

NEWSLETTER

Gloucestershire Local History Association



Gloucestershire
Local History Association

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GLHA Members' Forums, March 2nd and June 25th

Since the publication of our last Newsletter in February 2015, we have held two Members' Forums, both of which were attended by between 25 and 30 people, representing around half of the Association's 49 member groups.

The March meeting included a presentation on the work of the Friends of Gloucestershire Archives, and in particular their ongoing fund raising for the Archives' 'For the Record' project, by Stephen Haygarth, the Chair of the Friends, and Heather Forbes, the County Council's Head of Information Services and Archives. It also received the usual 'updates' on the Association's activities and finances from its Chair and Treasurer, and reports from representatives of the County History Trust and the Archives. This was the first meeting at which we introduced a specific 'topic for discussion', which on this occasion focused on the benefits of the Newsletter. The wide-ranging debate will result in a number of changes to the format, content and layout of future Newsletters.

The June meeting was also the Association's AGM, at which the Annual Reports of the Chair and the Treasurer were presented, and the Committee for 2015-16 was elected. Thanks were given to Alison Hobson and Mary Sullivan, both of whom were standing down from the Committee, and each of whom received a bouquet of flowers from the Association. The AGM was preceded by a

presentation on 'Making the most of the media' by Mark Cummings of BBC Radio Gloucestershire, followed by a 'question and answer' session. One result of this was the recording, during the 'interval' between Mark's presentation and the formal business of the AGM, of an interview with Caroline Meller of Gloucester Local History Society on her search for an example of the 'City of Gloucester Rose'. This was broadcast the next morning and soon resulted in the discovery of an example in a garden in Abbeydale – a story that was later taken up by the Daily Telegraph: such is the power of the media!

As usual, both Forums included time for refreshments and socialising, and we are grateful to Alison Hobson for organising these, and to Louise Scriven for baking cakes for the AGM. At both meetings, the GLHA Chair expressed the Association's continuing gratitude to the Archives for hosting our meetings.

The Association's next Forum will be held at the Archives on the evening of Thursday 10th September and will include a presentation by Sally Self and Linda Viner on the work that volunteers do to support the work of the Victoria County History contract staff. The 'topic for discussion' will be the format, timing and possible content of future Members' Forums.



2015 Summer Meeting at Lechlade

Around 50 people attended this year's Summer afternoon meeting, hosted by Lechlade History Society. A display about the town – an historic Thames-side port – was on show for people to look at while having coffee on arrival at the Memorial Hall.

The meeting began with an introductory talk on the history of the town by the Society's Chair, Marian Winckles, following which we divided into groups for walking tours of the town. One of these focused on the Market Place and the medieval St Lawrence's church, another on the town centre and riverside wharves, and the third (involving a short minibus ride to the Trout Inn) on St John's Lock and the site of the vanished St John's Priory and Hospital, to the east of the town.

The afternoon was 'rounded off' with a splendid tea, provided by the ladies of the local WI, and a 'thank you' from the GLHA Chair to all those Lechlade History Society members who had helped in the organisation of the meeting, including the displays and the guided tours.

Next year's Summer meeting will be held at Chipping Campden, courtesy of Chipping Campden History Society, on Saturday 16th July, and further meetings are planned at Tewkesbury in 2017 and Cirencester in 2018.



Tour of Llanthony Secunda Priory in Gloucester

On August 20th, twenty five members of GLHA societies were privileged to be the first visitors to be taken on a tour of the grounds of the Priory. The site was taken over by Gloucester City Council in the 1980s and, since 2007, the Llanthony Secunda Priory Trust has been responsible for repair and conservation of the buildings. In November 2013, it was announced that the Trust had been successful in its application for Heritage Lottery Funding for the restoration of the Priory buildings and grounds, and for the creation of a community-based interpretation centre. A Project Team was appointed, overseen by Project Manager Dr Edwina Bell, and a detailed plan for the development of the site has been drawn up.

An important part of the project is to encourage the community to learn about the history of the site and to engage in events and activities based there. The members of our group were “guinea pigs” for the Trust in planning how people can access the site during and after its development.

We very much enjoyed being taken around the site by Trust guides Liz Griffiths and Pat Harper, who have a wealth of knowledge of its history. We were able to see the surviving gatehouse and late medieval barn as well as the farmhouse which contains evidence of architecture from several hundred years of construction and repair. Although the building requires much restoration, we were able to visit the old rooms with the aid of our torches!

Dr Bell showed us the plans for restoration and explained how the Trust intends to preserve and promote the site and its history for the benefit of generations to come. The site will have public access apart from special events. We look forward to seeing the plans come to fruition and hope to be able to visit again as the work progresses.

For more information about the priory visit www.llanthonysecunda.org

N.B. GLHA plans to make an annual visit to a place of historic interest - particularly where a

conservation/restoration project is under way. We would welcome suggestions for possible venues.



Dates for your Diary

Local History Day: October 24th 2015

People to Places - Immigration and Emigration: to, from and within Gloucestershire. To be held at Pate's Grammar School, Cheltenham, 10.30am-4.30pm

Our three speakers have been confirmed. Dr Jessica Lutkin, of the University of York's 'England's Immigrants 1330-1550' project, will talk on 'From Iceland to Portugal: Resident Immigrants in Gloucestershire and Bristol, 1330-1550'. Theo Wiggill will talk on 'The British settlers of 1820 to South Africa: Bradshaw's party from Gloucestershire' and Florence Nyasamo-Thomas will talk on 'Untold stories: exploring Cheltenham's black history'. A full programme for the day will be available shortly.

Forum dates for 2015

Thursday Sept 10th 7.30 pm. Sally Self from Cheltenham and Linda Viner from Cirencester will talk about what volunteer researchers are doing to support the work of the VCH contract staff.

Discussion topic: the format, timing and possible content of future Members' Forums.

Monday Dec 7th 2.00 pm. Gwilym and Carol Davies will entertain us with traditional songs and inform us about the Glos SINGLE project.

Forum dates for 2016 NB - We propose to alter the evening start to 7 pm.

Monday March 7th 2 pm

Thursday June 9th 7.00 pm AGM.

Thursday Sept 8th 7.00 pm

Monday Dec 5th 2 pm.

Summer Afternoon Meetings

2016 – Chipping Campden (16th July)

2017 – Tewkesbury

2018 – Cirencester



Gloucestershire County History Trust

During 2015 the Trust's efforts to promote the VCH in the county will bear the fruit alluded to in the last GLHA newsletter. Kate Wallis' work on Yate is appearing as a VCH 'short' this summer and Big Red Book Volume XIII (West of Severn parishes) will soon be going to the printers for publication towards the end of this year or early next year. Our County Editor John Chandler has almost completed work on Twyning parish, which is the last parish to be written for Vol.XIII. The first drafts of sections of medieval and early modern Cirencester and Cheltenham are being prepared for publishing on our website for viewing and reviewing and work on the Sodburys has begun. The Trust continues to value the work of its contracted editors and the volunteers under the watchful eye of our County Editor. In February VCH Director Richard Hoyle joined the academy for a day and took delight in expressing his approval for what we are achieving. Our monthly academy meetings continue to fulfil their purpose as a focus for editors and volunteers to share ideas and develop good practices. All members on GLHA's emailing list should have received our second newsletter in January; if not, it can be read on our website.

In response to comments about the website made at the March meeting of GLHA, our chairman James Hodsdon has now brought it up-to-date. Please take time to study it, particularly the expanded section on how to make a contribution to ensure the continuing success of the Trust. It is now even easier to donate to maintain GLHA's generous support to enable us to continue our current progress.

All the details of these developments (and more) are included in the newsletter at <http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/gloucestershire/support>

David Aldred
for the trustees



Gloucestershire Archives Updates

Know Your Place – West of England launches

We're very pleased to announce the launch of the HLF-funded Know Your Place – West of England project. Over the next 18 months Gloucestershire Archives will be contributing to the provision of

online access to a range of archival resources and historic environment data covering the area formed by the old counties of Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire. This project builds on the very successful Know Your Place – Bristol website.

The expanded website will include digitised 25 inch Ordnance Survey mapping provided by the British Library, as well as selected tithe, enclosure, town plans and other estate and parish maps held at Gloucestershire Archives, Somerset Archives & Local Studies, Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre, Bath Record Office, Bristol Record Office and Wells City Archives. Users – members of the public, local heritage groups, repositories – will be invited to contribute to a community layer by uploading or linking to other digitised collections.

This is an ambitious but exciting project with several strands including volunteer training, schools liaison and a touring exhibition.

Follow the project's progress on Twitter and Facebook and if you've any enquiries about it please do get in touch.

Gloucestershire Archives prepares for the Heritage Hub

What does this involve?

In December we're going to reduce the hours our research room is open so we can start preparing for the major work needed to create the Heritage Hub and strongroom block which form part of the 'For the Record' project.

How will this affect me?

The research room will be open as usual up to, and including, Saturday 4th December, then from 9:00am to 5:00pm only on:

Tuesday 8th and Wednesday 9th December

Tuesday 15th and Wednesday 16th December

Tuesday 22th and Wednesday 23rd December

The Archives will be closed from Thursday 24th December until Monday 4th January and will be open during our usual Tuesday to Saturday hours from Tuesday 5th January.

Will I be able to see original documents?

Yes! But we'll ask you to pre-order any documents you want to see. Please give us as much notice as

you can: at least 2 working days if you'd like to see three items and at least 5 working days if you'd like to see more. You can order documents yourself while you're visiting the Archives or you can email the references to us - archives@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Although most of the staff will be involved in work behind-the-scenes, we will produce documents from the strongrooms once each day at 12:30, if necessary.

What else will I be able to use?

Our PCs will give you access to Find My Past and Ancestry which both include digital images of many basic sources such as wills and inventories and parish registers. You can also use these PCs to access other local and family history websites. Many local newspapers, including the Gloucester Journal and The Citizen are available on microfilm and we have a wide selection of local and family history books and journals on the open shelves

Gloucestershire Family History Society's Family History Centre will be open as normal until 18th December. The volunteers there will be happy to help with your family history enquiries.

Want to find out more about the For the Record project?

Please look at our webpage www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives/fortherecord and our onsite displays for more information about the plans we and our project partners have and how you can get involved!



Yorkley History Group

On Wednesday 1st June a brand new history group was formed, meeting at the new village hall at Yorkley in the Forest of Dean. Over 40 people attended, showing that we needed to meet in the large hall and not the small one I had booked. The idea of the group is to focus on the villages of Yorkley, Pillowell, Oldcroft and Viney Hill and to look at the history of those settlements with regard to settlement, forestry, geology, industry, religion and



Yorkley Institute built 1921, demolished 2014

whatever else we can find.

At our first meeting we discussed how to set up a history group and at the second meeting in July there was a talk about a Yorkley boy who was transported to Bermuda for the crimes he had committed. Since then we have followed a guided walk around Oldcroft stopping at the various points of historic interest like the enclosure stones marking three Forest of Dean enclosures, looking at the old Methodist chapel erected in 1876 and pointing out large stones at the side of the road placed there to stop the horses and carts running away down the hill.

At our third meeting we looked at maps of our area dating back to the 18th century, discovering name changes and introduction of buildings into the Forest fringe. Further meetings will concentrate on how to trace the history of your house, then we shall be looking at schools, chapels and shops, hopefully aiming to produce a web site and maybe a book in the future.

We meet at Yorkley Community Centre on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.30 pm. There is a small charge of £2 per meeting to cover the hire of the hall and a cup of tea and biscuits. For further details contact Averil Kear.

Tel: 01594563165 Mobile: 07987241190 Email:
a.kear@homecall.co.uk

Remember history starts yesterday so all ages are very welcome.



New Community Centre



New Publication: The Organ of Berkeley Castle, Gloucestershire

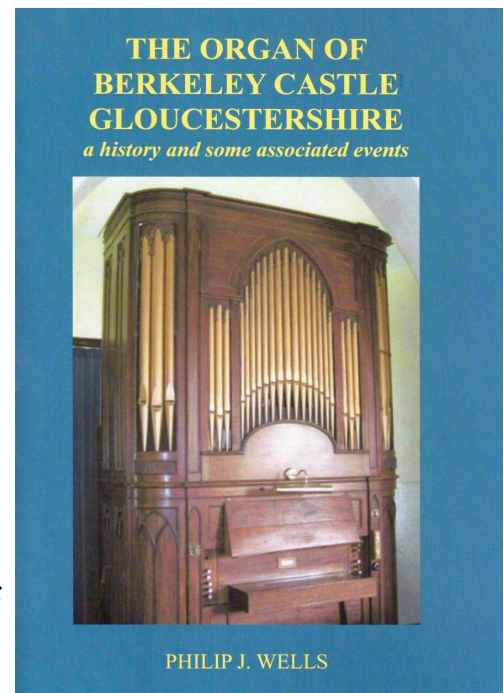
By Philip J. Wells

The Berkeley Castle chamber organ was built in 1804 by William Gray, a leading London organ builder, for Frederick Augustus, 5th Earl of Berkeley and Mary Cole, Countess of Berkeley. It stood in the Castle 'Musick Room' which new research has shown is now part of the Private Apartments. It was played by Charles Wesley Jnr, in Gray's London workshop, and William Mutlow, organist of Gloucester Cathedral, in Berkeley Castle in 1807 for a visit by the Prince of Wales. Associated events touched on in the booklet include concerts in the Great Hall together with musicians taking part e.g.

Mr C Harford Lloyd and Mr C. Hubert H. Parry. This is believed to be the first such attempt to document the history of an instrument that remained within the Castle for nearly 120 years, before it became unfashionable, was moved, 'improved' and finally disposed of to Liddiatt and Sons, the local organ builders. It is now in St Anne's Church, Cwmffrwd, Carmarthenshire. Proceeds from sales will directly support the work of the Friends of Berkeley Castle (FoBC), part of the Berkeley Castle Charitable Trust.

Booklet format: A5, 40 pages, fully illustrated. Price: £5.00, or £6.00 by post from:

Philip J. Wells, 80 Lantern Close, Berkeley, Gloucestershire.
GL13 9DE



Liz Jack's Literary Reviews

Stroud Subscription Rooms (1832 – 1950)

By Marion Hearfield

Having purchased Marion Hearfield's earlier book on William Cowle, I was keen to see whether she could maintain her high standard of research with her latest product. I was not disappointed. This booklet tells the story of Stroud Subscription Rooms from its inception in 1832 until the end of World War Two. Although it had been mentioned in many earlier works, this is the first booklet dedicated to the Subscription Rooms alone. Many new but original documents have been located and used as background material. The whole booklet covers more than a dozen different aspects of the life of the building and comes with a useful index.

The Borough of Stroud was created by the Reform Act of 1832 and the gentry of the town decided that its new status should be marked with the erection of an impressive public building. Plans were drawn up and subscriptions of £50 were attracted towards the cost of a site and the new building. Included in the booklet are the names of all subscribers and a brief biography of each.

The management committee struggled to raise enough money but, eventually, in 1834, the building was finished well enough to admit the public. Local dignitaries donated paintings to decorate the

walls. A list of the tradesmen and suppliers, found in the bank book, covering the period from 1832 to 1874, is also given.

Over the years, a variety of events took place in the Subscription Rooms; political meetings, musical concerts, tea parties, circuses, exhibitions, balls, celebratory dinners, recitals, etc., just about every type of event you can think of. But despite its many uses, financing the Subscription Rooms was a problem; it often incurred an overdraft. To bring in income, the George Room was refitted as a Masonic Temple and part of the building later became a club. A billiard room was added and a public reading room was opened later with residents coming in daily to read the latest news from London.

Towards the end of the 19th century, a steward, Henry Twitchett, was appointed to take over the day-to-day running of the club. He was the person responsible for bringing London companies to Stroud to entertain the population. When World War One was declared, the Subscription Rooms became even more in demand as a variety of committees were formed and needed somewhere to meet. Fundraising events also took place there and demonstrations were given on how to cope with such aspects as food shortages. During WW2, the building was requisitioned by the Air Ministry and a useful inventory of the building and contents was made. The rooms were returned to the owners in 1947 but were too expensive to run. By the end of the 1950s, they could not afford to pay for the necessary improvements so the whole building was sold to the Urban District Council.

Using a variety of archives, Marion Hearfield has produced a fascinating booklet about a much loved public building. Published in 2015 by Stroud Local History Society, this A5 booklet consists of 48 pages and costs £5. To purchase a copy of the booklet, go to www.stroudlocalhistorysociety.org.uk

The New Regard

The Journal of the Forest of Dean Local History Society.

The Forest of Dean Local History Society was founded in 1948 and now has over 300 members world-wide. Since 1985, the society has produced an annual journal called The New Regard. Each publication is A4 in size, has approximately 70 to 80 pages, and is mainly black and white although it includes some colour when necessary. The journal is of a high quality, in both its production and in its content. In fact, the society website states that The New Regard “is recognised as one of the best of its kind, to the extent that four of the contributors have been shortlisted for the British Association of Local History Association award for a published article.”

On the whole, The New Regard contains an incredible range of articles, covering topics such as mines, quarries, forests, trees, rivers, roads, tramways, industries, archaeology, schools, churches, houses, families – I could continue. Just to give you a taster of what you can find in these pages, I list a few titles of past articles:

Arthur Quinton Barton, chemist and optician, 1889-1956

The Enigma of Crocket's Holes, Newent

The Civil War in the Forest of Dean, 1642-1646

Bream Traders

Memories of Parkend during World War II

The Crown Prince of Siam at Westbury Court

Cup Stones and Arrow Stones

The Development of Horlick Malted Milk and Infant Food

Earthworks in or near Hay Wood, Oxenhall

The Woodside Infanticides

Ironworking at Flaxley Abbey

A Clean End to the Shift: Princess Royal Pithead Baths

Highmeadow House

The Union Pit Disaster: Bixlade 1902

If you are researching a particular topic and consider it may have some possible connection to the Forest of Dean area, I suggest you look at the online (and downloadable) index to the articles from all 29 editions which can be found at:

<http://www.forestofdeanhistory.org.uk/publications/new-regards/>

Occasionally, The New Regard is dedicated to just one topic, with all articles relating to that, as was the case with the 28th journal, entitled Cinderford through the Ages. Back in 1963, Ronald Beard produced an undergraduate project about the town and, fifty years later, he compared life there as it was in 2013 with his earlier findings. This particular edition contains 92 photographs, charts, maps showing coal seams, iron ore deposits, tram roads and rail networks, and tables such as birth and death rates, plus much more. The journal includes photographs of Cinderford taken by Ron in 1963 and corresponding ones taken 50 years later. The aspects covered in the articles include:

The Site and Situation of Cinderford

Industrial Development (covering the iron and coal industries, quarrying, forestry and wood industries, brickmaking, engineering and other industries)

The Growth of Settlement

The Future

All editions of The New Regard are available to be read at Gloucestershire Archives but, if you prefer to buy your own back copy or join the society so that you receive the journal each year, go to:

www.forestofdeanhistory.org.uk

Looking at the contents lists of all 29 editions of The New Regard there isn't one single journal which does not have at least one article which I would not happily sit down and read.

Liz Jack