough for this opportunity, it has provided much more food for thought than expected, and I would not have been able to do this without the help of the Hoskins-Duffield Fund. I will continue to enjoy unpicking the information gained and exploring the lives of lunatics in Victorian Leicester much further.

Jingyan Liu (UoL MA student)

### **Anti-Poor Law Movement and Urban Politics in Leicester (1836-1848)**

MA History (Urban History)

The New Poor Law was a controversial piece of social legislation in the nineteenth century, and there were well-organized popular anti-poor law oppositions in northern industrial counties, such as West Riding of Yorkshire and Lancashire. Historians usually believe that the introduction and implementation of the New Poor Law in Midlands, including Leicester, was relatively smooth and successful. However, by investigating the case of the manufacturing town Leicester and the Leicester Poor Law Union, this thesis identifies similar but not identical anti-poor law movement in Midlands as well.

The Hoskins-Duffield Fund has provided me the opportunity to go to the Leicestershire Record Office and the National Archives a couple of times for correspondence between the Leicester Poor Law Union and the central Poor Law Commission. These materials, together with local newspapers, constituted the primary sources for this study.

The key finding of this thesis is that the anti-poor law movement in Leicester was a moderate and lasting one that constituted two prominent characteristics. On the one hand, the campaign was a radical one with the framework-knitters as the main agitators; on the other hand, there was a prolonged scramble for dominance on the prohibition of outdoor relief between the municipality and the central government.

The middle-class liberals, consisting chiefly of big merchant hosiers in the town, played a decisive role in shaping the moderate nature of the movement. They constrained the working class, especially Chartists, from holding violent and radical public activities that may threaten the social order of the town, thus the movement only ran high with violence in 1842 and 1848. As the most proportioned ratepayers, they also insisted on opposing the central government for collecting higher poor rates to relieve the irremovable poor and rebuilding the Union workhouse.

Also worth mentioning is that this study also reflects on the historiography of poor law studies. Historians like Derek Frazer once described the study of poor law as a 'non-political limbo', indicating that historians should pay more attention to the struggle between different political parties behind the administration of the poor laws. In this sense, this study examines the movement from three pairs of power relations, namely the Liberals and the Tories, the middle class and working class, the local municipality and the central authority, to present how a social problem correlates with political struggle.



# Queen St Mill

## Study Day

*After a gap of what seemed like forever, the Friends were very glad to be able to organise an 'in-person' study day once more. The venue was Queen Street Mill, Burnley, with three talks in the morning, then lunch and a tour of the mill. We opened the event to some of the local Burnley History groups too, and the party probably comprised about fifty percent Friends and fifty percent 'natives'.*

### Life and Work in the Victorian (and Edwardian) Cotton Towns

*Dr Michael Winstanley*

In his talk, Dr Winstanley was aiming to demonstrate how 'cotton Lancashire' was distinctive. Is it possible to generalize about what a cotton town was like, and how it differed from other industrial towns? The first point that he made that it was not necessarily correct to correlate 'industrial' Lancashire with 'urban' Lancashire. In the early nineteenth century, you would find yourself 'walking through countryside with the occasional chimney'. Even when the towns expanded in size and population as the century progressed, there was always easy access to the surrounding countryside, which led to a strong tradition of rambling groups. Queen Street Mill itself had a rural context, being right on the edge of the moors. While scattered settlements did conglomerate into larger towns, there often remained a strong sense of identity derived from the constituent township.

Although there were the expected ups and downs, the area did see rapid population growth through the nineteenth century, although Burnley itself was a late developer, with its heyday in the second half of the century. At the start of the growth period the age distribution of cotton Lancashire was a pyramid, there was a large number of children

at the bottom. By the end of the century, there was a distinctive bulge of young adults. In the textile towns, the female population outnumbered the male, while in towns dominated by heavy industry and mining the male population was larger.

There were many processes involved in the production of cotton. Mills tended to specialize in either spinning or weaving. In addition, there were many ancillary industries, for example, building the looms required by the mills. Power loom weaving arrived in the 1830s, up until then, the industry was dominated by hand loom weavers. Whereas weaving at home was dominated by men, the transition to power loom weaving in the mill led to women dominating the trade. By contrast, spinning moved in the opposite direction. A task originally performed by women, the introduction of spinning 'mules' saw the men take the work. This was originally because the mules were manually operated, which was heavy work, but men maintained their dominance even as the mules were powered. Both types of mill grew apace on the Lancashire coal fields (with some outliers, such as Preston) as steam power replaced water. By the end of the century there was also a split between 'spinning' towns in the south of the area, and weaving towns in the east. Manchester itself had low census figures for both spinning and weaving occupations, as it had come to be dominated by the 'finishing'



and 'making up' trades associated with cotton production. The bulk of the male population in the area was involved in neither spinning nor weaving, but rather in the heavy engineering ancillary trades.

The examination of the population figures led to the identification of one very distinctive feature of 'cotton Lancashire'. In contrast to other areas, females had employment with high wages. Some three quarters of women were estimated to be employed in the trade, including approximately 90% of girls aged 14 to 15. This included very high employment rates for married women, estimated at 50% in Burnley. By contrast, only some 10% of married women were employed more widely, and even less than this in towns dominated by heavy engineering.

So far as wages were concerned, these were highly paid trades. Dr Winstanley displayed records showing male cotton spinners earned around 34 shillings per week, with male and female weavers being paid around 20 shillings per week. There were also good wages available for teenage girls. The cotton towns had different social structures and gender relations to other places; there was no male 'breadwinner' and a cultural portrayal of these women was as strong and independent. There has been a suggestion that the cause of women's suffrage was advanced by the working-class females in these towns.

In a feature less to modern taste, cotton mills have also been associated with child labour. Children had jobs as 'piecers' in spinning mills (which involved cleaning under the mules) but were employed in weaving mills too. Nationally there was much disquiet about the subject of child labour in the 1830s, particularly children spending long hours in the mills with no education. The age at which children could work was increased over the years, with the practice of 'half time' employment introduced in the textile towns in 1844. Children could work half a day at the mill if they spent the other half at school. The

better a child's school attendance or the level of attainment, the earlier they would be able to work at the mill. Half time employment was unpopular with schoolteachers but was defended by local trade unionists because the children were so useful.

There were many features in the cultures of the cotton towns that anticipated later social developments. Fast food appeared in the form initially of chip shops, developing into fish and chips shops. Civic pride was demonstrated in the building of large (and often ornate) market halls – the forerunners of our shopping malls. The custom of Wakes holidays was incorporated into the functioning of a town's mills in that they would have a coordinated shutdown for the same week. Even towns without a Wakes week would negotiate themselves an unpaid week off. Later it became customary to travel to Blackpool for a week by the sea, to stay in the boarding houses run by formidable landladies. The fact that the mill towns all had different closure weeks allowed the seaside resort to have an entire 'season'. Many of the guest houses were run by spinners and weavers who had retired from the physically demanding work of the mill to have a second career in the holiday industry. Other features that emerged from this area in this period were the corner shop, professional football, and the cooperative movement.

In conclusion, Dr Winstanley said that, while the Lancashire towns were most definitely distinct from each other in a number of ways, there were a number of shared experiences. These included the 'family wage' where both husband and wife were employed, full employment for children and teenagers, the growth of leisure in a working-class context, and the emergence of civic pride.

## Queen Street Mill in Context

*Dr Jack Southern*

From a general view of 'Cotton Lancashire', the next talk took us to the specific context of the mill that was hosting our study day. Queen Street Mill was distinct in several ways. It was situated right on the edge of the East Lancashire weaving belt, in one of the many villages that encircled the town of Burnley. It was in the hills, some 800 ft above sea level, and it was the geographical position of Harle Syke that was in many ways central to its development.

Queens Street Mill was built in 1894, financed as a joint stock company whereby shares were bought by individuals, many of whom went on to work at the mill. It operated under this model until its closure in 1982. On its last day, everyone simply walked out, leaving the machinery in place to form the basis of the current museum.

The mill's status as a joint stock company itself made it distinct from several of the mills in Burnley and in the wider county. The



OS 6 inch map 1909

first board of directors comprised working men (several weavers, a builder, a foreman, a glazer, and a headteacher). The mill managers often had family members working in the mill and themselves lived in the village, rather than in some distant 'big house'. The mill families were interconnected, with the same surnames being found among the workers right up until the closure. The workforce was dominated by people who wanted to stay there, including the managers. The makeup of the workforce was different from the general pattern too, with more male weavers and many staying until old

age. The Queen Street Mill workers put much of their earnings (both from labour and share dividends) back into the community.

Queen Street Mill was one of a number of mills at Harle Syke, which itself was one of a number of scattered settlements in the parish of Briercliffe. These hamlets were traditionally arable, with the seasonal work supplemented by hand loom weaving of woollens. These hamlets were isolated but had links to other places. A factory for hand loom weaving was opened at Hill End. The first power loom factory was opened at Lane Bottom in 1851, employing 200 loom operators. Older members of the Briercliffe community tended to stay with handloom weaving, while the younger workers went to operate power looms. There was a pattern of people learning to weave at the Burnley mills and coming back to Briercliffe to apply what they knew. For this reason, the mills opening there became a hotbed of innovation, with Harle Syke itself

famous as a byword for financial success. Natives of nearby Haggate gave rise to the expression

'Haggaters' as a description of local people who had made good. Dr Southern gave the example of the Emmett family. Robert Emmett came from a poor family of hand loom weaver. Having learned the power weaving trade he returned to Harle Syke to build his own mill. His son Thomas rose to the top of Burnley society. In the space of 60-70 years to fortunes of the family were totally transformed. In 1865, Harle Syke Mill became a 'room and power' mill, where the weaving shed and steam engine were provided but people owned and

operated their own looms within this space. This proved to be a birthing ground for future mill owners.

This was the entrepreneurial background to the joint stock company that built Queen Street Mill. In 1894 the prospectus was issued, promising a modern weaving shed with a thousand looms plus power and access to a good local workforce. There was a great ceremony when the mill opened, including a cornet solo played from the top of the mill chimney. This was a period where Dr Southern describe the community as going 'share crazy'. Villagers were investing in community resources as well as in industry. This chimed well with the general culture of the community, with its principles of 'respectability', religious non-conformity, thrift, and temperance (there were no pubs in Harle Syke itself, though there were some on the very edge of neighbouring communities). One notable local amenity that was financed by shares was the Haggate reading room. As well as literature, the reading rooms provided chess and billiards and other 'innocent' pastimes. A bowling club was also created with stock issue. A great deal of civic pride was invested, as well as money.

Down the hill from the Briercliffe communities, Burnley workers began to view these communities, and Harle Syke in particular, with some resentment and suspicion. The Harle Syke mills paid lower wages, justifying this because of their greater expenses in being up a big hill and having to carry resources up and finished cloth down. Many of the employees did not object to this as they were also share holders in the mill and so were rewarded with dividend payments. Trade unions made several attempts to establish themselves in these mills, but failed because of the family links between mill management and weavers and because of the culture. In 1915 matters came to a head when the Burnley Weavers Association attempted to impose the uniform list (establishing uniformity of wages) on the Harle Syke mills and called a strike. The strike

lasted eight months, and nearly crippled the Burnley Weavers Association. Enough of the Harle Syke weavers were determined to keep working to keep all the mills running. These strike breakers were termed 'knobsticks', and, predictably, there was a deal of conflict between the strikers and the strikebreakers. Many of the workers seemed to take the decision that they preferred the better working conditions in these mills, even if the trade-off was for lower pay (for example, none of the Harle Syke mills took part in the practice of piping steam into the weaving shed to improve the conditions for the cloth at the expense of the conditions of the workers). At one point the non-strikers themselves went on strike because they believed a settlement had been agreed without them being consulted. In the end the dispute was settled. Unions were accepted, but differential pay rates were also accepted, because of the greater expenses production incurred.

The heyday of the cottons mills was over, however. The twentieth century saw the long slow decline of the industry, with the doors finally locked at Queen Street Mill in 1982.

## Nancy Heap – the life and times of a mill orphan

*Professor Phil Batman*

Next, our study day organiser, Phil Batman, gave us an insight to the experience of children in 'cotton Lancashire'. Nancy Heap was born in Preston in 1886. If you google her, you will find nothing. She is anonymous, left no mark and has no voice. Her roots were in Swaledale and her family was displaced when the population suffered a precipitous decline as its lead reserves were exhausted and replaced by cheap imports. Not only did people leave, but the size of the families shrank too; where there were once nineteen heads of households with the same surname, this shrank to nine. This was indicative of a process Professor Batman described as 'chain migration': family



members would follow in the footsteps of others who had left the area before. How did the word get back? How did the families know where to go? Nancy's ancestors moved in a chain to the Burnley cotton mills. Nancy was orphaned at 12 years old, first losing her father to bronchitis, then her mother to peritonitis. She was taken in by her aunt and lived in a small end terrace house in Brierfield, adjacent to the cotton mills.



Professor Batman gave us some insight in the 'times of Nancy Heap' by reference to the contemporary accounts of two incidents plus an account of the 1900 Trades Union Congress views on the employment of children under 15 in the mills. This was described by the TUC as the 'practical murder of children' but one that was supported by the 'wickedness' of Lancashire parents. Parents justified the employment of their children with arguments such as they 'needed to learn the trade while their fingers were still supple'. The TUC also argued that wages for adults were kept down by the use of child labour.

A practical result of such employment was illustrated by the death of one of Nancy's neighbours, a 13-year old who worked as a

'piecer' in the spinning room of Stanley Mill. When cleaning under the machinery he was struck on the head and caught between the mule and the stand. The injury proved fatal. The boy's supervisor insisted that, although he had to perform his cleaning duties while the machine was in motion, there was no need for the boy to go underneath the machine. The verdict was 'accidental death'. The coroner said no blame attached to the mill, but that more stringent rules were needed to prevent the reoccurrence of such accidents.

Next came the suspicious death in 1884 of a nine-year old cousin of Nancy's, Margaret Ann Heap. She died suddenly and unexpectedly. Her father gave an account of coming home from work and finding her ill but being assured that she was recovering being shocked by her death the next day. A post-mortem found stomach contents that could suggest poisoning, although no actual poison was found. Suspicion fell on the stepmother, but she was cleared by the inquest, which suggested that if she wanted rid of the child she would surely have done it earlier, before 'it' had become 'useful'.

If the previous talks had tended to stress the positive side of cotton Lancashire, a society of prosperity and progress where women had power and agency, this final short talk served to illustrate just how brutal and unpleasant it could be.

## Mill Tour

*Dr Mandy de Belin*

After lunch, the group split into two to be taken on their guided tours of the mill. My group started with the 'power' side. All the looms currently situated in Queen Street Mill can be driven by their steam engine. I must admit to being slightly disappointed that their boilerman and engineman had recently both retired, so the power side was silent and cold on our visit. First, we went outside to visit the boiler room where two Lancashire boilers historically supplied steam. One was there

from the opening of the mill, with the second fitted six years later (this later one being the boiler still in use). Lancashire boilers have small fireboxes so require a lot of stoking. Water was pumped to the boiler from the 'weir' next to the mill. The weir was partially filled by the collection of water running off the mill roof in an early example of water capture. We then headed back past the newly restored, and rather magnificent, chimney (our cover star) to visit the engine.

Our tour guide had great affection for the engine: named 'Peace', most definitely a female, and talked of like a favourite mill character. For the technically minded, Peace is a horizontal compound tandem engine. A high-pressure and low-pressure cylinder work together to drive the same shaft that then turns the giant flywheel. Peace had been with the mill since it opened and was capable of driving the 1,000 plus looms that the mill once contained. On steaming days, they have all the belts to the remaining looms being driven. This must be quite a sight (and sound) and I fully intend to return to see this when they have recruited new staff to run the engine and boiler.

We then went on to view the weaving side, starting with a hand loom to give us a good idea of what was actually going on when we came to examine the powered 'Lancashire looms' that still populated the mill. I volunteered to have a go on the hand loom, and proved to be particularly inept, so no second career for me! We next went to examine machinery for processes that many of us had no idea existed. The cotton was spun at other mills and the thread arrived on spindles. Some were processed to form the 'warp', and others to be the 'weft'.

Cotton destined for the warp was loaded onto a frame where the thread was drawn off the individual spindles onto a beam. The threads on this beam were then run through a sizing machine where the 'size' (made to a secret recipe containing flour, soft soap, and tallow)

was applied to the threads to make them stiffer and less breakable. They were wound onto another beam which was then taken to a 'drawing in' frame, where individual threads were passed through the 'reeds' and 'healds' necessary to the operation of the loom. Reeds and healds could be threaded in advance with short lengths of thread which could then just be 'knotted in' to the thread from the beam, which was a quicker process. Many such prepared sets still hung from the ceiling where they had been left when the mill closed in 1982, complete with 'heritage dust'. Cotton destined for the weft was drawn off the spindles onto larger 'cheeses', which were then loaded onto another machine that wound thread from the cheeses onto individual 'pirns'. The pirns fitted into the wooden shuttles used to fly the weft through the warp on the looms.

Next, we moved on to see two looms in action. A loom is extremely loud but produces around ten inches of cloth in a very short time. The job of the 'weaver' is really to mind the machine, and place new pirns into the shuttles when they ran out (and they run out very quickly). Typically, a weaver would mind a bank of six looms arranged in two groups of three with a narrow corridor between. This layout could be seen in the large weaving shed which still contained over three hundred original Lancashire-built looms. We could only imagine the racket when they were all being driven. Weavers were apparently proficient at lip-reading and sign language. Our guide told us that mill work was either loved or hated. It was hard physical graft for long hours but had a tremendous sense of community.

The staff 'comforts' were primitive by modern standards, toilets that had no roofs and so were open to the elements and a tiny 'break' area with a steam kettle and steam oven, both run by 'Peace'. We, in contrast, then returned to the comfort of the museum's café area to drink cappuccino, listen to concluding remarks, and visit the comfortable and modern loos before heading off for the long drive home





on-tour  
photos



# In conversation with...

## Professor Phil Batman

*An interview with Phil Batman, previous editor of the newsletter, organiser of our Queen St Mill study day, and very generous sponsor of Prof. Phil Batman Family History Prize*  
[\(https://www.englishlocalhistory.org/wp/2022/08/02/centre-for-english-local-history-the-professor-phil-batman-family-history-prize/\)](https://www.englishlocalhistory.org/wp/2022/08/02/centre-for-english-local-history-the-professor-phil-batman-family-history-prize/)

***You achieved eminence in a completely different field, medicine; where did the passion for history come from?***

It came out of an interest in family history. It dawned on me that I had a ridiculous surname (at least people remember it!) when I was at school and the Batman comic strips and films started to appear. I asked my grandad Percy (I would never have dared call him that to his face) where we came from, and he said he thought it was the village of Copmanthorpe. That was only a couple of miles away from his armchair, and on our way home we called into the churchyard at Cop. It was full of Batman graves. Percy also told me no good would come of delving into our family history. He was a bit like that - but he also taught me to play bowls. I owe Percy a lot.

By the way, medical research and historical research have so much in common, and the transition from one to the other was virtually seamless.

***What did you find out about your family, and the origin of your name?***

The experts will tell you that the name derives from a servant of Bartholomew (Bart's man), and that it comes down from a single ancestor. Nothing to do with the army. Every Batman I've come across (and there aren't many in the UK) is a blood relative of mine somewhere back in the line, and the name originates from York.



***What brought you to study at the Centre for English Local History?***

Approaching retirement, I was scouting around for the best place to study local history, and Keith Snell happened to pick up the phone when I dialled Mark Fitch House. I was aware of his publications, and something clicked.

***Which broader areas of history interest you the most?***

Underdogs, people who have left no mark, whenever and wherever in history.

***Which historians do you most admire?***

Peter Laslett and Tony Wrigley, giants of men I think. Both deceased I'm afraid. They had the ability to see patterns and meaning in vast amounts of dry dusty numbers and transform them into evocative accessible words. They could turn local history into big history.

***What are you hoping for from the family history prize?***

I think families are very important. Mine is to me. Elizabeth Bott in her opening introductory comments of a renowned anthropological work said: 'There is an enormous literature on the family ... a reflection of its importance for the continuation of society and the happiness, and misery, of individuals. The family, we are constantly told, is the backbone of society ...'. I agree with her, on all counts. I didn't fully agree with Margaret Thatcher, though, when she told *Women's Own Magazine* in 1987 that, 'You know, there is no such thing as society. There are individual men and women, and there are families.' I can hear her voice now. But I think there is society, and families are very important to them. And very interesting.

***What's next for you in terms of historical research?***

I think I've worked out how and why Victorian lead miners left one of my favourite places on earth, Swaledale in North Yorkshire. I want to find where they went and what they did when they got there.

***Any other plans?***

To get a novel published. It's about an underdog. Cowed by a miserable family. Accused of a murder. But with a happy poignant ending. I've written it and it sits on my shelf but nobody seems to want to read it. Or at least publish it. And I don't know why not!

## Book Reviews

***Philip Skippon and the British Civil Wars: The 'Christian Centurion'***

*Ismini Pells, (London, 2020)*

Wounded civil-war soldiers have been a recurrent theme of this year's newsletter, and Ismini Pell's book concerns the life and career of Philip Skippon, who was famously wounded at the Battle of Naseby, but fought on regardless. This is not the focus of this work, however, rather it is concerned with trying to recover the motivations of a man who identified himself as a 'Christian Centurion'. Skippon is a well-known figure to students of the British Civil Wars but has nonetheless been rather neglected as a subject of individual study. He has commonly been regarded as 'a brave, simple and politically apathetic' professional soldier. This book seeks to dispel this stereotype, however. Skippon published three books on the religious and moral conduct for the soldiers he commanded. These reveal

much about how he viewed himself and, if taken at face value, contributes to a picture of a stolid puritan. Dr Pells finds that there was more to the man, however, and her studies revealed a far more politically astute operator than has hitherto been represented. She uses his life and career as a vehicle for reevaluating aspects of civil-war history, and the wider study of early modern society.

Skippon was born in Norfolk in 1598, to a family 'on the margins of gentility'. He began his military career on the continent around 1615, serving in the English garrisons in the Netherlands before finally returning to England permanently in 1638 (having been badly wounded at Breda the year before). The majority of Skippon's military career was thus

spent on the continent. Many men who featured in the Civil Wars had spent time in military service on the continent, and it is interesting to read some detail of an experience that is so often brushed over. Pells gives some time to considering what constituted a 'professional' soldier in this period and whether her subject met these criteria. She also examines how far his actions and his affiliations in this period reflected his personal faith.

Skippon's return to civilian life did not last long. Now more prosperous, having inherited estates from his father and his uncle, he was appointed captain-leader of the Artillery Company in the City of London; part of the militia known as the London 'Trained Bands'. Pells describes this appointment as 'a fitting way for a veteran officer to live out a quiet retirement'. The Artillery Company has been portrayed by various civil war historians as a focus for the group of men who had serious misgivings about the governance of Charles 1, and Pells evaluates the evidence for this. She also investigates the military competence of the company, and the degree to which they were affected by continental practice, as well as to the extent their members were motivated by their religious beliefs.

The early days of the first civil war found Skippon exercising with the trained bands in London while the Battle of Edgehill was fought in the Midlands. Skippon was soon to see real action, however, with the crucial role the trained bands played in repulsing the Royalist advance on London. This in turn led to the appointment of Skippon as Sergeant-Major-General of the parliamentary infantry, and the real beginning of his second military career. There are detailed accounts of Skippon's various civil war engagements and evaluations of the military skill he did (or sometimes did not) demonstrate. The overall verdict is a favourable one, Pells maintains that, once in battle, Skippon consistently proved himself to be a 'composed and competent general'.

Dr Pells gives explicit attention to Skippon's abilities as a leader of men, and the role that his three books played in constructing his identity as the 'Christian Centurion' – guiding his men in moral and religious matters, as well as reassuring them of the righteousness of their cause. The picture that emerges of Skippon's regiment is one with an 'enthusiastic but conventional religious atmosphere: Godly, but avoiding the religious radicalism of some other units in the parliamentary army'. Skippon also explicitly advised his men to avoid concentrating on the political issues underlying the struggle. There is also evidence showing his concern for the material condition of his soldiers, realising the degree to which morale could depend on the provision of pay and equipment. Topically, Skippon was also aware of the importance of providing medical care to the wounded. Skippon's ability to inspire his men, and his effectiveness as a military leader, saw him become famed figure in the propaganda of the parliamentary side. Skippon was appointed sergeant-major-general of the New Model Army at its foundation.

Victory in the first civil war brought many problems and disputes for the winning side, and Pells investigates the role of her subject in this, seeking to refute his reputation for being apolitical. Pells summarized Skippon's position as being 'Presbyterian' in religion, but 'independent' in politics, and he had first managed to maintain reasonably good relations with both parliament and the army and was himself elected as an MP in 1646.

These good relations were jeopardised by the proposal to disband his regiment and send forces to Ireland. Difficulties also remained over arrears of pay and indemnity for actions committed during the war. Throughout this turbulent and difficult period, Skippon seemed to be repeatedly manoeuvring between the rock and the hard place of parliament and the army, with the accompanying risk of becoming unpopular with both. Pells gives Skippon credit for keeping London on the parliamentary side during the second civil war. So far as the trial



and execution of the King was concerned, Skippon never attended any of the sessions of the trial and did not sign the death warrant.

Whatever his opposition to the execution, however, Skippon was soon integrated into the new ruling regime and able to resume his seat in parliament. Pells sees this as a prioritising of the survival of an ordered world. He was shortly thereafter appointed to the council of state. Skippon served the rump parliament but did not survive its enforced dissolution. This was not the end of his political career, however. When the Barebones parliament failed, he was appointed to the council of state for the Lord Protector. Survival of the new regime depended on maintaining order in London, and Skippon had consistently proved his ability to achieve that. Skippon could be relied upon to ensure the regime's stability in a crisis. His service saw the reestablishment of the Artillery Company, and his being put in command once more. Although by then aged and frail, he outlived Cromwell and helped to ensure the smooth transition of power to Richard Cromwell. Skippon's reaction to the restoration of the monarchy 'remains elusive', and he died very soon afterwards.

Dr Pells concludes that how much you accept Skippon's projection of himself as the 'Christian centurion', with all its associations of Godliness and modesty, is (and was) a matter of opinion. She argues that Skippon's career gives insight as to how contemporaries viewed the duties and service of a Godly soldier as

being perfectly compatible with the subtleties required of a politician. It would be hard to see how Skippon could have had the career he did without any political capabilities. His rise from minor gentleman to major politician resembles the rise of Cromwell himself and studying the life and career of Philip Skippon, for Pells, could give 'a clearer and more nuanced understanding of the complex issues that drove and surrounded the conflict and its aftermath'. This is a compelling work for anyone with an interest in Civil War studies.

*Mandy de Belin*



*Philip Skippon*

## ***A Rural Railway: The Midland Railway – Lincoln to Newark Line***

Jeremy Lodge, ([www.nottinghambooks.co.uk](http://www.nottinghambooks.co.uk), 2022)

Many Friends, having studied at the Centre, remain active in English local history studies, and continue to publish on the subject. The topic of early railway development, in this case the building of the line between Newark and Lincoln in the 1840s (and its subsequent operation), was of particular interest to me as

HS2 is, as I write, being constructed some two or three miles from my home.

The Nottingham to Lincoln railway opened in 1846: this book concentrates on the Newark to Lincoln section, it being the first railway to connect both the town and the city to the wider railway network. It has a particular focus

on the rural part of the line and the effect it had on both the villages it passed through, and the ones that it skirted. The proposal to build this railway was welcomed by some and opposed by others. The book contains a useful overview of the early days of the railway in Britain, including the economic case for building them. It represented the culmination of a number of transport improvements, turnpikes, coaches, and canals, that greatly expedited the travel of both goods and people. It was often perceived as a direct threat to its predecessors, however, which accounted for some of the opposition to railway building, as well as the support. It spelt the end of some rural industries in particular, although it did open up opportunities for others to expand. I was particularly interested to see the comparison of the draught capability of a horse, whether pulling on road, across water, or on rails (horses, of course, remained vital to the railway industry, a table of the assets of the Midland Railway in 1895 showed it owned nearly twice as many horses as it did engines).

Resistance, as they say, was futile, and by 1844 the Midland Railway Company had its parliamentary act for the Nottingham to Lincoln line. The tales of compulsory purchase, the invasion of farms by surveyors, and the subsequent conflicts between farm hands and navvies was not entirely different from my experience of local opposition to the building of HS2, but the results were about the same. The first train to Lincoln ran in May 1846, with some celebration and fanfare. It was apparently a 'great event' all along the line

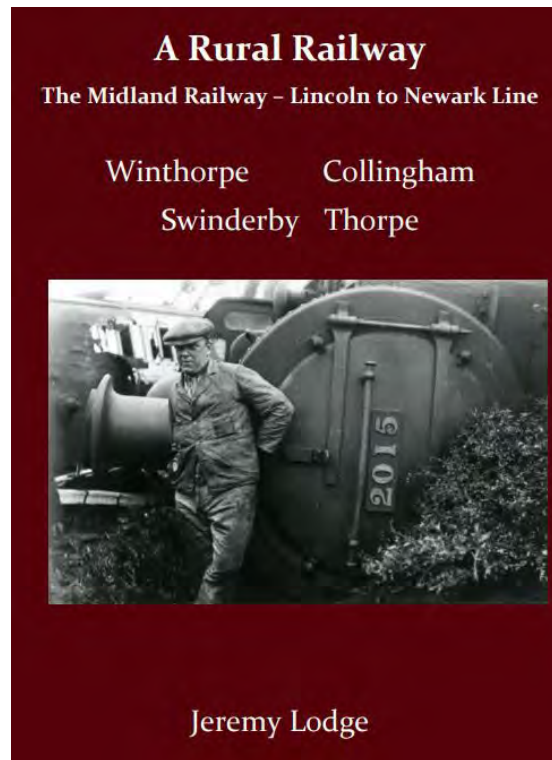
with 'two powerful new engines' being the stars of the show. This standard was not kept up, however, and there follows some contemporary accounts of delays on the line caused by the bad state of repair of the motive power. One fire box was so rusted through that the fire fell out quicker than it could be stoked, some boilers required the addition of oatmeal

to seal the holes in them (effectively plugged with porridge). Nowadays, no restored steam engine is allowed anywhere near a set of rails without a hard-won boiler certificate.

The standards of safety in the earlier days are illustrated by many accounts of narrow escapes and horrible accidents. Sparks from the engine set some goods carried in open carriages on fire. Intractable locals would refuse to remove their horse and cart (and wife!)

from the line despite the approach of a train. Workers and impatient passengers had a habit of falling beneath wagons and losing their limbs (which invariably seemed to prove fatal a few days later). Trains left the rails and tumbled into fields. Bridges collapsed under the weight of engines after being weakened by floods. The 'fish' train coming from Lincoln collided head on with a coal train parked at Swinderby station.

The safety of the line improved with the introduction of semaphore signals, and the erection of signal boxes that followed thereafter (now superseded by modern signalling, the only remaining box is found at Swinderby). Road crossings were all guarded by the residents of an adjacent crossing house, many of which still remain (although the associated function has long since been



supplanted by automatic crossings). The line could prove effective in opening up wider markets for rural enterprises. There was a thriving carrot industry based around Collingham. The station had three washing stations for the vegetables. Livestock was also frequently transported by rail. The book contains detailed plans and historic photos of the 'cattle dock' at Collingham Station – designed to allow cattle to walk into wagons.

This book is undoubtedly of interest to locals of Newark and Lincoln and areas in-between and contains many contemporary illustrations and photographs. Students of transport history will also find much of interest, as will people who live two to three miles from the building of a major railway!

*Mandy de Belin*

## Living through the Civil Wars in Warwickshire – the Loss Accounts Database launch

**Saturday March 26<sup>th</sup> 2022 (Online presentation)**

This online event was opened by Maureen Harris, a member of the Friends who gained her PhD from the Centre for English Local History in 2015 and has continued to work collaboratively with the Centre, most recently as Project Manager for the Warwickshire Loss Accounts database project.

The extant Civil War Loss Accounts for Warwickshire cover around 85% of the county's parishes. They are mostly held in SP 28 at The National Archives (TNA) with the remainder held at the Warwickshire County Record Office. The accounts mostly cover the period 1641-1646 and coverage is patchy, with no surviving accounts for some parishes but significant collections for others. Maureen estimated the total losses claimed for the county to be £1.2 million at today's values and pointed out that we have no evidence that any of the claims submitted were actually paid!

A project was undertaken by Warwickshire County Record Office in collaboration with the Centre for English Local History and supported by National Lottery funding. The project team recruited a team of thirty volunteers from across the county to enter entries in the loss accounts into a database. Five experienced helpers provided training and support and the Warwickshire Record Office and The National Archives provided further support along with

site visits for the volunteers. The repetitive nature of the entries meant that those new to transcription learnt quickly and twenty-six volunteers stayed the course and completed the work. Of these, nineteen are now working on another transcription project. The completed transcriptions are available via the Warwickshire County Council Heritage and Culture website and in a forthcoming publication of the Dugdale Society.

<https://heritage.warwickshire.gov.uk/catalogues-databases/warwickshire-civil-war-loss-accounts>

Maureen explained that the Loss Accounts are a rich source for local historians. Claims for losses were made as a result of providing quarter for Parliamentary soldiers, instances of plunder, the impact of heavy taxation, and for providing care for the wounded. Losses included the loss of money, possessions, tools, private domestic spaces, and personal liberty.

Claims were carefully compiled and, in some cases, provide very detailed itineraries including specific inventories of crops and the name of the fields they were taken from in Quartering or Plunder cases, detailed lists of timber taken by soldiers, lists of children's clothing taken by Parliamentary soldiers (some of whom had their wives and families in tow),



and exact details of the number of bed sheets ruined or lost during quartering. Some of the claims were for huge losses such as one claim for 800 horses and quartering in forty-two households in Stockton for two days and nights and another claim for £12 10s for feed for 500 horses and oxen. Some covered a significant period of time including one for the costs incurred whilst nursing a wounded soldier for over two years. Examples of high-value losses include a mercer who lost £200 “on the road” and the destruction of real property including barns, stables, and partitions in dwelling houses. Some were for personal acts of violence with one claimant asking for £15 for permanent life-changing injuries inflicted by a soldier. However, many complainants simply say “we don’t remember everything that was lost there is too much to recall”.

Some cases include the names of the military officers and soldiers who caused losses whilst others include criticism (overt or subtle) of the Commonwealth Regime and the behaviour of their armies with reference to marching armies. They also provide biographical information on claimants, with details of parishes of origin, trades, family members, and hints of their dialect.

These are not just financial statements – losses are described in emotive language and illustrate the lasting impact on civilians from the experience of large numbers of armed forces moving around the country. Maureen sees the process of submitting the claim as an act of remembering and part of a healing process. The claims provide testimony to the emotional cost of war and the prevalence of both a generic and a specific sense of fear – fear of intimidation, of threats and violence by groups or specific soldiers leaving a lasting fear of strangers amongst terrorised communities. The Loss Accounts do not stand alone but are part of a network of Civil War documentary

resources and the Database provides links to related records such as bills and orders to billet and petitions which can backfill stories of loss.

In the second session of this event, Ruth Selman, Principal Record Specialist, The National Archives, described the support the TNA provided for the project volunteers – this includes access to images, hosted visits to the TNA and training. She described the source records, the SP28 Commonwealth Exchequer Papers as an awkward collection comprising over three hundred boxes and bundles which are relatively underused and minimally catalogued. She explained that some Loss Accounts are also to be found in other series amongst army accounts, sequestration cases and the sale of royalist land.

In the final session, Nat Alcock provided an overview of the database and described the search and retrieval options available. The Home page and introduction provide an historical context for the records and explain



editorial conventions used (original spellings, values and place names are retained). The database can be searched by parish and personal name. Some entries are consolidated, for example, where multiple claims were made relating to the impact of

collections for the relief of distressed protestants of Ireland in Stratford upon Avon. Nat also showed how the loss account entries can help local historians with information on trade networks with the example of a fuller who claimed for several pieces of cloth taken by the Scots army and provided the names and parishes of the people who owned the cloth.

*Karen Donegani*

## 2021 AGM

### Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Friends, held on Tuesday 16 November 2021 at 19:00pm by Zoom

**1. Present:**

Michael Gilbert, Yvonne Cresswell, Karen Donegani, Kate Tiller, Mary Bryceland, Mandy de Belin, Graham Jones, Martin Watkinson, Celia Cotton, John Parker, Phil Batman, Alan Fox, Anne Coyne, Deidre Higgins, Trixie Gadd, Robert Mee, Heather Flack, John Goodacre, Noel Tornbohm, Pam Fisher, Diana Musgrave, John & Lydia Pye, Ann Stones, Andrew Wager. Also three unidentified participants and Oliver the cat.

**2. Apologies for absence:**

Sylvia Pinches, Jeremy Lodge, Margaret Hawkins, Keith Turner, Marion Hardy.

**3. Minutes of the AGM held on 19 November 2020:**

The minutes were agreed without dissent.

**4. Matters arising**

None.

**5. Chairman's Report**

This has been circulated and a copy is attached. Michael Gilbert noted that since September the Centre was no longer in Marc Fitch House but was relocated to the Attenborough Tower. Andy Hopper has left for Oxford and Angela Muir has taken over as Director. The Friends are seeking closer involvement with the Centre and its staff to offer help and support, particularly if the Centre subsequently moves to a property in the centre of Leicester. The Friends will continue as long as the Centre exists and there is much to be positive about. The position regarding alternative accommodation in the city centre was discussed and reported as 'ongoing'. Activities will continue on-line into the New year, and Hoskins Day will be planned for as a face-to-face meeting with facilities for remote participation.

**6. Treasurer's Report, with the Annual Accounts and the Independent Examiner's Report**

Robert Mee presented the report and financial statement. copies of which are attached. Technical problems prevented the independent examiner from signing the statement earlier, but he has reviewed the accounts and his signed letter of approval is in the post. The treasurer's report was accepted without dissent.

**7. Appointment of Independent Examiner**

Paul Shipman has agreed to remain as independent examiner and his appointment was approved.

**8. Election of Officers and Committee:**

The Secretary reported that the number of nominations received was such that no election was necessary. The following officers and committee members offered themselves for election and were proposed and seconded as noted below. Robert Mee is actively seeking a student representative, and Michael Gilbert will seek a programme secretary in the new year. The appointments were agreed without dissent. Thanks were proposed to those officers and committee members who were standing down. The nominations were accepted without dissent.

Officer	Standing	Proposed	Seconded
Chairman	Michael Gilbert	Mary Bryceland	Andrew Wager
Secretary	Mary Bryceland	Michael Gilbert	Andrew Wager

Officer	Standing	Proposed	Seconded
Treasurer	Karen Donegani	Michael Gilbert	Andrew Wager
Membership Secretary	Karen Donegani	Michael Gilbert	Andrew Wager
Editor of the Newsletter	Mandy de Belin	Michael Gilbert	Andrew Wager
Programme Secretary	Vacant		
IT Coordinator	John Parker	Michael Gilbert	Andrew Wager
Committee	Vacant		
Committee	Anne Coyne	Michael Gilbert	Andrew Wager
Committee	Linda Harrison	Michael Gilbert	Andrew Wager
Committee	Jeremy Lodge	Michael Gilbert	Andrew Wager
Committee	Robert Mee	Michael Gilbert	Andrew Wager
Committee	Andrew Wager	Mary Bryceland	Michael Gilbert
Student Representative	Vacant		
Student Representative	Vacant		
Centre Representative			

#### 9. Any other Business

Anne Coyne asked whether access to online materials through the University library could be offered to Friends. Alternatively, Friends themselves may be able to offer assistance with access to research materials. The new committee will pursue this. Martin Watkinson supported this initiative. It is hoped that the Centre's seminar series will restart in the next semester. Friends may be able to step in and present these without incurring the boycott which applies to the university. Hoskins Day can go ahead with a non-UoL speaker and an off-campus venue which could be de Montford University or Nottingham Trent. There is a move to change the name of the Centre in the near future which will have administrative consequences for the Friends. Mary Bryceland has a few paper copies of the Newsletter if requested by email, which John Parker will put on the website.

#### 10. Head of School

Krista Cowman was not available as proposed and Michael Gilbert suggested asking her to speak to all members at an evening session. He will pursue this with Krista.

*Andrew Wager*

## Treasurer's Report

A summary of the Friends' accounts for the last year are attached. The current total assets of the Friends stand at £32,874.59 an increase of £3,147.99 over the starting balance.

The reasons for the increase are a mix of an improvement in the value of our investments, combined with a lack of expenditure due to the ongoing pandemic. While our income, excluding investments, fell a little, our expenditure was minimal.

We have had no requests for student support during the past year, but there are one or two potential requests which will be assessed when submitted.



I can make no predictions as to likely budgeting for the year ahead, but our financial position remains sound, and we can meet any potential financial obligations for the coming year.

Receipts and Payments Account for the year to 30 September 2021

	2021	2020
<u>Receipts</u>		
Subscriptions and donations	£1,448.00	£1,898.00
Dividends/Interest (C&C, CAF)	£347.69	£463.41
Book Sales	£7.00	£5.00
Day Visit		
Study Weekend		
Conference Income		
Hoskins Day		
<u>Total Receipts</u>	<u>£1,802.69</u>	<u>£2,366.41</u>
<u>Payments</u>		
Administrative Costs	£146.88	£157.37
Student Support & Harold Fox Award	£0.00	£1,200.00
Day Visits costs	£0.00	£412.50
Newsletter	£0.00	£404.83
AGM Expenses	£0.00	£74.75
Study Weekend costs		
Hoskins Day		
Conference Expenditure		
Student Amenities		
<u>Total Payments</u>	<u>£146.88</u>	<u>£2,249.45</u>
<u>Excess of income over expenditure</u>	<u>£1,655.81</u>	<u>£116.96</u>
Opening Funds at 1st October	£28,434.37	£28,317.41
Deficit/surplus	<u>£1,655.81</u>	<u>£116.96</u>
<u>Closing Funds at 30th September 2019</u>	<u>£30,090.18</u>	<u>£28,434.37</u>
<u>Comprising</u>		
<u>Bank Balances</u>		
Cash	£0.00	£0.00
CAF Bank - Gold Account	£2,857.93	£2,637.14
Natwest Bank	£4,540.70	£3,232.58
Cambridge & Counties savings	<u>£14,232.60</u>	<u>£14,105.70</u>
	<u>£21,631.23</u>	<u>£19,975.42</u>
<u>Investment Assets at cost</u>		
FP CAF UK Equity Fund B Income	£4,278.61	£4,278.61
FP CAF Fixed Interest Fund B Income	<u>£4,180.34</u>	<u>£4,180.34</u>
	<u>£30,090.18</u>	<u>£28,434.37</u>
<u>Market value of investments</u>		
FP CAF UK Equity Fund B Income	£7,039.61	£5,483.05
FP CAF Fixed Interest Fund B Income	<u>£4,203.75</u>	<u>£4,268.13</u>
	<u>£11,243.36</u>	<u>£9,751.18</u>
<u>Total assets (including current investment value)</u>	<u>£32,874.59</u>	<u>£29,726.60</u>

Robert Mee

We look forward to seeing you at the 2022 AGM, Monday Nov 14<sup>th</sup>, 7 pm on zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84590693176> (passcode 118269)

# Friends of the Centre for English Local History

(Registered Charity no. 1073528)



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