

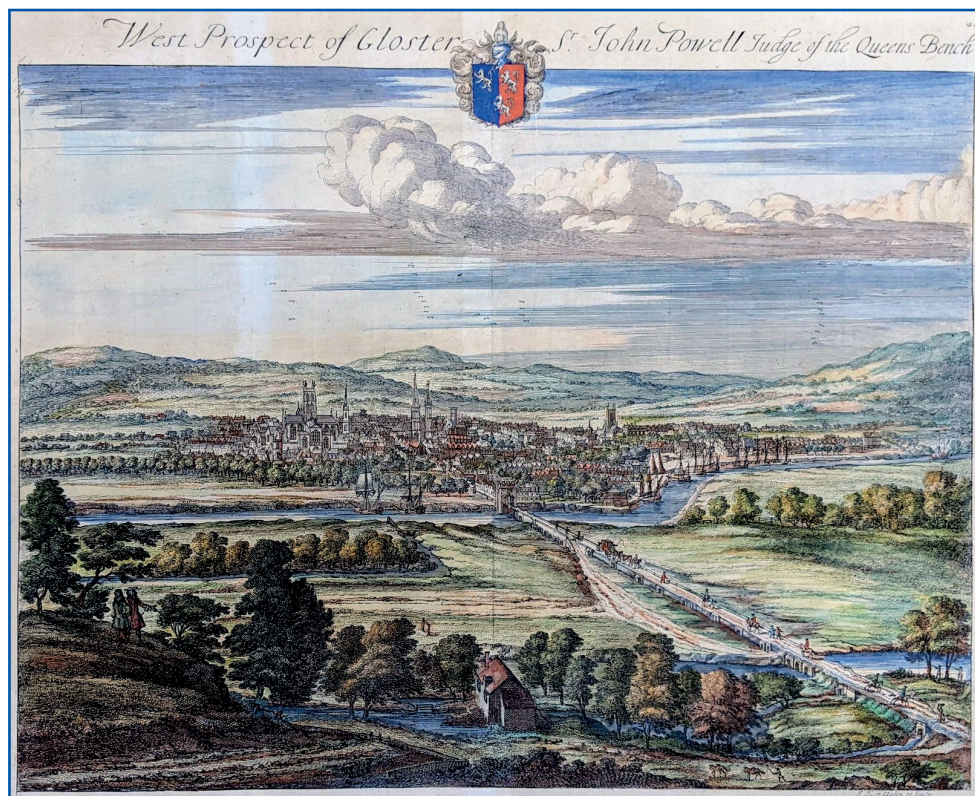
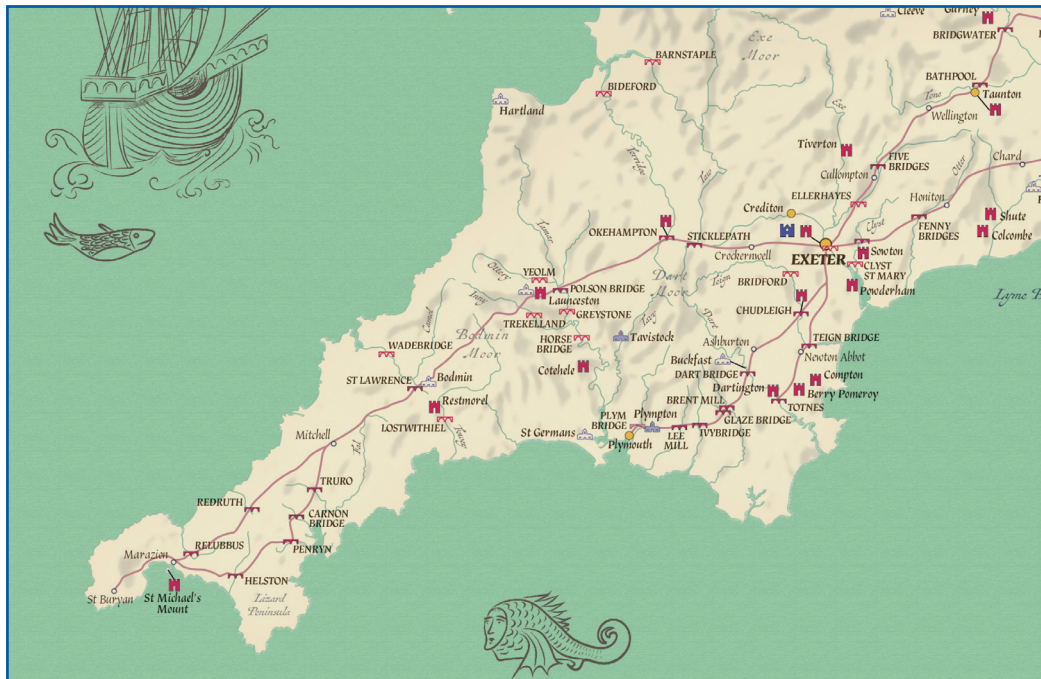
THE LOCAL HISTORIAN

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- The local historian and medieval roads: debunking the myths
 - Sexual defamation in early modern South West England
- Persistence in a rural demographic crisis: late-Victorian Combe
- Early elections to the urban district councils in three Midland towns
 - Returning servicemen and smallholdings in 1920s Devon
 - Domestic medicine in the Yorkshire Dales 1620-1850



IMPORTANT: please note that the editor of *The Local Historian*, Dr Alan Crosby, has a new email address. It is operative now, and his previous address will no longer work.

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FRONT COVER: Newark Castle (Nottinghamshire), alongside the River Trent: The castle at Newark was built by Alexander the Magnificent, Bishop of Lincoln, who also constructed a bridge across the River Trent in the town, thereby creating the modern London/York/Berwick Road. The castle was improved by Bishop Rotherham in the 1470s (photograph: David Harrison); **BACK COVER (top)** Cornwall and Devon, from the map of medieval roads: note the numerous contemporary bridges, and the large area apparently with no roads—precisely the sort of location where detailed local research might fill in the pattern of lesser medieval highways; **BACK COVER (bottom)** The long causeway and bridges across the River Severn at Gloucester, from Johannes Kip, ‘The West Prospect of Gloster city’ (1712). Such causeways, often with retaining walls and a series of bridges, were common over flood plains (photograph: Sarah Harrison)

The Local Historian is published four times a year, in February, May, August and November. Single copies may be purchased : for more information and enquiries about *The Local Historian* and the British Association for Local History, please visit our website at www.balh.org.uk or write to BALH Head Office, St. James House, Vicar Lane, SHEFFIELD S1 2EX.

Articles for possible inclusion in *The Local Historian* should be sent to the editor, Dr Alan Crosby, 77 Wellington Street, PRESTON PR1 8TQ or dralancrosby@gmail.com. A style-sheet, ‘Notes for contributors’, is available on request. We welcome articles on any subject in the field of local history, and the editor is always pleased to discuss ideas for contributions and to advise on their preparation.

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The local historian and medieval roads: debunking the myths

DAVID HARRISON

It is well-known that medieval people were frequently on the move. Merchants, administrators, the gentry, soldiers, clerics, and peasants on their way to market, rode or walked along the nation's highways. But the roads they travelled along have been little studied and those few studies are often full of misconceptions. Indeed, there has not even been a decent map of the country's major medieval highways. The publication of a *Road Map of England and Wales in the Late Middle Ages* (referred to as the *Map* below: **see extract on back cover**) is my attempt to put this right.¹ It is in effect the medieval version of the OS map of Roman Britain and shows that medieval roads need not be a *terra incognita* between the Romans and the turnpikes.

As well as mapping the main highways, the *Map* shows the stopping places and bridges on those routes, picking out those with significant remains. It includes selected inns and important destinations, highlighting the eight cities with populations over 5000 and major towns with over 2000 people are marked, almost all of them on the major highways.² All the wealthier monasteries with net incomes over £500 are depicted, as are others with remains of architectural or historical significance.³ Castles and great houses of the Crown and aristocracy used in this period as residences, administrative centres and fortifications, also feature. These were among the most difficult areas to research, as there is much information about the buildings when they were constructed, but their later history is often obscure. Also included are a few gentry houses of architectural or historical significance.

We thus have a snapshot of the country in the late fifteenth century on a single sheet. Several important aspects stand out beside the roads and bridges. London was predominant, then as now. The number of wealthy monasteries is one manifestation of this: in the capital there were several with net incomes of over £500 per year. In contrast, there was none in Wales with this income and only a few north of the Humber. Also striking is the absence of many of the later great industrial cities. Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and Sheffield were small towns.

This article sets out the types of evidence for the network of highways plotted on the *Map*. It demonstrates that by the late Middle Ages there was a strong sense of the existence of *national* highways. They were in some respects the medieval equivalent of modern trunk roads or the strategic road network. The article also shows that contrary to often expressed views, highways were usually physical entities, man-made, with gravel and stone, and drained with ditches. Furthermore, roads developed in the Middle Ages were to a considerable extent on a *different* alignment from the main Roman roads. Subsequently, the basic medieval alignment was often followed as late as the 1920s when the main roads began to be numbered.

I trust the *Map* will be a valuable document for local historians, but it is just a start in mapping medieval roads. There is much work to be done as its scale is relatively small and it cannot show routes in detail at a local level. Many more roads, notably county roads linking market towns, existed. These can be traced, and there is scope for a series

of more detailed regional maps. Note that although this article refers to roads, in the Middle Ages the terms ‘highway’ and ‘way’ were used, and in Latin *via regia* and *alta via* were common. The word ‘road’ comes into use during the seventeenth century. It was popularised by the publication of the first English road atlas in 1675, by John Ogilby, but the older usage continued. At the end of the century Celia Fiennes was familiar with the new term, but normally stuck to the older. The switch to ‘road’ was terminological and did not imply a change in structure.⁴

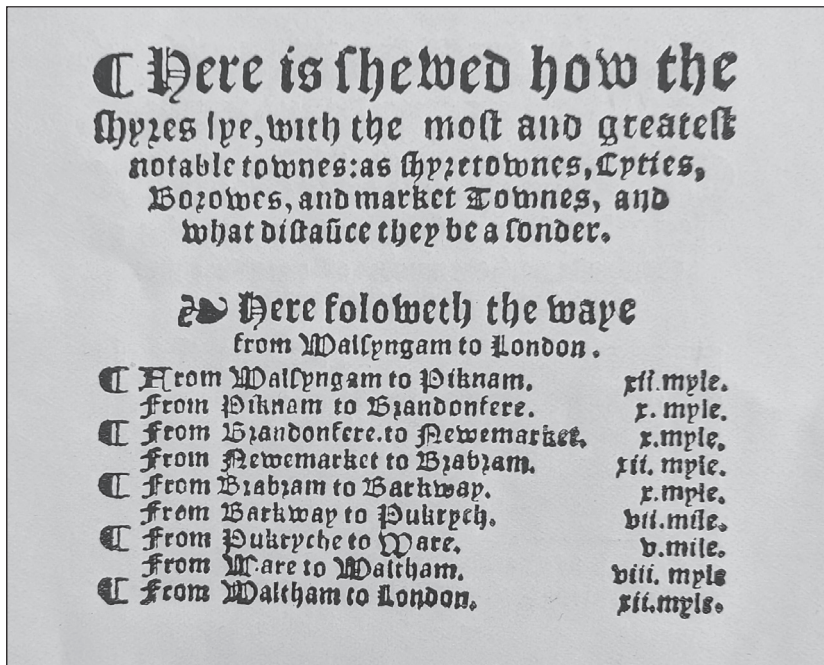
The national highways of late medieval England and Wales: the evidence

There is abundant evidence that people had a sense of there being long-distance national highways. For example, a letter of Edward II’s reign refers to a section of the York Road as ‘the high road via Ware, Royston and Huntingdon’.⁵ The Tudor antiquary, John Leland, noted of Worcester that ‘Sudbyry-gate standynge este in the way from Worcestar to London’.⁶ Main highways can be traced in a range of sources. Two of them, the Gough Map and the earliest tables of English highways of the 1540s, give an overview of England and Wales.

The Gough Map is named after Richard Gough, the antiquary, who declared that ‘the greatest merit of this map is that it may justly boast itself the first among us wherein the roads and distances are laid down’.⁷ It shows numerous red lines joining points, which have been traditionally interpreted as representing roads. Sir Frank Stenton took this view and noted that while the compiler of the map had not represented the roads from London to Dover and to Ipswich, or from York to Newcastle, with a red line, he had set out in the correct order all the places on these roads.⁸ Recently, challenging the traditional interpretation, it has been argued that the red lines should be seen as routes not roads.⁹ One writer has gone so far as to say that ‘The (red) lines in England and Wales also bear minimal relation to post-Roman and later roads’.¹⁰ However, the evidence suggests otherwise. A wide range of sources show that the red lines indicate major roads or, if an older term is preferred, highways.

The Gough roads are borne out by the second national source, described by the distinguished cartographer Sir Herbert Fordham as the ‘Earliest Table of the Highways of England and Wales’ (fig.1). These were printed in brief publications known as *A Cronicle of Yeres*, beginning in 1541, which list nine highways from London, indicating the stopping places they passed through. The nine highways went to St David’s, Bristol, St Buryan near Lands End in Cornwall, Dover, Colchester and Great Yarmouth, Walsingham, Chester, Coventry and Caernarvon (with a road to Cockermouth branching off near Coventry), and York and Berwick.¹¹ These highways are remarkably similar to roads shown on the Gough Map, except that map includes a road to Norwich, the second largest city after London c. 1500, which the Table of Highways curiously omits.

There are small differences between these two sources. For example, the Gough Map shows a route to Salisbury via Winchester, the Table of Highways one via Basingstoke. This became the more popular route in the fifteenth century. Other sources confirm the importance of these key highways from London. Consider the road from London to Exeter and Cornwall. A manuscript drawn up around 1400 in Titchfield Abbey (between Portsmouth and Southampton) provides a remarkable example of a medieval itinerary, a type which was probably common. The document lists the places en route from Titchfield to other Premonstratensian monasteries and the distances.¹² The itinerary to Torre Abbey (near Torquay in Devon) goes via Salisbury and Exeter



1 'The Earliest Table of the Highways of England and Wales'

(photograph: Sarah Harrison)

following exactly the same route which William Worcester records as part of an itinerary prepared for him by Thomas Clerk of Ware in 1476.¹³ The Gough Map and the Tables of Highways also describe the same route from Salisbury to Cornwall.

Leland refers to the road, noting that Honiton in Devon was a 'fair, long thorough fare ... in the high way to London'.¹⁴ He also describes other major highways following the same route as Gough Map roads, such as 'the Way from Winchester to London': Alresford (seven miles); Alton (seven miles); Farnham (seven miles); Guildford (nine miles); London (twenty-five miles). He notes that 'Wedon [Weedon Bec on the Chester Road] is a praty thorough fare ... much celebrated by cariars bycause it stondith the famose way, there communely caulilid of the people as Watheling Strete'.¹⁵ The expenses claimed by the fellows of Merton College, Oxford, on their journeys allow us to trace their routes. On one journey, the warden and sub-warden left Oxford on 20 January 1315.¹⁶ They stopped to drink ale in Tetsworth near Thame and spent the night in High Wycombe. The following day they ate at Uxbridge and stayed the night at Acton. They reached London the next day. The places they passed through had probably been on the main road from Oxford to London since the late Saxon period and remained on the route into the twentieth century when it became the A40.

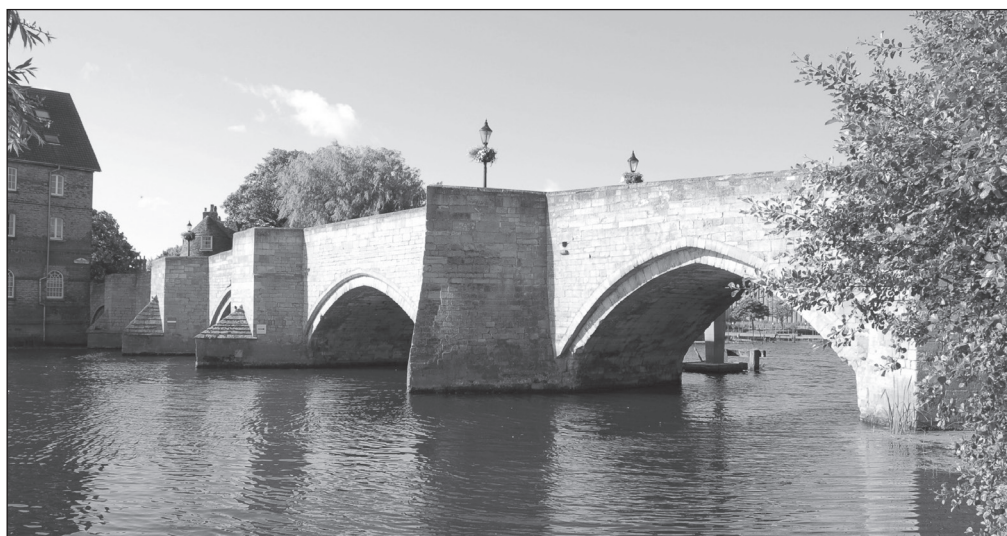
In addition to the great highways to London, the new *Map* also features cross-country roads. Some of these are drawn from the Gough Map such as the roads from Hull to York, Southampton to Canterbury, Doncaster to Kendal, Grantham to Worcester via Coventry and from Bristol to Chester. Several of these routes are also included in *A Little Treatise Conteyning Many Proper Tables and Rules very Necessary for the Use of all Men* which Richard Grafton published in his old age in 1571. The document contains an account of *The highe wayes from any notable towne in Englande to the Cittie of London. And likewise from one notable towne to an other, newly collected and set forth, in a more larger and better*

maner then heretofore it hath ben. Grafton's treatise is the first to describe a network of cross-country routes. His work also provides powerful confirmation of the importance of the great roads to London and adds a number of others such as the road from Boston, which went via Bourne and Stilton from where travellers joined the highway from York to London. Similarly, we are informed about the highway from York to Nottingham: 'From Yorke keepe London waye to Doncaster, and from Doncaster to Maunsfielde in Sherewoode' and from there to Nottingham. This important road was mentioned in Domesday Book: 'In Nottingham... the road to York... [is] so protected... if anyone ploughs or makes a dyke within two perches of the King's road, he has to pay a fine of £8'.¹⁷

Investment in national highways

Investment was often focused on these major highways. Thus, the London to Bristol road ran across marshy land near Chippenham, and the condition of the road was of concern to Bristol burgesses. In 1392, William Bakeswell left a legacy for mending the common way in Chippenham Lane and near Calne; and in 1476, Robert Hynde, a Bristol goldsmith, left money to the king's way between Chippenham and Calne. Another burgess made a bequest to a bridge between Calne and Cherhill.¹⁸

Pavage and pontage grants (royal grants of the right to take tolls for the repair of roads and bridges respectively) indicate that the major highways were of particular concern. In the late-fourteenth century, most of the pavages for rural highways were granted for stretches of roads to the north and north-west of London along the lines of the present A4, A40, A1 and A10. The main highway to the north-west from London went up Highgate Hill, and through Finchley to Barnet and St Albans. Pavage was granted to repair the stretch from Highgate to Finchley in 1354, and in 1380, to repair the road from the foot of Highgate Hill. In the 1460s, the road was being maintained by hermits, who had a hermitage in Highgate. A grant was issued for the road from Barnet to St Albans, and another further north for repairing the highway from Fenny Stratford to Stony Stratford.¹⁹



2 Huntingdon Bridge: the bridge, a remarkable medieval survival, was only bypassed in the 20th century (photograph: Peter Cross-Rudkin)

A significant proportion of pontage grants were for the benefit of bridges on major highways. The two great bridges across the Thames, on the Bristol Road at Maidenhead and the Exeter Road at Staines, were frequent beneficiaries, as were many bridges on the road to Berwick, including those at Wansford, Huntingdon, Newark, Ferrybridge, Doncaster, Tadcaster, Northallerton, Croft and Tyne Bridge, Newcastle. Ferrybridge, the key crossing of the River Aire replacing in importance the Roman crossing point at Castleford, was the first bridge to receive a pontage grant in 1228.²⁰

Bridges are the most prominent physical remains of the medieval road network. Around 200 survive with significant medieval material. A surprising number of these are on major highways, some bypassed but others still carrying motor traffic. One of the roads marked on the Gough Map, from Doncaster to Kendal, goes via an astonishingly impressive series of surviving medieval bridges at Wakefield, Kildwick, Settle and Kirby Lonsdale, though none of these bridges is on the main road today. Even more remarkably, a number of medieval bridges remain on the Old North Road despite the heavy traffic over the centuries. Among them are the magnificent bridges at Huntingdon and Croft. At Huntingdon, a bridge with pointed arches, cutwaters and pedestrian refuges, carried large volumes of traffic for centuries until 1975 when it was bypassed (fig.2). Fourteenth-century Croft Bridge, across the River Tees, was sensitively widened in 1795 by John Carr, Bridge Surveyor to the North Riding, by, in effect, building a new bridge attached to the old. After Croft, the road to Newcastle and Berwick crossed over the splendid medieval Sunderland Bridge, *en route* to Durham where two medieval bridges survive; one of them, Framwellgate Bridge, dates from c.1400 and is one of the finest bridges in the country with two arches of massive spans. At Felton, in Northumberland, a fifteenth century bridge with chamfered ribs remains over which traffic on the Great North Road flowed until 1926 when a concrete bridge was constructed nearby. Finally, spanning the River Tweed at Berwick is the superb old bridge, 355 metres long, which replaced a timber structure and was opened in 1624 following the union of the English and Scottish crowns under James I. It was the only major medieval or early modern bridge funded by the Crown.²¹

Many now-lost bridges lasted into the late eighteenth century, and were illustrated. The Ouse Bridge, York, a thirteenth-century bridge with a large sixteenth-century central arch, survived until 1810, and was frequently sketched, engraved and painted. Tyne Bridge, Newcastle, was regularly depicted, poignantly after the collapse of several arches and homes in the terrible flood of 1771. The evidence of bridges, both surviving and lost, enables us to confirm the entire route of the Berwick Road. There were medieval bridges at the crossings of all the rivers on the route.²²

Inns, great houses and battles

Inns were concentrated in towns and cities along the great highways. Thanks to the impressive work of John Hare and Edward Roberts, we know a good deal about the inns of Hampshire. Both Southampton and Winchester had more than ten inns where travellers stayed. There were also inns in small towns along the main roads. In Alton on the London Road, two late-medieval inns, the *George* and the *Crown*, partly survive along the High Street and its extension, Crown Hill. The *Angel*, which occupies a prime position in Andover High Street, is the finest and most complete medieval inn in the county. In the same street was the *Bell Inn*, which, sadly, was demolished in 1969–70.²³ Alton and Andover are towns which William Harrison in his *Historicall Description of the Iland of Britaine* called ‘thorowfares [which] haue great and sumptuous innes builded in them, for the receiuing of such trauellers and strangers as passe to and fro’.²⁴

In 1577, 22 inns, most of medieval origin, were recorded in St Albans on the highway from London to the north-west. This way through the town has now been bypassed, and its former route along Sopwell Lane, Holywell Hill, George and Fishpool streets, gives a vivid impression of this ancient road. A late medieval building in George Street, now a Thai restaurant, was formerly the *Swan Inn*. Nearby, on French Row, remnants of the medieval *Christopher Inn* survive. On Holywell Hill, the *White Hart*, formerly the *Hartshorn*, has timbers dating from the fifteenth century. Wills of that period refer to the now lost *Mermaide* on the same road, and to the *Stone Hall* or *Saracen's Head*. After the first battle of St Albans in 1455, the Duke of Somerset was killed fighting outside the *Castle Inn* in St Peter's Street (now the site of the Skipton Building Society).²⁵



3 Battle of Barnet (1471) from the Ghent manuscript, a late 15th-century document (Ghent University library, MS236).

Like most battles of the Wars of the Roses, Barnet was fought on a national highway.

This reminds us of the importance of this highway to the north-west in terms of the number of major battles of the Wars of the Roses fought along it, including the second battle of St Albans in 1461, and Barnet in 1471 nearer London on the same highway (fig.3). Battle sites were similarly found along other major highways. Edward IV and his army proceeded north along the London to York Road following his proclamation as king in March 1461. His army forced a crossing at Ferrybridge, the main bridge over the River Aire, and carried on along the highway to Towton where he secured a crushing victory. Ten years later he was again victorious at the Battle of Losecoat Field further south on the same road outside Stamford. The other key battles of the period took place on highways marked on the *Map*: Northampton, Wakefield, Ludford Bridge outside Ludlow and

Tewkesbury. Bosworth is the main exception, but even here Richard III had taken his troops along the ancient highway from Nottingham to Leicester, where he spent the night before heading off to Bosworth Field.²⁶

Castles and great residences were common on the main highways. Along the North Road were the castles at Berwick and Alnwick, where the vast fortification rises above the River Aln, and at Newcastle guarding the strategic crossing of the Tyne. The bishop of Durham, as well as his castle in Durham, had a palace in Darlington on the road, and another at Northallerton, described by John Leland as strong and well-moated.

At Newark, Bishop Rotherham of Lincoln made major changes with impressive new apartments in the 1470s (**see front cover illustration**). Other great houses were close to the road: the archbishop of York's Scrooby, the new palace of Margaret Beaufort (mother of Henry VII) at Collyweston, the Yorkist centre at Fotheringhay, the bishop of Lincoln's Buckden, and the Tiptoft, then Lovell, palace at Elsyng, which was frequently visited by Henry VII. Winchester, one of the richest dioceses in Europe had several important properties such as Esher, Farnham and Alresford, stopping places on the main road from London.

Differences between the Roman and medieval road networks

It is sometimes claimed that Roman 'trunk' roads such as Ermine Street or Watling Street remained fundamental to the medieval road network, but this is an exaggeration. In fact, a notable feature of the medieval network is how different it was from the main Roman network.²⁷ While it is true that stretches of medieval roads broadly followed the Roman alignment (though it is often uncertain whether the Roman road itself was used) long stretches went on a different course. Consider the York Road. The southern part of the medieval highway roughly followed the course of the Roman Ermine Street, but north of Grantham the roads diverged, the medieval route passing through Newark, where a new bridge was built in the twelfth century, *en route* for Doncaster, after which it headed to the new medieval bridge over the River Aire at Ferrybridge, not the Roman crossing point at Castleford.²⁸ Other medieval roads from London owed very little to their Roman predecessors. Many years ago, O.G.S. Crawford showed how the medieval Bristol Road ran close to, but on a totally different detailed alignment from, the Roman road to Bath.²⁹ The key to the changes probably lies in the way the medieval route passed through important Anglo-Saxon settlements such as Chippenham and Reading which were not on the Roman road network.

The nature and upkeep of medieval roads

It is similarly a commonplace to contrast well-engineered Roman roads and allegedly inferior medieval tracks. Paul Hindle, the author of several books on medieval roads, asserts that where the Gough Map red lines followed a Roman alignment, they were roads, but that otherwise they were simply tracks made by the passage of traffic. Contemporaries did not make this distinction.³⁰ Were medieval highways simply tracks? Misconceptions about the nature of medieval roads have a long history. Beatrice and Sidney Webb's *A Story of the King's Highway*, published in 1913 as part of their history of local government, has cast a long and unfortunate shadow over the history of medieval roads. In a recent collection of essays on roads it is asserted that 'The medieval highways that run through open terrain rather than through towns may be considered a right of way as much if not more than a physical entity ... the Victorian Fabian socialists Sidney and Beatrice Webb liken the road as a right of passage ... To the citizen of the twelfth, the fifteenth, or even the eighteenth century, the King's Highway was a more abstract conception. It was not a strip of land, or any corporeal thing'.³¹ Hindle quotes the Webbs with approval: 'The King's Highway ... was not a strip of land ... What existed ... was not a road, but ... a right of way ... which, if much frequented, became a physical track'. Hindle also cites Cyril Flower's striking phrase from his introduction to *Public Works in Medieval Law*, that 'The 'king's highway made and maintained itself'. It is a memorable, but inaccurate comment, in reality disproved by the evidence in Flower's important collection of mainly legal documents relating to the repair of medieval roads. Typical is a reference that the 'king's road (via regia) at Dourlane in

Hendon is flooded by default of Richard Edward who ought to repair it'. To state the obvious, if a road had to be repaired, it was not maintaining itself.³²

There has been an unfortunate tendency to assume that the only choice is between a 'track' (sometimes called a trackway or routeway) which made itself, or a heavily engineered, paved road such as the Romans built. It is important to remember that the Romans themselves had different classifications of roads. According to Ulpian, writing in the early third century, these included the *via munita* (a regular built road, paved with rectangular blocks of the stone of the country); *via glareata* (an earthed road with a gravelled surface); and *via terrena* (a plain road of levelled earth). Examples of the *via munita* are to be found in Italy, such as the paved Via Appia, but in Britain even major Roman roads were not always paved. Christopher Taylor described the Roman road between Salisbury and Dorchester which has been excavated in at least five places. The agger was common to the roads, but the construction of the road and its surface varied. The materials used were chalk, gravel, earth, clay, small stones and flint. The road in these sections was not paved as the Appian Way was.³³

Now consider medieval roads. There is compelling evidence that major roads were, for the most part, man-made structures. We know that large sums of money could be spent on them. In 1396, Robert Holme, a wealthy York merchant, left a legacy to improve the road to Tollerton and to repair the nearby bridge at Thornton (on the York/Berwick Road), and to build a new bridge over the Derwent between Elvington and Sutton and repair the road to Kexby Ferry (and thence to Beverley and Hull).³⁴ In the same decade, John Lewyn, the most important master mason in the north of England, entered into an agreement with Ralph, Lord Neville, to 'renew sufficiently all defective roads' at Brancepeth within two years of being asked to do so, for the sum of 200 marks (£133 6s 8d).³⁵ In his will of 1427, Sir Gerard Braybroke paid for the completion of the magnificent bridge over the Great Ouse at Great Barford and left £100 'to foule wayes in Bedfordshyr and Buckyngnamshir'.³⁶ These sums could purchase much material and labour. In 1345-46, a week's wages for a man to dig gravel for Exeter Bridge was 8¹/₄d; presumably, he was able to dig quite an amount of gravel in a week.³⁷

New roads were constructed in the Middle Ages. Hull lay on an extensive flood plain, and after Edward I's decision to develop the port, land was acquired for the construction of new roads forty feet wide. However, flooding caused a great deal of damage. In 1316, the commissioners of sewers found the roads impassable and ordered *inter alia* that the Anlaby road be raised six feet. Repairs to this road were again necessary in 1375 and a pavage or three years was granted to the mayor of Hull and prominent inhabitants of Hessle, Swanland, and Anlaby.³⁸

Blocking the highway was an offence, known as *stretbreche* in Old English, and later as a purpresture. In 1354, it was said that men and servants of the abbot of St Mary's, York, had dug up the king's street between York and Huntington (now a suburb of York), and taken earth away to repair his mill pond, thereby narrowing the king's street, doing damage to men wishing to pass and to the whole country to the value of £10.³⁹

Occasional references indicate how roads were repaired. The thirteenth-century *Gesta Abbatum* records improvements made to the major highway (*strata regia*) in the area by an eleventh-century abbot of St Albans, Leofstan. This included levelling rough patches of road, building bridges, reducing the gradients of steep slopes and making the road safer by cutting back the woods.⁴⁰ Work often involved the application of sand, gravel and stones. In 1489, parts of Gloucester Castle were demolished and the stone used for road repairs.⁴¹ In 1363, William Phelipp was repairing the highway between Smithfield

in London and Highgate. Because the highway was muddy and worn down, he was granted the right to take tolls to buy 'wood, sand and other necessary things'. Presumably, branches were laid down and sand and other material spread over them. In 1380, a road between Glapthorn and Southwick near Oundle, which was wont to be made of great stones, was out of repair. The accounts from the 1390s relating to the causeway at St Ives record: 'in digging gravel and carrying it to the causeway, 2s 8d', and 'for digging sand and clay to raise the height of the causeway, 3s 10d'.⁴² While the medieval road builders may not have made use of foundations in the same way as the Romans and while the amount of gravel and stone employed may not have been as thoroughly applied, there seems little doubt that medieval roads were made and repaired.

Improving drainage was an important factor in maintaining roads. Most legal cases about bridge repair involved the failure to keep ditches clear. Typical is a case in 1371 involving the King's street near Pocklington, Yorkshire, which was 'flooded and very dangerous to men passing with carts for want of cleaning ditches'. Drainage was also improved by raising the level of the road. In 1371, the King's road in Southwark was flooded by the failure of the prior of Bermondsey to raise the road.⁴³ Causeways, defined as raised roads across low or wet ground, were commonly constructed at the approach to bridges. Fortunately, one exceptional example of a very long causeway across the Trent valley survives. At Swarkestone in Derbyshire a series of small bridges and an earthen causeway almost a mile long rises above the flood plain of the Trent. Although the bridge over the main channel has been replaced, many small, pointed medieval arches remain over lesser channels. It gives a powerful impression of the potential length of these great medieval structures. Another fine causeway survives at Lower Heyford, Oxfordshire. First recorded in 1255, it retains medieval ribbed arches in the bridge over the main channel of the Cherwell, and the causeway.⁴⁴ Leland provides a lengthy description of the causeway to Gloucester (**see back cover**). He describes three bridges (of seven, two, and five arches) over a number of channels. The five-arched bridge was by the west gate, and further west according to Leland 'there goithe a greate causey of stone, forcyd up thurgh the low medes of Severn by the lengthe of a quarter of a myle ... At the end of this causey is a bridge of 8 arches not yet finished'.⁴⁵ An excellent detailed local study of a causeway is Brian Hodgkinson's work on the Holland causeway in the Lincolnshire Fens, in the medieval period the responsibility of the tiny impoverished religious house tellingly named Bridge End Priory.⁴⁶

Fortunately, we have a striking example of how new river crossings were constructed across a whole flood plain and beyond. A long poem was composed in the fifteenth century to commemorate the building of new causeways, roads and bridges at and near Abingdon and Culham. It records that, in 1416, 300 men were working on this major civil engineering project. The bridges and the road extending from Abingdon to Dorchester were repaired by the guild of the Holy Cross in Abingdon. The guild's charter of incorporation of 1441 provided a licence to the bishop of Salisbury, the earl of Suffolk, Sir John Golafre (MP for Berkshire and sheriff of Oxfordshire and Berkshire several times) and others to found a perpetual guild for the repair of the road from Abingdon to Dorchester. In fact, it seems that the road was seen as part of a route from Henley via Abingdon towards the Cotswolds; Sir John Golafre was said by Anthony Wood in the seventeenth century to have left money for the construction of Newbridge on the upper Thames. As a result of these major public works, even heavy, bulky materials were transported by road. Stone was taken by cart from Taynton to Henley where it was transhipped to Eton College for building the chapel. The bridges were not conceived as isolated structures, but as part of a system of road improvement.⁴⁷

A final source for the structure of medieval roads is archaeological evidence. At Sourton Down (Devon) excavators found a section of the medieval road from Exeter to Okehampton. It had been 'raised to a height of 0.5m by a series of clay and weathered shale layers upon which was laid a surface of local stone ... The new road was laid slightly to the north of the original [Roman] road, and its embankment created a causeway across [a] shallow combe ... A likely source for the dumped material was a large quarry pit that lay to the west'. The road was originally a maximum of ten metres wide.⁴⁸ This site was relatively isolated on the fringes of Dartmoor; how much more likely is it that substantial work was done on sections of major roads nearer towns and cities.

Trenches survive in the woods beside the road between Huntingdon and Royston; Oliver Rackham pointed out that these were created following the Statute of Winchester (1285) which laid down that "the highways from market towns to other market towns be widened where there are woods or hedges or ditches, so that there may be nowhere anyone with evil intent could hide within two hundred feet of the road on one side or the other".⁴⁹

In some places it was difficult to discern which was the main road. For centuries the old highway between Salisbury and Shaftesbury passed over the well-drained chalk downs. Here, in the early eighteenth century, Daniel Defoe found that 'the road which often lyes very broad, and branches off insensibly, might easily cause a traveller to lose his way', but the local shepherds were unfailingly helpful in pointing him in the right direction. Elsewhere, as they went onto the open hillside, travellers could meander, as aerial photographs of multiple braided roads reveal. At other places there might be no obvious track. By the late Middle Ages, travellers used a route across the sands of the Lancashire estuaries, including Morecambe Bay. They were led by guides over treacherous sands, and the route continued in regular use, including by wheeled vehicles, up to the railway age. It was quicker if more dangerous than the main road through the uplands to Carlisle via Shap and Penrith. Max Satchell has noted that Richard Grafton, writing in 1571, pointed to a shorter alternative route to the road from Exeter to Bristol via the Somerset levels, though he added 'no man can travel it except ... in summer or in a great frost'.⁵⁰ Trackless routes such as these were the exception to the norm that major highways were strips of land, often defined by ditches, repaired and maintained at some expense. Causeways carried the highways over floodplains to bridges which were unfailingly present where a river had to be crossed.

Continuity of roads from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century

There were no major changes in the basic character of roads between the fifteenth century and the eighteenth century and few in the basic alignment of the major national highways until even the twentieth. That is not to say there were no changes in the mechanisms and responsibilities for maintaining and repairing roads. The Highways Acts of 1555 and 1562 stipulated that parishes (or townships in the northern counties) were to be responsible for the upkeep, within their boundaries, of highways which led to market towns. This was an attempt to improve the maintenance of those roads, but it did not represent a change in maintenance techniques or the character of roads. From the late seventeenth century, however, there was increasing concern about the state of roads more generally. Whereas in the Middle Ages riding had been the main mode of transport for travellers who could afford it, by the late 1670s coaches were increasingly popular and they required better roads. At the same time, the widespread and increasing use of heavy wagons caused additional damage.

Turnpike trusts were set up by Act of Parliament for repairs and improvements, funded by tolls on road users. The concept was similar to the medieval pavage grants, but the effects were eventually transformational. Initially, most of the work carried out differed little from past procedures and methods. Indeed, from the Middle Ages until the late eighteenth century, the techniques used to maintain and improve roads remained largely the same. On the Bristol Road in the 1720s and 1730s the repair of stretches between towns was by means of gravel. As Theo Barker and Dorian Gerhold observed of the turnpike trusts: 'There appears to have been little improvement in techniques of repair until the nineteenth century, but there was more effective use of existing methods'. The more thorough application of these methods had a major impact on journey times and/or the cost of transport. As a result, coaches were able to travel more quickly and goods could be carried more cheaply.⁵¹

It is well known that the 19th century finally brought significant improvements in technique, notably 'macadamisation' named after John McAdam, who became surveyor of the Bristol Turnpike Trust in 1816. He used a layer of small stones forming a camber which became compacted into a solid mass. The design ensured rainwater rapidly drained away. The process spread round the world. But McAdam's roads generated a good deal of dust and so tar or similar materials were added to create tarmacadam or tarmac, which became widespread as motor vehicles increased in number in the twentieth century.⁵²

Despite these significant improvements, the alignment of many medieval highways changed surprisingly little. There are obvious exceptions. The ancient road between Salisbury and Shaftesbury, now known as the Old Shaftesbury Drove, took an upland route over White Sheet Hill. It was turnpiked in the 1700s but by the nineteenth century the modern route of the A30 in the valley was preferred. In Lancashire, where heavy traffic was generated by industrialisation, 754 miles of turnpike road were authorised and constructed between 1724 and 1842. Of this 69 per cent were medieval roads with minor upgrading (including the key north-south road from Warrington to Preston via Wigan, and the main Liverpool-Preston road; 6 per cent were medieval roads with major improvement; and no less than 25 per cent was completely new road on virgin alignments, including some lengthy cross-country routes in east Lancashire. Comparable percentages pertain to Cheshire, where completely new turnpike roads included those from Manchester via Stockport into Derbyshire, and from Macclesfield to Buxton.⁵³ Thus, in districts where commercial expansion and industrial development provided impetus, new roads might be built, but for the national highway network in general the medieval routes sufficed. In some places the ancient highway has been reduced to a footpath. Another route listed in the earliest table of highways, the road to Walsingham, which was by the later Middle Ages England's foremost pilgrim site, went from Newmarket to Brandon and through Pickenham, a place marked on the Gough Map, to Walsingham. The pilgrimages ended with the Reformation, and it can now only be traced as a series of village roads.⁵⁴

However, most ancient highways have continued in use and often lie under modern roads. The classification system of roads, created in 1922, designated important routes connecting large population centres, or for through traffic, as Class I. The definitive list of those roads was published in 1923, including the A1 to Edinburgh, the A2 to Dover, the A4 to Avonmouth, the A6 to Carlisle.⁵⁵ It is striking that these roads pass through so many of the same places as their equivalents in the Middle Ages. A good example is the A4 which follows the medieval route through Maidenhead, Reading, Newbury, Marlborough, Calne, and Chippenham with the A420 branching off through Marshfield to Bristol.

Further work: local studies and county roads

The highways described above and marked on the *Map* are shown at a relatively small scale and cannot show the routes in great detail; they basically indicate the larger and smaller towns the roads passed through and the bridges they passed over, but it is possible to get a more detailed picture. For example, Leland tells us that Bishop Burton is two miles from Beverley ‘in the way to York’. It still is: the road is now the A1079. We know from the *Earliest Table of Highways* that the road from Gloucester to Bristol ran through Newport halfway between the two cities, and today on the A38. Further detail is provided by a reference in 1422 when the bishop of Worcester offered indulgences for the repair of the Bristol road in Slimbridge between Cambridge and Gloucester.⁵⁶ There is significant potential for local studies to produce far more detailed alignments.

In addition to national highways, there was an extensive network of county roads, which linked towns and other destinations. The twelfth-century *Leges Henrici Primi* state ‘That is called a royal highway which is always open, which no one can close or divert with walls he has erected, which leads into a city or borough or castle or market town’. The *Leges* add that the highway should be wide enough for two wagons to meet and pass there, and for herdsmen to be able to make contact, with their goads at full length, and for sixteen knights, armed, to ride side by side. The thirteenth-century Statute of Winchester used similar language referring to highways between market towns, as did the Highways Act 1555.⁵⁷

There are many mentions of specific roads between towns. Some can be traced in royal and other itineraries. Michael Prestwich has noted how easily Edward I was able to move with a large entourage on such roads.⁵⁸ Leland’s journeys are again a valuable source: he notes ‘From Hoveden (Howden) to Hemingburge (Hemingbrough) yn the way toward York about a 2 Miles’. Other sources include court cases. For example, a fourteenth-century legal dispute refers to the *via regia* between Warwick and Southam, another to the *via regia* between Bingham and Whatton. These roads are roughly on the line of the present A425 and A52.⁵⁹

The evidence of the laws and the references to roads and places on roads show that there was a network linking market towns, and provides a scattering of locations through which the roads passed. The system of ‘county’ roads can be more comprehensively revealed by mapping the medieval bridges. Using a wide range of sources, a large number of the bridges over rivers can be documented. Figure 4 is a map of the Yorkshire bridges extant in the late Middle Ages. The many bridges on the map imply a dense network of roads which linked towns together. In some areas the ancient bridge sites continue to carry main roads. Consider the medieval bridges over the River Swale downstream from Richmond: Catterick, Morton, Skipton, Topcliffe and Thornton. All but one of them carries an ‘A’ road today, linking towns to the west of the river (Masham, Bedale and Ripon) with those to the east, in particular Northallerton, Thirsk and Easingwold. In addition, some early county maps mark roads, Symonson’s Kent of 1596 being a notable example, and it should be possible to trace the roads back to an earlier period.⁶⁰ Those to Dover and Rye have a medieval origin, and it is highly likely that the others have too.

There are important local studies of roads and road history: Lancashire is an excellent example. But with a few exceptions, such as a map of the roads round Evesham, the main ‘county’ roads have not been comprehensively mapped.⁶¹ The full network of such county roads is too dense to be plotted on a single map of the country but could readily be on a series of regional maps.

By the late Middle Ages, there was a network of national highways. For the first time this has been systematically mapped. The best referenced roads are those focused on London, which might be described as ‘London way’ as far away as Devon and Yorkshire. There were also major cross-country highways. These roads were physical entities, not mere rights of way. They differed significantly from their Roman predecessors, and their basic alignment often continued into the twentieth century. Future local studies could specify the route of these highways in more detail and there is a real need for a series of regional maps which would plot the ‘county’ roads between market towns.

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Sexual defamation in early modern South West England

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On 17 January 1639 a church court defamation case was held in Salisbury cathedral in which a young woman, Elizabeth Blitham,¹ accused Thomas Hayter, a Salisbury shoemaker, of calling her a whore.² The slander³ took place the previous Michaelmas in William Gilbert's alehouse booth at Weyhill Fair near Andover. The fair was held at the end of September and it was commonplace to use the liturgical calendar to date events. The case was heard in Salisbury cathedral as Weyhill was a Hampshire parish 'peculiar', under the jurisdiction of the diocese of Salisbury even though most local parishes were in the diocese of Winchester. In any case, all the people involved lived in Salisbury and had travelled from there to Weyhill for the fair. To modern sensibilities an insult might appear inappropriate to take to court but it was taken very seriously in early modern England. The use of sexual insult had considerable force. In a largely oral culture social bonds—such as neighbourly approval or economic partnerships—depended upon trust between individuals, and trust depended on having a good reputation. How one was regarded by other people was of vital importance. Thomas Hobbes stated that regardless of how people may rate themselves, a person's 'true value is no more than it is esteemed by others'.⁴ The social standing of oneself and others 'was the product of mutual surveillance and negotiation'.⁵ A good reputation included financial solvency and sexual propriety. Personal honour was not something that concerned only the nobility. Everyone was careful to protect their good name, something readily supported by the legal system, for example in defamation cases. 'Under English law, every individual was entitled to a good name; to undermine this in public ... was an offence against both secular law and that of the church'.⁶ In early modern England 'fame' meant reputation and credit among one's neighbours. 'Good fame was an almost tangible social good to which anyone, however poor or humble, could lay claim'.⁷ Defamation was, therefore, capable of destroying a person's reputation, livelihood and place in society.

'The legal system gave ample support to the culture of honour. Through lawsuits prosecuted at the church courts and other jurisdictions, ordinary women and men pursued the defence of their good names'.⁸ Slander was regarded as a breach of Christian charity and damaging to community harmony.⁹ The period from the mid sixteenth century to the late seventeenth was one of 'unprecedented and unsurpassed litigiousness, thousands upon thousands of men and women from across the social scale were called on to produce testimony in early modern courts'.¹⁰ The lawyer John March wrote in 1647 that actions for slander, 'are much more common, and do much more abound than in times past'.¹¹ Although a church court case could exonerate someone publicly slandered it was not without risks: 'Even a successful performance was normally followed by an admonition to avoid cause for suspicion in the future. In other words, the shadow of discredit was not entirely lifted'.¹² Even so, many people felt they had no choice but to go to court.

Sexual slander drove men to court to defend themselves after being publicly called 'cuckold' or 'whoremaster'. A man could not afford to lose his reputation as it would impair his ability to work effectively within his community and so provide for his family.

It was universally accepted that a household should be led by a respected man—the patriarch, to whom his wife and children deferred. ‘Judges, lawyers and juries were male and the law regarded husband and wife as one person, the man’.¹³ The word cuckold was humiliating, damaging a man’s status within his community. It implied that his wife was guilty of sexual misconduct and therefore that the man had failed in his social and religious duties as family patriarch. In doing so he had destroyed the good name of the whole family. Public mockery was one way of dealing with sexual transgressions. A man suspected of being cuckolded could be placed upon a skimmington pole by his neighbours and carried around his village or parish in shame. The depiction of a skimmington ride on a prominent fireplace at Montacute House in Somerset indicates how seriously such matters were regarded. Men could be reluctant to pursue legal redress when defamed as a cuckold. Unlike ‘whoremaster’, ‘cuckold’ was not in itself an actionable word and it did not lead to anything like the number of court cases arising from the sexual defamation of women.



1 Skimmington ride: plasterwork decoration, c.1600 (Montacute House, Somerset)

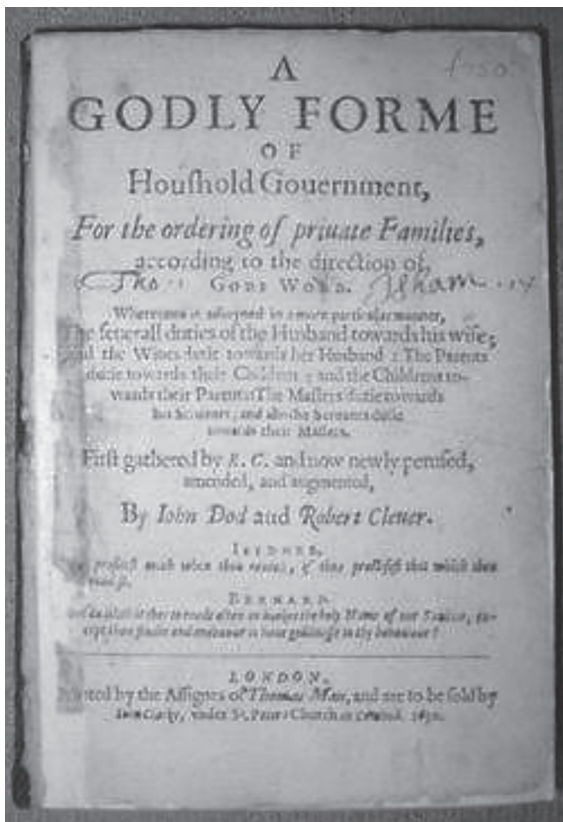
Accusations of sexual impropriety were even more serious for women as they faced complete loss of respect within their community. Men took action to defend themselves against a wider range of insults that included thief, drunkard and blasphemer. For women, reputation was more related to their sexual behaviour which is why slanders such as ‘quean’, ‘whore’, ‘harlot’, ‘strumpet’ and ‘bawd’ were commonly brought to court. These words were officially ‘actionable’ and warranted legal redress. They were defamatory and harmful to a person’s reputation. There was no greater insult: ‘The whore was the archetype of sin’.¹⁴ The accusation of being a whore declared that someone was completely lacking in morality and could not be trusted across all other issues.

An accusation of being a scold was another reason women went to court. This was a highly religious society in which personal behaviour was regulated and individuals were legally liable for personal immorality. For example, churchwardens might initiate legal proceedings against parishioners in cases of scolding and sexual defamation. Communities could also punish women who did not conform by means of ducking

stools or scolds' bridles, penalties that were both brutal and humiliating. The metal plate of the scold's bridle depressed the woman's tongue, virtually gagging her as she was led around her community. Some of the plates were even spiked. There was a sexual undercurrent to scolding as if the failure to recognise the authority of the family patriarch might stray into sexual betrayal. However, the word scold did not refer solely to marital behaviour but also to someone who disturbed neighbourhood peace by regularly using foul language or repeating slanders, thereby undermining the delicate balance of reputations within a community. In such cases the church court could term offenders 'common defamers'. Scolds were seen as contrary to the prevailing view that women should be gentle and passive. Men in authority, therefore, often raised the spectre of gossiping, linking it to scolding.

Advice that women should largely remain at home was commonplace in early modern England yet was contrary to the reality of women's working lives. Many conduct books were printed to advise women how to behave. For example, in 1592 Philip Stubbes published *A Christal Glass for christian women* in which he praised his deceased wife Katherine as follows: 'She obeyed the commandment of the Apostle [St. Paul] who biddeth women to be silent ... So gentle was she and courteous of nature, that she was never heard to give any the lie in all her life, nor so much as to any in anger. She was never known to fall out with her neighbours, nor with the least child that lived, much less to scold or brawl, as many will do nowadays'.¹⁵ Stubbes claimed that his wife only

went outside if accompanied by himself, a clearly ridiculous statement contradicted by himself later in his publication when he revealed that Katherine would lambast people in her community whose religious views she disagreed with. This ideal of the passive dutiful woman was commonly depicted in literature written by men. In 1598 John Dod and Robert Cleaver published *A godlie forme of householde government*, a very popular work which went through several editions. It included advice for young women: 'no man will look for any other thing of a woman but her honesty ... for in a maid the honesty and chastity are instead of all'.¹⁶ Applied to women, the word honesty meant chastity and the authors therefore reduced a young woman to nothing more than her virginity. The message was clear, that to have prospects of marriage a young woman must above all else remain chaste, reinforcing the fear of sexual defamation.



2 The title page of Thomas Dod and Robert Cleaver, *A Godlie Forme of Household Government* (1598)

Church courts

Ecclesiastical courts were central to early modern England's complex legal system. The country's twenty-one dioceses contained over 250 church courts, which had four important functions: to correct, adjudicate, verify and record, and license'.¹⁷ Where possible, church courts were held on consecrated ground: in 1639 the Salisbury consistory court was located near the entrance to the cathedral nave. The proceedings differed from those of lay courts such as quarter sessions. Depositions by witnesses were introduced part way through the court process. Beforehand the aggrieved plaintiff, often termed the producent, appointed a proctor, who lodged the complaint on his or her behalf. The defendant was then summoned to appear in court. He or she could lodge their own complaint and both plaintiff and defendant were then asked to respond to accusations under oath. If no resolution was reached, witnesses – known as deponents – were summoned to attend on pain of excommunication. Although in theory this was a serious penalty which could have consequences for livelihoods, many people chose to ignore its threat. For example, '121 out of 352 suffered excommunication by the Winchester Consistory Court in Michaelmas term 1623'.¹⁸ Perhaps the risk posed by excommunication was preferable to becoming embroiled in a neighbourhood dispute.

In church courts legal cases were known as causes and were overseen not by a judge but by the chancellor of the diocese, who was the bishop's spiritual advisor, and a lawyer known as official principal. Their decision was final as there was no right of appeal.¹⁹ Dr Lyme, diocesan chancellor at Salisbury cathedral, oversaw the Weyhill Fair defamation case alongside Dr Nenckman. Clerks and administrative staff would also be present. The hearing took place in a part of the cathedral which was sectioned off by imposing court furniture, an example of which can still be seen in Chester cathedral. The array of officials, documents and legal paraphernalia would have appeared intimidating to witnesses who were often illiterate. Cases involving a dispute between individuals such as Elizabeth Blitham and Thomas Hayter were known as instance business, distinguishing them from cases concerning clergy, church discipline or parish matters. Instance suits covered moral issues such as defamation and marriage disputes. Defamation was one of cases most frequently brought before English church courts and this was true of Salisbury.

To file a defamation a plaintiff such as Elizabeth Blitham attended court and had to produce deponents who were present at the slander and could describe what happened in detail. The use of supportive witnesses to clear a defamation was called compurgation. It was expected that deponents were 'of good repute and usually of equal status to the accused, who were prepared to take a formal oath that they believed the defamed person to be innocent of any crime and of good name and fame'.²⁰ They would testify that the words spoken were 'actionable', had been spoken in the presence of others and that the plaintiff's reputation was diminished as a result. The detailed questions that followed witness statements were described as 'interrogatories' and partly followed a set formula. A common use of interrogatories was to challenge the competence or character of the deponents.²¹ A deponent was not present to hear the other witnesses testify so did not know what they had said. A record of proceedings was taken by clerks who sometimes summarised the words of deponents rather than reporting them verbatim which accounts for the somewhat formulaic language. Despite this church court records provide valuable insights into the lives of ordinary people in early modern England.

Weyhill Fair

The slander involving Elizabeth Blitham took place at Weyhill Fair, one of the largest fairs in England. It had been held three times a year since the eleventh century, at the crossroads of trade routes linking Farnham, Winchester, Southampton, Salisbury, Marlborough, Newbury and places beyond. At its height Weyhill Fair attracted many people and enjoyed a wide fame. In 1720 it was described in the atlas *Magna Britannia* as 'the greatest fair in the Kingdom'.²² The largest of the three annual fairs at Weyhill was held over six days at the end of September and included a great sheep market which could attract over 100,000 people. At one time Geoffrey Chaucer owned part of the land occupied by the fair which was, coincidentally, sited on the old Pilgrims Way. It is commonly stated that Weyhill is the fair is mentioned in the poem *Piers Plowman*: 'At Wy and Wynchestre I went to the feyre.'²³ Thomas Hardy's tale of the sale of a wife at a fair, in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, was based upon Weyhill, thinly disguised as *Weydon Priors*.

In the late sixteenth century a court of Pie Powder (from the French *pieds poudres*: dusty feet) was established on site to provide rough and ready justice for the large number of disputes arising at the fair. This did not, however, cover cases concerning sexual defamation which were matters for the church courts.²⁴ Such was the success of the fair that permanent booths were constructed in the early nineteenth century specifically for hop trading and these can still be seen today. Such booths were the location for all sorts of vendors, alehouses and other entertainment and were a common feature of early modern fairs. They were usually temporary structures as was the case in Weyhill in 1638. A nineteenth century photograph taken at Weyhill Fair shows the typical appearance of temporary booths. William Gilbert's alehouse booth was wattled with ferns, indicating its temporary nature. A bustling scene of crowds, livestock, heavy drinking and petty lawlessness provides the backdrop to the events that occurred in that booth in September 1638.



3 Late nineteenth century temporary stalls at Weyhill Fair

Case 1 Blitham v Hayter

The case heard in January 1639 concerned Elizabeth Blitham, variously described as being eighteen or nineteen, who was working in Gilbert's alehouse booth by helping his wife manage things and attend to the customers. The substantial booth had several rooms and in court was referred to as the Sign of the Antelope. At the trial Elizabeth was supported by three deponents: William Gilbert, his wife Alice and his servant Amy Due. William was the first deponent, telling the court that he was 47 years old and a tailor who had been resident in Salisbury for twenty years. It was normal at the start of a court case for each deponent to give evidence of their reliability as a witness in terms of their residency and knowledge of the parties involved. It is not known whether William was still in work as a tailor or merely doing temporary work at the fair to earn some extra money. He stated that Elizabeth and the other deponents were working in the booth alongside a cook and someone turning the spit. William testified that Elizabeth and Alice were folding linen by the entrance to the buttery storeroom while Thomas Hayter was drinking at a table opposite them in the company of a man and two women.

He told the court that Hayter seemed to take exception to something Elizabeth said about them all hoping to enjoy music later on and 'in an angry manner called her the sayd Eliz Blitham whore and dirty whore in the presence and hearing of this deponent, his wife and one Amy Due and to the hurt and discredit of her, the said Elizabeth'. William stated that his wife then asked someone to pass Hayter his bill for a pint of wine which he objected to. The whole scene was witnessed by four other people. Under interrogation he admitted that 'he knows the litigant parties and favours the parties alike', perhaps indicating his impartiality or else his awkwardness at appearing in court in support of Elizabeth. At one point he replied to an interrogatory by saying he was at first unwilling to get involved in the suit but was later persuaded otherwise. Salisbury was relatively small and all the people involved had to continue living near to one another. William responded to a question about his health by admitting to a period of being 'distracted', in other words suffering some form of mental ill health, but added that he had been well for four or five years. This line of questioning was probably designed to discredit William as a witness. He said that he had not worked at the fair before and that he would not go there again, something later contradicted by both his wife and his servant. He admitted that he knew Thomas Hayter in Salisbury and had spoken to him recently but was not friendly with him. The clerk added that in answer to questions put to William, 'he responds that the said Elizabeth is a young woman never married'. William ended his testimony by signing his name, evidence perhaps that his status as a tradesman required literacy.

During interrogatories William Gilbert provided evidence to the court of his standing as a reputable citizen. He had no debts, had attended the court freely and without any payment. The economic worth of a witness was considered very important. 'Worth' equated to independence or, more importantly, lack of dependency. Wealth was often equated with moral worth and so the testimony of someone in debt or without assets carried little weight. 'More pointed interrogatories occasionally asked whether witnesses had ever received formal relief from their parish or informal charity from their neighbours; whether the clothes they wore when examined were their own... and when, where and from whom they last received the sacrament'.²⁵ Receipt of charity such as parish alms diminished people's worth, damaged their reputation and reduced their chances of economic activity. In 1635 Michael Dalton wrote a book of advice for magistrates in which he stated that, 'Situation, sex, age, discretion, reputation, worth and faith: you will need these things in witnesses'.²⁶ All the deponents in church court

cases were questioned about their worth and William Gilbert was keen to stress his own worth as someone who was respectable and trustworthy, not being in debt or in receipt of charity.

Elizabeth's second deponent was William's wife Alice, who said that she had lived in Salisbury for 30 years. Her age was given as 'about 50 years old'. Alice provided a slightly different account from William, stating that Hayter was drinking with another person at about eight o'clock in the evening and that he became angry when Elizabeth refused to sit and have a drink with him. She confirmed that Hayter called Elizabeth, 'whore, base whore and dirty whore', adding that Elizabeth had 'ever been accounted an honest maiden and to her great grief and discomfort'. Elizabeth was very upset and immediately asked William, Alice and her third deponent Amy Due to bear witness in a legal sense to what had happened. Alice named John Moggridge, a Salisbury tanner, as Hayter's drinking companion along with an unknown young woman. She revealed that William's servants William Cully and Thomas Wayte were also present, reinforcing the gravity of the defamation. When presented with the bill Hayter 'swore them out of a pint of sack'. Alice might well have appeared a more precise and more willing witness than her husband. During the interrogatories she admitted that Hayter came to her house to ask if she and her husband were going to testify about the events at Weyhill fair. Alice answered that she had refused to say, adding that Elizabeth's sister, who lived with her and William, reminded her of Hayter's name as she didn't know him. She confirmed that her husband had previously been ill but had recovered eight or nine years ago. The proctor kept up this line of questioning about William's mental health with the deponents. Alice revealed that William had kept a booth at Weyhill fair once before as well as one at Burford. She concluded her testimony by repeating that she knew of Hayter but was not familiar with him. Some small discrepancies in the deponents' testimonies under legal questioning might be evidence of lack of planning or nerves in an unfamiliar and intimidating court situated within the cathedral. Finally, Alice signed with a mark revealing her illiteracy.

The third and final deponent supporting Elizabeth was Amy Due, aged nineteen, who was described as a spinster and who also signed with a mark. She had lived with William and Alice in Salisbury for three months. It was normal for servants in early modern England to live with their employer. The clerk recorded Amy as saying that, 'Thomas Hayter coming into the said booth to drink with some other company viz. a young wench, an old woman and another man one John Moggridge, a tanner of Salisbury. And there being drinking of sack the said Hayter espying the producent Eliz: Blithman (as they passed by him) spoke unto her to come and drink with him. But the said Elizabeth refused so to do, wishing him the said Hayter to use them well that he had there already, having the said young wench between him and the said Moggridge'. This confirmed the testimony of Alice Gilbert that Elizabeth was a wholly innocent party. She told the court that Hayter called Elizabeth a whore four times, 'to the hurt and discredit of her the said Eliz: and to the taking away of her good name and fame, [Elizabeth] saying she would be revenged on him if there were any law in England'. Under questioning Amy stated that she had known Elizabeth three or four years and Hayter about one year. Her worth was described by the clerk as, 'Nothing except what her friends will bestow upon her'. Amy added that another servant Ellis Antram was also at work in the booth, along with William Cully and Thomas Wayte, confirming that there were several witnesses to the slander. In answer to an interrogatory about William Gilbert's health she replied, 'he is now a very sensible man and she never knew him otherwise and he has kept a booth two or three times'. Amy referred to Alice as 'Goody Gilbert'. Goody was short for Goodwife, a term applied to respectable married

women who managed a household and was, therefore, an expression of Alice's worth. Amy confirmed that everyone could hear what Thomas Hayter said to Elizabeth and that she knew who he was but had never spoken to him.

Unfortunately, the records of Elizabeth Blitham's defamation case do not reveal the verdict. This often happened as most cases were resolved out of court. Church court penalties usually took the form of a public penalty and/or payment of legal costs. Such cases were all about preserving one's good name and the plaintiff never received any financial redress, except in the form of costs paid. The fact that two of Elizabeth's witnesses were of higher worth might have counted in her favour, as well as the evident drunkenness of the defendant. Given the strength of the case against Thomas Hayter it is possible that he had to make a public apology, retract his defamation and pay costs. However, the fact that the defamation took place in a fairground alehouse may have told against everyone involved. It was common for poorer witnesses who could be associated with drinking to be 'linked to idleness, prodigality, improper alliances and immoderation'.²⁷ Regardless of the verdict, this church court case provides evidence for the importance of reputation to lower class people in early modern communities. It also reveals some of the stresses they were subject to in a society committed to enforcing strict gender roles.

Case 2 Smith v Guy

The second church court case presented here was another instance suit, one concerning a neighbourhood dispute in the diocese of Winchester.²⁸ In June 1592 in the village of Preston Candover near Basingstoke James Guy was working on a hedge that separated his property from the vicarage where Anne Smith lived. At the same time Jacob Shackleton, a weaver aged 50, arrived to deliver cloth to Anne. He entered the house and looking out of an open window saw Guy in 'earnest communication and chiding Anne'. He then heard Guy 'utter and speak to the said Ann Smith as he believes and as he has before said, the term and word 'Strumpet'. But he cannot tell whether he said 'Thow art a strumpet' or 'go like a strumpet'. Anne immediately went indoors and spoke to Jacob and her two maids, who were cleaning windows and so also witnessed the scene. The clerk recorded Jacob's testimony to the court as follows: 'the said Ann Smith came into her house and told unto her maidens that she was called 'strumpet' by the said Guy and was never so called before. And she then asked this deponent if he heard not him say so. And this deponent answered her 'Indeed such a word I heard''. Jacob admitted that he knew both parties well, something that was commonly asked in court to verify that witnesses were reliable. At the end of his testimony he signed with a mark, indicating that he was illiterate. During Jacob's responses to the interrogatories the clerk recorded that 'he is a poor weaver of little or small ability', perhaps undermining his credibility as a witness. Jacob confirmed that the other deponents, Christian and Agnes, were cleaning the windows of the vicarage and could clearly hear the exchange between Anne and James.

The second deponent supporting Anne Smith was 'Christian Marten alias Capper of Chilton Candover, around 20 years old' and originally from Winchester. She affirmed that she knew both parties in the case. Christian's account was more informative than Jacob's: 'the said James Guy being at hedging at his meadow over right the vicarage gate, and the said Ann Smith then being in her garden near unto that place, she the said Ann Smith used some speeches of her mislike with the said Guy about the breaking of her sow's leg, wherewith she charged him. And at length said unto him: 'you are an honest man, I warrant you'. Whereupon the said Guy replied unto her, the said Ann Smith, and said 'I will have 20 honest men to say for me and thow shall go

like a strumpet'. Then said the said Ann Smith to the said Guy: 'Wilt thou say those words again?' Thereto the said Guy presently replied unto her 'I that I will, thou art a strumpet' in the presence and hearing of this deponent and her contest Agnes Edwards, who then were scouring of a glass window of the vicarage house there near unto and in sight of the said parties as she deposes and otherwise she cannot depose'. The clerk's use of the word 'contest' means that the person referred to was also a deponent in the case. Christian signed with a mark. Under questioning she described herself as 'a poor maidservant and that is her maintenance'. She states that she clearly heard the exchange between the litigants and did not hear Anne Smith say any 'unseemly speeches'.

The third deponent, Agnes Edwards, 'around 40 years old', had lived all her life in Preston Candover and told the court she knew both Anne Smith and James Guy. She said that Christian was helping her clean the vicarage windows and the rest of her testimony was almost identical to Christian's. She signed with a mark. When questioned Agnes said she was, 'a poor labouring maiden servant and lives by her labour'. The case is interesting because it involved neighbours who had to continue to live as such after the court case. Although the outcome of the trial is unknown, there does not appear to be anyone to speak on behalf of James Guy. Anne Smith's case might have benefitted from her living at the vicarage. Like Elizabeth Blitham she did not appear to provoke her accuser except in so far as she raised the matter of the injured sow. However, her witnesses were poor illiterate people dependent upon her for their livelihood which may have counted against her. 'Servants were doubtful as witnesses because of both their lack of means and their dependence on masters or mistresses. The obligation servants owed to employers was a particular concern when they were called to give evidence either for or against a master or mistress'.²⁹ In this respect Anne Smith would have had a stronger case if she had been supported by deponents whose worth equalled her own.

Case 3 Burnell v Cullen

A survey of church courts in Norfolk found that 'The most noticeable characteristic of defamation cases between 1562 and 1725 is that they were increasingly brought by women against other women'.³⁰ This was a general trend and often involved married women. The case of Elizabeth Blitham involved a young women keen to protect her reputation for chastity. Many older women, such as Anne Smith, also went to court to defend themselves against defamation. However, the third court case described here concerned two married women: Dorothy Cullen called Mary Burnell a whore in a Glastonbury street in 1681.³¹ The trial was held in the hall of the chancellor hearing the case, which sometimes happened when there was no church court nearby. The first witness was Susanna Hewlett, aged 61, who had lived in Glastonbury since infancy. She was in her porch at work knitting alongside her daughter Joan Pittman and Mary Fear when she heard a scolding between Mary Burnell and Dorothy Cullen, who lived on the opposite side of the street. 'And the said Cullen called the said Burnell murderous whore several times whereupon the said Burnell came back to this deponent and her contest and the said Joane Pittman, and bade them bear witness of what the said Cullen had called her'. Mary Burnell also lived in Glastonbury and was walking along the street when she was defamed. Susanna then signed her statement with a mark. The next deponent was Mary Fear, married aged 28, who repeated the evidence of Susanna and also signed with a mark. These deponents gave brief statements, unlike the evidence that was to follow.

The court record continued two months later when John Treasure gave evidence on the case to different church officials at another location. He was 47, resident in Glastonbury for sixteen years, and had been churchwarden of St John's parish when the events took place. In a new development he appeared as a deponent not for the plaintiff but for Nathaniel Burnell's sister and he took the proceedings in a new direction. He began by stating that Nathaniel Burnell, Mary's husband, 'had the repute of a very honest poor man and never heard or understood that he was any way addicted to follow or keep company with strange women'. Having given an indication of Nathaniel's worth—the opinion of a churchwarden being a significant endorsement—he stated that Nathaniel was very diseased with French pox, the contemporary term for syphilis, and that he caught it from his wife Mary after she returned from a visit to Wells. Nathaniel complained of his wife 'in a grievous manner' believing she had been unfaithful to him. John and the parish overseers of the poor examined Nathaniel's genitals and immediately agreed to pay for a physician called Perryman who confirmed the diagnosis. A second physician, Dr Jaques Flowerston, also confirmed the diagnosis but refused to do more when he discovered Perryman's involvement. The latter also examined Mary Burnell and found that she was also afflicted but not as badly as her husband. The parish agreed to pay over £3 to the doctor but Nathaniel saw no improvement and died. The court clerk recorded John's words that Nathaniel

'grew worse and worse till his death and died in miserable condition always crying out upon his wife that she had brought him to that miserable end... and that it is generally now believed in and about Glastonbury that the said Mary Burnell, the plaintiff (wife to the said Nathaniel Burnell), was the chief instrument of her said husband's distemper which hastened his death. And the cause of such belief is for that the said Nathaniel did often and in extreme agonies and protestations declare so much'

John added that after Nathaniel's death he went to the Burnell house and asked Mary whether her husband was cured before he died, in which case he would have to pay the doctor. Mary told him that her husband was not cured. Under interrogatories John Treasure stated that he had never witnessed Dorothy Cullen and Mary Burnell quarrelling but that since Nathaniel's death 'his wife's credit is not so clear as formerly'. Credit was a synonym for good name, fame or reputation. John then signed his name. It was clear that the community, led by its parish officials, had decided on the case to Mary's detriment.

The case proceeded to a fourth deposition, made by John Applin, a stocking maker aged 32, who had lived in Glastonbury since he was born. The active possession of a trade always added credit to a witness. He endorsed the approval of Nathaniel Burnell who 'ever had the repute of a very honest man'. At the time, the description of a man as 'honest' was closer to our understanding of it as truthful. For women the term usually meant chastity or without sexual transgression.³² He explained that he was with John Treasure when Nathaniel complained of being unable to work due to the pox and therefore needed financial help from the parish. John Applin told Nathaniel 'that they were not immediately to satisfy his desire upon his bare saying so, upon which he showed them his privities which were in such a lamentable condition that he really pitied him'. He then repeated much of the evidence given by John Treasure. Under questioning this witness stated that the whole business 'had a very ill report in Glastonbury'. He was able to sign his name.

The next witness was Andrew Ticknell, aged 30, a worsted comber who had lived in Glastonbury for nine years. In addition to repeating some of the previous testimony he added a new piece of evidence: that Mary and Nathaniel Burnell, 'fought and she

threw him down and broke his head, shortly upon which she went to Wells'. Clearly, the case the court Mary was building, despite her being the original plaintiff. Andrew told the court Mary was 'out of all manner of credit amongst the better sort of people'. It was clear that those deponents who spoke against Mary did so informed by what Nathaniel had told them and due to their awareness of community feeling about the affair. The final witness was Anna Spurlock, aged 57 who had always lived in Glastonbury. She said that she visited Nathaniel two days before he died and helped his sister strip his body. She described the pitiable state of his body in some detail. The following day Anne went back with Mary Burnell who told her that she too was very ill and in pain. Apparently, Mary told her that despite the rumours she did not know the real cause of her husband's death. Before signing with her mark, under questioning Anne endorsed the view that Mary Burnell was of little credit. Significant figures in the Glastonbury community acted to divert the court case away from the defamation by Dorothy Cullen to the suffering and claims of Nathaniel Burrell. Mary's illiterate deponents did not have the status to compete and may well have been reluctant witnesses. It is unlikely that Mary got the verdict she sought. As a poor widow she would probably have needed parish support to survive but it would not have been forthcoming due to her ruined reputation. There is no way of knowing which of the Burnells first caught syphilis. The reactions to syphilis in the Glastonbury case indicates how the disease was feared as threat to the stability of the whole community, showing how many hazards, both moral and physical, threatened early modern lives.



4 The reconstructed early-seventeenth century consistory court in Chester Cathedral

Conclusion

Many people did clear their names by going to court and the details of cases varied greatly. Church court defamation cases might arise when someone called a woman a whore in an argument about something else entirely. Suits were often enmeshed with other disputes, over land, cash transactions and neighbourhood clashes. Sexual slanders sometimes erupted as the outward expression of deep-seated conflict. At Preston Candover the slander may have been of this sort if the injury to Anne's sow had been a deliberate act as part of a feud. Yet she did at one point call John Guy an honest man so it could have been an argument about the cost of a pig that suddenly boiled over into sexual slander. The defamation at Weyhill Fair appears to be an unpremeditated affair, perhaps sparked by excessive alcohol. When sexual slanders uttered in the heat of the moment came to court the outcome might be a public apology or the instruction that they should 'reconcile themselves'.³³ The aim would be to clear the reputation of the defamed party. Wealthier defendants could sometimes pay a fine to avoid the embarrassment of a public apology. Courts could also be lenient in cases where words had been spoken drunkenly or in jest.³⁴ In fact court officials would sometimes discourage such cases from coming to court at all if there was other pressing business. There were a range of types of defamation case, not just when a man insulted a woman, as seen at Glastonbury. This case was an unusual one in which parish authorities intervened in a case involving two women to reflect the views of their community.

The significant rise of litigation for defamation in church courts between 1550 and 1700 is difficult to account for although this was a society in which even illiterate people had a good knowledge of their legal rights. A growing culture of personal honour might have facilitated the escalation of minor disagreements into more serious conflict. It is possible that the post-Reformation protestant focus upon personal responsibility encouraged a kind of 'competitive piety' which increased the judgement of others. This in turn could have led to greater challenges to individual reputation and therefore increased litigiousness. Most people in early modern England lived in small communities which required constant negotiation between individuals. 'Both men and women played a role in evaluating reputations and upholding standards of personal morality and in doing so aired potentially defamatory facts and opinions'.³⁵ Over 80% of slander suits were between people who lived in the same parish.³⁶ It must be emphasised, however, that it was always men who were in local positions of authority as landowners, clergy, churchwardens, constables and overseers of the poor. Their views about defamed women were often influential, as happened in Glastonbury. The patriarchal culture of early modern England promoted fixed views about what constituted respectable 'manhood' and 'womanhood'. Social and religious orthodoxy was enforced by the legal framework, longstanding conventions and fear of punishments such as scold's bridles. Inevitably these produced stresses which at times erupted in the kinds of sexual defamation that found their way into the church courts. Some historians have suggested that a rise of individualism in early modern society led to a decline of neighbourliness though whether this would have contributed to a rise in defamation cases in the century following 1550 is unknown. An eighteenth century decline in defamation litigation has been attributed to 'the growing anonymity of urban settings, the shifting foundations of reputation and a shift of focus from a publicly shaped self to an 'inner' or 'individualist' self'.³⁷ Perhaps the key lesson from the court cases discussed here is the overwhelming importance of having a good reputation for people at all levels, something which endured for the entire early modern period.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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Anatomy of decay—persistence in a rural demographic crisis: late-Victorian Combe

PETER JOLLY

Introduction

The population history of England and Wales is not without examples of communities decimated by extrinsic forces, ranging from extreme mortality crises such as plague besetting the Derbyshire village of Eyam in the 1660s, to collapsing copper prices extinguishing viable mining activity among Cornish villages two centuries later. The experience of the small downland Hampshire parish of Combe is hardly less dramatic—the population more than halved between 1871 and 1891.¹ Its relative isolation and historic evolution from medieval manor ideally suit Combe as a case study into rural depopulation. This paper seeks to examine the ensuing societal changes, and what happened to many of its residents, chiefly focusing on the residuum that stayed within the community.

The study was constructed around the framework of the raw data found within census enumerator books from 1861 onwards, although principally directed towards two decades of dramatic population loss. Using standard nominal record linkage techniques, supplemented by baptismal and burial registers, the history of individual parish residents was traced.² In the absence of farm accounts or narratives, annual parish agricultural returns to the Board of Trade evidence variations in agrarian productivity, while investigation of Combe's landholdings benefitted from a superbly detailed set of 1894 conveyancing documentation.³

In both 1861 and 1871 censuses, the resident parish population was about 220, but as Table 1 reveals, thereafter it rapidly declined.⁴ The drop over the next two decades, from 219 to 90, represents a fall of 58.9 per cent. Although many adjacent parishes in this agricultural chalk downland area suffered demographic decline, none was as severe as that of Combe.⁵

Table 1 Combe population 1861-1901

census year	enumerated population	resident population (excluding visitors)	prior decadal decline	no. of persisters from previous census
1861	225	221 (122M/99F)		
1871	220	219 (110M/109F)	0.9%	99
1881	134	134 (67M/67F)	38.8%	42
1891	92	90 (45M/45F)	32.8%	37
1901	95	92 (43M/49F)	(+2.2%)	40

Notes: percentages based on resident (not enumerated) populations; table constructed from, and all subsequent material based upon, censuses of England and Wales 1861 to 1901 entries: counties: Hampshire, Berkshire; parish: Combe; registration district: Hungerford RG 9/723, RG 10/1253, RG 11/1273, RG 12/971 and RG 13/1124

Demographic analysis of communities in transition involves consideration of migratory trends and the forces that impelled them, but the focus of the present study lies more in the people that did not move away. This work first examines issues peculiar to the identification and nature of persistence, before embarking on a description of the village in its context as it stood in 1871, the agrarian changes that ensued and their effect on the village population as revealed in subsequent censuses, before considering characteristics of the stayers.

Persistence

Mobility studies, whether focused on communities experiencing out-migration, or assessing incoming migrants relocating to a specific town or its environs, are rightly popular research subjects. Less frequently, however, does the focus fall on the residuum; those that persist for any length of time, those for whom there is insufficient pull from outside the parish nor push to leave their present home. Whereas migration involves a trigger event or reason, evidenced externally in many different forms, persistence remains an internalised state of mind. In short, although persistence is reflected in the absence of mobility, and the propensity to 'stay put', stasis appears infrequently to merit separate scholastic discussion.⁶

Calculations involving net lifetime mobility reflect only two constants: place of birth as recalled, and residence on census date often many years later. In themselves net lifetime migration distances, and apparent geographical persistence, may hide several largely self-cancelling moves. Intervening censuses better evidence the continuum of consistent parish residence, but as snapshots in time separated by a single decade they cannot exclude possibilities of shorter-term locational changes. Population turnover may also be less likely in larger parishes, where intra-parish moves accommodate minor locational movements.⁷

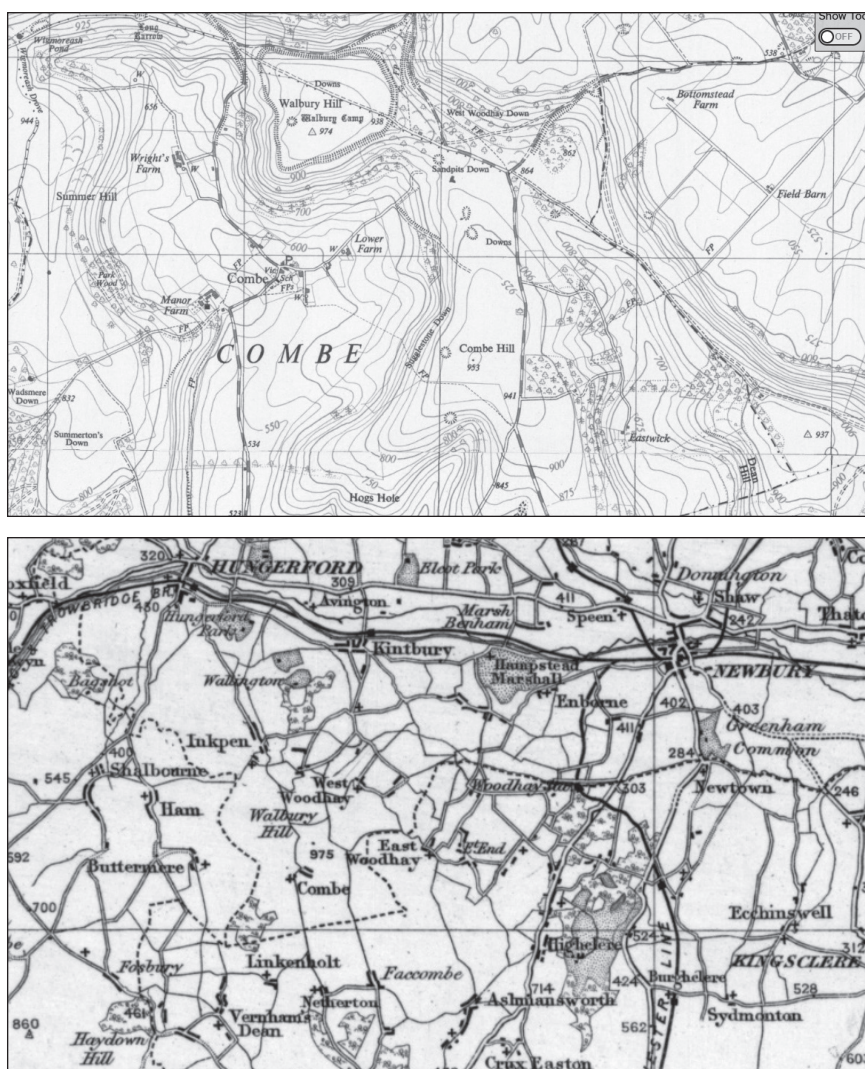
Inevitably, the age and family structure of parish populations at any moment influence the likelihood, or otherwise, of the same persons appearing in consecutive censuses. Young married couples may produce further children, while the more elderly statistically have a greater chance of not surviving the decade.⁸ Equally there are acknowledged life-cycle events which have a greater tendency to trigger population mobility, young girls going into residential service or marrying, to name but two.⁹ Persistency was affected by age as Bogusia Wojciechowska found in her exhaustive study of the Wealden parish of Brencchley in the mid-nineteenth century.¹⁰

Net migration calculations reflect differing population counts in, say, successive censuses, minus the extent to which births exceed deaths in the decade, but actual numbers of remainers can be straightforwardly determined by identifying the same persons in successive censuses.¹¹ How those numbers are expressed as a proportion of the community presents problems in times of either rapidly rising, or falling, populations. Forty-two villagers in 1871 would remain for the next decade representing 19.2 per cent of the then current population, but viewed retrospectively as decade-long residents in 1881, they comprise 31.3 per cent of the much-depleted 1881 demographic.¹² To attempt to reduce this statistical imbalance resulting from Combe's rapidly declining demographic, a discrete formula was adopted by which population counts at each ends of the censal period were combined, and by doubling persisters numbers to reflect their appearance in both censuses, those 42 remainers represent what might be termed an overall crude persistency rate ('OCP') of 23.8, rounded to 24 per cent.¹³

In an endeavour better to assess the impact of demographic decline, focus will primarily be on decadal changes. For statistical consistency both incoming visitors and known parish residents temporarily absent were excluded from calculations.¹⁴

Combe in 1871 and the ensuing years

The Oxford English Dictionary defines ‘Coomb’, the former parish name, as ‘a deep hollow or valley ..., especially one of the characteristic hollows or small valleys closed in at the head, on the sides of and under the chalk downs’.¹⁵ Nothing could better describe the co-ordinates of Combe village, lying at the head of a deep dry valley on the southern slope of the North Wessex chalk downs on the borders of Hampshire, Berkshire, and Wiltshire, four hundred feet below the highest land in south-east England. The ancient parish measured 2212 acres, mostly arable and grassland, with woodland comprising about an eighth of its extent. As figure 1 shows, it also embraced the isolated hamlet of Eastwick, set in another southward-facing dry valley. Linked in the nineteenth century through poor law, registration, and sanitary authority administration to the Berkshire town of Hungerford only five miles north, the journey involved climbs and descents totalling over 800 feet. The shallowest gradients led southwards towards Andover, over nine miles distant.¹⁶



1a Combe parish (from OS 2½ inch map 1937) and **1b location of Combe in relation to Hungerford and Newbury** (from OS quarter-inch map 1906)

Although numerically modest and lacking any formal alehouse or nonconformist chapel, in 1871 the village had a resident vicar, school, post office, stores, and several rural craftsmen. The equal gender balance among its 219 residents, remarkably maintained over the next two decades, was matched by near similarity in their average ages. The population was spread among 53 households in 47 houses, almost exclusively family units of spouses, or widows, with unmarried children. Four groups of co-resident workers and two individual lodgers additionally were separately treated as household units.¹⁷

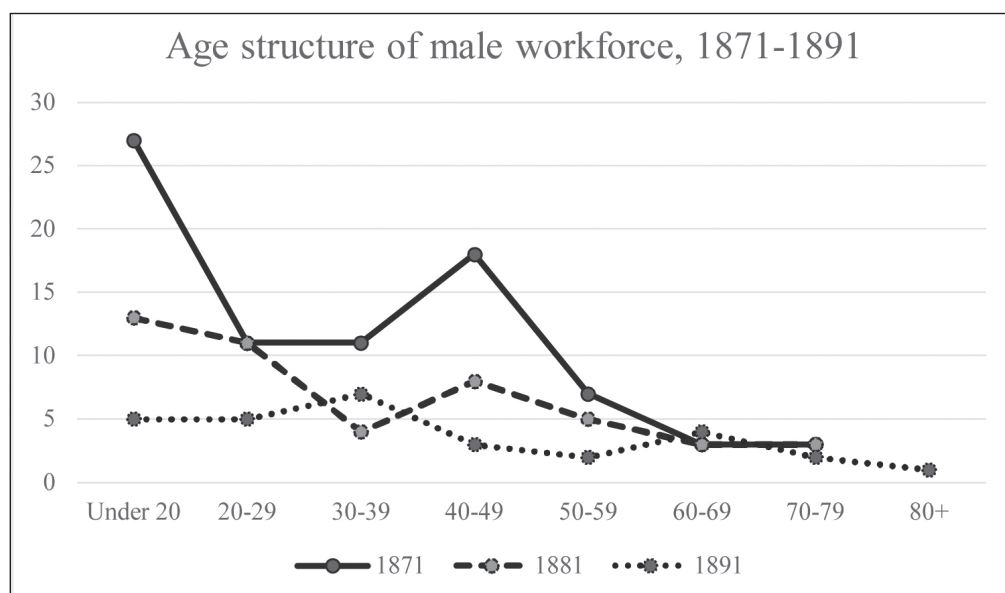
Table 2: The Combe workforce over time

	1871 male	1871 female	1881 male	1881 female	1891 male	1891 female
Agricultural labourers (undefined)	39	9	20		8	
Carters/under carters	4		8		7	
Carter boys	8					
Ploughboys	1		2		3	
Shepherds	4		2		1	
Shepherd boys	2 ^a					
Other farm workers			3			
Farmers	3		1	1		1
Farmer's relatives	3	4	2			
Farm bailiffs	1		2 ^a		1	
Farm managers					1	
Farm pupils	1					
Gamekeepers	2		3		1	
Grooms (domestic); stable boys	2		1			
Shoemakers^c	4		2		1	
Blacksmiths	1					
Carpenters	1					
Carriers	1					
Clergymen	1				1	
Woodmen	1					
Road labourers	1					
Gardeners					1	
Draper's Assistants					1	
Poultrywomen		1				
Domestic servants		14 ^b		6		6
Seamstresses		3				
Laundrywomen		2				
Schoolmistresses		1		1		
Postmasters/mistresses		1			1	1
Bakers, Grocers		2	1		2	1
Charwomen						2
TOTALS	80	37	47	8	29	11

Notes: ^a One out of work; ^b five out of place; ^c one also a grocer/beerseller Sources: as table 1

When Colin Pooley and Jean Turnbull included over 16,000 life stories in their analysis of migratory patterns since the eighteenth century, moving for work appeared the single most important cause of migration.¹⁸ The occupational structure of communities over time is inextricably linked with mobility and the thesis of this study is that employment, or its lack, lay at the root of Combe's demographic decline. Nineteenth-century censuses sometimes reflect the heavy hand of the enumerator, and their use in demographic studies has been subjected to much scholastic comment, notably from Edward Higgs. Seasonal and occasional work, such as help with the harvest, and multiple employments, are easily hidden and censuses struggle to reveal the intensity of work gainfully undertaken by women at home.¹⁹ Nonetheless, a clear pattern emerges. Over 85 per cent of the Combe 1871 male workforce was directly involved working the land. Alternative local employment opportunities were limited, as the occupational breakdown in table 2 reveals. It is likely that most, if not all, the 1871 and 1881 workforce was employed within Combe itself.²⁰

Three-quarters of working householders, all agricultural workers and labourers, fell into social classes IV and V.



2 Age structure of the male workforce over time

Sources: as table 1

Figure 2 shows the varying age structure of the male workforce over the two decades. The 1871 working males averaged just under 33 years old, the youngest aged nine, with numbers highest amongst the under-twenties, and a lesser peak in the forties. The female workforce (37 women) averaged three years younger with numbers dropping, broadly in line with the overall female demographic, fairly evenly from teenage domestics to women in their sixties. Notably, there were five married agricultural labourers in their twenties.

Farming and landholding

Table 2 showed the continuing, if declining, influence of the land in providing village employment. Contemporary observations in trade directories describe parish soils as rather heavy with a chalk subsoil.²¹ Agriculture was based on the ‘sheep-corn’ regime in which sheep would be folded on arable land. This system, following the end of the ‘high farming’ era in the early 1870s, suffered greatly in the weakened economic climate associated with the ‘Great Depression’: farming profitability and landlord income fell rapidly, with rents widely abated and farms surrendered.²² Successive parliamentary enquiries detailed the challenges affecting agriculture, although it is impossible to identify which bore most heavily upon events in Combe.²³

Owned by Kings College, Cambridge, since July 1441, Combe exhibited many features associated with closed parishes. Its three farms in 1871 were each worked by a resident farmer. The largest, Manor Farm, comprising half the parish, was occupied by John Chillingworth from Shellingford, near Faringdon, Berkshire. Chillingworth took a twenty-year lease, while the two other farms were held under copyhold tenure. But a catalogue of largely unforeseen events disrupted continuity of tenure, essential to maintaining land in good heart and providing satisfactory returns for both landlord and farmer.

The insolvency of John Chillingworth in 1875, effectively terminating his lease and leading to a brief interlude when his brother took the farm, coincided with the death of Elizabeth Hooper at Hooper’s Farm. A month later her son died terminating the copyhold, the farm reverted to the College, and all live and dead stock were sold.²⁴ Only the Kimber family, farming in remote Eastwick, retained continuity throughout the two decades of this study. For some six years from 1879 the rest of the parish farmland was occupied by William Butler without any formal lease. It is not difficult to imagine the catastrophic impact these events had on village life. No resident farmer followed Butler and when his former holding was let to William Cole, at rents less than half of those a decade previously, it was as an adjunct to the latter’s agricultural and sporting estate in neighbouring West Woodhay.²⁵ Manor Farmhouse was then occupied by a gamekeeper.

The use of official parish agricultural returns as primary sources is not unproblematic, as they neither separate individual holdings nor provide annual averages of stock numbers, merely end-of-June snapshots.²⁶ Combe returns however closely accord with what is known about parish farms. Between 1870 and 1890 falls of 70 per cent in corn acreage and 65 per cent in numbers of sheep and lambs were recorded, while permanent grass increased more than fourfold. Such reductions in farming intensity reflect the much-diminished requirement for agricultural workers seen in table 2.

Combe in later years

Of the 1871 population, although 26 certainly died in the ensuing decade, at least 129 persons (70 of them workers), had definitely out-migrated in the 1870s, one other was away, 23 could not conclusively be traced and 42 persisted into 1881.²⁷ As well as these 42 remainers the 1881 census contained 92 newcomers. Fifty-eight were children born since the previous census, some to in-migrating families, but 34 others were incomers, to which might be added un-recorded numbers coming and going between census dates, all signifying continuing levels of population turnover. In October 1879 farmer William Butler was advertising for ten able-bodied labourers, doubtless to replace villagers who had left for work elsewhere.²⁸

Census officials in 1881 counted just 27 inhabited houses, twenty less than 1871, with fourteen homes uninhabited.²⁹ The male workforce had shrunk by 40 per cent to only 48, its mean age rising to just over 35 years. The parish had lost all its rural craftsmen bar the village shoemaker and what was probably his assistant. The decadal age structure of the male working demographic seen in figure 2 now, save for notable shortages of thirty-something workers, fell steadily from its teenage peak, the youngest worker fourteen, through to the seventies. Meantime, the census revealed a female labour force that, shorn of agricultural labourers, had reduced by over three-quarters, although some casual working doubtless replaced tasks formerly undertaken by village laundrywomen and seamstresses. Some caution is also required in evaluating these numbers as, for example, it is unlikely that Maria Matthews, postmistress in 1871 and 1891 was not similarly engaged in 1881.³⁰

A trade directory of 1889 reveals the closure of the parish free school and the village shoemaker/grocer now also operating a twice-weekly carrier service to Newbury.³¹ By 1891 the village contained only 22 occupied dwellings with fourteen more uninhabited.³² Just two young co-resident farmworkers remained. The overall demographic was ageing, whilst the shrunken male workforce of 29, a fall of nearly 64 per cent in twenty years, now averaged virtually forty years old. The female workforce comprised the farmer Mrs Gilbert with her unmarried daughter presumably keeping house for her, two widowed charwomen, five unmarried domestic servants and the village sub-postmistress. Additionally, census officials added the occupation of Hannah Annetts as 'Grocer'.

Over the previous twenty years the working population had both fallen by two-thirds and aged, and farming provided employment for little more than a quarter of the 1871 numbers. Those who stayed in the village, and how they differed from the out-migrants is the subject of much of what follows.

Characteristics of the stayers

An overall crude persistence rate for the 1870s was previously calculated at 24 per cent. The right-hand column of table 3 applies the same formula across a forty-year span including the broadly static 1860s and 1890s demographic. As can be seen on any calculation, the likelihood of persistence reduced drastically in times of greatest population loss, and in times of demographic crisis females in Combe were less mobile than males, contrary to French's Kingstonian women.³³

Table 3 Decadal persistence of Combe residents

Decade	population loss / (gain)	percentage loss / (gain)	number of persisters	% of population at decade start who persisted	persistence rate (OCP)
1861-1871	-2	1%	52M/47F (99)	45%	45%
1871-1881	-85	39%	19M /23F (42)	19%	24%
1881-1891	-44	33%	16M/21F (37)	28%	33%
1891-1901	(+2)	(+2%)	22M/18F (40)	44%	44%

Sources: as table 1

Table 4 shows that the cohort of future persisters in both decades of demographic decline is significantly older than the parish mean, the difference almost doubling to nearly fifteen years in the 1880s. Pointedly, the mean age of 21 out-migrating married farm workers of the 1870s (just under 38 in 1871), was fourteen years less than their seven contemporaries who remained. A decade later, this differential in mean ages of out-migrating married farm workers of the 1880s and the equivalent stayers had risen to 25 years.

Table 4 Age Comparisons of all residents and those who will remain for the next decade

	mean age of Combe total population	mean age of persisters for the next decade	number of future decadal persisters
1871 male	26.1	4	19
1871 female	27.2	33.8	23
1881 male	25.9	40.4	16
1881 female	26.8	41.5	21

Sources: as table 1

In the 1870s two and a half times fewer men would stay in the village as in the previous decade.³⁴ Nor were the 19 male persisters of the 1870s spread evenly across age groups. Only one in eleven men in their twenties and thirties stayed, but a third of 18 forty-somethings, and an even higher proportion of those in their fifties. More than one in five girls under ten remained for the next decade, being in non-migrating families and too young yet to have entered residential service, rates dropping drastically before rising to over a quarter of women in their forties and a half or more of women in their fifties and sixties. This high proportion of 1871 future remainers in their forties and fifties reflects lesser mobility among families headed by working men of that age.³⁵

A decade later, only one of twelve 1881 Combe males in their thirties and forties would remain in the village until 1891, contrasting with two-thirds of men over fifty. The men who constituted the 1871 peak of persisters in their forties and fifties were now a decade older: six farm workers, the farm bailiff and the village shoemaker, all continuing remainers. Persistence within the 1881 female demographic rose steadily with age culminating in two-thirds of women in their fifties and all six in their sixties remaining until 1891. Such high proportions among the older demographic are all the more striking because of the increased likelihood of inter-censal mortality impacting the older population. Low numbers of children remainers reflects the paucity of younger married couples.

Thirty of 37 decadal persisters of the 1880s were pre-1871 parish residents: two of the other seven were Combe-born in the 1870s, a third the son of the shoemaker, a Combe-born returnee. Only one agricultural worker moved into the village between 1871 and 1881 staying till 1891, dying in his eighties in 1892. A second, George Newman from Linkenholt, died in his late fifties in 1887, leaving his widow Jane charring for a living, a daughter in service and a ploughboy son. That Jane remained in the village for nearly twenty more years is unsurprising. Charwomen were typically immobile, there was no housing shortage in Combe, and she had the support of close family (her daughter would marry a Combe-born resident farm labourer in 1892 and, like her son, still be resident in 1911).³⁶

Identifying decadal remainers helps understanding of how parishes changed at times of greatest economic and social upheaval, but it is equally enlightening to investigate longer-term parish residents. The 1891 demographic included a dozen men and 18 women seemingly consistent parish residents throughout the twenty years of population decline.

For many, there were potential reasons to remain in the village when so many left. It is not difficult to suggest why the spinster Hooper sisters, in 1871 of independent means, in their fifties and living with their elderly Combe-born mother in Combe Cottage, would have little apparent reason to move away, benefitting, as did the vicarage, from a ready succession of village-girl domestics. At the vicarage, the Reverend Pearson's living was secure in the patronage of the Deans and Canons of Windsor although only his wife technically counted as a twenty-year occupant. The village offered no employment for children of such a family. The Kimbers were tied to their holding, farming at Eastwick, although it appears to have become less able to support the entire family. By the early 1890s, Mrs Kimber, in her late seventies, negotiated a surrender and the family left the parish.

The oldest 1891 resident was 90-year-old widowed agricultural labourer Thomas Silvey, over 60 years a villager, though we might suppose that, as in 1871, he depended much on parish relief. He now lived with his daughter and farm labourer son-in-law, both also long-term parish residents. Eastwick-born farm labourers George Cummins and George Harris and their respective wives were among the twenty-year stayers; the former, aged nearly eighty had lived with his wife in the parish over fifty years, while the latter likely worked the Kimber farm. Francis Harris, a one-year-old in 1871, still lived at home but by 1891 was employed as a gardener, possibly outside the parish. Charwoman Hannah Bulpit, in 1891 a village resident for forty years, was the widow of a farm labourer /woodman, and her married son, a shepherd, lived close by. Recently widowed eighty-year-old Sarah Batt lived with her daughter.

Two couples had specific roles that tied them to the village. Shoemaker George Annetts' wife had been a shopkeeper for at least forty years, and by 1891 their son Frederick had returned to the village to work as a baker, while another son returned to help in the grocery shop. Daughter Alice counts as a stayer, but a few weeks after census night she married a railway platelayer and moved to Reading. Combe-born Henry Matthews combined farm labouring with postmaster duties, a role shared with his wife, but also served as parish clerk. The Matthews family had wider village connections. Daughter Rose, another remainder, was by 1891 a residential domestic with the Hooper sisters. A year later she married George Salt: she would ultimately take over the Post Office from her parents.

Both bailiff Peter Tovey and his wife living in the substantial Lower Farm House, and farm labourer George and wife Ann Salt, hailed from Shellingford, presumably having followed farmer John Chillingworth, both couples remaining in Combe into the twentieth century, Ann until her death aged 92. The Salt family had by 1891 spread its tentacles widely through the parish. Among the Salt children, in 1891 William and his as yet unmarried younger brother George were farm workers living at home,³⁷ while daughters Ann and Isabella, young children in 1871, had each in their late teens married in-migrant farm workers. Ann was still in Combe in 1921, her husband being employed by the Cole family.

Concluding observations

Whether or not the methodological approach to persistence applied in this study is best capable of assessing the continuum of parish residence is open to discussion. A less rigidly numerical approach might also better reflect residents such as the Combe-born

husband of Sarah Batt, who died in his late seventies just short of the 1891 census, and counting only as an 1870s persister. For the elderly or infirm poor without relatives, final involuntary extra-parish migration to the union workhouse might terminate lengthy periods of persistency, while returnees to Combe show degrees of community as well as family attachment.

Notwithstanding the insularity of late-Victorian Combe, there is some resonance between this paper and other research.³⁸ Across the entire period of the Pooley and Turnbull study the authors discovered that propensity to migrate was high for young children, moving with their parents; dropped slightly as children grew older; but rose again steeply in teens and twenties when children moved away independently. It remained high until the early thirties, when marriage, a new family and changed employment stimulated moves, thereafter falling steadily.³⁹ High rates of persistency among Combe occupants over forty were seen, with few younger married couples staying in the village. While Elmdon shares certain features with Combe, albeit three times its size, Robin's calculations of 1860s persistence there embrace a decade with a below two-per-cent population decrease.⁴⁰

Combe has revealed several interesting features that merit comparison with typologically different communities.⁴¹ The propensity to remain fell most significantly in times of greatest demographic loss. The age of householders out-migrating was much less than their counterparts who stayed. Perhaps inevitably also stayers were older than the parish mean age, and in the second decade of decline much more so. In times of crisis for this rural community, females appeared less mobile than males, a somewhat surprising result with the shortage of local employment opportunities for girls, but some remainers did marry young. Older married men were less mobile than both their younger peers and single men, while women would stay in the village with their husbands, remaining during widowhood. Within such a confined community there was little scope for occupational or social mobility, save that enforced by age, wives of farm workers reduced to widowed charwomen.

Population turnover continued within demographic decline, although out-migration far outweighed inward flows. Despite the seeming availability of housing, younger farm workers seldom remained without special reasons: in-migrating workers and their families were rarely long stayers. It is noticeable that while others with similar characteristics may have out-migrated seeking work, many that stayed fell into the older age categories, were either parish-born, had long histories of parish residence, local family connections, or parish-specific roles.

This paper involved in-depth investigations into one parish with distinctive socio-economic features. As a study into a demographic crisis within a single community, sample sizes were inevitably modest, and even smaller as population plummeted. Nevertheless, the results, albeit to be treated with some caution, reveal what actually happened to the residents of this one village at a critical time in its history. Hopefully, this case study also makes a valuable contribution to wider research into demographic persistence within communities in transition.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

The formula for the calculation of the Overall Crude Persistence Rate (OCP) is given here. See also endnote 13.

$$\frac{2 \times (\text{number of persisters between start year } a \text{ and end year } b)}{\text{Resident population year } a + \text{resident population year } b} \times 100 = \text{Overall Crude Persistence Rate (OCP)}$$

Resident population year *a* + resident population year *b*

- 1 For the sake of consistency, the spelling 'Combe' is adopted throughout this work, in lieu of the former names 'Coomb' and 'Coombe' which appear variously in primary sources.
- 2 Census notations of widowhood were accepted as prior death of a spouse, birthplaces as shown on censuses, and age variations of up to two years admitted without further evidence. Variation in the spelling of certain family names ('Mackril', for example) was unsurprising.
- 3 Until 1894 the manor and parish were held by King's College Cambridge, and on their disposal not only did the conveyance contain extensive recitals, but that deed together with the College's nineteenth-century counterpart leases, and much supplementary contemporary documentation, are now deposited in the Royal Berkshire Archives [RBA] D/EX 1725).
- 4 Population had peaked at 228 in the 1851 census (GB Historical GIS / University of Portsmouth, Combe Parish (CP/AP) through time | Historical Statistics on Population | Total Population, *A Vision of Britain through Time*. https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10007010/cube/TOT_POP
- 5 The next greatest fall in enumerated population (46.5%) was at Facombe, but three other adjoining parishes to the north and west saw population increases varying from 2.2% to 19.2%, variations partly a function of differing elevation and connectivity (British Parliamentary Papers, Parliament 1883 C.3563 Census of England and Wales 1881 Volume II. Area, Houses and Population (Registration Counties) 72 and 73 (for 1871 and 1881 figures) and Parliament 1893-4, C 6948 Census of England and Wales 1891 Volume I. Area, Houses and Population (Counties), pages 124 and Tables 7 for the Counties of Berkshire, Hampshire and Wiltshire (for 1891 figures)
- 6 Exhaustive investigations such as that by Jean Robin of Colyton, a town of over a thousand workers in 1851, are major works of social and community history backclothed by continuity of residence but deliberately short on analysis (Jean Robin, *The way we lived then*, 2000); the magisterial microhistory of the Brea area of Kent by Barry Reay is arranged around topics such as family, social and occupational structures, health, literacy and sexuality but nowhere directly addresses persistency, even if it is an underlying theme of the volume (Barry Reay, *Microhistories: demography, society and culture in rural England, 1800-1930*, 2002). Community studies such as Geary on Bidford-on-Avon focus on population turnover (F. Keith Geary, 'Population movements in a Warwickshire Village, 1841-1891: Bidford-on-Avon', *Local Population Studies*, vol.98 (2017), 74-86), or specific economic groupings, such as Sián Pooley, 'Domestic servants and their urban employers: a case study of Lancaster, 1880-1914', *Economic History Review* vol.62/2 (2009) 405-29. That of Brenchley (B. Wojciechowska, 'Brenchley: a study of migratory movements in a mid-nineteenth century rural parish', *Local Population Studies* vol.41 (1988) 28-40) considered below, and Kingston (Christopher French, 'Persistence in a local community: Kingston-upon-Thames, 1851-1891', *Local Population Studies* 81 (2008) 18-36) dealing with the profiles of persisters in a much larger community that expanded more than threefold in forty years, are notable exceptions. Jean Robin's century-long study of Elmdon, an agricultural parish three times the size of Combe in 1871 which then suffered a decadal population loss of some 14 per cent, offers the closest parallel to Combe. Her principal statistical focus on nineteenth century migration and population turnover was however directed towards the years before 1871 (*Elmdon: Continuity and Change in a north-west Essex village, 1861-1964* (1980)).
- 7 As French found in Kingston, where street names and numbering identified intra-parish moves amongst persisters (French, 'Kingston', 27). Ravenstein found that the majority of migration was over short distances, which in larger communities could be within parish or town boundaries; Ernst Georg Ravenstein, 'The laws of migration', *Journal of the Statistical Society* vol.48 (1885) 167-235.
- 8 Ignoring issues of extra-parochial migration, statistically a notional parish population mostly comprised of unmarried adults or couples where the wife is between 45 and 60, would be more prone to exclude the worst impact of fertility and mortality, and potentially retain a larger constant decadal village demographic core.
- 9 Colin G. Pooley and Jean Turnbull, *Migration and mobility in Britain since the eighteenth century* (Routledge, 1998) esp. 159 and 193-227
- 10 B. Wojciechowska, 'Brenchley'. Her methodology involved counting each census entry separately, subtracting intercensal births and deaths from parish registers, deducting in-migrants and out-migrants and dividing by two to reflect there being two entries per person, thereby arriving at the number of persisters. Her calculations of persistence rates cannot offer a direct comparison with Combe, not only as Brenchley was ten times as populous as Combe, but her methodology identified totals of 'truly linkable' entries against which she measured remainers.
- 11 Although 23 Combe residents from 1871 could not be conclusively linked to any English 1881 census entry, complete transcriptions were made of subsequent Combe censuses, so we can be reasonably sure that none of those missing was in Combe. For the direct purposes of this study, it matters not to where they migrated, or indeed whether they survived, although the survival of some is evidenced from other sources, including later censuses.
- 12 The former, straight links between the percentage of residents in a given census year who would remain in the parish until the next census is conventionally adopted, for example by French for Kingstonsians

- 13 This concept of an overall crude persistence rate (OCP) will be adopted in this study the better to highlight the effects of decadal changes in Combe. The percentage calculation is given in appendix 1 (above). The OCP will always be lower than more sophisticated approaches that in any equivalent equation reduce the resident population in 'a' by deaths in the future decade, and/or the under-tens in 'b' who could not possibly be ten-year stayers, the concept adopted by, for example, Wojciechowska.
- 14 This, however, had the unfortunate consequence that the very embodiment of parish identity, George Pearson, the resident vicar of Combe for over fifty years until his death in 1910, was boarding in an Oxford hotel on census night 1881, and so does not count as a persister, despite his wife and family being enumerated at Combe vicarage.
- 15 *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*: complete text reproduced micrographically (1979) 962.
- 16 Measurements are, save where otherwise noted, taken in a direct line. As contemporary maps are in imperial measures, for convenience this work will where appropriate use imperial dimensions.
- 17 In the writer's experience the treatment of lodgers in census enumerator's books, no matter what the official guidance, was inconsistent. At over a century's distance it is impossible to tell whether the physical situation on the ground known to the enumerator affected the manner in which entries were made in his book.
- 18 Pooley and Turnbull, *Migration*, 152. It is unfortunate for the present study concentrating on the period 1871 to 1891 that Pooley and Turnbull analyse many migration for work statistics in two categories: up to, and post-1880, the former statistically weighted in favour of the earlier nineteenth century, and the latter the twentieth century.
- 19 Edward Higgs, *A Clearer Sense of the Census: The Victorian censuses and historical research* (Public Record Office, 1996). His evolving train of thought can be seen in Edward Higgs and Amanda Wilkinson, 'Women, occupations and work in the Victorian censuses revisited', *History Workshop Journal* vol.81/1 (2016) 17–38. Whereas Combe recorded nine female farm workers in 1871, and none in 1881, neighbouring Buttermere revealed none in 1871 and nine in 1881, the latter inconsistency remarkable given the pressures on agricultural employment in the later 1870s. The conflation of occupation with familial relationship for female relatives of farmers presents another problem and it was only in 1891 that instructions for census completion removed the requirement to give the occupational title 'farmer's daughter' if employed on the farm or in the home. (Higgs, *Clearer Sense*, 98)
- 20 Broad correlation between numbers of farmers' employees and the nature of land holdings suggest that most if not all of Combe's farm workers worked on the three parish farms, the farmers having housing available for their own workers. The adjacent parishes of Buttermere and Linkenholt were even more heavily skewed towards agricultural work with over 93 per cent of Linkenholt's male population in 1871 working on the land.
- 21 Kelly's *Directory of Hampshire, Wiltshire and Dorsetshire, including the Isle of Wight* (1889) 100
- 22 As seen in Combe with the insolvency of farmer John Chillingworth; rents receivable by Kings College reduced by 57 per cent during this period from an average of 65 pence to 28 pence per acre. There is extensive literature on agriculture in this period starting with T.W. Fletcher, 'The Great Depression of English Agriculture 1873-1896', *Economic History Review* vol.13 no.3 (1961) 417–32. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2599512>. For a detailed discussion on the crop rotation and agrarian practices on the Hampshire downs see Bethanie Afton, 'The great agricultural depression on the English chalklands: the Hampshire experience', *Agricultural History Review* vol.44 (1996) 191–205.
- 23 In particular the Royal Commissions on the Depressed Condition of the Agricultural Interests Reports of Assistant Commissioners: British Parliamentary Papers (BPP) 1882 C. 3375 (393–422) and BPP 1894 C. 7365. (5–23), especially the observations of Dr Fream on the Andover District.
- 24 *Newbury Weekly News*, 29 August 1878, 1
- 25 William Cole died in 1889, but following negotiations to bring in the Kimber holding at Eastwick, the College sold the whole parish to his son Alfred Clayton Cole in 1894: RBA D/EX 1725/5/1 to 6
- 26 For a critical assessment of Victorian agricultural returns see J.T. Coppock, 'The statistical assessment of British agriculture', *Agricultural History Review* vol.4 pt.2 (1956) 66–79
- 27 For convenience, '1870s' and '1880s' are used as shorthand for the periods between the respective censuses of 1871 and 1881, 1881 and 1891, and so forth.
- 28 *Reading Mercury*, 25 October 1879, 3
- 29 Parliament 1883 C3563 Census of England and Wales 1881 Volume II. Area, Houses and Population (Registration Counties), 73
- 30 Likewise her agricultural labourer postmaster husband gives only his primary occupation as farm worker in 1881.
- 31 Kelly's *Directory of Hampshire* etc., 1889, 100. The children attended neighbouring Linkenholt School until Combe school was re-tment of the Cole family.
- 32 Parliament 1893-4, C 6948, 124
- 33 During this period the overall gender balance of the demographic remained equal (Table 1), and as will be seen in table 4 there was little gender difference in the mean ages of persisters. See also French, 'Kingston', 25.
- 34 Table 3
- 35 The Pooley and Turnbull survey found that between 55 and 62 per cent of moves by agricultural workers were conducted by those in the 20-39 age bracket, and in total over 82 per cent by all under forties (their table 5.1a).

- 36 Peter Jolly, 'Necessity and neighbourhood: country charwomen in Edwardian England: a Berkshire case study', *Family & Community History* 27(3) (2024) 222–238. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14631180.2024.2433805>
- 37 Sole reliance on presence on census dates to calculate persisters categorises George junior as a stayer, but he was away serving in the army between 1882 and 1885.
- 38 Pooley found that nearly two-thirds of work-related moves by agricultural workers before 1879 were undertaken by men in their twenties and thirties, a statistic reflected in the paucity of Combe remainers within those age-brackets, and that most moves were made by married men taking their nuclear family with them (Pooley and Turnbull, *Migration*, Table 5(1)a) and Wojciechowska that unmarried persistency rates were well below those of the married ('Brenchley', 33). She also analysed persistency rates by occupation, finding high rates of persistency among agricultural workers, but the tiny numbers in other occupational groupings in Combe render equivalent occupational analyses almost meaningless.
- 39 Pooley and Turnbull, *Migration*, 207
- 40 Robin, *Elmdon*, 190 (Table 48)
- 41 Adjacent parishes such as Buttermere, with a population increase of just over two per cent between 1871 and 1891, are presently the subject of research by the writer.

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Urban Opportunities? Early elections to the urban district councils in three Midland towns

PAUL GRIFFITHS

December 1894 was a significant month for many small towns in England and Wales. It saw the first elections to newly-created Urban District Councils (UDCs). At first, the councils largely took over the powers and responsibilities of Local Boards of Health, but new electoral arrangements gave them a democratic legitimacy which the boards had lacked and, over time, they were entrusted with additional functions and became an important part of town life. In theory, many more people, including some from ‘working class’ backgrounds, now had the chance to participate in local governance by being elected as councillors. This study examines whether this happened in three industrial towns in the Midlands—Hinckley in Leicestershire, Long Eaton in Derbyshire and Rushden in Northamptonshire—over the next ten years. All were expanding rapidly as their staple industries prospered and, bearing in mind the disruption this caused to established social relationships, might be expected to have been particularly receptive to political change. The issue in 1894 was whether the Liberals, who hitherto had been the strongest political party in all three towns, would retain their position or be displaced by other group, especially those from a labour movement which was still in its infancy.

The study proceeds in three stages. The first outlines the ways in which UDC elections differed from those to local boards and introduces the three towns. The second describes the UDC elections in these towns between 1894 and 1904 and looks at the role played by three key institutions. Finally, an attempt is made to identify underlying trends in the hope of assisting research into other small towns and their UDCs.

Electoral reform

The creation of UDCs in place of local boards gave an opportunity to bring electoral arrangements more closely into line with those for other elected public bodies. Some electoral reforms were already in place for small towns with borough status, but those governed by local boards had to wait until 1894. Until then, local boards had favoured the wealthy. Board members had to possess property worth at least £500 or be liable for poor rates on a rateable value of £15 or more.¹ This restriction meant, for example, that Long Eaton Co-operative Society struggled to find a qualifying candidate when it wished to nominate to the Board in 1887.² Here were also minimum requirements for electors and a stepped scale whereby the wealthier could obtain up to six votes each. Since the scale applied to both owners and occupiers, it was theoretically possible for one elector to cast twelve votes.³

In contrast, UDCs had no property qualifications for membership; candidates only needed to be on the electoral roll or to have been a resident for the previous twelve months.⁴ At the same time, many more people were eligible to be on the electoral roll and every elector now had the same number of votes, that is one for every vacant

place on the council.⁵ The franchise for UDC elections, though still property based, was slightly wider than that for county council and parliamentary elections, and it included women who satisfied the property requirements in their own right.⁶ A survey of Hinckley in 1910 indicated that about 68 percent of men and 9 percent of women (aged 21 or above) were on the register for UDC elections.⁷

Local board elections had been open to abuse. Ballot papers had to be signed (or marked) and were available for inspection by candidates and their agents. The papers were delivered to electors' addresses and collected a few days later. Candidates and agents could accompany the collectors and might seek to influence electors as they cast their votes.⁸ The Ballot Act of 1872 had not applied to boards but, following experience in county council and parliamentary elections, it was introduced for UDCs.⁹ As a result, voters now completed ballot papers in secret at polling stations. Henry Thorpe, chairman of the Liberal election committee at Long Eaton in 1894, summed up the new situation: 'the qualification of property had been abolished, the election was by one man one vote, and the voting would be by [secret] ballot'.¹⁰

The status of each UDC was further enhanced by making its chairman a magistrate during his period of office.¹¹ This could be contentious; after Long Eaton UDC chose Samuel Butler as its chairman in 1894, Thorpe felt the need to assert that 'the Bench would not suffer, its dignity would not be lowered, nor would the confidence of the people be shaken by gentlemen from the different classes having a share in the administration of justice'.¹²

The three towns

Hinckley, Long Eaton and Rushden all recorded populations of about 12,000 in the 1901 census. They were large enough to supply the regular needs of their residents and to have their own weekly newspapers but small enough to give voters personal knowledge of many candidates standing in UDC elections. All three had witnessed rapid growth over the previous 30 years, as Table 1 illustrates.

Hinckley, a long-established market town and centre of an ailing framework knitting industry, began to prosper again when market conditions improved and the hosiery industry moved from domestic to factory-based production from the 1860s onwards.¹³ The town's population almost doubled between 1871 and 1911. Long Eaton and Rushden, which were merely villages with populations well below 1000 at the beginning of the nineteenth century, grew even more dramatically, expanding sixfold between 1871 and 1911.

Table 1 Population growth 1861-1911

census year	Hinckley	Long Eaton	Rushden
1861	6420	1551	1748
1871	6860	3204	2122
1881	7644	6217	3657
1891	9639	9636	7443
1901	11304	13045	12453
1911	12837	19207	13354

The rapid population growth in each town was due to the expansion of just one or two industries. This is clear from the 1911 census summarised in Table 2. Employment in Hinckley was dominated by the manufacture of hosiery and, to a lesser extent, footwear.¹⁴ In Long Eaton,¹⁵ lace manufacture predominated together with employment connected to the railways. In Rushden,¹⁶ the manufacture of boots and shoes alone reigned supreme.

Table 2 Employment in 1911

	Hinckley		Long Eaton		Rushden	
	male	Female	male	female	male	female
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Hosiery	30.3	67.5	-	-	-	-
Footwear	15.1	5.7	0.5	-	64.1	65.6
Lace	-	-	43.1	57.0	-	-
Railways and engineering	3.6	-	24.7	-	3.4	-

These industries brought people and prosperity to the towns but also meant that they were dependent on a narrow range of products, with occasional slumps acting as a reminder of the risks involved. Three of the staple industries (the manufacture of hosiery, footwear and lace) shared similar characteristics. Each had moved from domestic to factory working in the second half of the nineteenth century. Production could be profitable at a small scale and potential entrepreneurs required little capital because workspaces could be rented and machinery hired easily.¹⁷ As a result, many small family firms were set up as the industries flourished. This is still evident in the older parts of Hinckley and Rushden where small factory buildings (now often converted to flats) remain among the surrounding houses. The mills of Long Eaton were usually larger but it was customary for firms to rent ‘standings’ within them.¹⁸ Almost all firms were led by men who were unaccustomed to managerial positions and the social status of being a business owner. They headed firms which either they or their fathers had created so that the ‘social distance’ between employers and employees was often small.¹⁹ Such relationships make class distinctions particularly difficult to recognise and this study has chosen to follow the descriptions used at the time in the local press. On occasions, terms such as ‘working class’ or ‘working man’ could be adopted for political advantage or disadvantage but the study accepts them as generally reflecting views at the time on which opinions and actions were based.

Before examining the election results which follow, a couple of features of the political landscape of the three towns need to be noted. Firstly, none of the towns was divided into wards for electoral purposes (until they were introduced at Long Eaton in 1913). This meant that electors could vote for as many candidates as there were vacancies on the council. The lack of wards produced frequent elections because it only took one extra nomination to trigger an election for the entire town.²⁰ At the same time, successful candidates needed to have support across the town; interest groups could not gain representation by concentrating their efforts on one ward alone. Unlike borough and county councils, UDCs did not have aldermen so that all members of the council were dependent on a public vote every three years. Secondly, all three towns were in areas where the Liberals were traditionally strong. Their parliamentary constituencies,²¹ for example, were held by the Liberals in every election between 1885 and the First World War. For one historian, they were part of the ‘Liberal Reserve Army’ where electors ‘shared a Liberal political culture and perceived issues in a particular way’,²² giving the

Liberals an inbuilt advantage providing they adapted as society changed, much of this energy derived from religious nonconformity and all three towns were known for the strength of their chapels.

One further aspect needs clarification. The terms 'labour' and 'labour party' were used loosely in the 1890s and early twentieth century and could have different meanings in different contexts. The 'labour movement' generally referred to organisations led by working men which sought to promote the interests of the working classes. Notable were the trades unions, acting individually or collectively in trades councils, and the co-operative societies. It could also include working men's clubs, allotment associations and socialist societies such as the Independent Labour Party (ILP). Being 'labour' was more about identity than political views.²³ and the 'labour party' was often seen as an interest group akin, for example, to the tradesmen's and licensed victuallers' associations; it aimed not to replace the existing political parties but to make them more responsive to working class concerns.²⁴ The 'party' might align itself with the Conservatives or the Liberals or remain apart. Today's national Labour Party began quietly as the Labour Representation Committee (LRC) in 1900 and did not adopt the party name until 1906. It made little impact during the period of this study,²⁵ although in the ten years which followed, it became more prominent especially after 29 Labour members of parliament were elected in 1906. The term 'Labour Party' then started to take on a more precise meaning. Liberal and labour sympathisers acting together were sometimes said to constitute a 'progressive' alliance in opposition to the Conservatives. Contemporary uses of the term varied but this is the definition which is used below.

The 1894 elections

Table 3 summarises the 1894 election nominations and results. The amount of interest can be gauged from the number and diversity of candidates, especially in Hinckley and Rushden, and from the turnout rates, where known, of about 70 per cent. As had been customary in local board elections, most liberal and conservative associations nominated candidates, or at least made their preferences known, and they were now joined by a variety of local interest groups.

Table 3 1894 elections: candidates and councillors

	Hinckley UDC		Long Eaton UDC		Rushden UDC	
	nominated	elected	nominated	elected	nominated	elected
Liberal association	12	9	7	4	8	7
Conservative association*	10	4	4	4	7	2
'Labour party'	-	-	-	-	6	1
Co-operative society	-	-	3	3	-	-
Independent	3	-	2	1	3	2
Allotments association	-	-	-	-	2	-
Licensed victuallers	2	2	-	-	1	-
Tradesmen's association	-	-	-	-	2	-
TOTAL	27	15	16	12	29	12
Councillors with local board experience		13		10		8

* At Long Eaton 'the four oldest members of the Local Board' ran together and were, in effect, the Conservative candidates.

The overwhelming impression given by the results is that, despite the electoral changes, electors favoured continuity. Of the 39 seats across the three councils, 31 were won by men who had served on an outgoing, or earlier, local board. In Hinckley and Rushden, the Liberals dominated as they had done on the local boards whilst the situation in Long Eaton was more complicated. Almost all councillors were self-employed businessmen with a high proportion of traders and manufacturers.²⁶ However, four ‘newcomers’, detailed in Table 4, were different and suggested that, given time, electors might become more adventurous.

Table 4 Atypical councillors elected in 1894

council	Name	occupation	nominated by
Hinckley UDC	Austin Clarke	trades union secretary	Liberal association
Long Eaton UDC	William Holland	dairyman	Co-operative society
	William Woodforth	wagon builder	Co-operative society
Rushden UDC	John Spencer	shoe clicker	‘Labour party’



1 Samuel Butler, the first chairman of Long Eaton Urban District Council

From *Cooperation in Long Eaton* by Samuel Clegg, published in 1901

It may appear that there was least disturbance in Hinckley, but this is misleading. The Liberals there prepared carefully in the selection of their candidates and, in an effort to broaden their support, the *Hinckley Times* observed that ‘a good deal of casting about’ had taken place, ‘trying to include all and sundry interests’.²⁷ Support was withdrawn from two former members of the Local Board and an initial list of ten candidates was agreed. This included Wilson Chapman, a hosiery hand and youthful secretary of the local hosiery union who had played a leading role in the ‘great’ hosiery strike of 1891.²⁸ The list was later extended to twelve so that Austin Clarke, secretary of the local branch of the National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives (NUBSO), could be added after it was reported that the Union intended to nominate him in any case.²⁹ Chapman and Clarke were said to ‘represent trade union principles’.³⁰ Clarke was elected as a Liberal councillor and Chapman was only 28 votes short of success.³¹

The Liberals in Long Eaton were in a weaker position and won only four of the twelve council seats. The prospect of working with the three Co-operative councillors was realistic,³² but the relationship between the two groups was fragile. The Co-operative Society had deliberately chosen to run separately and the independence of its councillors was soon demonstrated when they outmanoeuvred the Liberals and appointed their most experienced councillor, Samuel Butler, as the UDC's first chairman.³³ Butler, the Society's manager, had first challenged the Liberals in the Local Board election of 1887, the Society believing that 'working men had not had that consideration from the members of the Local Board [which] they ought to have had'.³⁴ He was successful and displaced a Liberal.³⁵ In the first UDC election in 1894, the Co-operative Society brought forward three candidates—Butler again, William Holland, a dairyman, and William Woodforth, a wagon builder—and urged voters to back them 'as working men'.³⁶ The Liberals could not make the same claim; their successful nominees consisted of two lace manufacturers, a solicitor and an architect.³⁷

Rushden was the only one of the three towns where electors could choose specifically 'labour' candidates in 1894. The decision to run separately from the Liberals was taken after a meeting addressed by Tom Mann, secretary of the national ILP, in October 1894. Late in the evening, 'members of the Boot and Shoe Operatives Union, the Co-operative Societies and the Allotments Association' rejected an invitation from the Liberal Association to select candidates jointly.³⁸ Although the presence of Mann may have encouraged some faint hearts, the decision was not unexpected as a joint committee of trades unionists had already reached the same conclusion. Disenchantment with the Liberals was, it seems, a recent phenomenon. Two of the labour leaders, John Spencer and Fred Skeeles, had been members of the Liberal Association's committee in 1893 although they were already uneasy about some aspects of the party and, at a meeting with the local Liberal MP present, had sought to qualify a congratulatory motion by noting 'the general estrangement of labour from Liberalism'.³⁹ Growing tensions in the boot and shoe industry which culminated in a major lockout in April/May 1895, probably hastened the decision as many local employers were Liberal supporters.

Six 'labour' candidates, including Spencer and Skeeles, were selected in late November and, although led by a joint committee,⁴⁰ there is little doubt that the most influential trades union was NUBSO. It had set up the October meeting, was involved in all the reported discussions, and had at least four of its members among the six candidates. The election produced a Liberal landslide and, of the labour nominees, only Spencer was elected.⁴¹ He was probably favoured because of his involvement in other local organisations, notably the Independent Wesleyan chapel and the co-operative society, and his two years' experience as a 'trades unionist' on the Rushden School Board.⁴²

Elections after 1894

Table 5 shows the political composition of the councils at three-yearly intervals between 1894 and 1913. In doing so, it covers the ten years of this study but also gives a glimpse of developments in the following ten years up to the First World War. In Hinckley, the years correspond to those in which an election was held to choose all the UD councillors. In Long Eaton, where one third of councillors were elected every year, the table provides a series of snapshots which enable trends to be recognised. In Rushden, there was experience of both approaches; the town began with annual elections like those in Long Eaton but in 1907 switched to triennial elections like Hinckley.

Some candidates were nominated and clearly supported by political associations or other local bodies whereas other candidates stood as ‘independents’ seemingly without the backing of a particular group. Many independents received moral and practical support from an organisation but preferred not to acknowledge this formally, often contending that councillors should be chosen on their personal merit rather than their political (or other) affiliations. In small towns, however, candidates’ political views were rarely secret.⁴³ Where these were not clearly stated at election time, it is usually possible to discover them from previous allegiances, newspaper comments, nominations for parliamentary candidates and obituaries. This method risks misrepresenting councillors whose political views changed over time but, because such shifts were uncommon, it is unlikely to distort the overall trends.

Table 5 Political composition of the three councils

HINCKLEY UDC	1894	1898	1901	1904	1907	1910	1913
Official Liberals	9	8	9	9	9	9	8
Sympathetic liberals	2	-	-	-	1	1	1
Labour movement	-	1	-	-	-	2	3
Others: mostly Conservatives	4	6	6	6	5	3	3
Total	15	15	15	15	15	15	15

LONG EATON UDC	1894	1898	1901	1904	1907	1910	1913
Official Liberals	4	6	9	11	7	6	8
Sympathetic liberals	-	-	-	2	2	2	2
Labour movement	-	-	-	-	1	2	2
Co-operative society	3	3	1	1	-	-	-
Others: mostly Conservatives	5	6	5	1	5	5	6
Total	12	15	15	15	15	15	18

RUSHDEN UDC	1894	1898	1901	1904	1907	1910	1913
Official Liberals	7	5	5	7	5	5	4
Sympathetic liberals	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Labour movement	1	1	3	3	4	3	3
Others: mostly Conservatives	3	5	3	1	2	3	4
Total	12	12	12	12	12	12	12

The table highlights those councillors who could be expected to take a ‘progressive’ stance. The Liberal associations in each town were the core progressive voices and they almost always adopted official candidates in UDC elections. The Labour movement was similarly open about its nominees. Other councillors could be sympathetic to Liberal views but were not official candidates. The ‘Other’ section of the Table includes some councillors whose political views are difficult to categorise but most can be identified

as Conservatives. Only in Rushden was this always clear from the election reports; in Hinckley and Long Eaton, the Conservative Associations rarely adopted candidates formally,⁴⁴ although it is difficult to believe that supporters were left in doubt about their preferences.

In effect, table 5 summarises the new electorate's response to the opportunities which the UDC electoral reforms opened up. It provides a useful way of tracing the strength of the progressive forces on each Council over time and of measuring the extent to which they divided between the Liberal party and other groups. It also notes the existence of opposition voices. Though never in an overall majority, there were always Conservative councillors on all three councils except for two years in Rushden when the party deliberately withdrew, as explained later. It would be wrong, however, to give an impression that councillors, once elected, generally conducted business on party lines. Relationships were informal and most council business was decided by consensus. Only occasionally did issues arise which divided councils on party political lines.

All the councillors were men. Nowhere was the opportunity taken to bring forward women candidates even though all three towns elected women as Poor Law Guardians in the 1890s and two included women on their School Board. In this, they followed a national pattern; women, it seems, were acceptable in philanthropic and caring roles but were widely held to lack the business and technical skills needed for council work.⁴⁵



2 Hinckley Urban District Council: the councillors and officers in 1902

Probably from a town guide published by Pickering and Sons Ltd in 1902
Leicestershire Record Office has a copy of the photograph, ref DE8810/94

Hinckley after 1894

In 1894, Hinckley's Liberals were notable for their inclusivity and they maintained this approach in three of the next four triennial elections. The exception occurred in 1898 when the Trades Council nominated two candidates of its own—Chapman, the hosiery trades unionist who had stood for the Liberals in 1894, and James Thorne,

a representative of the hosiery trimmers' union.⁴⁶ It is unclear whether the Trades Council chose to promote separate candidates or did so because the Liberals were unwilling to embrace those candidates. The former seems likely because a brief manifesto was issued claiming to be 'in sympathy with the best interests of labour'.⁴⁷ At the poll, Chapman was elected to the Council in fourth position and Thorne only narrowly failed to win a seat. This was a considerable achievement for Chapman, almost certainly helped by his involvement in a wide range of local organisations including the Primitive Methodist chapel, the adult school, the co-operative society, the cottage hospital committee and a local building society.⁴⁸

Despite its strong performance in 1898, the Trades Council did not nominate candidates in the next three UDC elections. By 1901, Chapman had rejoined the list of Liberal candidates,⁴⁹ briefly termed 'Progressives', and remained with them for the rest of his time as a councillor. The party continued to include 'working men' in its nominations; William Warner, one of Clarke's successors as the local NUBSO secretary, was elected from 1901 and James Bennett, a hosiery trimmer and secretary of the Trades Council, was an unsuccessful Liberal nominee in 1904 and 1907.⁵⁰ In the meantime, the (Liberal dominated) Council chose Chapman as its vice-chairman in 1901 and 1902 and chairman in 1903. The adult school was quick to congratulate him as 'being the first workingman of Hinckley upon whom such a mark of distinction and appreciation has been conferred'.⁵¹

The Liberals held the progressive forces together in the elections of 1904 and 1907 but Chapman's career suggests that they became less open after 1907.⁵² The Trades Council finally broke with the Liberals in 1910 by nominating two former Liberals, Warner and Bennett, as their own candidates. Both were successful.⁵³ However, labour ambitions were modest and the break incomplete; Warner and Bennett were among those assenting to the nomination of the Liberal parliamentary candidate in December 1910,⁵⁴ and they were included on a Liberal committee 'to consider the question of perfecting the Liberal organisation of Hinckley' in 1912.⁵⁵ Labour retained a presence on the Council by winning three seats in the 1913 election but the Liberals remained firmly in control.

Long Eaton after 1894

The Co-operative Society's early success at Long Eaton was not sustained. Its first three councillors served for four years but attempts to add further 'working men' in 1897 and 1898 did not succeed.⁵⁶ Preparations for the 1899 contest exposed divisions within the Society. It was resolved 'that no action be taken, seeing that in the best interests of the society they could not afford to be at loggerheads'.⁵⁷ Holland and Woodforth, left to stand as 'independents', were not re-elected.⁵⁸ The Society made nominations again in 1901,⁵⁹ but Butler alone found favour with the voters and he remained the only Co-operative councillor until 1907. The Society's political involvement then lapsed.

Liberal fortunes rose steadily from their lowest point in 1896 when they were left with only three councillors. By 1899, the party held a majority of the council seats and it continued to strengthen its position. The withdrawal of Co-operative candidates was clearly helpful to the Liberals but another factor is also likely to have boosted their popularity. The party began to accept men from working class backgrounds as candidates for public office. In 1896, two members wishing to see a 'working man brought forward' for the next UDC election were told that 'all efforts in this direction had failed. No workman could be got to stand'.⁶⁰ However, in the following year, the party backed Alfred Chester. Though by then a self-employed businessman, he had

been an engine driver with the Midland Railway and an active trades unionist.⁶¹ He had been elected to the Long Eaton School Board in 1891 having 'appealed to working men as a working man',⁶² and been nominated by the Trades Council. Chester joined the UDC as a Liberal in 1897, topping the poll on his first attempt.⁶³ In the same year, Joshua Shaw was elected as a Liberal member of the School Board even though condescending attitudes remained. A leading Liberal noted that working men were not always a credit to their class but assured his listeners that Mr Shaw 'was the best type of that class'.⁶⁴ A third recruit was Frederick C.W. Dakin who became a Liberal councillor in 1902 having failed to secure a seat as a Co-operative Society nominee in 1898 and 1901 and as a Trades Council nominee in 1899.⁶⁵ A joiner by trade, Dakin was described as a 'typical working man'.⁶⁶ Interestingly, all three men held (or had held) prominent positions in the Co-operative Society.

Dakin characterised an uncertainty in Long Eaton about the best way forward for working men wishing to be represented on the UDC. The town was unusually well informed about the option of separating from the Liberals. A branch of the ILP was formed as early as 1894 and was active in organising public meetings over the next ten years and beyond.⁶⁷ The Trades Council was among the first 22 nationally to affiliate to the LRC.⁶⁸ Yet these activities failed to produce UDC councillors. The labour movement nominated candidates in 1896, 1899 and 1903 but without success.⁶⁹ It was not until 1907 that Samuel Truman, a lacemaker, became its first councillor.⁷⁰ In the meantime, the Conservatives were lending tacit support to other UDC candidates. Isaac Crofts, a landscape gardener claiming to be 'the working men's candidate',⁷¹ ran in 1900, 1901 and 1902. He was unsuccessful but Jarvis Smedley, a lacemaker with military connections, stood on the same basis in 1906 and won in a 'surprise' victory,⁷² providing a useful reminder that 'labour interests' were not always satisfied with the Labour or Liberal parties. After 1907, labour candidates contested all UDC elections but only ever held two seats. Meanwhile, the Liberals lost their dominance as the number of 'independents' also increased.

Rushden after 1894

Spencer's victory at Rushden in 1894 satisfied neither Liberals nor labour. The Liberals had to accept that they no longer monopolised the progressive vote while labour supporters had to acknowledge that only one of their six candidates had been successful. In most years thereafter, there was an election for a third of the council seats and the joint trades union committee always put forward candidates, the press referring to them as 'trades union' or 'labour party' candidates interchangeably. Over the next five years, the committee and the Liberal Association edged towards an agreement to support each other's nominees but, as the 1897 negotiations illustrated, there were issues to overcome. A labour proposal that each party should nominate two candidates for the four places was rejected by the Liberals, many of whom still regarded the 'labour interest' as a section within Liberalism and felt that the proposal unfairly favoured that section. The labour chairman, William Bazeley, retorted that the Liberals 'did not wish to have bone fide working men candidates without they could twist them around their fingers'.⁷³ The two groups eventually presented a united front in 1900 and Bazeley was elected as a second labour councillor.⁷⁴ In 1901, the arrangement was repeated; all four 'Progressive' candidates were victorious and labour gained a third councillor.⁷⁵

Tensions began to re-emerge in 1902 but events took an unexpected turn when the Conservatives decided to withdraw all their candidates. Since another sitting Conservative was already stepping down, the party was no longer represented on the

Council.⁷⁶ Again, in 1903, the Conservatives made nominations but withdrew them ‘for some reason’ prior to the poll. It was suggested that Conservative voters ‘largely supported the Labour men ... with a desire of adding to the strained feeling which exists in the town between the two sections of the Progressive party’,⁷⁷ but this hardly seems a full explanation of the party’s decision. Whatever the reason, it meant that the election of 1903 was a contest between Liberal and Labour;⁷⁸ afterwards, the progressive parties held all twelve of the council seats, with eight Liberal and four Labour members but, without Conservative participation, this could only be a temporary situation.

The election of 1904 set a pattern which lasted for the next ten years. The Conservatives won one seat and began a slow return. The Liberal and Labour parties acted without regard to each other by each nominating four candidates for the five available places. Labour lost a seat and, although this was regained in a by-election in 1905,⁷⁹ the party’s advance had stalled. Despite being an established and increasingly experienced presence on the Council, it was reduced to three seats in both the 1910 and 1913 elections. The Liberals gradually declined in popularity; they lost their overall majority but remained the largest party with the greatest share of the votes cast. In the election of 1913, the Liberals won five seats, the Conservatives four and Labour three.⁸⁰



3 Rushden Urban District Council offices, opened in 1906
(author’s photograph)

Local institutions

Without national leadership, those seeking to ensure that UDCs took account of working-class interests had to look to local organisations. At this stage, the primary aim for many was to get working men elected as councillors regardless of which organisation

nominated them. Manifestos were issued on occasions but the main concern in all three towns, as elsewhere, was with representation rather than specific policies.⁸¹ Yet the ability and willingness of local organisations to nominate working class candidates varied significantly. This is clear from a survey of the local liberal associations, co-operative societies and trades unions.

The Liberals were in a strong position in all three towns when the UDCs were formed. They saw themselves as the party of those who created wealth in contrast to the Conservatives who were thought to represent landed interests and the 'status quo'.⁸² The liberal associations were well established, known to the electorate and possessed the experience and funds to run successful election campaigns. There was every chance that they could maintain their position and exercise power through the new councils. This was an obvious attraction to ambitious members of the labour movement, provided that the local Liberals were willing to embrace working class candidates and concerns. An additional incentive was the prospect that any weakening of Liberal support could hand council seats to the Conservatives; abandoning the Liberals for a labour candidate could be viewed as a reckless act.

Working people wishing to be involved in the Liberal party faced different situations in each town. Hinckley Liberals succeeded in absorbing labour concerns.⁸³ They put forward trade union candidates from the beginning and were willing to support them into positions of power, as when Chapman was selected as the council chairman in 1903. Only in 1898 did the Trades Council nominate separate candidates and the estrangement was short lived. By contrast, the Liberals in Long Eaton in 1894 were evidently unable or unwilling to propose working class candidates and, as explained later, this appears to have been a major factor in the Co-operative's success. Liberal fortunes rose steadily from 1897, helped by the Co-operative's eventual withdrawal and the inclusion of a few working men among the Liberal candidates, notably Chester and Dakin. By 1904, the Liberals held eleven of the fifteen UDC seats even though a majority of their councillors were still described as 'lace manufacturers'. In Rushden, there were few new opportunities for Liberals of any sort to become councillors. Those elected in 1894 included three of the largest boot and shoe manufacturers in the town and, together with their associates and employees, they held six of the twelve seats. The other Liberals were an engineer and a contractor.⁸⁴ Thereafter, the original councillors monopolised Liberal nominations with only one other candidate, a builder, being put forward before 1902. Studies of councils elsewhere, in Keighley and York for example, recognise a similar pattern; independent labour candidates were more likely to emerge when the local Liberals were unwelcoming either because of patronising and middle-class attitudes or because of an unwillingness to nominate working men to positions of responsibility.⁸⁵

In 1894, the Co-operative Society in Long Eaton provided the most startling instance of avowedly 'working men' being elected to a UDC. In each of the three towns, the local co-operative society was an important institution but Long Eaton's was by far the largest; in 1897, its 2849 members compared with 930 at Rushden and its annual sales were three times as large as those at Hinckley.⁸⁶ More fundamentally, however, the Long Eaton society differed in its attitude towards representation on the Council. Some individual councillors in Hinckley and Rushden were active co-operative members—Chapman and Spencer, for example, served on their respective main committees—but their societies did not directly nominate candidates in UDC elections. In a survey of fourteen co-operative societies in the Nottingham area, Long Eaton's nomination of council candidates was described as 'unusual' and no similar action is recorded elsewhere.⁸⁷ Even at Long Eaton, the Co-operative's involvement proved short-lived.

In 1899, it failed to renew support for two of its sitting councillors and thereafter was represented by Butler alone until 1907. Co-operative societies were well established and trusted organisations which could offer stability and funding but were unsuited to political activity; it was marginal to their core role when most members joined primarily as consumers. Their leaders were already focusing on running complex businesses and were worried that political activity would affect trade adversely, deter potential members and fracture support.⁸⁸ Such fears were clearly evident at Long Eaton in 1899. In addition to the commercial issues, many leaders and members were liberals at heart and supporters of a 'self-help' approach. In the absence of Co-operative nominations in the 1903 UDC election, voters in Long Eaton favoured the Liberal and Conservative-inclined candidates rather than the Trades Council's nominee.⁸⁹ The *Long Eaton Advertiser* (unashamedly Liberal in its sympathies) often referred to Co-operative councillors as 'Liberals' or fellow 'Progressives', thus reinforcing the view that the early success of Co-operative candidates at Long Eaton was not primarily due to policy differences with the Liberals but was a reaction against the Liberal Association's reluctance to offer opportunities to working men.

In the long term, the drive to secure separate working-class representation was led by the trades unions in combination (the Trades Councils in Hinckley and Long Eaton and a joint trades union committee in Rushden,⁹⁰ but the timescales were very different. While Rushden elected its first Labour councillor in 1894, Long Eaton waited until 1907. Hinckley chose a Trades Council nominee in 1898 but, thereafter, no trades union candidate stood until 1910. In some parts of Britain, the lead was taken by the ILP but Long Eaton was the only one of the three towns which had an active branch in the early days of the UDCs.⁹¹ It did not nominate candidates directly although ILP members were involved in the Co-operative Society and the Trades Council, both of which did.⁹²

Bearing in mind the industrial structure, it was probably inevitable that NUBSO would be the most powerful union in Rushden. It provided the chairman and secretary of the joint committee and almost all the labour candidates for the UDC.⁹³ Of those elected to the council before 1907, all were (or had been) prominent NUBSO officials. There were also aspects of NUBSO which increased its impact. As a national body with no significant union rivals, it had a comparatively large membership, stability and some paid officials. It encouraged members to take part in local government and in the early 1890s had grappled with the issue of whether its general secretary, if elected to Parliament, would align with the Liberals or act independently.⁹⁴ The Rushden branch had expressed its support for the latter position as early as 1891.⁹⁵ When the LRC was formed in 1900, NUBSO was one of the founding unions.⁹⁶ A measure of its influence can also be recognised in Hinckley where, despite representing the smaller of the two main industries, it was a leading member of the Trades Council and provided the first trades union official to be elected to the UDC. By contrast, the main unions in Hinckley and Long Eaton were small and locally based. Hinckley hosiery workers had been part of the Leicester Union during the great strike of 1891 but seceded to form a separate union in 1897.⁹⁷ Similarly, Long Eaton's lace workers mainly relied on a locally based union; by 1890, the Long Eaton and District Association of Operative Lace Makers had supplanted the national Amalgamated Society in the town. It offered lower subscriptions and benefits, was more relaxed about working practices and conditions, and appealed to the employees of Long Eaton firms which prospered largely because they operated outside the Amalgamated union's sphere of influence.⁹⁸

In all three towns, the labour movement's approach was tentative. In Hinckley and Long Eaton, the Trades Councils rarely nominated more than two candidates and

could never have won enough seats to control the UDC. In Rushden after 1894, the union committee only proposed one or two candidates for four places until 1903, after discussions with the Liberals had broken down. In Long Eaton and Rushden, the labour movement occasionally nominated candidates for election to the School Board and as Poor Law Guardians but no attempt was made there, or in Hinckley, to gain a place on the county council or to withdraw support from the local Liberal member of parliament.⁹⁹

Conclusions

Electoral reform came late to small towns which lacked borough status. The new opportunities which were created when local boards gave way to UDCs in 1894 were widely recognised but, without national leadership, local responses varied. The Liberal net was widened at Hinckley, the Co-operative Society joined the fray at Long Eaton and the trades unions nominated six candidates at Rushden. Yet the 1894 election result was a vote for continuity. The majority of councillors on the UDCs had already served on the local boards and Liberalism remained strong. This was clearly evident in Hinckley and Rushden though more confused in Long Eaton. There followed a period of experimentation in all three towns when local factors and institutions predominated.¹⁰⁰

In time, the Liberals strengthened their position on the UDCs and reached a peak in the early years of the new century, as illustrated by the 1904 figures in Table 5. This proved to be a highpoint for progressivism, the greatest opportunity for Liberal and Labour forces to work together. At Hinckley, labour interests had been re-absorbed into the Liberal party after a brief flirtation with independent representation and, at Long Eaton, a similar process had taken place following the withdrawal of the Co-operative Society. At Rushden, Liberal and Labour parties remained separate but approached the electorate jointly in 1900 and 1901.

A separate labour alternative to the Liberal party was slow to develop especially when the idea of the 'labour party' as an interest group, rather than a political party, persisted. Timescales varied greatly. Ambitions were modest and the break with the Liberal party was gradual rather than dramatic. In each town, the lead was taken by the local trades unions acting together. Two variables were significant. Separate labour candidates appeared earlier when local unions were strong and politically involved, as NUBSO was at Rushden, and later where the local Liberals were open to working class involvement, as at Hinckley. By 1913, there were Labour councillors on all three UDCs but, although an established presence, they were always in a minority.¹⁰¹ Even at Rushden, which had the earliest and most experienced representatives, a lack of electoral support constrained further growth; for several years, the Labour group held four of the twelve seats but this fell back to three in 1910. Except perhaps in Hinckley, the Liberals lost their dominance in the face of Labour opposition and a Conservative resurgence, but they were not displaced. They provided the largest number of councillors everywhere even where they ceased to command an overall majority.

UDCs undoubtedly opened up local governance in the three towns to a wider range of people. They did this partly by encouraging the Liberals to be more inclusive and partly by enabling independent labour candidates to stand in elections. From 1894 onwards, a small number of working men were elected to each of the UDCs and their number grew gradually.¹⁰² However, there were limits. The Liberals had greater electoral success but were still wary of endorsing working-class candidates. The labour movement promoted such candidates but was less able to secure their election.

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Returning servicemen and the growth of smallholdings in the 1920s: a study of Devon

CLARE GREENER

A smallholder is 'a farmer who farms a holding or small piece of land not exceeding an annual rental value of £50, and usually, not exceeding fifty acres in extent'.¹ Any holding above fifty acres was deemed to be a small farm. A market gardener also had a small plot of land but 'specialised in intensive cultivation of plants out of season', mostly vegetables and fruit.² However, there was a lot of overlap between market gardeners and smallholders during the early decades of the twentieth century and it was not until 1919 that just 26 smallholders were listed separately in the trades section of Kelly's *Devon Directory*. By 1930, this number had increased to 384 with the addition of over 200 market gardeners and fruit growers.

This study looks at the role of the Devon County Council (DCC) in the implementation of the Land Settlement (Facilities) Act 1919 and the Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1926. Despite the challenges of acquiring land at a time of high prices and the depression in British agriculture during the first half of the 1920s,³ the DCC oversaw training schemes for ex-servicemen and ensured financial support for new tenants, utilising government funding. Their response, and encouragement of diversification, led to the creation of at least fifty smallholdings for market gardeners, pig and poultry farmers in the Holcombe and Dawlish area.

Demand in Devon for land provided by DCC grew during the latter years of the First World War and the years following, when there was concern about food production. It was thought that the mental and physical health of returning soldiers, traumatised by the war, benefited from working on the land. For example, Lt Col Dr Arthur Hurst, a British physician who worked at Seale Hayne Military Hospital in 1918 and 1919, had successfully combined the occupational therapy of working on a farm with intensive therapy sessions to help men suffering with shellshock.⁴ Some ex-servicemen were medically unfit to return to the jobs they held pre-war. In 1921, Harry Pincock, of Kingskerswell, was waiting for training in horticulture as he had returned from the war with tuberculosis. The Astor report, a major study by the Departmental Committee on Tuberculosis set up by the Ministries of Health and Pensions, found that up to August 1919 approximately 35,000 ex-servicemen were suffering with tuberculosis attributable to, or aggravated by, conditions of service.⁵ It maintained that work on the land helped men with recovery and recommended that they should be assisted to acquire smallholdings.⁶

It was also thought that animal welfare and breeding would be enhanced as individuals on smaller holdings would spend more time looking after their stock. To help with this aspect, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries prepared a series of *Guides to Smallholders* which it was hoped would be of benefit to servicemen intending to settle on the land. Individual guides dealt with the basics of pig-keeping, growing farm crops, soils and manure, fruit and potato growing. Costing 2d each, they were issued, post free, to all those who requested them.⁷

The Land Settlement Act aimed to fulfil several criteria: to reward returning servicemen for the trauma they had experienced during the war by creating homes, a job and independence; to prevent rural depopulation; and to create an agricultural career ladder. It was hoped that a man would start with a smallholding, move on to a larger holding, then a small farm and finally a larger farm, thereby keeping families on the land. As it was suspected that many of the men applying would have little or no experience in farming or running a business, the Ministry stated that applicants could not dictate the choice of land. The policy was 'to group Small Holdings together in large blocks' to give an opportunity for tenants to work co-operatively with people in similar situations, sharing tools, purchasing and marketing costs, and offering mutual help and support to 'have the best choice of securing a good livelihood' (see table 1).⁸

Initially there was to be a two-year project, with Government loans paying for land and expenses, and with a payback period of eighty years. Land was acquired by private treaty, leasehold or compulsory purchase. It was not always possible to acquire sites that the Council thought would be suitable for smallholdings. Land was in demand, both for food production and for building purposes, and this frequently pushed the prices up beyond the Council's means or beyond that which government surveyors had set as a suitable price for a particular site.

Existing tenant farmers, in place from before the war, who hoped to purchase their farms, resented competition from the Council as this increased the final price of land at auction, especially in the case of land which could be easily converted to several smallholdings. A farmer from Tiverton maintained that he had had to pay £1500 more than he would otherwise have done to secure his farm.⁹

Initial applications for land

At the end of the war, returning servicemen were invited to apply for land. By May 1919, DCC had received 376 applications, including forty from men who had no connection with Devon. However, the General Purposes Committee agreed that no men, or officers, should be considered until those who either lived in the county or had a close connection with Devon had been dealt with. By 25 September 1919 there were 507 approved applications with a further 71 under consideration. Being approved for a smallholding did not mean that applicants automatically became tenants—some had to wait years for a suitable place in the area they wanted.¹⁰

A list of 236 applicants from East Devon has survived in the papers of Col. Acland-Troyte of Huntsham Court, Tiverton, a member of the Agricultural Committee and the Smallholdings and Allotments sub-committee. It included seventeen men from out of county and two women. The majority (176) were ex-service.¹¹ The list details an individual's choice of holdings. These included bare land to add to existing farm holdings, held by tenants before the war ended, or to be near where they lived; land with outbuildings such as poultry houses, sheds, and stables; or cottage holdings with just one or two acres. The most popular choice was for a house and buildings with land of five to fifty acres, requested by 125 applicants.

Using directories and census returns, over half of the East Devon applicants have been identified. They came from all levels of society, but not surprisingly the majority had an agricultural or horticultural background (see Table 1). Among some of the individual applicants Sydney Hill from Elton Road, Exeter was a plumber; and George Martin, from Escot, a bricklayer. Marwood Welsman's father was a market gardener in Newton

Poppleford. Marwood was listed in Kelly’s *Directory* from 1919 to 1930, but it is not known whether he was awarded the five acres he applied for. George Felton Hedger was a gardener. He trained at Castle Hill, South Molton. From there he went to Bicton Gardens in East Devon, where he was working as a foreman gardener when he enlisted in the Devon Regiment in October 1916. He was gradually promoted to the rank of Sergeant and when he was demobilised, he returned to his old job at Bicton, living as a boarder in the bothy in 1921. His application was for a cottage holding with 3-5 acres. There are no details of him ever having a smallholding of his own, but in 1926 he was listed as a head gardener to Miss Chichester at Arlington Court in North Devon and in 1939 as head gardener at Maristow Gardens, Bickleigh.

Table 1 Breakdown of occupations of 143 applicants for small holdings c.1919

agricultural	horticultural	services	transport	unemployed	other
farmers	gardeners	baker	haulier	ex-service pensioners and retired/invalid	clerks
farm/ agricultural labourers	market gardeners	butcher	drivers		porter
		builders	carrier		millers
		chimney sweep			dealers
thresher		saddler			general labourers
		postman			
		wheelwright			
58	22	23	11	11	18

Agricultural and horticultural training

Devon County Council was allocated £85,000 of Government money, to train and resettle men. Intensive college courses, at reduced rates, were available for able-bodied officers at Seale Hayne Agricultural College—49 were in training and 36 had been trained by March 1921.¹² There were also residential courses available at a farm centre in Launceston.¹³ Disabled officers had a separate scheme paid for under the Royal Pensions Warrant. There were twelve officers in training under this scheme in September 1920, including George Nosworthy of Exeter who had been gassed during the war and also suffered a ‘derangement’ of his right knee.¹⁴ An alternative was a farm placement lasting up to two years. Farmers were expected to provide board, lodging, and training for which they would be paid up to £1 10s per week. Trainees would receive an allowance of £125 per year with an additional allowance of £24 per year for each child up to a maximum of £96. By 11 March 1920, it was noted that 63 men were training with selected farmers.¹⁵

Under the ‘Training in Horticulture Scheme’, where trainees lived at home, Tancred Purdue was placed with Percy Stevens, market gardener, at Woolbrook Nurseries, Sidmouth. An artist, Purdue had been in the Labour Corps during the war. Harold Bolt, a former cabinet maker, was sent to train with Torquay Cooperative Society on their market gardens and nursery at Oldway Gardens, Paignton. Alexander Dark, a disabled army officer, and former milliner, trained in fruit farming with George Pyne at Denver Nurseries in Topsham.¹⁶

Court Farm Training Centre, Holcombe, Dawlish

An important example of a local authority initiating training schemes came about in 1919 after Devon County Council acquired Court Farm at Holcombe. Lying midway between Dawlish and Teignmouth, it was purchased initially to create more smallholdings. However, it was decided that 85 acres of the farm would make a good site for training disabled ex-servicemen. Livestock were purchased, including cows and calves, steers, breeding ewes, six pigs, three horses, ducks and 230 head of poultry.¹⁷ Army huts were erected on site and the farmhouse utilised for the staff who were employed to train and look after the men.

The training centre opened on 28 April 1920.¹⁸ The farm principal was James Owen Baulkwill, at a salary of £200 per annum. This was later increased to £250 due to 'the number of detailed returns which he is required to keep'.¹⁹ House master, Thomas Henry Cole; poultry instructor, George Edward Dixon, and horticultural instructor, E. Gillard, were each paid a salary of £180 per annum. Baulkwill was employed from 6 April, and all were in post by 21 April.²⁰ In June 1920, there were 43 ex-servicemen at the centre, increasing to 60 in September and including ten men from out of county. They were undertaking courses which included dairying and general farm work, market gardening and pig breeding. Poultry farming, of free range and intensively kept birds, included carpentry where the men were taught to make poultry houses and incubators. The most popular, for half the men, was a mixture of all the courses.²¹

Men were paid training allowances. Single men received £2 per week, married men £2 10s plus 6s per child and a further 17s 6d if he had to keep a home elsewhere. Extra payments were made for rank held in service from 3s 4d to £1 per week. Out of their allowance, men paid £1 per week for board and lodgings plus 3d towards the provision of games, newspapers and similar for the recreation hut. They were accommodated in three of the 60 by 20 foot corrugated-iron Army huts. Other huts housed recreation, dining and teaching areas. Initially the centre aimed to train fifty men, although there was accommodation for 72.²²

Horace Thacker Jeary was an example of a trainee who did not go on to have an agricultural or horticultural career. A former railway porter at Bethnal Green in London, he had been living with his widowed father before he enlisted in the army on 26 February 1912. Discharged on 16 February 1919 with 'defective vision', he lived at 14 Stepcote Hill, Exeter, a tenement house which was pulled down at the end of the 1920s, with his wife Fanny and three small children and his mother-in-law.²³

Holcombe Farm as a training establishment was short-lived and by December 1920 the list of ex-service applicants requiring training was closed. The economy experienced a sharp downturn in the early 1920s which affected agricultural funding. Government cutbacks, and the Ministry of Agriculture's concerns that there were limited opportunities for disabled men to be employed in agriculture led to early closure of a successful enterprise. However, the Ministry insisted that civilians should not have newly created holdings, and that special preference should be given to those who had served overseas during the war.²⁴

The centre closed on 30 September 1921.²⁵ Of the 76 men who completed their training there, 21 had become smallholding tenants. A further 21 had been approved for a holding when suitable land was available. Twenty were working in agricultural employment, five of those abroad. The remaining fourteen were in other jobs or unemployed.²⁶ Each man who had completed his training was paid an efficiency bonus of five shillings (25p) for each week of approved service and was also given tools up to the value of £10.²⁷ It was noted that 'The marked difference in the health of the men

and good average of those who have obtained or likely to obtain work in connection with the land have been very pleasing features of the scheme'.²⁸ Eleven men who were still in training were transferred to other centres, and six were placed with private firms within the county.

On the closure of the training centre, the land was let as smallholdings to seven ex-servicemen at Michaelmas 1921.²⁹ Six men who had been working or training at the Centre took holdings, including Lewis Milford (1890-1962). Serving with the Royal Garrison Artillery, he had been gassed on the Western Front and was invalided out with the resultant continuing health problems. Milford had been living in St Marychurch, working as a commercial traveller at the outbreak of the war, possibly for the local brewery which employed his father.³⁰ Until there was an outbreak of fowl pest Milford ran his smallholding as Brookside Poultry Farm, but then changed to market gardening growing a mixture of vegetables, fruit and flowers, sent to London by the Dawlish train. He paid £3 10s a week for his bungalow, one of the converted huts from the training centre, and £32 10s per annum for his holding of 2.88 acres.³¹

Five of the trainees, who lived in the newly converted 'bungalows', had holdings of slightly less than three acres each.³² The farmhouse at Court Farm was converted into accommodation for two families. One half was tenanted by James Baulkwill who had overseen training at the centre. His holding became an approved station for sale of eggs including those of Light Sussex and Buff Rocks.³³ The other half of the farmhouse was let to Joseph Campbell a former landlord of the Three Crowns hotel, Chagford. Campbell had moved early in 1922, 'being an ex-service army Captain' to take the other half of the then divided farmhouse. The cob part of the farmhouse—Court Farm—took some 50 acres on the north side, and the big stone house, Manor Farm, took 50 acres to the south side, including the stream as far as the end of the orchard. There were also in these fields two more semi-detached cob farm cottages. These were turned into a farmstead with about 22 acres.³⁴ The whole of the 145 acres of Court Farm was let as fourteen individual smallholdings, split in 1921 between twelve smallholders.

Women smallholders

Government directives stated that smallholdings could only be let 'to suitable women who are certified by the Board to have been engaged in whole-time employment on agricultural work during a period of not less than six months during the war'.³⁵ Two women were on the East Devon applicants list. Kathleen Maud Granger was born in June 1895 at Padiham, Lancashire. Her father was a bank manager. In 1921 she lived at Hillside, Topsham and had applied for three acres of bare land. Adelaide Acland was born in 1878 at Nymet St George, Devon. In 1921, listed as a 'Poultry and Dairyman', she was a boarder with Earnest Frost, a gardener, and his family. She was single, aged 43, and worked for Captain Phillips at Bydown, Swimbridge in North Devon. She had requested five acres with a house and buildings in East Devon. Both women were registered as ex-service, but, to date, no details have been found of their service careers, nor does it appear that they became smallholding tenants.

Of the nearly 500 smallholders noted on the 1921 Devon census, 56 were women. The youngest was Milly Stanbury, aged 15, who assisted her mother, Eliza, at Bishops Tawton. The oldest was Fanny Dart at Newton St Cyres, aged 86. Not surprisingly most women were widows (33) or single (17). There was encouragement for women to gain a horticultural or agricultural education. Ten-week courses which covered market gardening, dairying and poultry management at a reduced rate of £15 to cover board,

lodging and tuition, were available for women at Seale-Hayne.³⁶ These were held in the summer when there were no courses running for men.

At Lee House, Marwood in north Devon, Hilda Meugens and Helen Tabor ran an upmarket smallholding as a training centre for gentlewomen from early 1921 to November 1924. With a small staff which included Edith Reeve, a poultry manager, and Lottie Herring a gardener, they offered residential and day courses covering a range of subjects which included dairying, market gardening, poultry and beekeeping with fresh produce sold locally.³⁷ Students were also encouraged to take Royal Horticultural Society examinations. Meugens was a passionate believer that women should play their part in food production to help the war effort and had encouraged women's work on the land through a series of talks during the war.³⁸

Shutterton Farm, Duckaller and Gulliford, Dawlish

On the edge of Mamhead and Dawlish parishes, 37.76 acres, part of Gulliford Farm, was acquired by Devon County Council and divided into one large parcel of 35 acres rented by William Trant, and a smaller plot of 2.496 acres tenanted by James Tarr. A further 207 acres, part of Duckaller farm, would be converted into more than thirty small holdings.³⁹ At Shutterton, opposite Duckaller, approximately 38 acres of bare land was divided into six plots of between four and eight acres held by Messrs G.J. Tutty, W.J. Rendell, W.E. Rabbage, L.S. Gilpin and the Farley and Beck families.

In 1920 Dawlish builders, J H Lamacraft, agreed with the county council to erect six semi-detached cottages, and to sink wells at Duckaller Farm. A further eight cottages with wells were added in 1921, and two more in 1925.⁴⁰ The properties had earth closets and provision for sink waste only, the latter drained through clinker filter that became clogged and unworkable. Wells were needed because it had proved too expensive to connect to the mains water supply. The cost of laying the pipework had increased from about £300 per mile prior to the war to almost £1000.⁴¹ By 1929 DCC had to build brick cesspits for the houses due to the number of complaints about the drainage, and, in September 1930, Newton RDC were asking DCC for a contribution towards the cost of supplying mains water which had been estimated at £1459.⁴²

Tenants were expected to keep their homes and buildings in 'good tenantable and decorative repair ... including doors, gates, posts, fixtures, pumps, water pipes, drains' and so on. Timber was supplied by the Council for some repairs, but tenants frequently paid half the cost of improvements.⁴³ They also had to prove that they were capable of running a smallholding. This meant that they should have some capital for tools, equipment, and animals. Match-funded loans were awarded to some tenants to purchase livestock and equipment, fruit trees, seeds and fertilisers. Initially, with interest set between 3½% and 5%, loans were not to exceed £500 and to be repayable in two years for seeds and fertiliser, or five years for other items.⁴⁴ In 1920 the largest loan given was £300, for livestock, to W.H. Heal who had two holdings at Great Stone Farm, South Molton. The smallest was given to A.J. Farley, of Lot 178a at Duckaller, Dawlish. He had already spent £150 of his own money on his holding and asked for £25 'for seeds etc' to be repaid over two years.⁴⁵

Rents varied according to the size of the plot, and the quality and cost of the land. Land had been bought when prices were high; DCC had to charge an economic rent which meant some ex-service men struggled due to the slump and there were several references to arrears in the DCC minutes.⁴⁶ William Ashplant, at Holcombe, needed a rent rebate following a poor harvest and depressed trade in cider apples. He survived

by diversification into pig keeping.⁴⁷ Plots, as they became vacant, were often snapped up by existing tenants to enlarge their holdings. When Mrs Searle gave up her tenancy due to rent arrears, her plot was taken by Lammas who had an adjoining plot. By 1925 some holdings had been combined with tenants cultivating two or three separate plots.⁴⁸

Produce

Smallholdings held a mixture of animals and crops. Poultry provided both eggs and birds for local markets. Pigs were also sold locally, cattle provided meat, milk and cheese. Staple vegetables such as beans, cabbages and potatoes were also grown together with orchard and bush fruit. Agricultural and horticultural shows encouraged careful breeding and selection of animals and crops. High-value crops, such as violets and primulas were beginning to be grown in Dawlish and Holcombe from 1916, and by 1930 A.G. Lammas & Son, initially pig farmers, were advertising gift boxes of violets in three sizes for sale across the country from Duckaller Violet Farm.⁴⁹ Holdings at Holcombe, Starcross and Dawlish had easy access to trains to transport produce to Covent Garden Market, London and to other large towns and cities. Produce was carried to stations by horse and cart or lorries.

In 1931 Lewis Baker took over a smallholding on the Duckaller site. The varied produce listed in the inventory of the holding included chrysanthemums, violets and bulbs, and also vegetables and fruit (see appendix 1). Livestock consisted of fowls and chickens accommodated in two fowl houses. Baker, a pensioner of the Admiralty, had 'about £250 to enable me to commence in business as a Small-holder at Duckaller, Dawlish'. Two years later, after struggling to make a go of the holding, he had returned to the navy.⁵⁰

Conclusion

Twenty million pounds was allocated by the Government for resettlement following World War One, enabling 24,000 men to be settled in England and Wales. The number of smallholdings doubled. The number of separate holdings returned in England and Wales as exceeding one acre and not exceeding 50 acres in extent on 4 June 1928, was 260,125.⁵¹ Confirming a continuing demand, the number of applicants on the DCC's waiting list on 31 December 1927 was 5821 of whom 2522 had been approved, while the remaining 3299 were waiting for a fuller inquiry into their qualifications.⁵²

Part of the aim of the 1919 and 1926 Acts was to keep a large population on the land under what was considered satisfactory and attractive conditions, and many men benefited physically and financially by having a smallholding. However, smallholdings were not available to all ex-servicemen; they needed to have sufficient start-up capital, be physically capable of cultivating their plot and to have some knowledge of what was involved, either as a result of DCC training schemes or through previous experience. In some cases, financial problems occurred as tenants, especially those unused to running a business, suffered with disease and crop failures.

Despite setbacks, such as the ending of the Court Farm scheme at a time when British agriculture generally was enduring hard times and the acreages of land given over to cultivation falling significantly during the first half of the 1920s, Devon's initiatives in relation to smallholdings were mainly successful. By the end of the decade there were thriving smallholders, market gardeners, fruit growers, poultry and pig farmers in Holcombe, and on the outskirts of Dawlish to the west, many of them DCC

smallholding tenants. Although many holdings were small in terms of acreages there were opportunities for those willing to diversify and small businesses were expanded to incorporate new products and handed down through the family. Dawlish and area benefited from local produce, and national markets benefited too, especially from the expanding flower trade which became a feature of the area in the 1930s. These findings accord with the broad thrust of argument made by Paul Brassley *et al*, in *The English Countryside Between the Wars: Regeneration of Decline*, in that agriculture was more resilient than the traditional image of inter-war depression and decline suggests.⁵³

Appendix 1 Valuation of produce and equipment of smallholding 11 at Duckaller, Dawlish (19 July 1931)

	£ s d
Chrysanthemums	1 0 0
Peas	2 11 0
Kidney Beans	4 0 0
Potatoes 18 yds	1 16 0
Violets	2 0 0
Strawberries	3 0 0
Cob	4 0 0
Harrows	10 0
Plough	4 0 0
Skuffle	3 10 0
Plannet Hoe	2 0 0
Plum Trees. 11 in number	3 6 0
Fowls	3 8 0
Chickens	2 0 0
Wire netting	2 18 0
2 Fowl Houses	3 0 0
Galvanised Sheeting	3 12 0
Frame work for shed	1 10 0
Waggon	2 0 0
Frame	2 6
Tools	1 10 0
Marketing baskets	2 0
Chips	1 2 0
Boxes	5 0
Harness	15 0
Scales & Weights	2 0 0
Spring Balances	1 9 0
Seeds.	5 0
Lamp Buckets & Watering Can	2 0
	£70 13 0 ⁵⁴

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- 2 *ibid.*
- 3 Alun Howkins, 'Death and rebirth? English rural society, 1920-1940', 10-25 in Paul Brassley, Jeremy Burchardt, Lynne Thompson (eds), *English Countryside Between the Wars: regeneration or decline?* (Boydell Press, 2006) 13
- 4 <https://heritagecalling.com/2018/12/14/home-from-the-war-what-happened-to-disabled-first-world-war-veterans/>
- 5 The Royal British Legion states that over 55,000 ex-servicemen suffered from tuberculosis, of whom 18,000 had died by 1922. It was responsible for setting up tuberculosis hospitals to help to treat the disease: see britishlegion.org.uk/stories/tb-hospital.
- 6 *Western Evening Herald* [WEH] 11 May 1920
- 7 *Exeter & Plymouth Gazette* [EPG] 24 May 1919
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- 9 Similar complaints were made by Farmers Unions: EPG 26 Sept 1919; *North Devon Journal* [NDJ] 22 October 1919 and 20 November 1919
- 10 DCC minutes. There were 48 (pre-December 1920) ex-service approved applicants still waiting for a holding in March 1924.
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- 51 [https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1929-01-28/debates/f894a9c4-2395-4246-95c9-8dbce95ba9e0/SmallHoldings\(Ex-ServiceMen\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1929-01-28/debates/f894a9c4-2395-4246-95c9-8dbce95ba9e0/SmallHoldings(Ex-ServiceMen)).
- 52 DCC Minutes
- 53 Brassley et al, *The English Countryside Between the Wars*
- 54 This was totalled incorrectly and should have read £70 13s 6d; DHC 7491C (Dawlish) 1927-31.

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Domestic medicine in the Yorkshire Dales 1620-1850

MICHAEL PEARSON

Two recent articles in the *North Craven Heritage Trust Journal* covered aspects of health and disease in the Yorkshire Dales. In the first of these Mary and Mike Slater explored the history of the medical practitioners in and around Settle. Probate inventories provided some fascinating insights, as did the contents of an apothecary's shop in Settle. In the second article, I took a different approach and using parish records analysed the cause of deaths in the parish of Clapham.¹ But what about the everyday ailments and the treatments which people received to alleviate their pain and hopefully provide a cure? This is another approach, using domestic recipes as a source of evidence, which may be a spur for further research into our local history.

In his diaries, Timothy Hutton (1779-1863), of Marske Hall in Swaledale, recorded all those illnesses that afflicted him and his family.² There are entries for the extraction of teeth by a surgeon and the application of leeches as well as a visit to London to consult a physician about a kidney stone. In 1841 a physician was called to treat his wife's nosebleed with a check-up a few weeks later. This is the only instance where the cost of the treatment was recorded: two guineas for each consultation. Today this would be equivalent to £240 based on the percentage increase in the Retail Prices Index and considerably more based on other indices.³ Timothy Hutton was well aware that the poor could not afford doctors' bills, and he often paid for his tenants' treatment. His brother Matthew went further and established dispensaries at Leyburn and Reeth.

Although physicians, surgeons and male-midwives were available they were probably only called for in serious cases. Most illnesses were treated at home by people with no medical training, be they family members or the local clergyman and even schoolteachers.⁴ Some of these treatments were based on local superstition and folk remedies while the better-off had access to books such as John Parkinson's *Theatrum Botanicum* (1640), Nicholas Culpeper's *English Physitian* (1652), John Wesley's *Primitive Physic* (1744) and William Buchan's *Domestic Medicine* (1769). Many of these were regularly reprinted, the final edition of the latter being printed in Philadelphia in 1871.

Parkinson's herbal was principally a botanical description of plants known at the time. As an apothecary he also provided a description of 'the vertues', or conditions the plant could be used to treat. For example, 'knapweede' (*Centaurea nigra*) 'being of an astringent and drying taste, it thereby helpeth to stay fluxes, both of bloud at the mouth, nose, or other outward parts, and those veines that are inwardly broken, or inward wounds, as also the fluxes of the belly and the stomacke, provoking castings'. He went on to detail fourteen other conditions which it could be used for and explained that a decoction of the leaves and roots in wine would be drunk or applied externally.⁵ Culpeper's book followed a similar format, with the description of each plant followed by a section called 'government and virtues', and an additional astrological link to planets and constellations. So, his description for madder (*Rubia peregrina*) includes 'It hath an opening quality, and afterwards to bind and strengthen. It is a sure remedy for yellow jaundice, by opening the obstruction of the liver and gall, and cleansing those parts;

it opens also the obstruction of the spleen, and diminishes the melancholy humour'. There are different preparations for the roots, leaves and seed as well as a host of other conditions for which the plant could be used, including the removal of freckles.⁶

The reference to the 'melancholy humour' is a statement about the fundamental understanding of one of the causes of disease and its treatment: we will return to this shortly. For now, it is worth noting that when comparing Culpeper and Parkinson there is little to separate their description of the benefits of same plant species: the only difference is Culpeper's introduction of astrology. It is possible that Culpeper was copying Parkinson or alternatively both were recording a long tradition of herbal medicine. The evidence points to the former and it appears that Culpeper copied 92 per cent of Parkinson's entries. Culpeper succeeded in producing a cheaper volume although the quality of the illustrations suffered.⁷

William Buchan's book broke away from the format adopted by his predecessors. The first third of his volume was a general treatise on health and how to maintain it. The rest was organised around particular ills with a description of the disease and its symptoms followed by a discussion of the causes and treatments. As a physician he was well aware of his profession's propensity for obscure speculation, and the use of jargon with its pretentious Latin prescriptions and claims to exclusive authority (a criticism also voiced by John Wesley). Yet beneath this academic medicine lay a tradition of folk and domestic medicine, much of which was herbal. He maintained the traditional view of the body as being an equilibrium system, where balance constituted health and imbalance resulted in illness. This humoral model of pathology dates from Hippocrates in the fifth century BC and was further developed by Galen in the second century AD. Disease was thought to be due to an imbalance in the four humours or bodily fluids (blood, phlegm, yellow and black bile) and any treatment aimed to restore the balance. There was no place for the idea of specific drug action, so that even though he was aware of the efficacy of Peruvian bark (quinine) in the treatment of malaria he still recommended purges and emetics.

Little appears to have advanced in the eighteenth century as far as medical practice is concerned. The Reverend Edmund Stone drew attention to the properties of willow bark (*Salix alba*) in a report to the Royal Society in 1763. He treated fifty people suffering from rheumatic fever symptoms with the bark and reported satisfactory results. Salicin, the active ingredient, has a similar effect to aspirin but the finding was ignored. It was not until 1899 that aspirin was introduced.

date	name and location	no. of medical recipes	archive/collection
1625-1635	Mary Lister: Thornton in Craven	124	Leeds University Cookery Collection MS621
1683-1719	Richard Wigglesworth: Conistone	9	North Yorkshire Archives
1814	Mrs Brown: Stainforth	2	West Yorkshire Archives (Leeds)
1820-1850	James Lightfoot: Askrigg	33	Dales Countryside Museum, Hawes
1847	Margaret Shelsaill[?]: Addingham	8	Craven Museum, Skipton

William Withering was more successful with his investigations of the effects of the foxglove on the heart. In 1785 he published his account based on ten years of experiments and clinical trials. His starting point was a folk herbalist who had successfully treated dropsy (swelling from congestive heart failure). Her recipe listed 20 or so plant ingredients and Withering narrowed them down to the foxglove as the one which mattered. Over ten

years he experimented with the doses and exchanged his findings with other physicians and reported on their results. As a result, he built up a significant body of scientific evidence which was widely adopted by his fellow physicians.⁸

Yorkshire Dales recipes

Five recipe collections have been located: all with known authors and dates. These are summarised in Table 1. Many more exist but are either anonymous, from an unknown locality or of uncertain date. In the case of Richard Wigglesworth, the recipes are found in his account books. With the others they are included among cookery recipes. There is an intriguing entry of two incomplete lines of Latin in the Wigglesworth accounts which has been interpreted as an incantation for a cure for ‘any thing that is bitten wth a maddog’.⁹ No other examples of such incantations were found in the recipes examined from elsewhere, though there are several examples of recipes to treat dog bites. The entry ends with ‘probatum est’ or ‘tested and found good’. This highlights one reason for the reputation of some folk remedies. There is the tendency for most people to recover from their ills but also, in the case of rabies, the dog may not have had the disease in the first place.

Many of the nineteenth-century recipes were for the treatment of everyday ailments such as bruises, scalding, burns, toothache and coughs. In James Lightfoot’s collection there were five different entries for coughs, which suggests that many of these cures were ineffective or at least reflect the diversity of folk remedies. Mrs Shelsaill listed three cough mixtures of which two contained opium. The other was a mixture of garlic and vinegar! The use of opium in the relief of pain dates back to at least the seventeenth century in England. It was also used to treat dysentery and respiratory disorders and by the nineteenth century was widely available and prescribed. Today we associate opium with drug abuse and addiction, but in recent historic times it was a much valued substance used to control pain. It may not have been a cure but at least it alleviated suffering. By the nineteenth century opium usage soared due to the high levels of addiction.

James Lightfoot’s collection also includes treatments for more serious disorders such as gravel (kidney stones), cholera and yellow fever. It is worth considering the recipes for these in more detail. For ‘An infallible cure for the gravel ... one bottle of Hock or Rennish [wine], two ounces mustard seed and the same quantity of horse radish, infused for twelve hours. Take one wine glass full in the morning and repeat it in the evening’. The cholera medicine was a combination of brandy, laudanum, ‘ammonia carbonate’, and peppermint mixed in hot water.¹⁰ The treatment for yellow fever is the most intricate of the prescriptions. ‘On the first symptoms appearing, shave the fore part of the head and wash the temples and pole of the neck with vinegar the whole body must then be immersed in warm water to give a free course to perspiration, some opening medicine should be afterwards administered and every four hours Ten Grams of James’s powders; if the Patient be thirsty the drink should be white wine and water, and a slice of bread to satisfy any inclination to eat; a tub of tar constantly standing in the room is a good thing to prevent infection’.¹¹ By this stage the recipe had dropped any identified herbal component in favour of powders of then unknown composition.

Neither of Mrs Brown’s medical recipes contained any herbal ingredient. Extract of lead was the principal ingredient for her eye treatment while a patent medicine (ethyl nitrate) in a glass of gin at night and the same in the morning was her treatment for back pain. Mary Lister’s collection contains by far the most medical recipes in the collection, more than twice the rest combined. When she was recording her recipes

Parkinson's book had yet to be published and the earlier Gerarde's Herball, of 1597, had long been out of print.¹² She had also a wide network of family and friends who contributed cures including a Dr Lister as well as Lady Fairfax, Mrs Ingram, Mr Hirst, Lady Hearthe and others. Many of her recipes were to treat illnesses or ailments which we would recognise today such as scalding or burns, colic, toothache, coughs, back pain and so on. Others are less straight forward, such as 'weakness of the stomach', 'a cold humour', 'falling down of the fundament' and 'Germane evil'. Once again there were several remedies used to treat the same condition. For example, there were four treatments for plague: two were to prevent you catchingsufficiently the plague and the remaining two to treat you if you were sufficiently unfortunate to succumb to it. All four had different ingredients: a mixture of spices and fresh plants steeped in wine or vinegar and either consumed or applied 'to the sore & it shall drawe out the venome'. From what is now known about the plague none of these would have been effective.

There were seven recipes for the treatment of ague (malaria) with symptoms of alternative periods of feeling intense cold and shivering or shaking followed by a fever with the cycle repeated every three to four days. Again no two recipes are alike and all consisted of a concoction of spices, fresh plants in either ale or wine. About half of them had to be drunk an hour 'before the fitt come'. Knowing that malaria is caused by a protozoan parasite transmitted by female mosquitoes casts doubt on the effectiveness of all of these recipes, but at least none would have caused the patient harm. None of the recipes included Cinchona bark, the only effective treatment of malaria at that time.

As ague was a disease of damp areas, where the mosquitoes lived and bred, it was thought that plants growing in such places could be used in the treatment, somewhat like docks growing in the vicinity of nettles. But none of the plants in Mary Lister's ague recipes are associated with such a watery habitat. Other recipes have been recorded from Cumbria for ague and the identified plants are also not assoiated with damp areas and are not the same as those listed by Mary Lister. This suggests that by the early seventeenth century both areas had moved on from such explanations. In other words, the idea that God created plants to cure specific diseases associated with them or the 'Doctrine of Signatures' was waning. For example, the plant eyebright (*Euphrasia officinalis*) had been created to resemble a blue eye to show that it was useful in treating eye diseases. But this plant was absent from recipes for eye problems. Cumbrian remedies for ague also included some unusual ingredients. For example some included the use of spiders, dating from the end of the sevenrteenth century and even later. The swallowing of spiders, thankfully with their legs removed, was widespread. Charms, worn around the neck, made of chips from a gallows were also supposed to prevent or cure ague.¹³ Mary Lister's remedies also included some strange ingredients: two recipes for the treatment of scalds or burns included the use of goose and sheep dung fried in butter!

While it is easy to mock these folk remedies those of the professionals were no better. The pharmacopoeia issued by the College of Physicians in London in 1618 included the use of moss growing on a human skull and blind puppies. It was not until 1746 that the use of human fat, spider webs, and moss from human skulls were eliminated but there still remained woodlice, pearls, vipers and others unusual ingredients.¹⁴

Conclusions

With such a small sample of medical recipes from the Dales and the lack of material from the eighteenth century any conclusions have to be tentative. Although the 'Doctrine of Signatures' was associated with Paracelsius in the sixteenth century it was

reinforced by Culpeper a hundred years later and was still widespread in the eighteenth century. Yet there is little evidence for it in the herbal recipes in the Dales. On the contrary humoral medicine persisted with the administering of purges to correct the balance of body fluids. By the eighteenth century the recipes appear to have lost their herbal components which were largely replaced by chemical compounds. The other shift was to the widespread use of opium to alleviate pain rather than as a treatment in its own right. This may have started in the previous century but was complete by the eighteenth century. There may be other recipes that have survived but not in our local museums and archives. Any help in locating these would be much appreciated.

Acknowledgements

Charlotte Craig (Craven Museum, Skipton), Jane Sammells and her colleagues (Yorkshire Dales Countryside Museum, Hawes) and Alex Pearson (West Yorkshire Archive Service, Leeds) for providing access to material in their care.

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- 10 Laudanum is opium dissolved in alcohol. Ammonium carbonate was used as an early leavening agent, a precursor of baking powder. It was also used in smelling salts.
- 11 Dr Robert James patented his powder in about 1746 and it was claimed to cure fevers as well as gout, scurvy and distemper in cattle. It was a mixture of antimony oxide and calcium phosphate.
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Review article: four record society volumes

HEATHER FALVEY

Given the important purpose of record societies—to make original documents more accessible—it is very pleasing to be able to review four volumes published by such societies, especially (from a personal point of view) because these are documents from the late-fifteenth to the early-seventeenth centuries, which is ‘my’ period. The first two provide information mostly about members of the gentry, and thus concern people who appear in other records, but the other two mainly refer to people lower down the social scale, who are far less likely to be recorded elsewhere.

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE OF THE REIGN OF HENRY VIII, 1509–1547 edited by Jonathan Mackman (List & Index Society Standard Series no.372 2025 ISBN 978-1-906875-66-4) price for L&IS members £30; non-members £45 [membership costs £5]

This latest volume edited by Jonathan Mackman for the List & Index Society continues the listing of justices of the peace under the Tudor monarchs. Like the volume relating to the reign of Henry VII, this one provides details from all the surviving commissions of the peace. Previously published sources for membership of these early Tudor commissions were based almost solely on entries enrolled on the Chancery patent roll (ref. TNA C 66) (separately published for Henry VII and included in *Letters and Papers of the Reign of Henry VIII*). As noted by Dr Amanda Bevan back in 1985, copies of each peace commission were also generally enrolled within the Exchequer originalia rolls (ref TNA, E 371). Here the two sources have been combined to give a more complete list of the JPs in any county but, as Mackman notes, some years and some counties are still missing and he discusses various possible reasons for this. The differences become clear when looking at the lists: for example, there are 22 surviving lists for Buckinghamshire, 32 for Devon, 24 for Hertfordshire, 26 for Northamptonshire, 30 for Somerset and 25 for Warwickshire. On the other hand, that there are only four for Cheshire (from 1539 onwards) and three for Monmouthshire (from 1542), ‘reflects changes in the jurisdictional relationship of those areas with the English Crown and government’.

The contents of this volume (and that for Henry VII’s reign) comprise lists, by county, of the recorded members of that county’s commissions of the peace. Individuals are listed in order of their first appearance (so not alphabetically, but there is an index), regardless of their status or their position within subsequent commissions. Whenever possible, surnames have been standardised to their best-known form (with reference to the *ODNB*, the *History of Parliament* or J.H. Baker, *Men of Court*) but changes of status or title are given separately. Similarly, where possible surnames of noblemen and higher clerics (usually a courtesy position on the commission rather than an active role) have been supplied in addition to their title (using sources such as the *ODNB*, *Complete Peerage* and *Heads of Religious Houses*). Those who were members of the quorum (all of whom were required to be present at a meeting of the county commission, and who were often lawyers) were noted in the original documents and here have been denoted with a ‘q’. Regarding the Hertfordshire entries, some familiar local surnames such as Brockett, Heydon, Leventhorpe and Pulter occur and among the more widely known is Ralph Sadler, knight, protégé of Thomas Cromwell, but also a prominent landowner in the north of the county.

This is a useful resource updating previously published summaries and correcting omissions and editorial errors, enabling local historians to identify active JPs in ‘their’ county.

TEMPLE FAMILY PAPERS vol.2 1604-1624 edited by Rosemary O'Day (Buckinghamshire Record Society 2025 no.44 xi+649pp ISBN 978-0-901198-49-5) £22 BRS members £30 non-members + p&p

As this volume of Temple Family Papers follows on from the volume reviewed in *The Local Historian* in February 2026, I will not reiterate the background to this extensive archive. There are two thematic essays in this volume, the first being 'Sir Thomas Temple, 1st Baronet Temple of Stowe, and his wife, Hester Sandys Temple, Lady Temple'. Sir Thomas (1567-1637) and Lady Hester (1570-1656) married in 1586 and had at least fifteen children, of whom thirteen survived to reach adulthood. Inevitably, such a large brood drew heavily on Sir Thomas's wealth, but as head of the Buckinghamshire branch of the Temple family, he was also responsible for the welfare of his sisters and his unmarried brothers (their father John died in 1603), particularly Peter 'the Lunatic' (1589-1657), who suffered from periodic mental disorder. Topics covered in this essay include: lawyers; Sir Thomas's methods of working (he had various books in which he recorded specific types of business); money and debt; Lady Hester's participation in family affairs of all kinds (her 'extraordinary' role in managing leases is tabulated on pp.30-34); her own financial accounts and keeping her husband's accounts in order. The couple's relationships with their adult children are varied in nature: records of litigation, which occurred at moments of crisis and conflict, are balanced against correspondence which discloses (sometimes) more cordial relationships. Sir Thomas's management of the Temple estates can be traced through his memoranda book and O'Day concludes that he was knowledgeable about farming and micromanaged his extensive estates. For many years his predecessors had relied for their prosperity on sheep and their wool but, with the decline of wool prices, his lavish lifestyle was challenged and he sought to exploit his land in other ways.

The second essay, 'Servants, labourers, retainers and companions', which introduces the reader to the world of the many people who were dependant on the Temples for their livelihoods, acts as a guide to many of the relevant documents included in the selected papers (in the whole series of volumes). It outlines the organisation of the household and estate(s). In the Temples' case, the distinction between the household servants and agrarian servants 'is frequently blurred and difficult to draw'. O'Day has identified some 'servant dynasties': marriage among the Temples' servants seems to have been common, generating a ready supply of young servants. Some servant case studies have been provided.

Many of the documents reproduced in this volume relate to lawsuits and are somewhat tortuous. For example, documents from 1617 and 1618 emanate from a long-running legal battle regarding the wardships of Dorothy and Mary Lee; and during 1619 and 1620 Sir Thomas was involved in financial disputes with his brothers Alexander and William, whom he had charged with the care of their brother Peter the Lunatic. But there are also more individual documents. 1612.2 is a passport issued by the Privy Council for Sir Peter Temple (later 2nd baronet) to travel 'beyond the seas', except to the city of Rome. 1616.5 is William Temple's clothing account for Peter 'the Lunatic', detailing, among other items, yards of various cloths, silk and gold buttons, different types of hose, and a pair of riding boots. The total of £27 1s 6d, includes the tailor's bill of £1 14s. 1624.8 is a drapery account for Lady Hester Temple listing numerous fabrics and trimmings for making coats and gowns for various female relatives.

Volume 2 includes detailed indexes and a glossary, but frequently the reader is referred back to Volume 1 for the *Dramatis Personae* and other scholarly apparatus provided therein relating to the Temple Papers. While the Temple family may not be 'typical' of their time and status (if, indeed, any family was 'typical'), the essays and documents published here provide detailed insights into gentry life in early modern England.

THE ACCOUNTS OF TWO WESTMINSTER FRATERNITIES, 1474-1540 edited by Lisa Jefferson (Boydell & Brewer for the Westminster Abbey Record Series 2025 384pp ISBN 978-1-837653-08-9) £25

Medieval religious fraternities or guilds were founded to provide prayers for the souls of deceased members. Most parishes, particularly urban ones, had at least one fraternity (women were admitted as members) until their dissolution in 1548. To fulfil a fraternity's purpose, one or more priests would be employed, wax candles burned, bells rung and annual feasts held; all of which needed to be paid for and those payments accounted for. Very few such accounts have survived, but in 1730 the churchwardens of St Margaret's, Westminster, paid for the 'binding up' of eight sets of financial accounts and that book, the contents of which have been published here, is now held in the Westminster Abbey Muniments. They comprise the accounts of the fraternity of the Assumption (of the Virgin Mary) covering the years 1474-77, 1487-90,

1505-08, 1515-18 and 1518-21 (its wardens were elected for a 3-year term of office) and those of the fraternity of the Hospital of St Mary Rounceval covering the years 1520-22, 1522-24 and 1538-40 (its wardens were elected for a 2-year term of office).

The introduction discusses the foundation and finances of these two fraternities. The Assumption, the principal guild of the parish of St Margaret's, was informally founded in about 1430 and became a legal entity by royal licence in June 1440. Over the years it acquired land and property in the area, and also received bequests and benefactions. Membership was 12d per annum. The administration of the properties and the maintenance of their dedicated chantry chapel in St Margaret's is apparent in the surviving accounts. The second fraternity was somewhat different. The chapel and hospital of St Mary Rounceval was established at Charing, to the north of Westminster Abbey, by 1236. It was founded as a cell of the Augustinian Roncevalles Priory in Navarre and established on land given by William Marshall, earl of Pembroke. The ins and outs of its management are explained. A main point to note is that, apart from rents from various properties, its income was mostly derived from the sale of indulgences (see below). The fortunes of the hospital and fraternity fluctuated, and matters were such that in 1475 letters patent were obtained from Edward IV to found a new fraternity at the hospital. Its subsequent history is recounted, while the functions and purpose were set out in 1513 in a document issued by Pope Leo X to the master and two wardens, confirming the institution and its constitution. Membership was 4d per annum. The surviving accounts demonstrate how, in the sixteenth century, the fraternity 'managed the day-to-day running of the hospital and chapel and all its attendant affairs'. There was a gradual cessation of indulgences, severely affecting the hospital's income. Indeed, by the time of the 1538-40 accounts the hospital was no longer treating the sick and in November 1544 it was formally surrendered by the fraternity to the Court of Augmentations.

Having covered the contents and organisation of the two sets of accounts, Lisa Jefferson then explains in detail how sums of money were added up, how the accounts functioned and how debts were handled. The accounts followed the charge and discharge system, wherein the charge comprised monies handed on by the previous holder (warden or master) and receipts and income during the accounting period, and the discharge comprised expenditure. Interestingly, the accountant also recorded receiving clipped coins (or, bad money) (e.g. pp.82, 110), which would be worth less than their face value. The Rounceval income from the sale of indulgences is recorded in the accounts as income from the proctors who sold them on the fraternity's behalf. By purchasing one of these indulgences, the recipient, having repented in full of their sins, would be enrolled in all the spiritual benefits of the fraternity (the text is printed in full on p.xxix).

The Assumption accounts provide list after list of names of members: the living who had paid their annual fees (or who were in arrears) and the deceased who had made bequests (or who were in arrears). Some bequests were monetary, some property and other items, such as 'a ryng of silver & over gilte with a broche of silver and over gilte' 'received of olde Alyson in the Theven Lane'. In each account are payments for numerous pounds of wax for candles. In 1490, as well as food, drink and decorations, payments for the general feast held in 'the Archebissshop of Yorkes place' include 7s to 'players for a pley' and 6s 8d for John Duff & his 'felowe mynstrelles'. The total cost was £37 7s 3d, with expenses exceeding receipts from the brothers and sisters present by £25 9s 6d. Payments to almspeople are recorded as are repairs to the chapel, to the almshouses, and to fraternity's various tenements, including several times for scouring the privies. The Rounceval accounts are very different, listing monies received from the proctors active around the country selling indulgences, and some bequests and gifts. The names in these accounts are mostly of local workman repairing the hospital or its chapel. Very occasionally those sick in the hospital are named, such Christopher Smyth and William Drewe, but others are simply described, such as 'a ladd that went on his kneis & Liyng sike by the space of x daies'.

These fascinating accounts are fully indexed and there is a useful glossary.

THE LOUTH ST JAMES CHURCHWARDENS' ACCOUNTS 1527-1570 *edited by Brian Hodgkinson* (Boydell & Brewer for the Lincoln Record Society vol.113 xvi+421pp ISBN 978-1-910653-16-6) £40 from Boydell & Brewer

The churchwardens' accounts from the parish of St James in Louth provide one of Lincolnshire's most comprehensive examples, surviving in an almost unbroken sequence from the beginning of the sixteenth century (1524-25 are fragmentary, 1525-26 to 1526-27 are missing). Those from 1500-01 to 1523-24 were

published in 1941; Brian Hodgkinson continues publication from 1527-28 to 1570-71. The parish had four churchwardens each year (named at the opening of each account and detailed in Appendix 1). There were also incorporated guilds in the town, the foremost being St Mary's and the Holy Trinity, which had both secular and spiritual functions. The Introduction includes sections on the town, parish, clergy and people, and the basic events of the English Reformation under Henry VIII and his three children.

In general, churchwardens' accounts record income, very often from property owned by that parish, as well as bequests, payments for burials and periodic donations, and then expenditure during the accounting year. Perhaps the most striking feature of these accounts is the absence of income from parish property. At St James's, income comprised monetary offerings collected every Sunday, a handful of legacies, and payments for burials and the tolling of bells at funerals and commemorations of named deceased parishioners. The offerings were recorded by week. Having totalled them annually (from 1500-01 to 1570-01, Appendix 2), Hodgkinson has analysed them, noting that there was a general decline in the amounts received in the Sunday collections and suggesting that this may reflect 'a measure of dissatisfaction with the prevailing *status quo*' regarding religion. He also notes different reactions in the parish to the changes of sovereign. He discusses the speed at which the parish complied with new directions for the conduct of services and parish religion more generally, concluding that the parish complied with the doctrinal changes, altering fixtures and fittings and purchasing books as required, albeit at different speeds.

Readers who know about the so-called Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536 will recall that it was preceded by the 'Lincolnshire Rising', which commenced in Louth on Sunday 1 October. Unsurprisingly, the accounts provide no details of those tumultuous events, which apparently resulted from a sermon preached by the vicar, Thomas Kendall, concerning a visitation to be carried out the next day. Hodgkinson sets out the details of the 'rising' as recorded in the *Letters and Papers of the Reign of Henry VII*, and adds footnotes to the main text when known participants are recorded in the accounts for any reason. The only allusion to the rising in the accounts relates to the lack of offerings on 8 October: *nihil propter tumultum populi* (nothing because of the rising of the people). Kendal was hung, drawn and quartered at Tyburn on 29 March 1537.

The outgoings recorded in these accounts are generally similar to those made in other parishes, including payments for repairs to the church and maintenance of items necessary for the services, such as books, the organs, the bells, and the clock and chime. The parish appears to have performed mystery plays around the time of Corpus Christi: several payments were made for moving the 'pageants' (carts on which the plays were performed). As well as women washing various cloths, the building itself had to be kept clean; hence payments to William East for 'whipping the dogs' (getting them out of the building and churchyard), to Edward Cotts for removing pigeons and to Thomas Atkins 'for sweeping the aisle windows of the church from spynner [spiders'] webs'.

Payments are also recorded for various secular activities: appointing surveyors of the highways; maintaining protection against fire by having hooks to pull down burning thatch; supervising the common bull, used to service the town's cattle; and even transporting prisoners to Lincoln Castle for trial ('jail delivery'). Assistance given to local poor people is recorded from 1547-48 onwards, initially as small amounts paid at various times. In some years money collected in the 'poormans box' is recorded. For two years (1554-55 and 1555-56) there are long lists of named recipients (perhaps someone wanted to keep careful track of who received what?) The folios relating to payments in 1554-55 are out of sequence and incomplete, but they contain 206 entries; in 1555-56 there are 339 entries. In both years some entries record more than one person. Some of the payments are dated and, looking at the names, it is clear that several poor parishioners received regular payments throughout the year.

This volume is a monumental achievement, not only in relation to the sheer number of entries in the accounts, but also the 48-page index and the numerous footnotes. It will be of use to anyone interested in sixteenth century parish life.

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• REVIEWS •

THE CHURCHWARDENS' ACCOUNTS OF ST. BOTOLPH WITHOUT ALDERSGATE, LONDON, 1466–1500 *edited and transcribed by Gary G. Gibbs and Valerie A. Hitchman* (Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions 244 [Leiden and Boston] 2024 xxiv+281pp ISBN 978-90-04-68014-2) €114.00 (both for the ebook and hb)

This most welcome publication is the first of three volumes of churchwardens' accounts from the city of London parish of St Botolph without Aldersgate. The editors have provided a helpful preface that describes their methodology, the churchwardens' methodology and the context of the accounts. There are 105 rolls—not the usual registers—for these accounts, which cover the period 1466 to 1636, albeit with some gaps (1467–68, 1472–79 and 1495–96). This volume focuses on the first twenty rolls for the period 1466 to 1500. They are largely written in English but with marginal notes in heavily abbreviated Latin: the editors have engaged with other specialists to transcribe and expand the contractions and translate these texts, which are included in footnotes. The editors have endeavoured to be as faithful to the original text as can be and this means one has to concentrate a little harder on spelling and pronunciation, but such an approach enables the reader to understand dialect as well as scribal capability. The section on churchwardens in London and their accounts is a very helpful point of reference, as is Table 1 which summarises the surviving churchwardens' accounts for London up to 1500. This is followed by the Introduction which puts the parish in context with recent historiography and explores what made St Botolph without Aldersgate so special in the fifteenth century. The accounts reveal a broad range of craftsmen and women, especially brewers, and also gentry and officials, presumably because of the proximity to the court at Westminster. By the time of the 1548 chantry certificates the parish had approximately 1,000 communicantes with a fraternity dedicated to the Holy Trinity and Saints Fabian and Sebastian.

The accounts themselves follow a layout and form to be found in other examples elsewhere. Their obligations included maintaining the edifice, cleaning and maintaining the fabric, cloths and furniture, tending and repairing the churchyard and its walls—and there was a quite a lot of work needed here, not least of which in 1489/90–1490/1 when 2s. 2d. was paid for carrying away thirteen loads of dung from God's acre—and arranging for burials and mortuary endowments together with prayers for the dead. The accounts are particularly detailed from 1479 when the two churchwardens for each year are named, and which reveal a steady continuity of stewardship (see Table 3). Entries regarding income include a list of quit-rents paid and also those overdue, accounts for the 'formes' (church property), money received for the lights, fees and charges for knells and burials, bequests and donations for vestments and utensils. One notable burial, that of Agnes de la Caulx [Anne of Caux], the former nurse to Edward IV, was recorded in the accounts for 1482/3–1483/4. She bequeathed 6s 8d to St Botolph's church and we read later that 12d was paid out for ringing the great bell at her knell.

There were annual collections to pay for the lights that were to burn before images of Our Lady, Saints Katherine, George, Christopher, Margaret and Fabian and Sebastian, usually 2s 2d for every light each year. We also find from the expenses how much was spent on the celebration of annual obits, such as 2s 5d for Alice Cobwell, whose anniversary was celebrated throughout the accounts, and which was maintained until 1548. The churchwardens also recorded payments for single year celebrations such as 4d for tapers at the obit for the parents of William Guy, prior of St Bartholomew's (elected 1484, died 1505), in the accounts for 1491/2–1492/3. The accounts noted bequests to the parish church: in 1471–2, for example, 'the gyft of the executors of Wyllyam Chamberleyn squyer a torch to bren[g] at the sakingyng tyme'. His will was proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury on 5 November 1470 (PROB 11/5/479) where we find that he bequeathed the parish, where he was presumably living, 4 marks and a further gift of 10s to its fraternity. William Nashe, the parish clerk of St Botolph's, was to receive 2s.

There are other delights tucked away: in 1479/80–1481/2 payment was made to value the church goods and then to make a new inventory of them (albeit now lost); later in 1488/9–1489/90 an old cross was sold and a new one bought; in 1491/2–1492/3 a payment of 4d was made to clear snow out of the gutters. In the accounts for 1492/3–1493/4 an intriguing entry records 14d paid to Henry Dobrege and to 'hys fellow' for staying out for five nights after a robbery.

Editions of churchwardens' accounts, both urban and rural, are often published through the guidance of local record societies whose armies of volunteers remain crucial to the study of local history. Oddly, the London Record Society decided not to support this edition, which is a shame as it would have been

a welcome volume in their splendid series. Nonetheless, Brill have done a good job in publishing this first of three volumes. The production quality is fine and the maps are clear. The material has been sensibly and carefully organised, and it was an enjoyable volume to read. Obviously, the price is stupid: this is presumably a publishing ploy to stitch up the few remaining academic libraries who are willing to pay astronomical prices for books.

There is much of tremendous interest in this important edition and I very much look forward to volumes II and III. The focus is parochial – but of course! – yet every now and again there are hints of national change. My favourite is this noted in 1471–72: ‘...in xxix yere of Harry late in dede and not inright Kyng of England ...’. But following the events at Bosworth in 1485 there is a dignified silence.

CHRISTIAN STEER *usually works on tomb monuments and commemoration, but he is currently preparing an edition of the churchwardens’ accounts and inventories of St Nicholas Shambles in the City of London with David Harry based on a project begun by the late Helen Combes. It is due for publication in 2028. He is Chairman of the Yorkist History Trust and an honorary visiting fellow in the Department of History at the University of York.*

HISTORIES OF PENZANCE Book 1: Landmarks and Legends by Linda Camidge (Tolver Press 2025 256pp ISBN 978-1-0683436-0-5) £18

Penzance, the most westerly market town in southern Britain and the cultural centre for West Cornwall, had a macabre coat of arms, a circular boundary including a lot of sea, and a famous son who rarely visited. All three of these are key elements in this well-researched and location-based town history. As Linda Camidge acknowledges, Peter Pool’s 1974 *The History of the Town and Borough of Penzance* remains a major reference work for her and others. Debts to other scholars are generously acknowledged and each section has extensive footnotes allowing further research. A longer version of the text is also available online.

Histories of Penzance Book 1 comprises a prologue and eleven chapters each with a beguiling title. Instead of ‘The Village of Penzance, to 1614’ as in Pool’s book (‘village’ being a misnomer as Penzance was always a seigneurial borough) followed by various iterations of Borough down to 1974, we have ‘Fragments’, ‘Battlefields’, ‘The Saints in the Garden’, ‘Gull and Phoenix’, ‘The Holy Head’, ‘Inside the Circle’, ‘Marking the Occasion’, ‘Seadogs’, ‘Most Famous Son’, ‘The Immortal Legend’, ‘Glory and Delight’ and ‘The Legend and the Landmark’. The arrangement is loosely chronological, but in most cases carried through to the present day.

The prologue (‘Fragments’) consists of a short list of key archaeological sites and dates. Chapter 1 then focuses on Lescudjack ‘hillfort’, the earliest major settlement site in the north-east part of the present town, and its history through romantic folklore (‘Battlefields’ being a local place name) to the present day. Chapter 2’s title comes from St Anthony’s Gardens which were set out in 1933 and destroyed in March 2025 for ‘development’. Maps show that St Anthony’s chapel, one of at least three medieval chapels with known sites in Penzance, lay just north of the gardens. St Mary’s chapel, rebuilt as the present parish church in 1832–3 and the chapel of St Clare on the northern edge of the town also appear in this chapter. The third chapter portrays Penzance as the rapacious swooping gull among the five Mount’s Bay ports. The ports, running from south to east round the bay, are Mousehole, Newlyn, Penzance (the best-sited port by the early sixteenth-century), the lost Porthplement and Marazion. This chapter concludes with an account of the defining moment in the borough’s pre-charter history: the Spanish raid of 1595.

Chapter 4 deals with the unsavoury coat of arms – the head of St John the Baptist on a plate – and the granting in 1614 of the town charter. The arms originated in 1620 as a punning version of the Cornish ‘sans’ and ‘Pen’ meaning holy head or headland. A visual overload of ‘cannibalistic’ heads on plates can be seen at Penlee House Gallery and Museum and on buildings round the town, but today’s coat of arms includes an anodyne pirate, fisherman and lamb and cross tin smelting mark. The next chapter considers the town’s unusual circular boundary devised in 1614, and lasting until 1934. Surviving and replaced boundary stones and the much-moved market cross, which may once have formed the compass centre point, also feature. Chapter 6 looks at the beating (and ‘rowing’) of the bounds and the corporation’s unwillingness to make this a regular event. Low-key celebrations also accompanied charter anniversaries on account of war and corporate parsimony.

Pirates of Penzance, Gilbert and Sullivan's comic opera, was first performed here in March 1881. Smuggling and maritime activity can also be found in Chapter 7. On land Penzance pewterers were notorious for their 'tin-laundering' activities. Despite a love-hate relationship, pirates still remain part of the visitor-shopping experience with the Admiral Benbow pub long a centre of myth-making activity. The chapter ends with the poignant tale of the *True Love*, built in a Penzance back yard by Robert Ellis, an enterprising Brixham fisherman to replace his lost fishing boat. After a costly launch (involving the demolition of several back yard privies) in 1906, and his failure to get a fishing licence, Ellis was offered a place in Madron workhouse.

Chapters 8, 10 and 11 focus on the life and town of Sir Humphry Davy. Starting with his childhood, education and apprenticeship, Camidge then traces his career in Bristol, London and abroad through the eyes of Penzance people. The final chapter looks at how Penzance chose to remember a lazy youth with rather too many hobbies who nonetheless made good. Sandwiched between the Davy chapters, Chapter 9 examines Penzance's unprovable claim that it heard of the death of Nelson and the Trafalgar victory a few hours before Falmouth. As in the rest of the book, all the evidence is carefully presented, with caveats, for the reader to make their own mind up.

Maps, paintings, engravings, drawings, interesting and unusual objects (including a patriotic scarf of the Napoleonic era) and photographs old and new, often not published previously or taken especially for the book, make this a highly attractive production. I also enjoyed the way the author was just as sceptical about Professor Charles Thomas's interpretation of the Penzance market cross as Perkin Warbeck landing at Newlyn (the latter being a complete fiction based on a 1908 Parker's pageant). Given the existence of a longer online version, I do wonder if a bit more pruning of the text to avoid unnecessary repetition might have improved readability in places, but overall the book exudes enthusiasm and encourages further exploration of this fascinating town. This book should be of interest to local and urban historians, local residents and visitors and I can highly recommend it.

Dr JOANNA MATTINGLY is the author of *Cornwall and the Coast – Mousehole and Newlyn* (2009). She also worked with staff and volunteers at Penlee House Gallery and Museum on Mousehole and Newlyn exhibitions, the redisplay of the Social History gallery, and the 2014 Penzance Quatercentenary exhibition.

LANDSCAPES AND PRODUCERS IN MEDIEVAL ENGLAND Essays presented to Rosamond Faith edited by Richard Purkiss and Hannah Boston (Hertfordshire University Press 2025 296pp ISBN 978-1-912260-73-7) £35.

Ros Faith is a very impressive and eclectic scholar, as comfortable in the seminar rooms of Oxford as in muddy earthworks in Devon. On the one hand, she has created an overarching framework for understanding how rural society was organised from the Dark Ages until the end of the twelfth century, while, on the other hand, she has remained firmly rooted in local and regional history. Her range of articles reflects her capacity to engage in major debates, while possessing a sure eye for local detail, and so her publication record includes journals as diverse as *Essex Archaeology and History* and the *Economic History Review*. She was the resident medievalist on a project studying a community in France's Alpes-Maritimes and a regular lecturer at Oxford University. Her chronological range is wide. From her early work on the Berkshire land market in the later Middle Ages and the great peasant 'Rumour' of 1377, Faith has moved backwards in time to explore early English farming and the moral economy of the Anglo-Saxon countryside. Her intellectual heritage is firmly grounded in Marxism and the History Workshop movement, although these have influenced her approach to her subjects more than her interpretation: in other words, Faith's work has focused relentlessly on the social relations between lords and peasants, but it has not attempted to squeeze evidence into an ideological straight jacket.

It is unsurprising that the twelve contributors to this festschrift are also an eclectic group: from early career scholars to emeritus professors, and from archaeologists to legal historians. Hannah Boston and Richard Purkiss introduce the volume with a short survey of historical approaches to the English peasantry to around 1300, followed by an evaluation of Faith's own contribution to the subject. The rest of the volume is divided into three parts. Part I is Organising the Landscape; Part II, Peopling the Landscape; and Part III, Farming the Landscape.

Tom Williamson leads the way with an evaluation of Rendlesham's (Suffolk) role as the central place for a wider territory dominating the Deben valley. Rendlesham is one of the most important archaeological sites of seventh-century Britain, but Williamson's interest lies in exploring what its territory reveals about the relationship between, and subsequent fate of, central places in East Anglia. Rendlesham's territory was

preserved in the later Wicklaw Hundreds acquired by Ely abbey, but Rendlesham itself declined early, its settlement thinned and fragmented, and by Domesday it was insignificant: as a result, the archaeology of the seventh-century site has been preserved. In contrast, the central places of other, peripheral, East Anglian territories ruled from Rendlesham survived as sizeable settlements at Domesday and became medieval market towns, although their subsequent importance has meant a loss of the earlier archaeological record. John Blair pulls together the hitherto unpublished conclusions of the West Oxfordshire Charter Boundary Group, which in the 1990s tramped through the countryside before ending up at Faith's house for sustenance and debate. His focus is the early boundary and subsequent evolution of Witney, as revealed in two charters of 969 and 1044. The estate of Witney was carved out of a larger territory around the 960s, and the settlement itself was a relatively late insertion to a landscape undergoing rapid colonisation. The town subsequently flourished, prompting Blair to muse that a decision made in the 960s dictated the location of what we know as the A40. Hannah Boston offers a convincing study of the communal management of watercourses, drainage and pasture in the fragile landscape of the south Lincolnshire fens. Boston reconstructs the patchwork of small administrative hundreds which made up the main wapentakes of Bolingbroke, Wolmersty, Kirton and Elloe, which by the early twelfth century had shed their original fiscal and military responsibilities but remained in use as communal institutions tasked with managing fenland commons. The final essay in Part I is an edition of, and short commentary on, eight writs from 1317-18, exchanged between an estate administrator and the local bailiff of Birdbrook manor (Essex). Phillipp Schofield's meticulous translations and informed contextual comments show how decisions were made and communicated relating to a range of tasks, from placing the local ploughman on an early version of capability management to the transportation of grain and pigs to the monastic household.

Part II, on peopling the landscape, is the most coherent and, in some ways, most innovative section of the book. In three separate, lengthy, absorbing and complementary essays, Tom Lambert, Richard Purkiss and Chris Lewis discuss the classification and independence of the English peasantry in the eleventh century. The Domesday surveyors were aware of the baffling variety of contemporary classifications and gradations of peasants, and so instead they decided to pigeon-hole the peasantry in Domesday into a simpler five-fold division, which nodded to the many and complex distinctions in social status and economic standing: the divisions and nods were clear to the officials compiling the great survey, but remain much harder for historians to interpret. Lewis notes that the commonplace labels *villanus* and *bordarius* were new to England after the Conquest. Lambert's scholarly reassessment of the late tenth-century *Rectitudines Singularum Personarum* focuses on the key figure of the *geneat*, who is interpreted not as a dependent tenant, but as a superior peasant landholder enjoying reciprocal obligations with his landlord. In effect, P.D.A. Harvey's (1993) interpretation is revised through the filter of Faith's work and Lambert suggests that the *villani* of Domesday Book were, in reality, comparable to *geneatas*. Purkiss shows that peasant landownership was highest in eastern England and areas where fiscal assessments were light. Stephen Milesen makes a strong case for more research into the social world of thirteenth-century freemen, those just below the ranks of the gentry who had a demonstrable impact on the landscape, with some telling examples from the midlands, although his arguments apply less to the long tail of impoverished freemen which had developed by the end of the century. In a fascinating aside, Lesley Abrams notes the presence in c.1045 of one *Wicing Batsvegen* as a witness to a Devon manumission and dissects his origins as a Scandinavian incomer, possibly a boatman or even a moneyer, and his likely social networks. The study serves as a reminder of the heterogeneity of the society of south-west England at this early date.

Part III opens, appropriately, with an essay on the farming year in early England by Debby Banham, which had been earmarked as a chapter in her magisterial collaboration with Faith on Anglo-Saxon farming, but had to be culled from the book due to the publisher's word limit. Helena Hamerow, Claus Kropp and Amy Bogaard offer an intriguing short paper demonstrating how experimental archaeology and archaeological science is being applied to a reconstructed Carolingian manorial farm in southern Germany. This reveals differences in the weed composition of low-disturbance regimes using the scratch plough ('ard') in comparison to high-disturbance regimes using the mouldboard plough, and it also raises the possibility that the short-term gains in grain output from using the cattle-drawn, deeper, plough was ultimately offset in the long-term by soil degradation. Finally, David Austin develops themes from his earlier work on settlement patterns in Pembrokeshire to address the old myth that this landscape owed much to the embedding of such 'English' characteristics as open fields and nucleated villages during the high medieval period. Austin's meticulous morphological analysis, illustrated with an explosion of 25 maps, reveals instead the complex layering of the processes of settlement development, preservation and change over time, thereby undermining the 'Little England' narrative.

Many of the contributors offer touching personal acknowledgements of Ros Faith's influence on their work, usually citing hours of productive conversations whether in her kitchen, at the pub, or along muddy footpaths. As the editors' preface states, 'no one has done more to rescue the nameless early medieval peasant from modern condescension than Ros Faith'. In a similar vein, the general editor of the series, Jane Whittle, observes that 'each chapter explores links between ordinary people's way of life and the great currents of economic, social and political developments over time, links which form the essence of local history'. The result is a fitting tribute to a distinguished historian and a kindly human being.

MARK BAILEY is the Professor of Later Medieval History at the University of East Anglia with a lifetime interest in the English peasantry. He has returned repeatedly to Ros Faith's exemplary study of the late medieval peasant land market.

MAKING DOMESDAY. Intelligent Power in Conquered England by Stephen Baxter, Julia Crick, and C. P. Lewis (Oxford University Press 2025 1072pp ISBN: 978-0-198850-12-0) £143 and e-book £99.99

1086 has a good claim to be the year zero of English local history. Domesday Book, produced twenty years after the Norman Conquest, records information on roughly 13,000 settlements, most of which are documented for the first time in its folios. It is a daunting text. While various works explain the structure and terminology encountered in typical entries, any attempt to harness Domesday material on a larger scale soon faces disconcerting questions. How was this mountain of information collected? How was the book (in fact two: Great and Little Domesday) produced? And what was the purpose of it all? Such are the questions that animate this monumental study.

Making Domesday presents the fruits of a project which arose from the disbanding of the manuscript known as 'Exon Domesday' (Exeter Cathedral Library MS 3500) for conservation and digitisation in 2011. Exon Domesday is one of a group known as 'Domesday satellites', i.e. texts connected with the Domesday survey but separate from Great and Little Domesday. It has long been recognised as a preliminary product of the survey, underlying Great Domesday's description of the south-western shires (Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall). But its preservation as a single manuscript under a synthetic name conceals its true nature. Exon Domesday consists of texts which were not intended to form a book of any kind, but were simply working documents. After Great Domesday had been written up, someone (probably Bishop Giso of Wells) effectively swept a desk of now-redundant documentation and retained it for his own purposes. Not all the loose parchment booklets survived into preservation: nearly all of Wiltshire, and most of Dorset, was lost before the collection was bound. What remains offers a unique window on the Domesday process.

The book comprises the equivalent of two lengthy monographs. Part I (chapters 1–11) examines the Exon texts. First, the history, codicology, and palaeography of the manuscript are surveyed in forensic detail. Analysis during the original research project identified twenty-seven separate hands and matched them to scribal stints, enabling the authors to reconstruct the practices of what they term the Exon office. Viewing the Exon texts at this resolution brings us startlingly close to the people who made them. Each scribe is assigned a name, characterised palaeographically, and placed within the workings of the office – Mu the supervisor, Alpha and Beta, the competent assistants who took the lead in writing, and a rotating cast of subordinates whose skill can be judged by the number of corrections made to their work. Next, chapters 3–9 address the texts themselves, which comprise 'geld accounts' relating to the land tax, 'fiefs' describing the manors held by each baron, descriptions of lands held without royal authorisation, and statistical summaries of individual fiefs. Historiography, underlying sources, and methods of production are dissected for each. This, in turn, sheds light on the process by which one scribe subsequently edited the Exon material as he wrote up Great Domesday.

Part II (chapters 12–18) turns to the task of 'placing Domesday', considering its administrative, legal, and personal backdrop. The Danish invasion scare of 1085 has been invoked to explain the initiation of the survey, but there is no indication that the commissioners were concerned with matters such as billeting or knight-service. The earliest surviving Pipe Roll, for 1130, is employed as a comparator regarding the composition of post-Conquest royal revenues, the suggestion being that Domesday was an exercise in controlling multiple revenue streams. Neither the survey nor its textual outputs were unprecedented except in their scale and ambition. Written surveys of landed wealth had long been used in Carolingian Francia, and in conquered England this tradition could be grafted onto the records generated by a particularly effective land tax. The idea that Domesday Book was intended to facilitate a reform of the geld has been

treated with reserve, but the products of the survey could have been used for this purpose. Its potential to maximise the proceeds of royal lordship—escheats, reliefs, wardships, control of widows—has been accepted more widely, and is duly emphasised here. The related question, whether William claimed to be the source of all tenure in England, is answered in the affirmative. Domesday both documented and furthered the king's obsessive concern to ensure that his barons held nothing except by his permission. The operation therefore required not merely logistical effort but a mastery of fiscal administration and familiarity with the Conqueror's thinking. These properties were found in a group of educated, ambitious, and worldly churchmen who found advancement through the royal chapel and treasury. The survey was probably not devised by a single mastermind but within a small circle that understood the challenges faced by the new regime.

A briefer Part III (chapters 19–20) recapitulates the main contentions. The making of Domesday proceeded in stages structured around royal assemblies. First, groups of commissioners were sent into the localities to combine geld assessment lists with manorial detail supplied by landholders, producing Domesday-like but geographically arranged texts. Separate groups of commissioners with no local interests then convened shire assemblies, in which this geographical recension was subjected to public scrutiny under oath, and any disputed matter registered. Next, the material was rearranged into feudal order, running baron-shire-hundred rather than shire-hundred-baron. Exon represents this stage. Finally, Great Domesday was written up from the feudal recension, the scribe editing down the material and rearranging it again into a shire-baron-hundred structure as he went. For reasons that remain unclear (perhaps because the king's death intervened), Essex, Norfolk, and Suffolk were not included in Great Domesday or edited down, but written up and bound separately as Little Domesday. Each stage generated different types of documentation which had their own uses. This suggests that the survey was not made for a single purpose. It provided the means to maximise different kinds of revenue, articulate a new tenurial principle, and identify outstanding disputes. The definitive quality of the enterprise made it acceptable to the baronage, who gained greater security of title from an unprecedentedly possessive king.

No summary can do justice to the methodical structure and granular detail in which *Making Domesday* presents its case. Primary sources are quoted at length, and even approximate calculations are invariably accompanied by tables to show their working. Still, the book does not claim to solve every problem. The origins of Little Domesday are acknowledged as requiring further study. The absence of hundredal rubrication (i.e. geographical sub-headings within fiefs) from Exon and consequently from the Great Domesday account of the south-western shires—so unhelpful to historians—can only be explained hypothetically as an editorial decision in the Exon office. Another unfortunate regional quirk, the incomplete recording of pre-Conquest landowners in several Midland shires, is put down to the initial commissioners being provided with defective geld assessment lists. If so, the deficiency should have been easy to remedy at the public checking sessions in the shire courts. Here may be a rare instance of multiple cogs in the Domesday process malfunctioning, or of some other consideration preventing corrections.

One aspect of the survey which emerges with particular clarity is its reliance on Continental personnel. The authors emphasise how many competent scribes were required to complete the task on a very tight schedule. This makes it all the more striking that all the hands identified in Exon were trained in Continental traditions. The scribal resources of English abbeys and cathedral chapters were not called upon, at least for the latter stages of the survey. Why was this? English scribes may have been used for the earlier, geographical recensions of material, none of which survive as originals. As the authors note, a secondment to the king's survey must have been a plum job for ambitious clerks, enabling those overseeing the Exon stage to pick and choose, or favour their own. And then there was the matter of cooperation in a pressurised environment, that emerges so tantalisingly from palaeographical analysis. Those working on Exon and its regional counterparts would have required a common office language. Language apart, the functioning of the office is evoked in an unexpected but compelling chapter (11), which uses an imagined dialogue between scribe Alpha and a pupil to articulate the authors' reconstruction 'freed from the language of scholarly caution'.

Making Domesday is unlike previous books on the subject in that it does not internalise the perspective of the king or even the barons, but that of clerks. The authors' admiration for the conception and execution of the survey shines through. Is there indeed a hint of wistfulness in their depiction of scholar-administrators solving great problems of state? Only up to a point: they are clear-eyed about what they are describing, and end with a characterisation of Domesday as an act of colonial subjection by data. This is therefore necessarily an account from the inside, not from the top but from the middle, where the writing was done.

Adopting an administrator's perspective steers the book away from single explanations. Its answers to the 'why' of Domesday involve multiple considerations rather than one master key. Some readers may find this unsatisfying or suspect a fudge. The authors' rejoinder would no doubt be to reverse the question: is it plausible that such an undertaking, recognised as extraordinary in its day, should have been set in motion to produce one written artefact, however consequential? Future work will inevitably take issue with elements of the new picture. Domesday has received wholesale reassessments before. But the weight of evidence assembled in this remarkable book sets the bar for any fundamental reinterpretation exceptionally high.

As will be apparent, this is not necessarily a book calculated to appeal to local historians. Its concern is with process, not place, and its perspective is that of central administration. Its sheer heft, which owes much to thorough engagement with more than a century of scholarly debate, makes it unwieldy to use. Nonetheless, it will from now on be an indispensable resource for anyone making serious use of Domesday material for any locality. Historians of the south-west will, of course, wish to consult it before turning to Exon. It should prompt anyone reading Domesday or related texts to pause and consider where a given piece of information came from. And its reconstruction of progressive copying, reordering, and abbreviation, during which even the most accomplished scribes demonstrably nodded (however rarely), cautions against ascribing excessive weight to any particular figure. One may hope for the eventual publication of a cut-down guide, on the scale of a 'PRO handbook', distilling the findings and implications for a wider audience of occasional Domesday users.

A review of *Making Domesday* must end on a note of loss following the untimely death of Professor Stephen Baxter in January 2026. His extensive contributions to the volume, which will become standard points of reference on multiple topics, now represent the last word of a distinguished scholar.

RICHARD PURKISS wrote his *DPhil on royal administration in tenth- and eleventh-century East Anglia. He works mainly on the social history of late Anglo-Saxon England and has recently co-edited Landscapes and Producers in Medieval England: Essays Presented to Rosamond Faith (see preceding review).*

SERFDOM IN MEDIEVAL ENGLAND. Theory and practice 1200 to 1500 by Mark Bailey (Manchester University Press 2025 xiii+439pp ISBN 978-1-5261-7297-6) £90.00

In the mid-1980s, and using the Marxist historian Rodney Hilton's *Bond Men Made Free* as a core text, my university history course taught how centuries of repression and subjugation followed by a post-Black Death 'seigniorial reaction' culminated in medieval serfs rising up against their landlords in the Peasants' Revolt of 1381. This remained the most popular view for decades, although it should be acknowledged that it was not one that was accepted by all historians. However, more recently, this traditional narrative has started to unravel. Studies by Joe Chick and Mingjie Xu, for example, have shown that in two counties heavily involved in the 'Peasant's Revolt', Suffolk and Cambridgeshire respectively, the rebels were not peasants but of more affluent status, while their targets were not landlords but predominantly the state and its officials. In a similar manner, the number of historians questioning whether serfdom was as restrictive and onerous as had been claimed has been increasing. Sheilagh Ogilvie and John Hatcher, in particular, suggested that English serfdom was relatively weak so that, for example, the extractive powers of landlords and their ability to restrict the mobility of their serfs was very limited.

In this new work, Mark Bailey notes these contradictory views of medieval serfdom and sets out his aims to 'elucidate those different approaches [and] to establish decisively how serfdom did in fact operate on the eve of the Black Death'. He achieves this through a carefully structured approach which sets out very clearly his argument and his supporting evidence. In Part I of the book, entitled 'Serfdom in theory and practice', Bailey first outlines the legal theory of serfdom and establishes the existence of a state-backed legal framework for villeinage (Chapter 1), before providing detailed evidence for its operation between 1280 and 1350 (Chapters 2, 3 and 4). In these chapters, using evidence from large samples of data and numerous case studies, he demonstrates that although a legal interpretation would suggest that villein status was both restrictive and burdensome, the reality was somewhat different. Of particular interest and significance is his exploration of the use and interpretation of the common law. It has frequently been claimed that the common law provided significant benefits to landlords, often at the expense of their villeins who, it was asserted, had limited access to the common law courts. However, Bailey argues convincingly that this was not the case and that as the common law evolved, decision-making based on precedent and consistently applied rules became the norm. In practice, this proved beneficial to villeins

since they were able to access written precedents, contracts and custom, and thus prevent iniquitous landlord behaviour. Proof of this 'emerging legal and literate culture' can be found in the increasing standardisation of manorial records by c.1300.

In Part II, 'Serfdom in England: causes and consequences', Bailey explores in some detail the implications of this new understanding of the nature of English serfdom prior to the Black Death. He starts by demonstrating that although factors were in place which would have been expected to support the imposition of a strong system of serfdom (such as the large proportion of land occupied by English demesnes and the state-backed common law of villeinage), in practice other factors and, in particular, the power of custom, were such that the English system was weak on the eve of the Black Death (Chapter 5). He then considers how this weakness contributed to the economic and social problems which were increasingly prevalent in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries (Chapter 6). In particular he highlights how the structure of service rents and seigniorial policy encouraged the division of landholdings into inadequate smallholdings at a time when larger, more efficient agrarian units were required to support a growing population.

Part III, 'Serfdom in England: The impact of the Black Death through three case studies', considers the fate of serfdom in the post-Black Death period. It begins with a chapter that develops the view that serfdom was weak in the pre-Black Death period to show how this not only prevented any attempts to reestablish serfdom after the plague, but actually hastened the final disintegration of serfdom, which Bailey suggests was well underway by the 1370s and thus some time prior to the Peasants' Revolt (Chapter 7). Again, this rewrites the traditional view that landlords made concerted efforts to re-establish serfdom in the three decades after the Black Death, the so-called 'seigniorial reaction', before its final death throes at the end of the fourteenth century. This evaluation of serfdom in the post-Black Death period is followed by three chapters providing case studies of three manors (Codicote, Winslow and Norton) from the estate of the abbey of St Albans. These case studies are used very effectively to illustrate the operation of serfdom both before and after the Black Death, and to provide proof that not only was it relatively weak prior to 1348–1349, but that it rapidly declined in the late fourteenth century.

Particular attention should be drawn to the fact that throughout the book, Bailey provides extensive evidence to support his arguments. One of his criticisms of those who have gone before him is the frequency with which historians have made 'grandiose statements without evidence to support claims', or where claims are supported by one or two examples (delightfully referred to as 'sniffing out truffles'). By contrast the author makes use of large samples of data with averages drawn from as many data points as possible, together with the three comprehensive case studies referred to previously.

It is difficult to be critical of a work that is so comprehensively argued and which significantly advances our understanding of the operation and impact of serfdom on medieval society. One minor criticism is that there might have been some value in including a case study from a lay manor as well as the three from manors belonging to the same ecclesiastical estate. Bailey frequently suggests that serfdom was stronger on large classic manors (typically, although not exclusively, ecclesiastical), such as when he notes that heavy labour services were mainly confined to larger manors and were lightest on small lay manors. He states that serfdom, therefore, was inevitably even weaker on these manors; a view generally accepted by other historians. I can offer no evidence to suggest that this was not the case; however, a lay manor case study would have put this argument beyond doubt.

The systematic development of the argument through the theory, practice and then, finally, the evidence, is highly effective and leaves the reader convinced that this is a definitive account of the reality of serfdom in the late medieval period. In addition, as ever, Bailey's narrative is fluid and highly readable and although some aspects of medieval serfdom can be challenging to grasp, he is careful to provide valuable explanations of some of the more difficult aspects. The power of Bailey's argument and evidence is such that the reader may be convinced that this is the final word on a topic that has engaged medieval historians since the eighteenth century. However, while constructing a compelling counter-argument would appear to be a more than formidable challenge, it is one that I suspect will be taken up.

JOANNE SEAR *has lectured for the Institute of Continuing Education at the University of Cambridge on manors and manorialism and is the co-editor of a translation and transcription of the extant fifteenth-century rolls of the manor of Newmarket published by the Suffolk Records Society as The Records of Medieval Newmarket.*

THE SHEFFIELD HEAVY SPRING TRADE 1829-2025 by *John Austin* (the author 2025 192pp ISBN 978-1-0369-3270-1) £14.99 (contact john.austin1@btinternet.com)

A monograph on Sheffield's Heavy Spring Trade is as unlikely to be a light as it is to be a seasonal read. The Heavy Spring Trade was not unique to Sheffield but it was integral to Sheffield's industry as it developed in the last three-quarters of the nineteenth century. It employed significant but not large numbers of men (and latterly some women) but its reach encompassed the great names of Sheffield industry—Charles Cammell, John Brown, Frederick Thorpe Mappin. Springs, after all, had been vital components of horse-drawn carriages, their manufacture burgeoned with the railway age and, in due course, with the age of the motor car. Those who worked in the trade (John Austin was briefly among them) saw themselves as craftsmen, men with status, relatively well-paid. They had the craftsman's pride in his craft, instinctively practical, sensibly conservative, quintessentially 'Sheffield', and the strength of this book lies in the way in which John Austin communicates this.

He is alert to the human dimension of his story, men as well as masters, and to the now all but unimaginable impact of the rapidly industrialised environment. Sheffield was a famously radical place; this account tempers the radicalism—Sheffielders were, perhaps, more awkward than radical. It was also famously (and quarrelsomely) Methodist; Austin plays down the Church/Chapel side of Sheffield life. That is fair enough except that it was the dreadful conditions which made Sheffield such a centre of temperance and Methodism.

The book is divided into three unequal parts. First and longest, told chronologically in seven chapters, is the history of the trade: beginnings, domination, depression, maturity, inter-war, post-war hope and disappointment. Secondly, the author gives his own recollections of life in a spring shop. Thirdly, in what is effectively an appendix, he provides technical notes, an account of the spring-making process, and a brief glossary. This arrangement makes for easier reading, unlikely to put off readers new to Sheffield, and in one interesting respect he has made the right call: there are no foot- or end-notes (more questionably, there is no index). Purists will not approve but this account would have fallen victim to foot-and-note disease had they been provided, and the author promises to respond to any query arising from their absence. I suspect that he will relish the opportunity.

He does not mince his words. For just over a year in the early 1970s John Austin worked on the shop floor. In retrospect he realises that this was at the 'fag end' of a once important industry. He encountered 'a culture and atmosphere founded on mutual suspicion and hostility'. He found the work hot, heavy and demanding. The labour turnover was high and industrial relations were sour. It was complex: in the forge, for example, were machines which 'punched, clipped, ground, bent, slotted and stamped lengths of hot and cold metal plates which were then assembled into laminated springs'. That was only part of the shop. This is from his preface. What follows bears out the promise of that preface.

This book might be unkindly described as vanity publishing. It is certainly a labour of love and it has some of the signs of such labours. It could have done with tightening and tautening, its copy-editing might have been more eagle-eyed. That said, it is a thoroughly useful book, comprehensive and authoritative, easy to read, engagingly written, and well-illustrated. Shame on the publishers who, one suspects, turned it down. Here is 'niche history' in the best sense of that phrase. It brings into sharp focus an easily overlooked aspect of what made Sheffield 'Sheffield'.

CLYDE BINFIELD is *Professor Emeritus in History at the University of Sheffield where he began to teach in 1964. His interests lie in ecclesiastical, political, and social history, latterly in architectural history. He is the author of some books and many articles and has co-edited The History of the City of Sheffield 1843-1993 (Sheffield Academic Press, 3 vols., 1993) and Masters to Masters: A History of the Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire (Oxford University Press, 1997).*

THE POST-MORTEM ACCOUNTS AND INVENTORIES OF SIR THOMAS CHARLTON (d.1465) edited by *Claire Martin* (Yorkist History Trust in association with Shaun Tyas 2026 xlv+130pp ISBN 978-1-915774-46-0) £25+£5p&p from <https://yorkisthistoytrust.org/>

Sir Thomas Charlton (c.1417-1465) belonged to a London merchant family which had acquired manors in Middlesex and become gentrified, later marrying into similar families in the metropolis as well as acquiring a more distant connection with the Neville earls of Salisbury and Warwick. Thomas's known

career began as an esquire of the hall and chamber to Henry VI, which, with his family property, enabled him to become a member of parliament for Middlesex on several occasions from 1442 and led to a knighthood in 1453. In the following year, as tensions rose from Henry's incapacity, his links with both the court and the Nevilles made him an acceptable choice to be speaker of the House of Commons, and in 1459 he became controller of the royal household. When obliged to choose a side in the Wars of the Roses, he joined the Nevilles and fought for York at the second battle of St Albans. Captured by the Lancastrians, he was spared from death but held in confinement until the Yorkist victory at Towton. His choice put him in favour with Edward IV, but he seems to have largely lived in retirement after Edward's accession until his death four years later.

Charlton's possessions included six manors around Uxbridge, four others in Middlesex, four in Essex, one in Bedfordshire, two in Cambridgeshire, and properties in the city of London. He had houses at Uxbridge, Swakeleys in Hillingdon, and Aldermanbury in the capital. His wife Benedicta predeceased him, but he left behind a young family of five children, the oldest of whom, Richard, was subject to wardship. His four executors therefore had to fulfil the terms of his will, manage his property, deal with the wardship issue, and dispose of his moveable possessions. Their surviving accounts, preserved in ten documents in the archives of Westminster Abbey, form the basis of Claire Martin's edition. They include records of the income of Thomas's properties, an inventory of his goods with their estimated values, and another of how the goods were disposed of. As must often have happened, the testator's will was not wholly effective in practice. Thus, the decision to buy back Richard's wardship, costing 1000 marks, meant that his two sisters received only 200 marks between them for their marriages, as opposed to the £200 each that their father had meant them to have.

Dr Martin has produced an excellent volume. The history of Charlton and his family is clearly and thoroughly set out, and the accounts are translated with equal lucidity, along with a glossary and index. Historians will find plenty of material here about estate revenues, houses with their various rooms, artefacts of many kinds, and the history of Middlesex in particular. One element of interest is Charlton's books, several of which are recorded. As well as missals, perhaps from his domestic chapels, there were his wife's primer, a book of prick-song, an illuminated manuscript, and five literary works. These included Langland's *Piers Plowman*, Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, part of the *Canterbury Tales*, and Thomas Hoccleve's *Regement of Princes*. They show how, by the 1460s, a body of classic texts by English authors was becoming a likely possession of the English aristocracy.

NICHOLAS ORME *has written over thirty books on English religious, social, and cultural history, especially in the later Middle Ages and the Tudor era. His next title, Chaucer's England, will be published in October 2026 by Yale University Press.*

A ROAD THROUGH TIME Wichendon Road, Teddington, 1906-2025 *by Christopher French*
(Borough of Twickenham Local History Society 2025 107pp ISBN 978-1-911145-09-7) £6

This is a beautifully produced publication, packed with information and illustrations which include plans of buildings, extracts from documentary sources, and photographs. More than this—it is a model of good practice in writing local history. The introduction includes a quotation from Pat Hudson arguing that micro-histories, such as the history of a single street, can ask and answer big historical questions. Dr French's aim in the research and writing of this micro-history of one road aims not only to reveal a narrative chronology but also to look at larger questions about ordinary life in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It asks questions about change and social and occupational mobility, and the standard of living, and it also seeks to challenge the negative perception of suburban life with the reality. Winchendon Road is a typical suburban road. Placing our local history research within its wider context is something we should never forget. I found the approach taken in this publication, and the way in which the narrative flows but does not lose sight of the wider issues, inspiring and reassuring that there are still local historians who can be analytical and at the same time write accessible prose.

A starting point for micro-history and a contextual discussion are the relevant sources of information. The sources used to reconstruct the life and times of this road are discussed in detail, explaining what these contain, and where these can be found. Again, this is good local history practice, making the tools of research accessible for others to follow and to test against their own road or street. Some of the sources used are related to this particular research, but most give a pointer to general sources which such as the

1910 valuation or the census returns. There is also a section on the process of including the residents of the road past and present, and how this uncovered more documentary sources that included house deeds and other legal material, reminiscences and photographs. The reminiscences and interviews from residents included Doris Keeping who lived in the road from 1937 to 2018. These interviews help to place people in the houses, each resident or family bringing a new perspective to life in the road.

When Winchendon Road was first planned this was open land, as can be seen on the 1800 enclosure map. In 1906 it was offered for sale as 10½ acres of freehold building land, which was purchased by George Gale, a Fulham builder. His building plans for the first houses show reasonably-sized two-storey dwellings with gardens, and the luxury of a bathroom with hot and cold running water and a water closet. Today these are very desirable residences. The road was not completed by the end of the First World War, and in 1925 the remaining land was sold in 77 separate lots. The occupations and size of families in the first houses collected from the 1911 and 1921 censuses show that families with young children predominated and occupations were mainly white collar, clerical, merchants, and teachers. This had changed slightly by 1939 and included police officers and bus drivers and bus conductors working for London Transport. Today the occupational structure has changed again to include actors, writers, and the executive heads of institutions such as banks or the NHS, which is not surprising for houses which sold for £2,500 in 1950 and topped £1 million in the 2020s—a trend replicated elsewhere.

Does the text fulfil the aim of micro-history asking and answering larger questions in the historical context? Chris French demonstrates clearly how the socio-economic changes of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries can be traced in a study such as this. His work should lead to similar studies to see whether these changes are peculiar to the location of this road and its proximity to London, and also the significance of the occupational structure of the road and the organising abilities of some of its residents. He shows that this suburban road has a defined identity and feels like a community, with events such as wassailing, street parties, community sports, and carol-singing bringing residents together, and that the reality of suburban life is positive and life-enhancing rather than negative and bland. I recommend this publication to all local historians who care about the good practice of the discipline, and I hope it will result in further micro-histories of roads through time.

EVELYN LORD *is a former Reviews Editor of The Local Historian. She has published Investigating the Twentieth Century: Sources for Local Historians, and was co-editor of Shaping the Past: Theme, Time and Place in Local History – essays in honour of David Dymond.*

FOR KING AND COUNTRY The role of patriotism in mobilisation in the First World War

by Richard Batten (Pen & Sword 2025 256pp ISBN 978-1-399060-02-8) £25

This is a valuable book and, happily, a very readable one thanks to Richard Batten's eye for fascinating and entertaining anecdotes. It uses the county of Devon as a case study in how patriotism was deployed in Britain during the First World War and, in particular, how that played out so far from the centre of power in London. Batten introduces us to Devon's great and good, his 'provincial patriots', in 1914 who were tasked, or simply took it upon themselves, to persuade young men to join the armed forces. The term itself he borrows from Stephen Reynolds, a civil servant in the south west who recorded his thoughts on the 'home front'.

As one might anticipate, the prospect of Devon's young men departing to fight far-away Germans was less attractive when their families were farmers. Yes, there was a war to fight, but a sudden loss of labour could spell ruin for a farm, and no amount of patriotism could get the harvest in or the cows milked. Some farmers argued that they were, anyway, already being patriotic by growing food for a nation at war, and that they should thus be excused from offering up their sons. Others, whether farmers or not, thought it unlikely that Germans would find their way to the far south west of England, and thus couldn't see the point of the war. Yet others simply didn't want to fight. One finds oneself almost rooting for the farmer who is about to lose a son and thus probably his living. 'You ought to be back in the trenches, not here mucking about. I don't care a damn if the Germans do come', said one such farmer, berating a recruitment party of soldiers in the village of Huntsham in mid-Devon. One has sympathy too, for the young men hiding in the bushes as a military band comes marching down the lane. Other men foiled the army by joining the navy (a Devon tradition, after all).

In this way the story begins to feel like the familiar one of the First World War—a tale of an older and generally privileged elite urging ordinary fighting-age men to sacrifice themselves on bloody fields far away. It could thus be too easily framed as Devon's young lions being led off by those notorious donkeys. But, in the end, there was a war on, and men were needed, and Batten resists rushing to judgment regarding any of the key players in his history. Instead, he delves into just how his 'provincial patriots' dealt with the resistance that they found. It seems that they swiftly expanded their role, keeping step with the totalisation of the war itself. They sought, in public meetings, speeches, and newspaper columns, to set definitions and standards of patriotism, and to thereby suggest a moral and ideological backdrop for not just their recruitment efforts but, to some extent, for the conduct of Devon's citizens in general.

They began, indeed, to police the very nature of patriotism in the county, judging and shaming those who did not share their vision. But the more savvy amongst them understood the value of carrot as well as stick, and more crucially that loyalty to the king and the government in London could only go so far. They evoked local heroes such as Sir Francis Drake, and Boer War hero General Sir Redvers Henry Buller. They understood the particularities of patriotism and that in the end (as the army itself knows so well) the strongest loyalties may be the most local ones—to one's schoolmates, pals, platoon.

It is not at all clear, and probably hard to establish, what effect the 'provincial patriots' had in terms of recruitment. There were of course rousing speeches, glory, shame, white feathers, and the rest, and young men did join up in vast numbers, but they may have had their own reasons for marching to war. What is clear is that the imposition of reasons by the usual elites was a source of at least some irritation. Would an average farming family be moved, for example, by the public pitching of Devon against Somerset in terms of which county had offered up the most men? Recruitment posters, we do know, were sometimes torn down, perhaps in an act of dissent against symbols of remote power.

However, with the war under way, conscription in place, and Germany sinking merchant shipping en route to Britain, the patriots retained an important role. They were involved, for example, in the discourse around tribunals which dealt with men who claimed exemption from military service. There were involved, too, in calls for vigilance against enemy agents, though resulting in an ugly and drawn-out campaign by some Devon local councillors against German monks in Buckfast Abbey. On that note, Batten's book is timely, examining as it does the shifting realities of patriotism and asking questions about who sets its tone, who questions and resists it, and how people may make their own loyalties. Patriotism is at least partly an act of imagination—we may all fly the same flag, yet fool ourselves that we are all doing so for the same reasons—that defies easy analysis.

Batten explores all this with balance and sensitivity across 170 action-packed pages in which a clear narrative is maintained alongside a depth of research fitting for the PhD study that inspired it. He relies quite heavily (and understandably) on newspaper reports as sources. It would be interesting to know more about how editors and press owners saw their own role, given the centralising pressures on the press at the time. Were they agents of central power, or platforms for local argument, or both? The need to explore that further is not a criticism of Batten, rather than a sign that his work usefully prompts further questions.

Dr ROB CAMPBELL is a former journalist who now edits *The Devon Historian* (the journal of the Devon History Society). His PhD examined tabloid journalism in the early twentieth century, and his work has appeared in *The Edinburgh History of the British and Irish Press*. He is co-author of *The newspaper that scooped the world: The Cologne Post and British journalism in the occupied Rhineland 1919-1929*, and he has recently published an historical novel called *Century*, set during the same period.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS IN LOCAL HISTORY

Only books and pamphlets sent to the Reviews Editor are included in this list, which gives all publications received between 1 April 2026 and 1 July 2026. Most books are reviewed in this or a future issue, or on the BALH website (see page 288 for the list of the latest books reviewed on the website). Publishers should ensure that prices of publications are notified and, if appropriate, give details of how to obtain copies. Please note that all opinions and comments expressed in reviews are those of the reviewer—they do not necessarily represent the views of the editors or of the British Association for Local History. **The Reviews Editor, to whom all publications for review and listing should be sent, is Dr Heather Falvey, 119 Winton Drive, Croxley Green, RICKMANSWORTH WD3 3QS.**

London and South East

A SOUTH BUCKS VILLAGE The History of Hedgerley *edited by Michael Rice* (Hedgerley History Society 2026 267pp ISBN: 978-1-0369-5468-0) £25

COLCHESTER'S VICTORIAN DOCTORS The Business of Healing *by Jane Pearson* (University of Hertfordshire Press 2026 206pp ISBN: 978-1-912260-79-9) £18.99

HAT-MAKING IN ST ALBANS An industry built on straw 1800-1940 *by Jonathan Mein and Anne Wares* (St Albans & Herts Arch & Arch concise histories no.4 2025 56pp ISBN: 978-0-901194-27-5) £8 plus p&p

JOURNEYS ROUND A LONESOME CHILDHOOD *by Tony Shelton* (Merton Historical Society 2026 28pp ISBN: 978-1-903899-89-2) £2 + p&p

NEWARK MILL, RIPLEY *by Bob Gale* (Send & Ripley History Society 2026 reprint 40pp) £5

'THIS DIABOLICAL SIN OF DRUNKENNESS'. Hampshire and the Temperance Movement *by John K. Lander* (Heritage Hunter 2926 200pp ISBN: 978-1-905315-99-4) £12.50 including p&p

South West

HANDEL COSSHAM 1824-1890 *edited by John Stevens* (Avon Local History & Archaeology and Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society Bristol Section 2026 140pp ISBN not given) £9.50 + p&p

LECKHAMPTON COURT Manor House to Hospice *by Eric Miller* (Leckhampton Local History Society 3rd edition 2026 72pp ISBN: 978-0-9524200-9-5) £10

East Anglia

'IN CASE OF INVASION' How the people of Norfolk and Suffolk were instrumental in defence against France in the 18th and 19th centuries *by John Clarke* (Heritage Hunter 2026 338pp ISBN: not given) £15.99 including p&p

NORFOLK BUILDINGS WITH A PAST The stories of 20 historic Norfolk properties built for one purpose but later used for something different *by Chris Armstrong* (Poppyland Publishing 2026 126pp ISBN: 978-1-869831-52-3) £11.95

SEASIDE HOMES AND FISHING BOATS A walk through Overstrand after the Great War *by Tim Bennett* (Poppyland Publishing 2026 139pp ISBN: 978-1-869831-53-0) £11.95

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF NORFOLK'S FIRST WORLD WAR AIRFIELDS (2 volumes) *by Gary Rossin* (Poppyland Publishing 2026 384pp ISBN: 978-1-869831-60-8) £29.95

THE PARISH CHURCHES OF MEDIEVAL NORWICH City Community and Architecture *by Brian Ayers, Clare Haynes, Sandy Heslop and Helen Lunnon* (Oxbow Books 2026 xxviii+498pp ISBN: 979-8-88857-182-8) £35

Midlands

GUN LOCK MAKERS OF WOLVERHAMPTON *by Mark Cooper and Victor Griffiths* (Mark Cooper 2026) £8 + £2 p&p contact coopermark1@gmail.com

LEFT BUT NOT FORGOTTEN The Children of the Foundling Hospital at Chester *by Anthony Annakin-Smith* (University of Chester Press 2026 380pp ISBN: 978-1-910481-33-2) £19.99

MARY'S MADHOUSE AND THE EARLY MADHOUSE TRADE IN HENLEY-IN-ARDEN, WARWICKSHIRE *by Julie Moores* (Heritage Hunter 2026 48pp ISBN 978-1-905315-57-4) £7.90 including p&p

RAILWAYS OF HEREFORDSHIRE AND THE SOUTHERN MARCHES *by Heather Hurley* (Logaston Press 2026 ISBN: 978-1-910839-85-0) £20

THE LITTLE BOOK OF BRUMMIE SLANG Sayings, History and Humour *by Michael Layton QPM and Androulla Christou-Layton* (Brewin Books 2026 124pp ISBN: 978-1-85858-793-6) £9.95

WORLDS OF FRAMEWORK KNITTERS IN LEICESTERSHIRE c.1600-c.1850 by *Dave Fogg*
Postles (the author 2026 iv+169pp no ISBN) free to download from <https://davelinux.ifo/BOOKS/bookindex.html>

Northern England

BEDE The Man Who Invented England by *Edoardo Albert* (Birlinn 2026 ISBN 978-1-780278-39-1) £17.99

FINDING THE BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH by *Paul Cavill and Stephen E. Harding* (University of Chester Press 2025 ISBN 978-1-910481-15-8) £19.99

SCHOOLS AND SCHOOLDAYS IN NINETEENTH CENTURY HARROGATE by *Paul Jennings* (Carnegie Publishing 2026 284pp ISBN: 978-1-910837-54-2) £20

THE POEMS OF JOHN BYROM vol.IV: Further Manuscript and Printed Verse edited by *Timothy Underhill* (Chetham Society, third ser., 59 2026 342pp ISBN 978-1-7394679-2-0) £39.95

Scotland

THE CALEDONIAD The making of Scottish history by *Catriona M.M. MacDonald* (Birlinn 2026 560pp ISBN: 978-0-859767-49-1) £30

Wales

ABERFAN A Family Story by *Jack Lewis* (Graffeg 2026 96pp ISBN: 978-1805951-85-8) £15

HAY DAYS by *John Beynon* 'Penlan' (Y Lolfa 2026 ISBN: 978-1-800997-19-6) £12.99

GENERAL

A HISTORY OF PARISH REGISTERS IN ENGLAND AND WALES from the Restoration to civil registration by *John Wintrip* (Lutterworth Press 2026 ISBN: 978-0-718898-48-9) pbk £22.50 also hardback and digital

A NIGHT AT THE INN Space, place, and the elite experience of Empire 1650–1850 by *Daniel Maudlin* (Oxford University Press 2026 272pp ISBN: 978-0-198867-05-0) £30

ALL AROUND IS FAIRY GROUND Pleasure and the Regency garden by *Timothy Mowl* (Reaktion books 2026 280pp ISBN: 978-1-83639-248-4) £35

FOR KING AND COUNTRY The role of patriotism in mobilisation in the First World War by *Richard Batten* (Pen & Sword 2025 256pp ISBN: 978-1-399060-02-8) £25

THE SETTLEMENT OF THE POOR IN ENGLAND c.1660–1780. Law, society, and state formation by *Naomi Tadmor* (Cambridge University Press 2026 360pp ISBN: 978-1-108499-19-4) £85

WILLS AND WINDOWS Testamentary evidence for glazing and fenestration in medieval England by *Richard Marks with Christian Steer* (Liverpool University Press for the British Academy 2026 xciii+284pp ISBN: 978-1-805-966-54-8) £175

JOURNALS AND NEWSLETTERS RECEIVED

The more substantial articles in these journals are noted below, but we do not give a full contents list. Most journals are listed alphabetically by geographical location, not title of publication; general journals are at the end of the list. Newsletters generally include details of forthcoming events, society business and administrative matters not noted in these summaries.

Abbots Langley Local History Society Journal (no.64 Spring/Summer 2026) www.allhs.org.uk
Chairman's report; forthcoming talk; The lychgate in Abbots Langley; Parsonage Farm barn: Oualine Dairy Farm; Plane makers from Abbots Langley; Abbots Improvements - AIMS, The story so far; Introduction to archiving; Remembering Eve: obituary; David Spain Collection: old photographs; 100 years ... [newspaper reports from 100 years ago]; future events; Where is it?

Acton Historian (no.81 May 2026)
www.actonhistory.co.uk *The Acton History Group is 40; Gunnersbury Park centenary; Brian Ferris: a tribute; Memories of Acton, Part 2; Postcards of West London; Agatha Christie and Ealing; AGM 2025 minutes; accounts; forthcoming meetings*

Anglesey Antiquarian Society and Field Club 2025 Transactions (May 2026)
<https://www.hanesmon.org.uk/aaswp/>
Trustees' Annual Report 24-25; Giuseppe Rinvoluceri, architect of Our Lady Star of the Sea church, Amlwch; Anglesey's Ireland: a case study of the Land Question in nineteenth-century Wales and Ireland; Iron Age gold coins discovered in Llangoed; the location of townships and hamlets in Llŷfon and Menai (in Welsh); Coastal access ramps; book reviews

Avon Local History & Archaeology Newsletter (no.186 31 March 2026)
<http://www.alha.org.uk/> *ALHA news (including new book on Handel Cossham; summer walks; Avon Past redigitised); Groups and societies news (including data protection complaints legislation); Events and sources (including South Gloucestershire Heritage Open Days 11-20 September); Reviews; books and other publications noticed; Arcade attached to rectory of St Michael without Bristol; Commentary (including Romance fraud; origins of the Great Western Railway); (no.186/1 e-update 30 April 2026) ALHA news (including new book on Handel Cossham; Summer walks programme; William Tyndale conference); Groups and societies news (including ALHA Presenters Directory 2026); Events and sources (including Roger Fry exhibition; BALH online talk); books and other publications noticed; Commentary (High rise; Solar farms and archaeology); (no.186/2 e-update 31 May 2026) ALHA news (including subscriptions; Local history day 2027); Events and sources (50 years of Aardman in Bristol; call for papers for Bristol & Glos Arch Soc 150 Symposium; 1926 General Strike Bristol exhibition); Bristol & Glos Arch Soc Library disbanded; books and other publications noticed; Commentary (Recycling; Severn Bridge Railway; Metaphors for architectural change); (no.187 30 June 2026) ALHA news (including report of walk in Nailsea); Groups and societies news; Events and sources (including online exhibition on Gloucestershire Archives' website*

All shaped balls); Online training for community archaeology volunteers; books and other publications noticed; Commentary (including Changing names; Trumpeters, puppeteers and acrobats)

Aylsham Local History Society Journal and Newsletter (vol.13 no.6 May 2026)

www.aylshamhistory.org/ From the editor; forthcoming events; A footnote to murder: the tale of young William Spink; North Elmham church and its environs (report of talk); Buildings of Aylsham III: TSB Bank 1 (summary of report); The fight against smallpox; the medieval Bishop's Palace of Norwich (report of talk)

Barnes and Mortlake History Society Newsletter (no.257 June 2026)

www.barnes-history.org.uk *The Festival of Britain; Breach of promise of marriage (1850); News and future events (including AGM report; The Kilmorey Mausoleum; The Burton Mausoleum; Barnes Fair; Know your place heritage festival; Surrey WW2 bomb map); Dukes Meadows: a century complete; The Barnes baby farmer (1899); Shopping is never done: High Streets down the decades (report of conference); Sheen House & Barnes Home Card Club (report of talk); The Barker family and market gardening (report of talk); Lecture programme for 2026-27*

Local History Records (journal of The Bourne Society) (vol.118 Summer 2026)

www.bournesoc.org.uk
Chairman's report; BS officers 2026-27; The Coal Posts revisited; Major Alfred Talbot Smith; All Saints' churchyard, Warlingham; Charles Duff's Anthropological Report (1935); The shop at 1 Coulsdon Road, Caterham; James Banks Taylor (d.1884); How things have changed: Caterham-on-the-Hill; The 'Ice Cream' Pacittis (report of talk); group reports and programmes; forthcoming visits; mystery photograph

Bridport History Journal (new series, no.1 2026)

www.bridporthistorysociety.org.uk
Discovering Bridport suffragists: West Dorset Women's Suffrage Society 1910-19; William Mountfort of Bridport: a medieval merchant; The bells of St Mary's, Bridport; From the Simene to the Thames: a brief reflection on the tragic life of Eustace Budgell of Symondsbury; forthcoming talks

Broseley Local History Society Newsletter (no.66 May 2026) www.broseley.org.uk

Summaries of previous meetings; The Ghost Train: play in 1937; The marriage of Hon Christine Weld-Forester and Hon Richard Orde-Powlett 31 July 1951; Day out for workers (1870); The Amies House; Archives given to the society; book review

The Griffin (newsletter of the Chadderton Historical Society) (no.117 May 2026)

www.chadderton-historical-society.org.uk
Comment: Chadderton pride of place; funding for regeneration; It's a fact no.23, Defiant bishop with principles once lived in Chadderton; And in God's House no.4 Cowhill Methodist church; Historic anniversaries no.14 Opening of North Chadderton School; Townships that never developed, (8) Within the parish of Manchester (iii) Five eastern townships; Chadderton Football Club's excellent season and play-off zone

Chadwell Heath Historical Society Newsletter

(Spring 2026) [no website, but Facebook page www.facebook.com/chhistorical] *Obituary; AGM notice; A long walk to Dagenham; A grand day out?; Battle at Becontree Club (1926); Seven Kings station, then and now; Wangey Road chapel's predecessor; A park tragedy on the eve of WW2; News from Upminster windmill; (Summer 2026) Chadwell Heath's first purpose-built police station; One thing leads to another: Hillman airways (1930s); Alan Fox: further developments; Summer concerts; Percy Ashton, rural councillor (1926); Shops in Chadwell Heath: then and now; Mrs Blank's Haberdashery; Shady behaviour at the Haw Bush a century ago; St Chad's church summer fete; new books; forthcoming conference*

Chilterns National Landscape e-newsletter

(April 2026) www.chilterns.org.uk
The Chilterns on Countryfile; New Chilterns audio guide; Traditional hedge-laying in progress; Deer management hub; Stories of Chalk Streams film; Chilterns Heritage & Archaeology Partnership; Changes to the planning protections; Heritage and habitat along the Ridgeway in Goring; forthcoming events; Vole spotted on the River Chess; (May 2026) New funding boost for nature recovery; Centre for Outdoor Accessibility Training; Citizen scientists help map trout spawning activity; Chalk Streams Challenge badges; Action for the River Kennet; New cycling guide book; forthcoming events; (June 2026) Management Plan for the CNI; Farm to table: from wheat to sourdough in less than 3 miles; Chilterns Discovery Day; Out and about with Mend the Gap; New infrastructure projects; Hawkstone Farmers Choir member; forthcoming events; Luton Henge festival

Cleveland and Teesside Local History Society Newsletter (no. 139 May 2026) www.ctlhs.co.uk

Programme; Secretary's report on the year ending 31 December 2025; Images from St John's, Middlesbrough, part 2; the Packett Prize essay competition; Book news; Notes & Queries; Further dates for your diary

Cosby Heritage Society Newsletter

[Leicestershire] (April/May 2026) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/cosbyheritagesociety/> *Forthcoming talks; AGM notice; forthcoming visit; (May/June 2026) Forthcoming talks; AGM notice; forthcoming visit*

The Book of The Old Edinburgh Club (the journal for Edinburgh history) (new series vol.21 2025) www.oldedinburghclub.org.uk

'Twelve miserable views of Edinburgh': John Elphinstone's perspective prints of the principal buildings of the capital reassessed; A bridge too far: the Colinton bridge—an early conservation victory?; Edinburgh's Cafe Royal; The social profile of the leaders of Wesleyan Methodism in Edinburgh (1911); Port Hopetoun in art; Satan's invisible world discovered—George Sinclair, the scientific revolution and the supernatural in 17th century Scotland; Book reviews; annual report

Farnsfield Local History Society Newsletter

(no.7 Autumn/Winter 2025) <http://farnsfieldlhs.co.uk>
Farnsfield's windmills; FLHS recent events; Wartime memories; Farnsfield Millenium embroidery; Visit to Newark (report); Old photographs: who are the subjects?; The Old Vicarage; Thomas Stacy (1749-1831), clockmaker of Farnsfield and Southwell; New book; Forthcoming programme; (no.8 Spring/Summer 2026) St Michael's graveyard inscription project; The angry letter sent by people of Ashill, Norfolk, to the gentlemen of the parish (1816); a walk down Main Street in 1966; Thomas Wombwell and his sons William, Frederick, Albert and Robert; Local history organisations, resources and events

Forest of Dean Local History Society News

(May 2026) www.forestofdeanhistory.org.uk
Editor's notes; Notes from the Chair; forthcoming meetings; Summer walks; A well cooked book; book reviews; Byelaws: Forest of Dean; Bark extra!; Meetings in review; The tangled tale of two cups, Cinderford RFC and Jim Beard

Frogmore Paper Mill Newsletter

(April/May 2026) <https://frogmorepapermill.org.uk>
Museum's accreditation; NHLF award for stabilisation and roof repairs; June events; talks programme; online exhibitions; Heritage Stories - a brief story of Braille

Gateacre Society Newsletter (June 2026)

www.gateacresociety.co.uk *Forthcoming talk on Liverpool Anglican Cathedral; Date for diary; Community litter pick; The Bear and Staff*

Hackney Heritage News (e-newsletter of Hackney Museum & Hackney Archives) (April 2026)

Eason & Co., a Victorian photo studio in Dalston; Hackney History Festival May 2026; 80s activism; Hoston Hall and the 1970s arts and theatre movements; Archiving Vietnamese histories in Hackney; 1926 General Strike in Hackney; Strike songs; (May 2026) Post-war social housing and regeneration: life on the Gascayne Estate; Volunteer as a local activism researcher; Events at the archives; Abney Live event; Young researchers opportunities; (June 2026) Hackney's first refugees: Huguenots in the 18th century; The origins of Leyton Orient FC; Festival: Windrush Generations; Hauntings: English folk and its ancestors; Events at the archives; (July 2026) Ital Records; forthcoming talk; new display; events in the borough for the school holidays

Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society Newsletter (no.85 Spring 2026)

www.hantsfieldclub.org.uk *Editor's notes; Archaeology (including report of conference; encounter with two recent archaeologists' work at Hinton Ampner; 2025 excavations); Landscape (including What is landscape?; Reading the landscape; reports of field trips); Local History (including P.A.D. Harvey; History of Milford-on-Sea; Training Women's Land Army 'Land girls' at Sparsholt; recent addition to Hants Archives); book reviews; Historic buildings (including the St Cross renaissance frieze; The little barn at Grace's Farm; Historical graffiti report); Field Club outing to Christchurch in 1898; HFC Library at the Hartley Library, University of Southampton; AGM notice; forthcoming talks and visits*

Harpenden & District Local History Society Newsletter (no.158 May 2026)

<https://www.harpenden-history.org.uk/> *Issue in memory of John Wassell, editor for many years (articles that he wrote reprinted); Female Lane; Will of Elizabeth Ashby (1741); Discovery of human remains (1840); Place names on Dury & Andrews Map, 1766; Field names: a review; The development of Douglas Road; A tragic accident in Harpenden (1816)*

Hatfield Local History Society Newsletter

(no.141 June 2026) <https://www.hatfieldhistory.org.uk/>
Hatfield Station History Exhibition, part 2; 18th century road atlas page; Society news (AGM notice, diary dates, news from the Committee

Heanor and District Local History Society Newsletter (no.461 April 2026)

www.HeanorHistory.org.uk *Chairman's welcome; How we blew up the American Adventure; Two Smalley windmills and two Marpool windmills; The ladies in the window of Smalley parish church; A Derbyshire rail outing (report of talk); (no.462 May 2026) chairman's welcome; Heanor's Home Guard; BALH award and a history of H&DLHS newsletter; The Wilbers: memories of a Heanor couple; Codnor's lost and forgotten land (the site of Hall Farm); They walk among us (UFOs and their passengers); It'll do you good (report of talk); forthcoming meetings 2026/7*

In Our Age--Herefordshire Lore: Living Local History (no.78 Spring 2025)

www.herefordshirelore.org.uk *Welcome; Hereford cadet collars escaped prisoner; Greyfriars Bridge opens (1967); Leominster cowboy (1929); Pigeon boy (1962); GI befriends Ross family (1944); Home Guard in Clehonger; Dorstone's prisoners of war (1940s); A dip into HL's archive; Flooding at Breinton (1960); HL partners in major city rivers project; Hereford History Day returns*

Horley Local History Society Newsletter

(July 2026) <https://www.horleyhistory.org.uk/>
Meetings calendar 2026; 1 July 1916 - remember the Somme; A trip to the cinema (part 1); 1926: 100 years ago; 1976: 50 years ago, including the Great Drought

Huddersfield Local History Society Journal

(no.37 2026/27) www.huddersfieldhistory.org.uk
Editorial; recent publications; forthcoming talks; Discover Huddersfield report; Kirklees Heritage Forum report; The great Longwood heist, 1856; Adventures of a very large serpent; A 'theory' of Huddersfield Town's thrice champions; Cake? Huddersfield and the 1951 Festival of Britain; Further thoughts on Smith Carter's 'souvenir' of Lockud; One hundred years of the parade on Carr Lane, Slaithwaite; Albert Lunn (1872-1957), decorator, developer and devotee of Ruskin; Searching for Miss Whitham, 'Our young Yorkshire queen of song'; Circumstances and recollections in the late 17th century; A brief history of Lindley Mechanics' Hall, a 'noble and spacious building'; Book reviews and notices

Lancashire Local History Federation

Newsletter (no.55 May 2026)
www.lancashirehistory.org *'At Home' at Harris Museum, Preston, in July; View from the chair: Buildings on the brink (Heritage at Risk list); Lancashire Archives & Local History (exhibition, forthcoming talk, new edition of Archives magazine, Archives' new online catalogue); Lancashire Libraries Local History collections; Lancashire Archives digitisation service; Friends of Lancashire Archives (new committee member needed); News from member societies including forthcoming meetings & events; Lancashire & Cheshire Antiquarian Society - talks & publications; Carnforth Library 90th anniversary project; Friends of Pendle Heritage; Chorley town trails; Friends of Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery; News roundup, including Heritage Network, Women in street names; Manchester Histories Festival; Speakers' details*

Friends of the Centre for English Local

History e-newsletter (May 2026)

<https://www.englishlocalhistory.org/> *Hoskins Day 2026; The World Turned Upside Down; Fenland Heritage Group; Leicester Guildhall Museum; English Civil War events conference; Forthcoming events and conferences; (June 2026) https://www.englishlocalhistory.org/ Hoskins Day 2026; Friends Publications - scanned and available on website; The World Turned Upside Down; new book; University of Leicester Archives & Special Collections; At Home in history; Forthcoming events and conferences; The Spalding Gentlemen's Society; (July 2026) Festival of Archaeology Leicestershire and Rutland; Civil War Conference; Harmondsworth Great Barn conference; Revolution 250*

Lewes History Group Bulletin (no.190 May

2026) <https://leweshistory.org.uk/> *Rev Matthew Welland (d.1980), pastor of Jireh Chapel; Rendel Williams postcard views of Lewes; Two more William Page stereoviews; Eastgate Wharf to let (1880); A change at the Crown Inn (1829); The Salvation Army in Lewes (1891); A gentleman's carriage (c.1900); The Lewes Police Court (1907); George Poole's Lewes stables (1925); (no.191 June 2026) Beowulf, a Sussex legend; Local history research - a practical 3-part course for LHG members; When Lewes had only 17 telephone subscribers (1895); 17th century map of Sussex; Dealing with a juvenile delinquent (1851); An order for clothes (1740); Francis Godolphin Osborne, MP for Lewes 1802-1806; A tribute to Ellen Reeves (d.1874); The Prince of Wales visits the White Hart (1870); Football in the street (1904); A husband's heartless conduct (1903-6); Cliffe High Street in the 1920s (postcard); LHG contributions to the Lewes community; (no.192 July 2026) open day at Bridge Farm excavations; Lewes Festival of Democracy; High Street decorated for Edward VII's coronation; William Camden on Lewes (1610); The Lewes Season ended in early February (1825); Rodin's 'The Kiss' being moved (1933); Golden Jubilee of the Phoenix Ironworks (1885); A Prize Essay (1911, by 13-year-old schoolgirl); Watercolour of Anne of Cleves House sold recently*

Lincolnshire Past & Present (no.143 Spring 2026)

www.slha.org.uk *Obscene publications in Lincolnshire 1859-1939; When was Boston 'stumped Part 2; Lincolnshire wife sales; The last ran-tanning in England?; Recent additions to the Shuttleworth Collection; Stragglethorpe: what's in a name?; Vermuyden 400; Speculative explorations in 'Gilbert Country'; no.6; Objects of Life: the tragic murder of Charles Spencer, cattle dealer of Walkeringham, 1860; obituaries; Death penny for Duncan Cokville of Grimsby*

Society for Lincolnshire History & Archaeology Newsletter (Spring 2026) www.slha.org.uk

from the Chair; Museum of Lincolnshire Life SLHA Exhibition; Lincolnshire Past & Present short items invited; Diary dates May to September; Steep Hill Bookshop news & catalogue; forthcoming visits and walks; forthcoming study days

Loughton History (no.247 April-May 2026)

<https://loughtonhistoricalsociety.org.uk/> *Loughton History 250 approaches; Some random recollections of Loughton in the 1890s by Percy Thompson (1866-1953) (reprint from 2010); Coal and a dramatic downfall; Memories of travelling from Woodford to Loughton (reprint from 1970); The Leyton sidecar; Correspondence on Loughton History 245; Snippets; Charles T Pearce, MD, MRCS (d.1883); Charcoal burner camp at High Beach, 1889; Breach Barns bus service; Blue Plaque to Percy Thompson*

The Clock Tower (Friends of Medway Archives

[FOMA]) (no. 82 May 2026) <http://foma-lsc.org/> *Chairman's letter; New FOMA Patron; Medway Archives Centre (MAC) Report - staffing, news from behind the scenes; AGM report and 20th anniversary event; The Herbert Baker Heritage Trust; Overarching difficulties: the station that never was; Notes on John McArthur (1821-c.1892), clerk at Chatham Dockyard in 1874; The doctor's; forthcoming events; news from other societies*

Merton Historical Society Bulletin (no.238

June 2026) <https://mertonhistoricalsociety.org.uk/> *Forthcoming meetings and events; MHS 75th anniversary celebrations; Sir Patrick Kelly, 'Chief Wimbledon Air Warden' and his statue in Mumbai; Recent local planning decisions; new booklet; Local history workshop reports; emails to the editor; Mitcham 1890s: housing of the working classes; Majestic Way and Upper Green Pharmacy; Motspur Park 100; The Cresswells of Figgs Marsh, Mitcham*

Newdigate Local History Society Magazine

(no.122 May 2026) www.nlhs.org.uk *News from the Society; Editorial; Future events; Ewood Home Guard; Frightful murder of a gamekeeper (1865); Pictures of Newdigate Youth club (1948 & 1950)*

North Craven Heritage Trust Journal (2026)

<https://www.northcravenheritage.org/> *Chair's report; Benchmarks in the Dales; Lost show caves of the Yorkshire Dales; Coal mining trials in Giggleswick and Settle; Museum acquisitions; Our lost orchards; Farther Rome, Giggleswick; Where have all the woodlands gone?; Gordon Sanderson and the vernacular architecture of Craven; The Chatsworth InspeXimus and the Percy landholdings; detectorist finds from the area; A village schoolmaster; The Tatham and the Thompsons: Settle's pioneering family of botanists; Dr Buck's socketed bronze axe head; Populations of Giggleswick and Settle townships*

Northamptonshire Industrial Archaeology

Group Newsletter (no.178 April 2026)

www.niag.org.uk *News, reviews and information (including triangulation points in the county); Life as a (female) train driver, part 2; reports of talks (Rails to Weedon Depot; Northants wind and water mills); Bobbin lace 'tells': rhymes from a 1919 book; Arcow Quarry tales continued; An industrial archaeology driving tour: Rothwell to Easton-on-the Hill; Royal Signals inter-war transport arrangements; Travellers' tales (from a commercial traveller)*

Ogmore Valley Local History & Heritage

Society Quarterly Newsletter (April 2026)

<https://ovlhs.co.uk/> *Welcome from the editor; Photographic Competition; Projects update (including Cemetery headstones photographic record; Nantymoel Memorial Clock Tower; Ogmore Vale Rugby Club minutes; noticeboards); Can you help:- St John's Ambulance Brigade badge; Ogmore Valley Archive - first day covers; (July 2026) Projects update (including Ogmore Valley Museum accreditation; new planters at federation Stone Moners Memorial; Budd family archive; Ogmore Vale Rugby Club minutes; Can you help (1965 Welsh pole vault champion Graham Gibbs); Ogmore Valley Archive - early Bronze Age axe fragment*

Oxfordshire Local History Association

e-bulletin (April 2026) <https://www.olha.org.uk/>
Cuttleslowe walks; Museum of Oxford (MoX) guided walks and lunchtime talks; OLHA study day; Bloxham Museum exhibition; Bicester Local History Society; Slade WW2 Camp: award for volunteer; Hill End outdoor school; Ultimate Picture Palace at risk; Eynsham Museum; General Strike in Oxford 1926 commemorations; Botley Centenary tours; Oxford City Engineer's deposited building plans; Vale & Downland Museum's Green Growth Award; Stratton Audley LHS; City of Oxford 1850-1914 course; Short articles sought for OLHA's journal; Warneford 200 exhibition; new books; Magdalen College servants; forthcoming talks and events; (May 2026) Abingdon Museum MG exhibition; Oxford Preservation Trust tours; Witney & District Museum revamped; Binsey Whimsy walk; Archives manager retiring; National Mills Weekend; VCH Oxon new volume; MoX guided walks and lunchtime talks; Rose Hill estate street names explained; Oxfordshire Black History Map; Oxfordshire Buildings Record; Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum: Lee Miller exhibition; Royal Berkshire Archives; Morris Motors Museum; Flora Thompson: 150th anniversary of her birth; North Leigh Roman villa; Oxfordshire Past conference; (June 2026) Bloxham in 50 Objects; Blue plaque for Lucy Faithfull; Women with learning disabilities in World War One; Wheatley windmill; Forthcoming conferences; Oral history collection afternoon; Flora Thomson event in September; Burford Dolls' House booklet; Royal Berkshire Archives; North Leigh Roman villa; Oxfordshire Past conference; new books; forthcoming talks and events

Redditch History Society Newsletter (vol.8 no.1

April 2026) <http://www.redditchhistorysociety.org.uk/>
From the editor - Society's new website; April AGM report; Forge Mill Needle Museum now fully open; forthcoming talk; AGM reports & minutes; Sketches by J M Woodward (1850s); (vol.8 no.2 May 2026) From the editor - request for content from members; May meeting report; Forge Mill Needle Museum events; forthcoming talk; Redditch Local History Museum faces closure; Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service; Three more paintings by Charlie Stallard based on early postcards; (vol.8 no.3 June 2026) From the editor; June meeting report; Forge Mill Needle Museum events; Reminiscences of a 'trainspotter' (reprint from 2021); High Duty Alloys (wartime factory) photographs

Rickmansworth Historical Review (no.39 May

2026) www.rickmansworthhistory.org.uk
Editorial; Money Hill Road, Rickmansworth, in 1939; Mentions of 'The More in recent publications; West Hyde in 1926; "The North Orbital Road" (newspaper report from 1929); Susan Tweedsmuir, an author who lived at Moor Park; 'Where the many waters meet' (article reproduced from Hertfordshire Countryside magazine Autumn 1951); Forthcoming meetings

Saffron Walden Historical Journal (Series 3 vol.1

Spring 2026) www.saffronwaldenhistory.org.uk
Editorial; The makers of Saffron Walden Cemetery; The Reverend Brinkworth in Saffron Walden 1885-1899; From Newport Pond to Woburn Abbey: the Howlands of Newport and Wicken Bonhunt; Fairs and markets of Saffron Walden; John Maddams 1938-2026; St Nicholas, Berden, tower restoration; A knight, his heraldic badge and an Ashdon field; Listed! St Peter's church, Littlebury Green; book reviews; forthcoming talks

Clissh-Clash e-newsletter of the Scottish Local History Forum (no.74 February 2026)

www.slhf.org *Books for sale; contents of latest SLHF journal; Libraries, Archives and Museums news, including new additions to NLS maps, archives events, OUTWITH travelling displays; What's On: forthcoming talks and exhibitions; History News: Parliamentary Archives move to TNA, Dingwall's royal charter is 800 years old, Cold War bunker open for visits, 12th century Scottish coin found; Watch and Listen including new presenter for 'In our time', The History Podcast, Witness History, Digging for Britain, This week in history; Blogs and articles including Dig it!, Scotland's people; (no.75 April 2026) SLHF news including forthcoming talk, uploading talks to YouTube, Libraries, Archives and Museums news, including National Records of Scotland 5 year strategy, East Lothian field names recording project and viewer, NLS OS 2.5-inch 1st edition (Scotland) georeferencing project, Celebrating Scotland's intangible cultural heritage, Three asks for the next Scottish government; Poets in archives, Forthcoming exhibition on Roman Scotland; History News: Charles Fraser-Mackintosh antiquarian, Town centre heritage 'gems'; Watch and Listen including Revinder on BBC Radio 4, Nairn across Britain, The week in history; Website: The Forestry Memories image library; Blogs including Conservation of a sketchbook, Scotland's game of curling*

Send & Ripley History Society (no.307 March

2026) www.sendandripleyhistorysociety.co.uk
Editorial; Henry Peak, Guildford's first borough surveyor (report of talk); 40 years ago (reissued article on the history of Toby Cottage Restaurant); letters to the editor; The story of Send Amateur Dramatic Society (so far); Bomb disposal during World War Two (report of talk); Helicopters at Dunsborough House; Parish problems: parish council issues over the years; Guilehill Brook: follow up; Where is it?; What is it?; Send Evangelical Church, 50th anniversary; Museum news; (no.308 May 2026) Remembering Stanley Rudkin 1912-2004; 40 years ago (reissued article: Dunsborough House, part 1, construction) The vicarages of Send; A modest local heroine: Valerie Pettit, M16 'secretary'; A little bit of nonsense - the myth of a secret tunnel from Newark Priory; Down memory lane - a grand day out; Send and the National Farm Survey; Where is it?; What is it?; Spike Lives - people who passed through the Guildford Workhouse; Forthcoming events

Sittingbourne Heritage Museum Newsletter

(April 2026) www.sittingbourne-museum.co.uk
Emigration database updates; First forum pop-up a success; Forthcoming events; New video on YouTube channel; Study group report; Michael Peters reflects on the Second World War; (May 2026) Air-raid wardens newspaper dipping; Mistaken places and knowledge gained; Findings from Kent Archives' event at Sittingbourne Library; Study group report; Recent finds in the EKG Archives; (June 2026) Study Group report; Digging the village - Borden's Archaeological Roadshow; (July 2026) Announcement - Sittingbourne Heritage (proposed merger of Heritage Museum and Historical Research Group); Crumbs of history at The Central Pie Shop; Museum outreach

Sittingbourne Heritage Museum Quarterly Journal (no.113 June 2026)

www.sittingbourne-museum.co.uk *Bradbury House, Milton High Street; Mystery Locations and lost places, no.5 Coffin Pond, Congregational Church, Convent and the Court Hall; Muddy Lane, Bapchild*

Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society e-bulletin (May 2026) <https://sanhs.org/>; *Back number of Proceedings wanted; SANHS Library Book Club; Photographing historic buildings webinar; Forthcoming guided walks; Wildlife in churchyards project; Big Nature Day at Nettlecombe; Young archaeologists: the Cheddar brooch; Notes and snippets; Raleigh Radford, historian and archaeologist; associated societies news and events;* (June 2026) *Visit to the Hydrographic Office; Wildlife in churchyards project; Young archaeologists: Avalon Archaeology Park and Fyne Court; associated societies news and events;* (July 2026) *Members News - obituary; discovering wildlife in churchyards visit; Festival of Archaeology: Viking invasion; SANHS out and about - displays at other societies' events*

Notes & Queries for Somerset and Dorset (vol.41 part 403 March 2026) <https://www.sdnq.org.uk/> *A response to East Somerset Malsters 1647; Colonel George Starre - Dorset's Forgotten MP; St Mary Magdalene, Taunton: from daughter chapel to modern minster; The 1686 Survey of Dorset Beds and Stables; The 'Bankruptcy' of John Harcombe (1742-1803) pt.2; Did Napoleon land in Dorset?; Heavy Traffic at Upcerne; Book reviews; queries*

St Albans & Hertfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society Newsletter (no.240 May 2026) www.stalbanshistory.org *President's remarks; Adopting a phone box; Clock Tower report; publications report; Library report; Excursions; Francis Bacon exhibition report; Heritage report, including new heritage plaque; St Michael's ford and bridge; America 250: St Albans connection; New insights into St Albans history event; forthcoming lectures and events; SAHAA licensing and copyright policy*

Staffordshire Archaeological & Historical Society Newsletter (no.151 January 2026) <https://www.sahs.uk.net/> *The parted veil; Medieval comic strip; Forthcoming Transactions volume; Trent Valley past and present project; Social media engagement; Wedgwood V&A Museum; The tramroads of Caldon Low; Excursion 2026 to Thong and Claverley; Faces in medieval manuscripts; WW1 diaries of Clifford F Gothard of Burton on Trent; Edward IV coronation roll; Stafford History Centre exhibition;* (no.152 May 2026) *Laser cleaning of monuments; new Staffordshire Record Society volume; Archaeology news; Tales from the Bawdy Courts; Transactions volume contents; Interim report on geophysics investigation into St Andrew's chapel near Burton on Trent; Stoke-on-Trent City Archives news*

Sunbury and Shepperton Local History Society Journal (no.96 Spring 2026) www.sshs.org.uk *The Queen Mary Reservoir; Halliford Manor; Halliford Manor House and Clock Cottage; Jubilee Clock Tower: brief history; End of an era - BP in Sunbury; The first evidence of the Wood family at Littleton; Do you want ice?; Rev Harcourt Skrine and the Rifle Volunteers Corps; Dunton's Boatyard, part 1, 1840-1892*

Friends of the Keep Archives Newsletter [East Sussex Archives] (Spring 2026) *Editor's Introduction; Remembering Judy Brent; Letter and papers of a Lewes POW during the Second World War; Making a splash - Eric Ravilious and the Cerne Abbas Giant; Rediscovering the wallpaper designs of Peggy Angus; George Hiller's Resistance testimony; Visit to the Old Town, Eastbourne (report)*

Explore Your History (West Sussex Record Office e-Newsletter) (June 2026) <https://www.wsro.org.uk/> *Welcome from County Archivist; WRSO turns 80; New historical maritime resource goes live: archive of Marine and General Mutual Life Assurance Society; Cataloguing miscellaneous church court records; New research guides available; National Volunteers Week; get involved with WRSO Friends*

The Researcher: Newsletter of the West Sussex Archives Society (no.133 April 2026) www.wsas.co.uk *County Archivist's report, including conservation of Consistory Court papers and Act Books, completion of 'New Jerusalem's' new towns project, 186 accessions in 2025, purchases at sale, 80th anniversary of WRSO; Chairman's report; Hurrah for Shippam's (report of visit); Volunteer projects at WRSO including listing of probate inventories, the Photographic Heritage Survey, WI collections, Sir Ernest Shackleton, Worthing & District camera club; Archaeology and archives (report of talk); WSAS grants (latest acquisitions: licence from Henry VIII, album of watercolours by Julia Henty); WSAS Inventory Project; forthcoming WSAS events and at the RO*

Recorders of Uttlesford History News (no.4 2026) <https://recordinguttlesfordhistory.org.uk/> *2025 AGM report; Co-ordinator report 2025; Uttlesford change: county government reorganisation; New co-ordinator needed by 2028; Saffron Walden Museum news; Data recording; Audio tape digital transfer; news from all over Uttlesford; Gibson Library, Saffron Walden - Heritage Lottery Fund grant*

Uxbridge Record (Uxbridge Local History and Archive Society) (no.125 Spring 2026) <http://www.eddiethecomputer.co.uk/history> *Summary of recent talks; Hillingdon's history on display at new museum; Grace Cope, psychological architect; On the increase in cottages in Uxbridge (1827 article); Early buses of Harefield; Sidney Peel, officer and gentleman; The church in the wrong place; Brunel University coat of arms*

Friends of Watford Museum Newsletter (no.102 May 2026) <https://www.watfordmuseum.org.uk/friends> *British Museum visit (report); Post War Watford (report of talk); New learning and engagement officer; Obituary; Croquet and Cassibury House; Celebrating the Year of the Horse; MoW monthly; New logo*

Museum of Watford Monthly (May 2026) <https://www.watfordmuseum.org.uk/> *Mini movers; Striking a chord; Heritage hero - football collection; Herts Museums Object of the year; (June 2026) Community events; Grassroots Football; Museum Advisory Panel; Collections Management Team; (July 2026) Culture of Watford FC; Family activities; Museum's exhibition fit-out contractor appointed; Art Collection on the move - to the new building; Learning Engagement volunteers required*

Wells Local History Group Newsletter (no.92 Spring 2026) <https://www.wellsnorfolkhistory.co.uk/> *From the editor; Georgian remake of 16th century merchant house in High Street; Wells Improvement Commissioners Part 2; Buttlands; Locust tree reveals wealth of 19th century Wells merchant*

West Midlands History Exchange Bulletin

(May 2026) *the Baskerville Punches Project*; (June 2026) *the Chance Glassworks cataloguing project*; *Walks & tours in July & August*

Whitechapel Society Journal (no.127 April 2026)

<https://www.whitechapelsociety.com/>

From the editor; Whitechapel and Florence (but not Maybrick); Mary Jane Kelly's last doctor; Criminour CDVs; Morgan the canine crimefighter; New book titles; The Thames Torso Murders; The man in the shadows, part 1, Cut from leather and hidden in The Jago; Murder most foul: the abominable William Sheen of Whitechapel; report of February meeting; (no.128 June 2026) *Media coverage of serial murders, part 4; New books; Belle Gunness; The Original Monster; Crispin Street E1; Hebrew Dramatic Club disaster 1887 & The Regent's Park ice disaster 1867; What's On - V&A East Storehouse; Man in the Attic (1953); The missing earring*

The Patriot: Newsletter of the John

Hampden Society (no.120 May 2026)

www.johnhampden.org *Mariette, Lady Saye and Sele tribute; Elizabeth Cromwell Hampden and the Lord Knyvett Free School; The Patriot and the Prince*

Newsletter of the Ranulf Higden Society

(vol. 2 no.8 Spring 2026) <https://ranulfhigdensoc.org/>

From the editor; Latin & Palaeography Summer School 2026; Bursary reports from the 2025 Summer School; two obituaries; book reviews; forthcoming meetings (all online)

Local Population Studies (no.115 Autumn 2025)

<http://www.localpopulationstudies.org.uk/>

Editorial; Migration and mobility in history (conference report); Spread of the Great Plague of 1603-4 to Bristol and its rural hinterland; Neonatal and infant mortality in the late 18th century Sephardi community in London; The membership books of the New Room 1770-1788 - a local Nonconformist population; Chain migration from the lead mines of Yorkshire to the coal mines and cotton mills of Lancashire; Population change and migration in a west Devon parish, 1841-1939; More or less - a comparison of early modern parish population estimates from different sources; Miscellany - Probate inventories and accounts for Worcester; review of recent periodical literature

Local Population Studies Society News-Sheet

(10 April 2026)

<http://www.localpopulationstudies.org.uk/>

LPS journal(s) now available; Forthcoming Chalke History Festival; BALH Conference May 2026; IHR Summer School; Books and back issues of LPS

Mortimer Matters (journal of the Mortimer History Society) (issue 64 April 2026)

<https://mortimerhistorysociety.org.uk/>

Who was the mother of Gwladus Ddu?; From the editor; Marion Gibson, Professor of Witchcraft and Magic; Aife of Leinster and the March; The regency of Roger Mortimer; Bursaries available; MHS essay prize 2025; AGM report; new committee members needed; forthcoming lecture; Ludlow History Festival; forthcoming events; study trip; new books

ONLINE REVIEWS ON THE BALH WEBSITE

In addition to the many reviews which appear in every issue of *The Local Historian*, many other books and publications are reviewed online on the BALH website. There simply is not enough space in the journal to include everything in the hard copy version. Please go to <http://www.balh.org.uk/publications/reviews> to access these reviews. The list below gives the titles and other details of the publications for which online reviews have been added in the last three months.

HERRIARD Records of life and work in a Hampshire village by Alex Craven (Hobnob Press on behalf of the University of London and the VCH Hampshire Trust 2025 x+123pp ISBN: 978-1-918403-00-8) £14.99 [reviewed by Heather Falvey]

HONEST GEORGE HOLLOWAY ‘that notorious fellow’: Politics, economics and society in Kidderminster by Michael J Loftus (the author 2025 274pp ISBN: 979-8-289-886-071) £12.99 via Amazon; £12 + £2.40 p&p; BALH members £10 + £2.40 p&p from michaeljloftus@gmail.com [reviewed by Alistair Beecher]

WALTER BAGEHOT Life and Legacy by Janet Seaton and Barry Winetrobe (Langport & District History Society 2026 162pp ISBN: 978-1-904-496-14-4) £20 [reviewed by Robert Dunning]

FEEDING THE SOULS The agricultural estate of Ushaw College 1799-1972 by Alan M. Wadsworth (Paragon Publishing 2026 198pp ISBN: 978-1-787921-21-4) £19.99 [reviewed by John Banham]

SCHOOLS AND SCHOOLDAYS IN NINETEENTH CENTURY HARROGATE by Paul Jennings (Carnegie Publishing 2026 284 pp ISBN: 978-1-910837-54-2) £20 [reviewed by Tim Lomas]

THE ILLEGITIMATE THREAD: A study of illegitimacy in the parish of Addingham, Cumberland, 1820-1939 by Lydia Gray (Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society extra series no.52 2024 ix+204pp ISBN: 978-1-873124-92-5) available to download as a free ebook from cumbriapast.com or in hardcopy for £20+£4 p&p from www.addinghamcumbria.co.uk [reviewed by Heather Falvey]

THE INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE OF THE CHILTERN by Hugh Howes (Chiltern Society 2025 232pp ISBN: 978-0-904148-64-0) £30 [reviewed by Heather Falvey]

BEYOND THE BOOKSHELVES Hidden histories in the Morrab Library by the Penwith Local History Group, edited by Sally Corbet (Penwith Local History Group 2025 86pp ISBN: 978-0-9954940-2-2) £15 + p&p [reviewed by Heather Falvey]

ST DECUMANS Life in a Somerset parish 1600-1670 by Philip Ashford and Adrian James Webb (Harry Galloway Publishing 2026 lxxxii+392pp ISBN: 1-86241-050-3) £40 [reviewed by Paul Schoon]

HAT-MAKING IN ST ALBANS An industry built on straw 1800-1940 by Jonathan Mein and Anne Wares (St Albans & Hertfordshire Architectural & Archaeological Society Concise Histories no.4 2025 56pp ISBN: 978-0-901194-27-5) £8 +p&p [reviewed by Paul Schoon]

SEASIDE HOMES AND FISHING BOATS A walk through Overstrand after the Great War by Tim Bennett (Poppyland Publishing 2026 139pp ISBN: 978-1-869831-53-0) £11.95 [reviewed by Heather Falvey]

NORFOLK BUILDINGS WITH A PAST The stories of 20 historic Norfolk properties built for one purpose but later used for something different by Chris Armstrong (Poppyland Publishing 2026 126pp ISBN: 978-1-869831-52-3) £11.95 [reviewed by Heather Falvey]