



Gloucestershire Local History Association

Newsletter No. 6 April 2014



Civil War at Cropredy with Brig. Johnny Rickett on a Gotherington and Area Local History Society excursion

News of this year's preparations for the WW1 Centenary

Updates from the GLHA

Focus on Gotherington and Area Local History Society

***Cottage Histories in Bledington, Gloucestershire* book review**

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News from the GLHA

GLHA Forum, 3rd March 2014

Thirty-four people, representing 28 of the Association's members, attended our quarterly Forum at Gloucestershire Archives on Monday, 3rd March. The meeting began with a presentation by Ollie Taylor, Project Officer for the HLF-supported 'Gloucestershire Remembers World War 1' project, who is based at Gloucestershire Archives. Ollie began by outlining the projects being undertaken by the Archives' partners in the project (the Everyman Theatre, the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum, Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum and The History Press) and then focused on WW1 projects at Gloucestershire Archives itself, and in particular the ways in which local history groups and societies might become involved.

The Forum also received reports from David Aldred of the County History Trust (VCH) and from Heather Forbes of Gloucestershire Archives, who outlined a proposed HLF bid for new strong rooms and the creation of a 'Heritage Hub' at the Archives.

Notes on all the above are included elsewhere in this Newsletter.

The GLHA Chairman's report largely focused on plans for the October 11th Local History Day, a separate note on which is also included elsewhere in this Newsletter. Other matters discussed included the successful 'Behind the Scenes' tour at the Archives on 30th January – and plans for a similar event on 29th September, and an offer by Dr Ray Wilson of GSIA to organise a Summer evening walk in Stroud for representatives of members organisations: details of both these events will be circulated in due course. The Chairman also asked those present to begin putting their minds to possible speakers for the Association's 2015 Local History Day, which will focus on aspects of migration: to, from and within Gloucestershire. He also appealed for groups to volunteer to organise a GLHA Summer afternoon meeting at some point during the coming years.

Ben Berry and Ray Wilson were thanked for their work on the Newsletter and website respectively, and it was noted that the Speakers' List on the website had recently been updated. The calendar of member organisations' events would be maintained, with two 'deadlines' each year – 1st September and 1st December. It was noted that Liz Jack from the Gloucestershire Family History Society would be writing book reviews for the Newsletter, focusing wherever possible on local history society (as

opposed to commercial) publications: members were urged to send Liz a note of any new publications that they would like reviewed. Her contact details are ejack@gloucester.demon.co.uk or Mrs E. Jack, 11 Old Cheltenham Road, Longlevens, Gloucester GL2 0AS.

The Treasurer's report noted that the Association now has 46 members (Minchinhampton Local History Group having recently joined) and a healthy bank balance of £982.

The next Forum (which is also the Association's AGM), will be held at 7.30pm on Thursday, 29th May, and will include a presentation by Viginia Adsett and Gillian Morss on their object-based sessions for adult groups, focusing on the 1950s.

Glos Remembers WW1 Project Update

The Glos Remembers WW1 Project (www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives/WW1) has begun enabling people from around the county to learn more about how the First World War impacted on where they live and the soldiers who served from their communities.

Archives' staff have run training sessions around the county in Gloucester, Fairford, Chipping Campden, Dursley, and Coleford introducing people to the sources that exist on the First World War for their area and how to begin their research. Resources to help with your research into WW1 can be downloaded from the Archives' website: www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives/WW1/help-with-your-research-into-WW1.

Training has also been delivered on sound recording, editing, and sharing research in creative digital ways. Examples of Digital Stories produced by members of various local history societies can be viewed via Glos WW1's YouTube Channel (http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIQn5rUpX_TRaGBNJTFkUyg/videos) or the 'Glos Remembers WW1' blog at <http://glosremembers.co.uk/ww1-blog/>.

The project is also looking for volunteers to help manage www.glosremembers.co.uk and its HistoryPin channel (<http://www.historypin.com/channels/view/48639#!photos/list/>). HistoryPin is a means of sharing photographs and heritage material that enables users to 'pin' them to the location that they relate to on a map.

Gloucestershire Archives have also been working with Slimbridge and Berry Hill Primary Schools to develop and pilot Key Stage 2 lessons and resources to help children learn about soldiers from their area and the impact of the war on it. Classes from Slimbridge and Berry Hill have visited the Archives and worked with original documents relating to their parts of the county. Why not visit Slimbridge's (<http://slimbridge.primaryblogger.co.uk/category/first-world-war-blog/>) and Berry Hill's (<http://bhlakers.primaryblogger.co.uk/>) blogs to see what they have been up to? Berry Hill have created a short digital story about their work so far that can be seen here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pui4jU0yF28>.

The work in Slimbridge has been particularly exciting as members of Slimbridge Local History have worked with teachers. Later in March, they are going to visit the children in school to talk to them about some of the soldiers that the class have been researching on their local war memorial. Project Officer, Ollie Taylor, said:

“Seeing the partnership between the school and the local history society grow has been one of the most inspirational parts of the project. The children will learn a great deal from them and it will enhance their own research into the soldiers from Slimbridge. I hope that other history societies will make contact with their local schools to see how they can work together to commemorate the centenary throughout 2014-18.”

The cross-curricular learning resources for schools are beginning to appear online here:

<http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives/article/116507/Cross-curricular-learning-resources-for-schools>. Later in the year, Gloucestershire Archives will work with Secondary Schools to develop Key Stage 3 resources that will also be free to download.

If you are engaged in research into WW1 or are planning an event to commemorate the centenary, please let the Archives know. Likewise, through the project, Gloucestershire Archives are aiming to preserve research on soldiers and how the First World War affected the county, and original documents, photographs, and memorabilia relating to WW1 era Gloucestershire. This includes research into the soldiers from Gloucestershire who served in the forces or research into how areas of the county were affected by the war. If you would like to donate a copy of your findings or documents to Gloucestershire Archives or volunteer with the project contact the Project Officer Ollie Taylor on oliver.taylor@gloucestershire.gov.uk.

WW1 Centenary – Get in Touch

In addition to the events and activities that are taking place through the HLF-supported ‘Gloucestershire Remembers WW1’ project, many other organisations across the County are running events and projects to mark the Centenary.

GLHA would like to compile a list of what its members are doing, so that it can publicise them through its quarterly Newsletter, the next issue of which will be available in late July. So if your Group or Society is organising an event, such as a lecture or an exhibition, from 1st August 2014 onwards, or is undertaking some research into the impact of the War on your community, please let Steven Blake know about it (email: steven.blake@deltonglos.plus.com) and it will be included in the next available Newsletter.

One such event that is happening in July is Cheltenham Local History Society’s day on ‘Cheltenham Life 1914-1919’, which is to be held at St Matthew’s church, Clarence Street, Cheltenham between 10am and 4pm on Saturday, 19th July. As well as displays on the subject – the result of research by a group of Society members - it will include talks on the Leckhampton Court VAD Hospital by Eric Miler of the Leckhampton Local History Society, and on ‘The Home Front Consumer’ by Robert Opie, the founder of the Museum of Brands, Packaging and Advertising, which many people will remember was sited in Gloucester Docks before its move to London.

A flyer for this event has been included at the end of this newsletter.

GLHA Local History Day, Saturday 11th October 2014: The Effects of World War One on Gloucestershire Communities.

This year’s Local History Day will be held at Pate’s Grammar School in Cheltenham from 10.30am to 4.30pm.

In the morning we will hear from two speakers who are producing books on the effects of the War on their own communities in The History Press ‘Great War Britain’ series. Lt Cnl Robert Dixon, Chairman of the Trustees of the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum, who is preparing a book covering Gloucestershire as a whole, will provide an overview of the subject. Sally Dickson of the Kidderminster Archaeological & Historical Society in Worcestershire who are, as far as we are aware,

the only local history society in the County to have taken on the writing of a volume in the History Press series, will explain how they came to do so, and the type of work that it has involved.

In the afternoon, Geoff North will talk about his research into the County's Red Cross VAD Hospitals – which is also to be the subject of a book - and the event will finish with a presentation by Dr Christopher Hutchinson and a colleague from the Radio Days Vintage Music Project, whose remit is to restore, study and perform the popular music of the first half of the 20th century, including that of the First World War. Their presentation will include both recorded and live music of the day, with a specific focus on the role of Music Hall in boosting morale at home.

An important part of the Association's local history days is the displays on the chosen theme that have been prepared by some of its member groups, and this event will provide a unique opportunity to explore a range of topics relating to the First World War from across the County.

The day will also feature the presentation of the annual Bryan Jerrard Award for what the judges believe to be the best journal article on an aspect of Gloucestershire history during the preceding year.

The event is being funded this year as part of the HLF-supported 'Gloucestershire Remembers World War 1' project, to which the GLHA is, of course, most grateful - and as a consequence of which admission to the event will be free. Refreshments will be available on arrival, at lunchtime and mid-afternoon: further details of this will be posted on the GLHA website in due course.

Publicity for your events on BBC Radio Gloucestershire

You may be aware that, every day, BBC Radio Gloucestershire publicises forthcoming events in the County. What you may not be aware of is that the service is free and that all you have to do is to send them an email with brief details, at least seven days beforehand. Clearly there is no guarantee that your event will be mentioned, but certainly if you have a special event it is worth a try. It is best to avoid too much detail and run the risk of unfortunate editing! The confirmation email you get back advises you that one of the radio presenters may wish to conduct a three to four minute live interview on the air the day before. If your event is featured in this way, you can provide a lot more information to 'sell it' to the public. Where your subject appeals to a reasonable section of the public,

then you may do quite well.

At a recent meeting of the Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology at Gloucester on ‘Sudbrook and the Severn Railway Tunnel’ we had more than 20 visitors after the talk was featured on the radio. Although that was truly exceptional, we usually get a few visitors that way.

You can contact the ‘Gloucestershire Guide’ by email (gloucestershireguide@bbc.co.uk) or by post to The Guide, BBC Radio Gloucestershire, London Road, Gloucester GL1 1SW. You should restrict it to one event and clearly state all of the following – name of your organisation; date and time; venue; details such as the title of a talk, the name of the speaker and a very brief description of the topic; any admission charges – and finally your contact details.

It would be great if GLHA Groups could sometimes submit details of their events - even if you don’t get many extra visitors, it will be good that listeners hear that there is plenty going on in local history in Gloucestershire.

Ray Wilson

GSIA

News from Gloucestershire Archives

Archives bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund

Gloucestershire Archives wants to see the documented heritage of Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire (with which the Archives has a service level agreement to deliver an archives service for South Gloucestershire Council) being as accessible as possible. So it is applying to the HLF for a significant project grant to help make this happen.

The project, currently titled ‘For the Record’, is about a collaborative approach to gathering, keeping and sharing the documented heritage of local communities. It builds on joint-working arrangements that are already helping to do this and paves the way for better access that will continue into the future. As currently envisaged, it will have three elements: a ‘Heritage Hub’, digital preservation work and new strongrooms.

The current vision, which the Archives has developed with its principal partners, is as follows:

‘Gloucestershire Archives is the heritage heart of a very special region of the UK. The archive treasures it contains are vital pieces of the Gloucestershire jigsaw of local memories, experiences and achievements. By expertly safeguarding and adding to these precious resources, and helping local people and organisations to do the same with their own documents, we will secure rich collections for future generations, and preserve the ongoing story of how we live. Supporting groundbreaking partnerships and lasting volunteering opportunities, we will work with individuals and communities across Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire to inspire and sustain them. We will create a unique meeting place open to all where people will be supported to document, care for, interpret and celebrate their personal and shared history’.

The three main elements of the project are:

1. A ‘Heritage Hub’. This is both a physical and organisational concept. Firstly, the Archives plans to transform its public research room and adjacent spaces into a Community Heritage Hub offering much better facilities for volunteers, community groups and organisations to work together and help the public. The Hub will also be a place where organisations of all kinds can learn how to look after, develop and interpret their archives through training, skills development, volunteering and access to expert friendly advice. Secondly, it plans to put collaborative working and fundraising at the core of its business. It will be developing, testing and evaluating innovative ways of working/raising income that will lead to a sustainable business model for access to archives in Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire.
2. Digital preservation work. The Archives wants to make sure that it can preserve and access digital material for current and future generations to enjoy. And it wants to help local people and organisations to do the same.
3. New strongrooms. The Archives plans to build three additional strongrooms on its Alvin Street site, which is owned by Gloucestershire County Council. This will provide space for new collections and ensure the sustainability of its preservation service.

The Archives is currently consulting widely on the project, including a meeting with the GLHA Committee, which will be providing a ‘letter of support’ for the HLF bid. News of progress with the project and the bid, which the Archives hopes to submit in mid-May, will be included in future issues

of the GLHA Newsletter.

Summer History Afternoon

This year's summer history afternoon will be hosted by the Forest of Dean local history society in the village of St Briavels. the village has a history that goes back to at least the time of the Norman conquest, with a castle built in about 1130 to act as the administrative centre of the Forest. The Church opposite is believed to pre-date the castle! After walks around the village and castle, the afternoon will round up with the usual delicious home baked cakes and tea in the village hall.

Booking forms have been circulated by our Secretary and should be returned to Mary Sullivan, FODLHS Treasurer with cheques.

Features

Latest News from the Gloucestershire County History Trust

Developments in the researching of the remaining parishes in the county continue apace. John Chandler is nearing the end of his work on the west of Severn parishes. As Rose Wallis's research into Yate begins to reach a conclusion, the Trustees are investigating the means to continue her work into neighbouring parishes. Beth Hartland has discovered some early Cheltenham records in the Duchy of Cornwall archive. Alex Craven and Antonia Catchpole have now started researching early modern Cheltenham and Cirencester respectively. Members of the local history societies have become actively involved in researching the Archives in a number of ways and the Trustees continue to be grateful for their contribution. John Chandler's Academy for these researchers has already met on two occasions in the Frith Centre. There is always room for more members, of course. Please contact John (admin@glosacademy.org) if you would like details of the Academy. The Trustees are grateful to John for developing this approach so successfully and also to Jan Broadway for setting up a data base for recording the notes taken during the research.

The Trustees are delighted that a real partnership is now developing between our contracted historians, volunteers from GLHA's member societies and Gloucestershire Archives. Together we are making real progress in completing the missing volumes of VCH Gloucestershire.

David Aldred
for the Trustees

Gotherington and Area Local History Society

How it all began

In 1981 Gotherington School celebrated its centenary with the publication of a book, *Lucky to Survive* which was written by Owen Stinchcombe. The book proved to be a good measure of how interested residents were in local history, as every copy was sold. This then was the catalyst for the formation of the local history society and the first meeting, attended by sixty local people, was held in October 1982, at which David Aldred spoke about the use of local records.

An immediate challenge for the fledgling society was the lack of money. Speakers needed to be found who would be willing to talk for free. Fortunately other local history societies rallied round and, along with the contacts generated by Mick Aston of Bristol University (before he became famous on *Time Team*!) a programme was put together. Over the years the Society has endeavoured to keep a balance between the choice of speakers and the general ambience of the meetings, catering for the 'more serious' historian as well as the average villager who just wants to know more about the local area. Striking the balance has meant that since those early days we have been able to enjoy around 230 talks and some 60 field trips. An annual series of evening classes and a number of day schools have also been organised over the years, seeking to develop skills such as reading secretary hand and developing an in-depth knowledge of historical events. The aim too has been to keep these topics as local as possible, thus we have rarely strayed beyond a twenty to thirty mile radius of the village.



Peter gets up close and personal at Castle Frome on a Society excursion to Herefordshire

In the early days, alongside the monthly meetings, the Society generated interest by publishing a series of research papers. These reflected the variety and depth of historical information available about our local area and included such titles as *Gotherington's Rare Collection of Books*, *Battle for an Ancient Lane*, and *Evacuees and Refugees*. Publishing these research papers encouraged members to undertake a more in-depth study of the area and, in 1993, *Gotherington, Portrait of a Village* was published (revised and reprinted in 2012). A different approach to the style of publication was devised in 2002 when *Aspects of Oxenton* was produced as a boxed collection of ten booklets. These included one based upon a

bundle of love letters written in the early 19th century, found hidden in a local chimney. The most recent publication to date has been a set of four guided walks written and illustrated by Geoff Newsum, taking our local historians out of their comfy armchairs and into the beautiful surroundings of the Gotherington area.

At present our latest project is centred on the history of the houses. Every house already has a record sheet detailing the long-term history of the property. However, as we all know only too well, time marches on and this project aims to record the more recent history of each house, tapping into the memories and knowledge of the occupants who live there in the here and now. All 450 houses have been photographed so that together, with the written record, a picture of what Gotherington was like in the early 21st century has been captured for posterity.



21st anniversary exhibition, 2003

Gotherington and Area Local History Society continues to be one of the most popular societies in the village attracting people to meetings from outside the village as well as loyal support from within. Future plans include a commemoration of the First World War on Sunday 3rd August when residents will share the experiences of their own ancestors by bringing along stories, photographs and records that demonstrate the varied roles those people played. Our web page too enables us to reach out beyond our area, so if you're interested in finding out more, then please visit www.gotherington.org.uk/historysociety.asp.

Caroline Meller

Chair, Gotherington & Area LHS

Book Review

Cottage Histories in Bledington, Gloucestershire

Michael Weller

Published June 2013 by Bledington Local History Society

Occasional Publication No. 7

A4, paperback, 129 pages, 63 illustrations, £15 plus p&p.

Following on from his previous publication on the farms and farm holdings in the village of Bledington, Michael Weller has this time concentrated his research on the old cottages and the families who lived in them. In all, 86 pre-20th century cottages have been studied based mainly on documentary evidence such as old maps, deeds, wills, surveys and sales catalogues found locally at Gloucestershire Archives, at Oxford Record Office or the National Archives at Kew. Oral history has been gathered with the help of the local population and previous owners.

The book begins with a map showing numbered properties that existed in 1769 and then, working street by street around the village, it gives the history of each thoroughfare and of the selected cottages. Using a variety of maps, censuses, the Lloyd George survey, old photographs and family pictures, the village past is brought to life. In particular, the availability of local deeds and wills has allowed Michael Weller to describe the ownership of each property and how it has passed from one generation to another over the centuries.

Take Mary's Cottage on the south side of Chapel Lane as an example. The author records how, in 1756, two cottages were bought by the University of Oxford from Barbara and Hannah, the daughters of Henry and Barbara Gardiner. One of the cottages was later sold to the Methodist Council and then, in the late 1880s, to Charles Fletcher who promptly sold off some of the land. In the 20th century, the two cottages were rented by John and Elizabeth Hall and their daughter, Mary. John was the son of a local blacksmith and had worked on Stows Farm for over 60 years. It was their daughter, Mary, after whom the cottage is now named.

A copy of this book can be found at Gloucestershire Archives or the Bledington Local History Society. A few copies are available for sale from the author who can be contacted on:

michaelweller759@btinternet.com. Whilst the book lacks an index to the highlighted names of the owners, occupiers and cottages mentioned within its text, this can only encourage historians to read the book more closely rather than pick out the relevant items. References to the documents used are

given throughout. Certainly this publication is a very good example of a combination of both local and family history research – every village should have one!

Liz Jack

*Cheltenham
Local History Society*

**CHELTENHAM LIFE:
1914 - 1919**

**What was life like for
those left behind?**

- Where did 1,000 Cheltenham women work?
- What changed?
- How did Cheltenham contribute to the war?
- 1919 - back to business?



Saturday 19th July 2014 10 a.m. – 4p.m.
ST MATTHEWS CHURCH, Clarence Street,
Cheltenham

11 a.m. "Leckhampton Court VAD Hospital" by Eric Miller, Chairman of Leckhampton Local History Society

2 p.m. "The Home Front Consumer"

ROBERT OPIE Founder of the Museum of Brands, Packaging and Advertising, London, formerly in Gloucester, Consumer Historian.

Tickets: Day Tickets £5 includes talks, exhibition and free tea or coffee

Talks 11 a.m. £1 2 p.m. £3 Exhibition Only £1

Tickets available from **Tourist Information Office** The Wilson Art Gallery and Museum or from Neela Mann Tel: 01242 238920 Orchard House, 338 Old Bath Road, Cheltenham GL53 9AF

Photo of Nellie Wright and Pals, Land Army, by kind permission of Wayne Finch.