

# NEWSLETTER

Gloucestershire Local History Association



Gloucestershire  
Local History Association

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## **Members' Forum, 10<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

Twenty-three people, representing 20 of the Association's members, attended our quarterly Forum at Gloucestershire Archives on Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> September; apologies were received from representatives of a further 11 member groups.

The meeting began with a presentation by Sally Self from Cheltenham and Linda Viner from Cirencester on what volunteer researchers are doing to support the work of the County History Trust contract staff in researching the forthcoming Victoria County History volumes on Cheltenham and Cirencester.

Reports were received from the County History Trust (a report on whose activities is included elsewhere in this Newsletter) and from Gloucestershire Archives. The latter focused in particular on some forthcoming events, and changes to opening times and access to original documents during December 2015, while preparations for the work required for the Archives' major 'For the Record' project are underway.

The GLHA Chairman and Treasurer reported on the Association's recent and future activities and on

its financial situation, which is very healthy, with a bank balance of £1,924, plus a £1,000 grant from the Summerfield Charitable Trust towards the cost of the 2015 Local History Day on 24<sup>th</sup> October. Membership still stood at 49 and most members had now renewed their current year subscription.

The Forum discussed the format, timing and content of future Forum meetings. It was agreed that the present arrangements worked well. It would be necessary to find an alternative venue for Forum meetings from September 2016 onwards, due to the 'For the Record' project work at the Archives, and it was agreed that one venue – rather than a different venue for each meeting - was preferable.

The Chairman thanked Gloucestershire Archives for hosting the Forum.



### **GLHA Local History Day, 24<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

The Association's third Local History Day was held at Pate's Grammar School in Cheltenham on Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup> October, the theme being 'People to Places: Immigration and Emigration - to from and within Gloucestershire'. This year's event was funded by the Summerfield Charitable Trust, which enabled the 110 + people who attended to do so free of charge. GLHA is most grateful to the Trust for its generous support.

This year's three speakers were: Dr Jessica Lutkin, a member of the team based at the University of York researching 'England's Immigrants 1330-1550', who spoke on 'From Iceland to Portugal: Resident Immigrants in Gloucestershire and Bristol 1330-1550'; Theo Wiggill, who was visiting from Australia, who spoke on 'The British settlers of 1820 to South Africa: Bradshaw's party from Gloucestershire', which had included one of his ancestors, Isaac Wiggill, on whose life he had recently published a book; and Florence Nyasamo-Thomas, the co-ordinator of Black History Month Cheltenham, who spoke on 'Exploring Cheltenham's African History'.



*Winners of the Best Display 2015 were Gloucester LHS, represented by Merv Smith, Caroline Meller and Danny Sparke*

Eleven member groups prepared displays on the chosen theme and judging for the 'best display' was

undertaken by John Loosley from the County History Trust, Vicky Thorpe and John Putley from Gloucestershire Archives and Carol Maxwell from Painswick Local History Society, who were last year's 'best display' winner. In their 'feedback', the judges said how impressed they were with the quality and variety of the displays, all of which were very creditable, but that they had decided to choose Gloucester Local History Society's display as the winner, as it covered both immigration and emigration in what they felt was an innovative way. The winning Society will receive a year's free membership of the GLHA and it is hoped that its display will be shown in the Coffee Lounge at Gloucestershire Archives early in 2016.

The other Award that was announced at the History Day was the Bryan Jerrard Award for what the judges believe to be the best published article on an aspect of Gloucestershire's history during the previous year. The 2015 Award was won by John Rhodes for his article on 'The Civil War Defences of Gloucester' in the *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* 132, with a 'runner-up' Award to Ben Lennon for his article on 'The distribution and origin of *meends* in the Forest of Dean' in the Forest of Dean Local History Society's journal, *The New Regard* 29. Both the winner and the runner-up received book tokens and the GLHA is most grateful to The History Press for sponsoring the Award for the second year. We were delighted that Bryan Jerrard was able to travel from Hampshire to present the Award to John Rhodes, and the Chairman thanked his fellow judges, David Aldred and Mike Greet, for their input to the Award judging.

In addition to the speakers and displays, the event also included three book stalls of new and second hand books, organised by Geoff and Elaine North, the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society and The History Press. Gloucestershire Archives was also there to promote its activities and in particular the 'For the Record' project.

At the end of the event the Chairman thanked all those who had helped to make it a success, especially his fellow Committee members, and in particular Vicki Walker for her secretarial support and for completing the paperwork for the Summerfield Trust grant, David Scriven for organising the technical side of the meeting and Janet Hudson for co-ordinating refreshments. He was grateful to Pate's Grammar School for the hire of the Hall and especially to Jim Wain of the School staff for help with the technical arrangements, and to those individuals who came to the school on the Friday afternoon to help us get set up for the Saturday: Frank Colls, Geoff and Elaine North, David Scriven and Vicki and Andrew Walker. Thanks were also due to all those who helped in one way or another on the day, including staffing the 'welcome desk', helping with refreshments (and especially to Shirley

Dicker and Louise Scriven for baking cakes) and helping to dismantle everything at the end.



*Guests at the Local History Day – left to right – Bryan Jerrard, Florence Nyasamo-Thomas, Jessica Lutkin, Tom Barrett, Theo Wiggill.*



## **GLHA Enquiries**

Ever since it was established in 2012, the Association has been contactable through an Enquiries facility on its website ([www.gloshistory.org.uk](http://www.gloshistory.org.uk)). Enquiries are automatically forwarded to the GLHA Committee member who deals with them on behalf of the Association – initially Alison Hobson from Fairford History Society and currently Janet Hudson from Stonehouse History Group, to both of whom we are most grateful.

Many of the enquiries that we have received over the past three years have been from people wishing to find out about some aspect of the past, rather than about the Association itself. We make it clear on our website that we do not deal with family history enquiries (for which potential enquirers are directed, via a web link, to the Gloucestershire Family History Society), but we do try to deal as best we can with all other enquiries. What we don't do is original research for people – but wherever possible we point them to relevant publications/websites or to Archives or Libraries where they can do the research for themselves. If their enquiry relates to a specific place, we refer them, or forward

their enquiry, to the relevant local history group – and we are always grateful to GLHA member groups for dealing with these on our behalf. Among those groups who have recently helped in this way are Cheltenham, Chipping Campden, Cirencester, Gloucester and Gotherington.

Enquiries about the history of individual houses have been a recurring theme, as have enquiries about aspects of past conflicts – including Civil War plaques in Gloucester, local Army and Prisoner of War camps and whether there had ever been a battle at Blanchworth, near Berkeley (we think not!). Other very specific enquiries have included the Honour of Gloucester, the County's Royal connections, local radio masts and even whether there had ever been a TGI Friday's restaurant at Quedgeley (again we think not, but are happy to 'stand corrected')!



### **GLHA Dates for your Diary 2015 - 2016**

#### **Forum Meetings**

2015

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2 pm: GLHA business followed by Gwilym and Carol Davies, 'Let us be Merry': local folk carols and wassails.

2016

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> March - 2 pm: The Constabulary Archive volunteers will tell us about the work they do, including a display of relevant archives. Followed by GLHA business.

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> June - 7 pm: Annual General Meeting. Speaker to follow.

8<sup>th</sup> September - 7 pm: Ian Standing from the Forest of Dean Buildings Preservation Trust. Followed by GLHA business.

5<sup>th</sup> December - 2 pm: GLHA business followed by Pat Furley Lantern Slide Show.

2016 Summer Evening Outing, to be arranged.

Next GLHA Local History Day (date to be arranged), topic: "Gardens for Food, Fun and Flowers"

#### **Summer Afternoon Meetings**

2016 – Chipping Campden (16<sup>th</sup> July)

2017 – Tewkesbury

2018 – Cirencester

## **GLHA Member Groups November 2015 (total 48)**

A list of Local History Organisations in Gloucestershire, and contact details where known, can be found on our website <http://www.gloshistory.org.uk/organisations.php>

Unfortunately, one of the Association's members, Bledington Local History Society, has ceased to exist, but the former Society's Archivist will continue to maintain the Bledington Village archives.

### **County-wide organisations**

Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society

Cotteswold Naturalists' Field Club

Gloucestershire Archaeology

Friends of Gloucestershire Archives

Gloucestershire Archives

Gloucestershire Building Recording Group

Gloucestershire County History Trust

Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology

Friends of Glendower

Friends of Purton

Gloucester Local History Society

Gotherington and Area Local History Society

Lechlade Historical Society

Leckhampton Local History Society

Lydbrook Historical Society

Maisemore Local History Society

Minchinhampton Local History Group

Nailsworth Society Local History Research Group

Northleach Historical Society

Oakridge History Group

Painswick Local History Society

Prestbury Local History Society

Randwick Historical Association

Slimbridge Local History Society

Stonehouse History Group

Stroud Local History Society

Swindon Village Society Local History Group

Tewkesbury Historical Society

The Rissingtons Local History Society

Tidenham Historical Group

Uley Society

Upper Windrush Local History Society

Upton St Leonards Local History Group

WEA Stroud Branch

Winchcombe History Group

### **District-wide organisations**

Forest of Dean Buildings Preservation Trust

Forest of Dean Local History Society

### **Town or parish based organisations**

Blockley Heritage Society

Chipping Campden History Society

Charlton Kings Local History Society

Cheltenham Local History Society

Churchdown Local History Society

Cirencester Archaeological and Historical Society

Colesbourne History Group

Cranham Local History Society

Dursley & Cam Society

Fairford History Society

## Gloucestershire County History Trust

The really exciting news from the Trust is that our endeavours to keep VCH Glos flourishing have borne fruit and the history of Yate, the first instalment of our foray into South Gloucestershire for what will become red book volume 14, was launched at Yate Heritage Centre on 24<sup>th</sup> September by the Lord Lieutenant, Dame Janet Trotter, to local dignitaries, academics and other invited guests. The history comes in the form of an attractive paperback in the VCH 'Shorts' series. It has been welcomed and very well reviewed and we hope members of local history societies will wish to purchase a copy for themselves. These are available at £12 from Gloucestershire Archives. Please let our General Editor, John Chandler, or our treasurer, Jonathan Comber ([jonathan.comber@easynet.co.uk](mailto:jonathan.comber@easynet.co.uk) or 01684 577134) know in advance. Alternatively, they can be obtained from Jonathan (plus £3 p&p). The author Rose Wallis is now working with Beth Hartland on the three nearby Sodbury parishes. Rose, who lectures in history at UWE, arranged for one of her students, Karl Keating, to study as a VCH intern during the summer, and now another, Lauren Perrett, is working with her at Gloucester under another placement scheme.

Volume 13, which covers thirteen parishes in the Vale of Gloucester and Leadon Valley, is now finished, and the text and illustrations are with VCH Central Office prior to submission to Boydell and Brewer, our publisher. Until his retirement in 2010 this volume was edited by John Jurica, who wrote four parishes. Simon Draper has also written four, and John Chandler, who took over editorship in 2011, has written the remaining five and the volume introduction. It should be published next Spring.

A recent appeal to members of the Cheltenham Local History Society has resulted in an encouraging number of new volunteer researchers coming forward to work on what will become volume 15, covering Cheltenham and adjacent parishes. They join the team organised by Sally Self, and are working under the guidance of Alex Craven, who has now produced a text on the town in the early modern period. Together with Beth Hartland's work on medieval Cheltenham, we plan to produce a second paperback in the 'Shorts' series, covering Cheltenham before the Spa.

We are hoping to recruit a historian shortly to continue research into the early modern period in Cirencester. Beth Hartland has almost completed her account of the town in the medieval period, and Antonia Catchpole has produced a study of its urban topography and development. Next we plan to engage an expert on Roman Corinium. Our band of volunteers is smaller than that in



Cheltenham but they continue to read sources and collect information on various topics.

Our monthly academy days at Gloucestershire Archives are increasingly valued by our volunteers and contributing editors as they provide an opportunity to discuss current matters and delve into local history subjects and techniques, often presented by visiting experts. Highlights have included 'field trips' to Cirencester and Cheltenham and, most recently, a talk by Simon Draper on the usefulness of place-names for understanding settlement patterns. Simon worked for VCH Gloucestershire before moving to VCH Oxfordshire.

Finally, the Trust is very grateful to the many people in Cheltenham, Cirencester and elsewhere who are researching as volunteers. However, we would also be interested to hear from anyone (potentially but not necessarily new trustees) who would be prepared to act as locally-based 'advocates' for the three current projects – the Yate area, plus Cheltenham and Cirencester as just mentioned.

Depending on individual preferences, this might involve some hands-on work with volunteers, but ideally would focus on raising awareness of the project, and networking with local bodies. If this sounds like you, or someone you know, do please get in touch with the John Chandler or the Trustees at the Archives.

David Aldred  
for the Trustees



### **Liz Jack's Literary Review**

#### **Memories of Choirs and Cloisters**

#### **Fifty Years of Music**

Originally by A. Herbert Brewer: Edited by John Morehen

Published by Stainer & Bell, 2015. Price £14.99. ISBN 978-0-85249-946-7

The original version of *Memories of Choirs and Cloisters* was published in 1931 and contained the author's recollections and anecdotes. In this year, celebrating the 300th anniversary of the Three Choirs Festival, John Morehen has modernised the spellings, names and punctuation, and generally organised the text into a more coherent memoir.

The book consists of nearly two hundred A5 pages divided into over 20 chapters, ranging from

Brewer's early upbringing in Gloucester, through his various professional appointments around the country, followed by his return to his home town where he became so very involved in the musical life of the city.

Throughout the book there are fascinating anecdotes which bring Herbert Brewer's experiences to life and give glimpses of his character. One early anecdote describes how, as a young chorister at St. Mark's Church in Gloucester, Brewer enticed a stray cat into the vestry and then hid it in one of the organ pipes. To the amusement of the children in the congregation, the cat added some weird and wonderful noises as an accompaniment to the efforts of the organist, before climbing out of the pipe and escaping. Brewer was temporarily suspended for his part in the event but did not return to the choir. Later, he was accepted as a chorister at Gloucester Cathedral where he progressed to being both soloist and head boy of the then College School.

After appointments in Oxford, Bristol, Coventry and Tonbridge, Brewer returned to Gloucester in 1896 as the organist at the Cathedral. His first big function was the celebration of Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1897. For his first Three Choirs Festival in the following year, Brewer determined that the chorus should be drawn from the three counties of Gloucestershire, Worcestershire and Herefordshire, a move that was deemed very successful.

The book is full of Brewer's reminiscences of musicians, singers and composers, of places and events that he attended, most of them accompanied by stories which bring the whole to life. He even includes some political events, having been made the City High Sheriff in 1922. Copious notes are provided on most pages throughout the text, with the editor expanding on Brewer's own memories, adding details where necessary to extend the original information and to enhance the text. A comprehensive index is given at the end, together with an index listing the composers and their compositions that are mentioned.

*Memories of Choirs and Cloisters* provides a fascinating insight into the life of one of our greatest cathedral organists and the people with whom he came into contact. I am sure the book will appeal to all with an interest in Gloucester's musical history, as well as to those who, like me, lack musical knowledge but are interested in our city's past.

Liz Jack

## Forest of Dean Local History Society wins the British Association for Local History's 2015 'Best Newsletter' Award

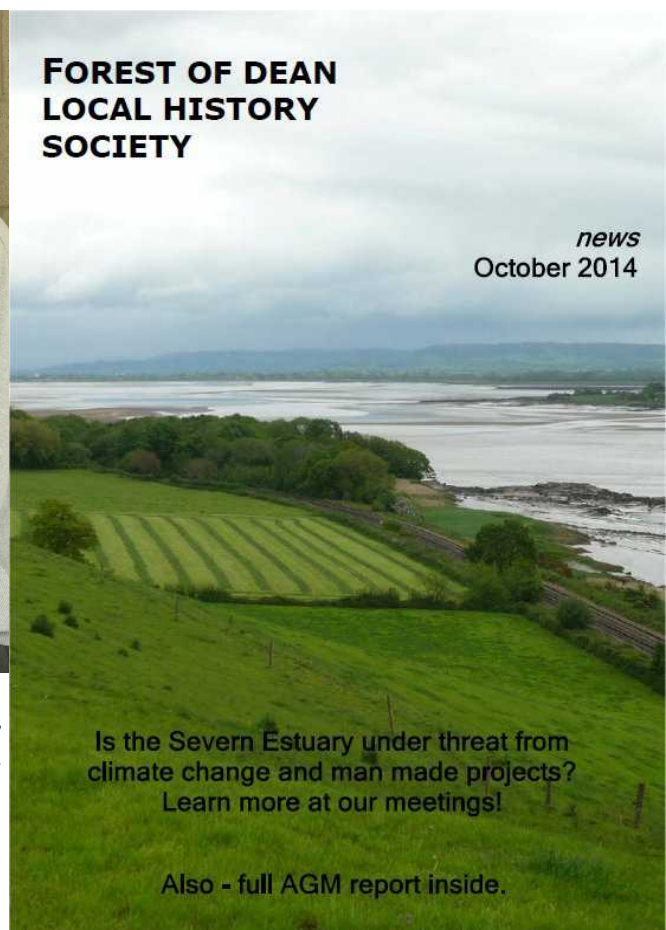
The Forest of Dean Local History Society newsletter is issued to all paid up members quarterly. As well as keeping members abreast of forthcoming events, it includes reviews of past talks and visits, often short articles on matters of local historical interest, messages from committee members and book reviews. Newsletter editor, Keith Walker, has made many improvements to the contents and look of the publication since taking over the role five years ago. Most strikingly he introduced the use of colour printing for the covers which has made a huge difference to the attractiveness of the newsletter. No wonder then that it won the BALH award 2015 as the best local history society newsletter. The society is very proud of this success.

Mary Sullivan



*Above: Keith Walker, Editor of the Forest of Dean Local History Society Newsletter, receives the Award from Professor David Hey, President of the British Association for Local History, at the BALH's Local History Day in Birmingham in June 2015.*

*Right: The FODLHS newsletter*

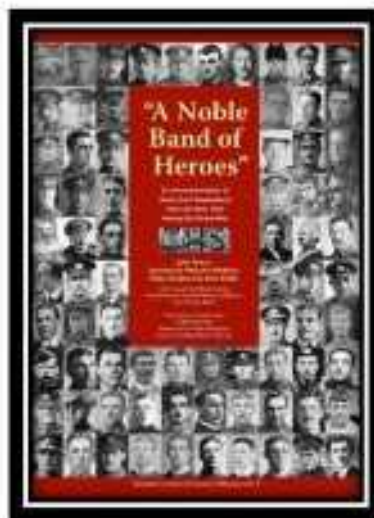


***Tewkesbury Historical Society***

is delighted to announce the publication

**on 7 November 2015**

of



***A Noble Band of Heroes***

A history of all those from Tewkesbury  
who lost their lives because of the ***Great  
War.***

**To find out more, visit  
[www.ths.freeuk.com](http://www.ths.freeuk.com)**