

# Gloucestershire Local History Association

Newsletter No. 1, January 2013



## **With news from...**

Churchdown Local History Society, The Dursley and Cam Society, Fairford History Society, Forest of Dean Local History Society, Gloucestershire County History Trust, Gloucester Local History Society, Oakridge History Group, Stonehouse History Group, Tewkesbury Historical Society and the Winchcombe History Group.

## Contents

Introduction	2
News from the GLHA forum, 3 <sup>rd</sup> December	3
Two Workshops for 2013	4
Churchdown Local History Society	5
The Dursley and Cam Society	5
Fairford History Society	6
Forest of Dean Local History Society	6
Gloucestershire County History Trust	7
Gloucester Local History Society	8
Oakridge History Group	8
Stonehouse History Group	10
Tewkesbury Historical Society	11
Winchcombe History Group	11

Photo provided by Mary Sullivan, of the lime kilns of Vention Lane, Lydbrook.

## Introduction

The first thing I want to do is to thank those who assisted in the compilation of this newsletter, Vicki Walker, Steve Blake, and especially Mary Sullivan, who passed on your submissions and organised the presentations at the GLHA forum on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December.

As a newcomer to local history societies – I only joined the Forest of Dean Local History Society this September – the opportunity to be involved in the gathering of news from the whole county was an interesting experience. I would like to thank everyone who sent something. I am particularly pleased that we have had a few photos sent to us from the Fairford History Society and the Stonehouse History Group, which added some much needed variety to these pages.

As the first of its kind this newsletter is only a foundation to be built upon in later issues. I hope to continue my role with the GLHA and my job now is to look to the future at the newsletter's continued improvement. I hope that as the GLHA Newsletter becomes more established, more articles will be sent so that everyone who reads it will get a more complete idea of what is going on with the local historians in their county. Please send any comments or feedback, this is your newsletter and all responses are welcome.

All that's left for me to say now is that I hope you enjoy reading about our friends from other societies and their own plans for the future. I would like to point you towards the Oakridge History Group's very relevant article on their receiving of a Heritage Lottery Fund. We, in Forest of Dean LHS hope to follow their example soon. The talk planned for the March meeting should help us all better to understand how to achieve successful grant applications.

Happy New Year,

Ben Berry

---

### **News from the Gloucestershire Local History Association Forum, 3<sup>rd</sup> December**

The Association's quarterly Forum was held at Gloucestershire Archives on Monday 3 December and was attended by 29 people, representing 24 of the County's local history organisations.

The meeting began with a presentation by Paul Evans of the Archives staff on opportunities for local history societies to co-operate with the Archives. These include tours of the Archives and undertaking research projects, such as the transcription of probate inventories, research into World War One memorials (in the 'run up' to the 2014 Centenary commemorations) and 'catalogue enhancement', whereby volunteers would work through specific collections (perhaps related to their own community) to add to existing catalogues where these are deemed inadequate. The Archives would also like to develop an 'advocacy' system, whereby members of local societies might deliver pre-prepared talks about the Archives on their behalf, or encourage new archive deposits from within their own communities. Anyone interested in any of these projects should contact the Archives staff. Other Archives news included the awarding of an HLF grant to interview residents of Charter Court, Gloucester, as part of the on-going Barton & Tredworth project, and a mini-conference on Fielding & Platt in March 2013.

Other reports were received from the County History Trust/Victoria County History, including an update on current work on a number of Severnside parishes and plans to extend the VCH work to both Cirencester and Cheltenham, and from four local societies - Forest of Dean on a proposed HLF bid for educational packs, Stonehouse on World War Two sessions with a local school, Dursley & Cam on a High Street shops recording project, and Tewkesbury on new publications - all of which are noted elsewhere in this Newsletter.

As usual, the Forum received reports from both the Chairman and the Treasurer, including the very good news that the Association now has 37 members. Future plans for meetings were reported, as was the fact that Philippa Davies, of the Heritage Lottery Fund's South-West Team would be coming to the next Forum meeting, on Monday 4 March, to talk about HLF funding opportunities for local history groups and societies – a meeting not to be missed by anyone hoping to bid for one of a number of currently available funding 'streams'.

---

### **Two Workshops for 2013**

The Association is offering the following two workshops for its members during 2013, further details of which (including how to book) will be circulated in the New Year - but if you are interested, please get the dates in your diary now!

On Monday, 11 March, Ray Wilson, who maintains the Association's website ([www.gloshistory.org.uk](http://www.gloshistory.org.uk)) will be facilitating a workshop on websites for local history groups and societies. This will be very much aimed at those members who would either like to have a website for the first time or who wish to enhance their current web presence. It should be stressed that this will not be a technical meeting, but it will provide the opportunity to share thoughts on what should be included on your website, how to set it up and how best to maintain it. Hopefully, it will be of benefit to all groups whatever the scale of your existing website. This will be an afternoon workshop, and there will be no charge.

On Saturday, 8 June, there will be a joint Gloucestershire Archives/GLHA workshop on Writing Local History for Publication. The workshop will examine how the results of local history research can be presented in an acceptably scholarly yet readable and interesting form for publication. It will also explain the processes, tasks and opportunities involved in bringing an author's manuscript to print, whether for a mainstream publisher, a journal/magazine or as a self-publishing project.

This workshop will be held from 11.00 am - 3.30 pm and there will be a modest charge, the level of which will be confirmed when further details are circulated in the New Year. It will be facilitated by John Chandler and Rose Wallis, who are historians employed by the Gloucestershire County History Trust to work on writing the Victoria County History for Gloucestershire. Rose has also taught

history at UWE Bristol and John has for many years run a small local publishing company.

---

### **Churchdown Local History Society**

We have a thriving society which meets on the second Thursday of each month from September through to June with an outdoor meeting in July which takes the form of a guided walk in the area. Following on from an excellent study day in Gloucester Cathedral last July, we are now in the process of organising a similar event next spring looking at the lives of medieval monks.

---

### **The Dursley and Cam Society**

The year began with a 1930's "dream of better care for people" in the Stroud Workhouse, up to the present day where the site is now flats. Chris Witts shared his experiences on the River Severn. Then came an almost practical demonstration of the medical treatment mainly in the Tudor period. David Evans took a look at places of historic interest in Cam with a promise to provide a sequel. Westonbirt Arboretum was viewed through the seasons and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee was toasted and celebrated by eating cake during a quiz evening when Jan, Sally and Barbara challenged everyone's local knowledge. Members were quizzed further while handling artefacts from the Museum in the Park and asked to identify their purpose. The area Head Ranger of the National Trust provided information about Woodchester Park and ongoing improvements to the landscape. We heard about the life of a boy in Tetbury, which prompted a request for a tour around the market town sometime in the future. In December we look forward to Ian Thomas talking about The Dursley Donkey. Thanks to Barbara Grove, in her first year as the Programme Secretary, for the hard work in formulating this programme and for producing another exciting schedule for next year, while also planning for 2014.

In June some members visited Rednock School, guided around the impressive facilities by a team of enthusiastic and efficient students who had given up their time for the occasion. The new buildings were opened two years ago and have won awards for their architecture. The tour was of particular interest to ex-pupils of Dursley Grammar School! We thank David Evans for all his work in making the arrangements for the visit.

There are research groups currently at work looking into the streets and shops in Dursley *then and now* and updating previous publications on aspects within Dursley. The Committee also discusses planning issues around the area. Some members of the Society also work at the Heritage Centre and the link between the two groups is essential for the mutual benefit to the local community. The *Dursley in Bloom* group is also providing an interest and we have supported this by joining with their requirements in maintaining the Society's eight display tubs and two hanging baskets.

We look forward to the publication of the Society's annual journal, which will be the ninth edition of *The Dursley Lantern*, in anticipation of memories of past events, people and places in the area. We would like to give thanks to Andy Barton for undertaking all the work involved in its production.

---

### Fairford History Society

Fairford History Society's latest publication, *Fairford Street Names*, lists the origins of all the names of streets in the town. The main sources used were documents from 1951 – 2000 from Gloucestershire Archives, the Parish, Town Council minutes and local knowledge. It accompanied a talk, *In Ffaireforde Aforesaide*, which investigated local place names in the town including those long forgotten and the possible origins of the names like Waiten Hill and the problematical The Piles. The book is available for £1 from Fairford History Society and is on sale at St Mary's Church, Fairford.



**Above:** The cover of *Fairford Street Names*. Contact the society on 01285 711768 or at [enquiry@fairfordhistory.org.uk](mailto:enquiry@fairfordhistory.org.uk)

---

### Forest of Dean Local History Society

We are currently planning the development of Educational Packs for schools and families that would inspire an interest in children about the unique local history and heritage of the Forest of Dean. Our current thinking is to produce packs on different periods of history e.g. Roman, medieval, industrial

19<sup>th</sup> century. Each pack would include different activities that encourage interacting with the environment, visits and finding out information for themselves. To support our eventual application for a HLF grant we are seeking support from many and varied community organisations as well as a few schools.

---

### **Gloucestershire County History Trust**

Thank you again to societies and individuals within societies who support the trust financially. The prospect of grant funding won't remove the need for continuing support from societies and individuals - these will remain vital to the long-term health of VCH.

Volume XIII (the Severnside parishes) continues to go well. John Chandler has completed in draft a parish history of Maisemore, and circulated it to interested parties for comment and criticism. An amended version will be posted on the VCH website very soon. He is now researching Hartpurpy and will begin writing up sections of its history in the new year, leaving two more parishes (Norton and Twyning) to be tackled during 2013. Simon Draper has completed all his research on Sandhurst and has written up four of the six sections. He is confident it will be completed in draft form by October. Rose Wallis is about to submit for review the first draft of the settlement section of the history of Yate. She will also be presenting several papers derived from her research on Yate in the Spring.

Since the last GLHA meeting we have secured substantial funding from the Winstone Trust in Cirencester over a four year period starting October 2013. We are also pursuing plans for a volume on Cheltenham as I indicated at that meeting. We have already had one meeting of the steering group. James Hodsdon, the Trust's treasurer, has been in contact with all the relevant local history societies and we have been encouraged by the response for volunteers. James is also exploring the possibility of funding from the Summerfield Trust. We would regard this and the Winstone Trust grant not just as funding for editors, but also to encourage further grants, especially as both towns are surrounded by parishes which would also be included in their volume. To help this process the trustees have commissioned John Chandler to produce two papers on the scope of each of these volumes which we can present to interested parties.

Finally, the British Association for Local History is holding its annual conference at Cheltenham Racecourse at the end of April next year. We have already become involved in the planning and

intend to have a strong presence to increase interest and knowledge of the trust with the hope and intention of increased financial support.

---

### **Gloucester Local History Society**

The Society was started by a small number of people following support from Dr Steve Blake (Gloucestershire Local History Association) and a visit from David Scriven (Cheltenham Local History Society) to offer support and guidance. Additional support was received from Eileen Allen of the Swindon Village Society, Cheltenham. With copies of relevant documents needed (thanks David), copies of bulletins (thanks Eileen), and lots of encouragement and advice (Steve) the Gloucester Local History Society was formed at Gloucester Folk Museum with the support of Gloucestershire Archives. The initial meetings were all humdrum as we set up the organisation and started to create a bank account, soon to be completed.

A draft bulletin is in place, with a possible email bulletin to be released in January 2013. We have not marketed the group and are hoping that numbers will increase from the core 'working group'. Officers were elected and the constitution was adopted. After Christmas we are hoping to do some research and at our February meeting we will be joined by Dr Steve Blake, who will be talking about the local history 'scene' in Gloucestershire which will hopefully result in our joining the GLHA. Following that, we have a 'behind the scenes' tour of the Gloucester Folk Museum. All are welcome to join us, you do not need to be Gloucester born and bred.

---

### **Oakridge History Group**

The Oakridge History Group has become one of the first groups in the UK to receive a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) All Our Stories grant. This exciting project, Our Archaeology, in Oakridge Lynch and led by the Oakridge History Group, has been given £7300 to find out the extent of the Roman Villa first excavated in 1843 by local landowner Thomas Baker and any other evidence remaining of the Roman occupation.

All Our Stories, a brand new small grant programme - launched earlier this year in support of BBC Two's 'The Great British Story' - has been designed as an opportunity for everyone to get involved in



their heritage. With HLF funding and support, community groups will carry out activities that help people explore, share and celebrate their local heritage.

The popular series, presented by historian Michael Wood, and supported by a programme of BBC Learning activities and events, got thousands of us asking questions about our history.

We were inspired to look back on our pasts in a new way: through the eyes of ordinary people.

The programme and HLF All Our Stories has proved a real hit and now Our Archaeology is one of hundreds of successful projects around the UK to receive a grant. Oakridge History Group explores the heritage of Oakridge Lynch and surrounding hamlets, and holds monthly meetings of talks and hands-on projects. This project will give inhabitants of Oakridge the opportunity to use the latest techniques of geophysical surveying, field walking and trial pit excavation under the professional supervision of the County Council Archaeology Service and leading archaeological company, Archeoscan. Visits will be arranged to the Museum in the Park, Stroud to examine objects previously found in the neighbourhood of Oakridge Lynch, the County Archaeology Service in Gloucestershire and Chedworth Roman Villa.

TV presenter and historian Michael Wood said

We British love our history, and no wonder: few nations in the world, if any, have such riches on their doorstep, and so much of it accessible to all of us. It is really tremendous that the people of Oakridge Lynch have been inspired to get involved to tell their own story and to dig deeper into their past. It's brilliant that so many people are being given the chance to get involved through All Our Stories grants. Having travelled the length and breadth of the British Isles this last year filming The Great British Story, I am certain that fascinating and moving stories will be uncovered which will not only bring to life the excitement of local history, but will illuminate and enrich every community's connection with the national narrative.

Commenting on the award, John Loosley, of the Oakridge History Group, said

it is wonderful to have been awarded this grant and we can't wait to find out more about the relatively unknown Roman Villa which only professional help will allow us to uncover some of its secrets.

Richard Bellamy, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund South West, said

Clearly the success of All Our Stories has reinforced the fact that we are indeed a nation of story tellers and that we want to explore and dig deeper into our past and discover more about what it really means to us. This is exactly what the grant will do for Our Archaeology as they embark on a real journey of discovery.

---

### **Stonehouse History Group**

SHG has produced a new calendar for 2013 which is selling well. We are also in the process of publishing our second Journal of 2012; Issue 1 concentrated on Stonehouse in World War Two, so Issue 2 will consist of all the other articles that were not in this category – several based on our on-going oral history project. We have interviewed eight residents in 2012 and have more on a waiting list. Our first Information Board on the New Post Office (opened in 1933) was unveiled in October. We have been involved in several projects with Park Junior School on the History of the Town and Life in World War Two. We have helped Howard Beard with information about the photographs which he has included in his new book *The Stonehouse Valley Through Time*, Amberley Publishing, 2012.

**Below:** Valerie Blick and Shirley Dicker at the unveiling of the board and its centre photo.



### **Tewkesbury Historical Society**

We have just published two books, a second edition of the *First 1992 Bulletin* which presented significant challenges after 20 years, and a new venture, a *Tewkesbury Then and Now Annual*, an anthology of monthly articles for a local free newspaper and which is aiming to raise funds for the Town Museum.

On 21<sup>st</sup> March 2013 the speaker at the THS meeting will be Dr. Madge Dresser, of Bristol UWE, who will be speaking on Slavery Obscured by Philanthropy, inspired by her challenging book, *Slavery Obscured*. The talk should be of interest beyond the confines of Tewkesbury. It will be held at the Methodist Church at the Cross at 7.45pm, with an entrance fee of £4.

---

### **Winchcombe History Group**

Winchcombe History Group has taken off in a way far beyond our expectations. At a preliminary gathering in October we had about 20 people, which was enough for us to decide to go ahead and form a steering group. At our second meeting in early November we were overwhelmed with 61 keen souls! We reported progress, formed our first committee and had a talk by the instigator of the group, Carol Harris, entitled *A History of Winchcombe in 30 Minutes*. Within the week the limit of 80 members had been reached and unfortunately many were left disappointed.