

QUEST

Issue No. 1.

Newsletter of the Avon Local History Association



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman: Mr. J.S. Moore, B.A., F.R.HIST.S.

Vice-Chairman: Miss M.E. Williams, B.A.

Secretary: Mr. J. Arbuthnot

Treasurer: Mr. G. Dear

Editor, Newsletter: Mr. J. Wilson, B.A.

Mrs. S. Barrance Mr. H.E. Donnett Mrs. S. Rogers

Mr. C.J. Spittal Dr. A.G. Warner Mr. R. Angerson

Mr. G.P. Davies

Co-opted Members

Mr. T.W. Crowe Major R.T. Hungerford Mr. I.H. Wethey

Q U E S T is the official newsletter of the Avon Local History Association. Articles appearing in QUEST must not be reproduced without written permission from the Association.

The Editor will welcome details of forthcoming events, news of Societies, articles and comment. Communications should be addressed to Mr. J. Wilson, c/o Bristol Record Office, Council House, College Green, Bristol BS1 5TR. All other correspondence on Association matters should be addressed to the Secretary, Avon Local History Association, c/o Avon Community Council, 2 Berkeley Square, Clifton, Bristol BS8 1HL. Tel. Bristol 26420 or 25951.

Chairman's Foreword

I am very happy to welcome the appearance of this first issue of the Newsletter; I hope that it will be useful to local historians throughout the County of Avon. Among the other activities planned by the Avon Local History Association are an annual Schools Essay competition, an annual Local History Conference and Exhibition, informal gatherings and - hopefully - a Local History Handbook for the County of Avon. All these enterprises can only flourish if they receive the full support of all local historians and local history groups in the county: in particular I hope everyone will help in buying and selling the Newsletter and by contributing material for future issues. We hope to be flexible and adaptable in providing a useful service. If you have any ideas for improving the Newsletter, the Editor or I will be more than pleased to receive them.

John S. Moore, B.A., F.R. Hist.S.
Chairman, Avon Local History Association
Lecturer in Economic History,
University of Bristol.

o - o - o - o - o - o - o - o - o - o - o

The Contribution of Bristol University Extra-Mural Department to Local History work in Avon

The Extra-Mural Department of Bristol University exists to provide courses for adults in a wide range of subjects, and among the most popular of all the courses are those on local history. The Extra-Mural courses take many forms; some are straightforward series of weekly or fortnightly lectures; others are provided for research groups, such as those which meet each week through the winter at the Bristol Record Office and elsewhere; many are on specific topics such as industrial archaeology, vernacular architecture, parish churches, or the study of particular kinds of documentary evidence. Several courses also meet during the summer for field work and visits, and in addition there are weekend and residential courses. Many of these Extra-Mural courses are arranged in conjunction with a local history society, or at the request of a society or group to help with some particular project or piece of research. During the past year, for example, the University has provided series of lectures or help with research for societies and groups at Chew Magna, Pensford, Whitchurch, Downend, Keynsham, Clevedon, Blagdon, Almondsbury, Frampton Cotterell, Winterbourne and elsewhere, as well as field visits, research courses and general lectures on local history. Some of the work done by Extra-Mural groups at the Bristol Record Office and at Chew Magna has been published by the Department, including transcripts of the earliest Bristol wills, and an edition of some of the Probate Inventories of South Gloucestershire will be published shortly.

The University Extra-Mural Department is always willing to consider requests from local history societies or from any group of interested people, and will be glad to help in any way it can. For further information and details of all courses please contact J.H. Bettey, Staff Tutor in Local History, Department of Extra-Mural Studies, 32 Tyndalls Park Road, Bristol BS8 1HR. Telephone Bristol 24161 ext.686.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- March 26 Historical Association (Bristol Branch) - Sixth Form Conference "Revolution" by Professor H.G.Koenigsberger (University of London) Details from the Secretary, c/o Bristol Grammar School, Bristol BS8 1SR.
- March 29 Almondsbury Local History Society and Annual General Meeting 7.30 pm at the Old School Hall, Almondsbury.
- April 7 Olveston Parish Historical Society - Members' Evening
- April 8 Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society - Centenary Dinner in Bristol.
- April 9 Keynsham and Saltford Local History Society - "Medieval Bath" by Peter Greening (Secretary of Bath and Camerton Archaeological Society)- 7.30 pm at Ellsbridge House, Bath Road, Keynsham.
- May 5 Historical Association (Bath Branch) - Annual General Meeting, followed by a visit to the Guildhall and the City Archives - 7.30 in the Brunswick Room, York Street, Bath.
- May 14 Historical Association (Bristol Branch) - Annual General Meeting at Barrow Court, Barrow Gurney.
- June 26 Historical Association (Bath Branch) - "West Country Links with America" by Professor Peter Marshall - 6.30 pm at the American Museum, Claverton, Bath. A special summer meeting organised in collaboration with the Bristol Branch to mark the bicentenary of the American Declaration of Independence. The talk will be followed by a wine and cheese party - tickets £1.20p.
- June 26 Almondsbury Local History Society - Summer Outing to the Forest of Dean - leaving at 1.30 pm from the Old School Hall, Almondsbury.
- July 10 Gloucestershire Community Council Local History Conference - Theme: "Archaeology and Documents in Gloucestershire History" by Peter Clark (University of Leicester) and another speaker - Technical College, Brunswick Road, Gloucester. There is also an exhibition staged by the County Archivist and County Museum, "Discovering Gloucestershire" nearby. Details from Community House, 15 College Green, Gloucester, GL1 2LZ.

- July 14 Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society - Annual General Meeting at Gloucester.
- October 18 Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society - "Archaeology in 1984" by Peter Fowler - 7.30 pm at St. Nicholas Church Museum, St. Nicholas Street, Bristol.
- November 1 Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society - "An hour of Bristol and Gloucestershire Music" by Mr. F. Byard, followed by a social meeting and refreshments - 7.30 pm at St. Nicholas Church Museum, St. Nicholas Street, Bristol.

NEWS FROM LOCAL SOCIETIES

The Batheaston Society

There are 140 life members (£3) and 120 annual subscribers (minimum 25p) of this Society, founded in 1971 with a number of objects, including those of conserving the local environment, stimulating interest in the history and present needs of Batheaston, encouraging developments which do not damage the local scene, recording the appearance of the village before some evidence disappears, and establishing a collection of local items. It meets three or four times during the winter to hear lectures. There is a summer programme which last year included visits to Bruton and Shepton Mallet. Two projects have been completed: the restoration of the village pond and of the archway to the original parish school demolished in 1859. The Parish Council has co-opted a member of the Committee of the Society to its Planning Committee. A newsletter is circulated to members and the Batheaston Society Journal has appeared each year. There is a photographic collection and a pamphlet on local walks has been produced.

Batheaston Society Museum

Dr. L.T. Hilliard is curator of the Museum which contains 400 exhibits and is situated in the basement of his home, Batheaston House. The collection may be visited by appointment with him (Tel. Bath 858106)

Bristol and Avon Family History Society

Although only formed in July last year, the membership already numbers some 170, not only resident locally but throughout the United Kingdom and overseas. These latter have ancestral connections with the area. At the present time no similar society operates within the counties of Avon, Gloucestershire or Wiltshire, so its activities extend further than its title suggests. The basic objective is to encourage the study of family history and genealogy and to provide a forum. Monthly meetings are held in central Bristol at which either an authority on family history speaks or during which members participate in discussions. A quarterly Journal, free to members, contains helpful articles and news. Transcription and indexing of source materials are being undertaken by members. Membership falls into categories: Full (those living within 20 miles of the Council House, Bristol) £2.50; Family £3.50; Concessionary (for full-time students or people receiving a retirement pension) £1.50.

Secretary: Stephen Emlyn-Jones, 108 Newbridge Road, St. Annes, Bristol BS4 4DR.

Downend Local History Society

This Society has a membership of about 50 and meets at Lincombe Barn, Downend, on alternate Tuesday evenings at 7.30 pm. Speakers at these meetings include members as well as guests who are specialists in topics of particular local interest. Members of the Society have undertaken research at the Bristol Record Office.

Correspondent: Mr. R. Angerson, 32 Acacia Road, Staple Hill, Bristol
BS16 4PY (Tel. 651235)

Keynsham and Saltford Local History Society

Meetings take place at Ellisbridge House, Bath Road, Keynsham, on Fridays at 7.30 pm. Non-members are welcome at all the meetings at a charge of 15p. (There is no charge for children who are accompanied by an adult) Notices about meetings are posted regularly outside Keynsham Public Library. There is a programme of summer outings.
Hon. Secretary: Mr. F.H. Milner, 14 Chelmer Grove, Keynsham
(Tel. Keynsham 3802)

Historical Association (Bath Branch)

The public are welcome to the ordinary lecture meetings of the Association, which often meets at King Edward's School, North Street, Bath, but whose programme also includes outings to places of historical interest. The charge for ordinary meetings is 15p (10p for students).
Secretary: Mrs. N.M. Catchpole, 66 Leighton Road, Weston, Bath BA1 4 NG (Tel. Bath 23338).

Frampton Cotterell and District Local History Research Group

The Group was founded in 1968 as an "activity group" of the local Community Association, with which it still retains links. In 1970 it was entered on the roll of classes organised by the Department of Extra-Mural Studies of the University of Bristol, with Mr. B.J.S. Moore, B.A., P.R.Hist.S., as Group Tutor. There are at present fifteen members, and the area of investigation covers Frampton Cotterell, Iron Acton, Westerleigh and Coalpit Heath. The Group began by transcribing local parish registers and indexing them as part of a family reconstruction exercise. This still continues and further investigation has been carried out into standards of literacy, occupations, ages of marriage, family size and population movement. During 1971 and 1972 the Group transcribed some 400 local probate inventories, and these will be published in 1976.
The Group meets each Wednesday during University terms at Highcroft School, Lower Stone Close, Frampton Cotterell. Inquiries: Mr. C.J. Spittal, "The Shieling", 162 Church Road, Frampton Cotterell, Bristol BS17 2ND (Tel. Winterbourne 773158)

Westbury-on-Trym Local History Group

Meetings of this Group are held weekly on Friday evenings from October to June in the Westbury Adult Centre annexe in Eastfield Road. They are informal and usually consist of general discussions or short talks by members. A selection of books and pamphlets is available for study, as is a collection of photocopied title maps, surveys and early Ordnance Survey maps of the area.

Westbury-on-Trym Group cont'd/...

Other activities include the examination of parish records, and an excavation still in progress on the site of a medieval almshouse, north of the churchyard. The Group hopes to produce a series of stencilled pamphlets on aspects of local history. New members are welcome. Membership is free. Copies of the annual report for 1974-75 available on request. Group Leader: Dr. D. Egdell, 3 Falcondale Road, Westbury-on-Trym, (Tel. Bristol 626150). Information is also available from Mr. J.R. Russell, 3 Priory Avenue, Westbury-on-Trym. (Tel. 626983)

Bristol Workers History Project

The Project has, over the last year, taken the form of two Workers Education Association courses, plus considerable activity on the part of individuals. The courses were in the main well attended and covered such topics as the Cotton Factory, the Coal Mines, the strikes of 1889 and sweated labour in Bristol. A number of old Bristol workers have been tape recorded and within the next few months we plan to publish some of the material that has been collected.

If anybody is interested in the Project or would be prepared to help organise the publications, please contact:

Ian Bild, 4 Denbigh Street, St. Pauls, Bristol 2.

Avon Amenity Societies Liaison Organisation

Local History Societies interested in local amenities, conservation and the retention of the good character of the County might wish to contact this organisation. Liaison Officer: Mrs. Y. Baker, Pennywell, Grove Road, Coombe Dingle, Bristol. The Organisation is making a list of books, pamphlets, maps and other printed sources suitable for local history studies in schools. Societies who have produced any printed work should contact Mrs. Baker direct.

Book Notice

Essays in Bristol and Gloucestershire History by Patrick McGrath and John Cannon (£3.50 post free, 350 pp, 33 plates, hard covers, index).

The Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society was founded in April 1876 and, to celebrate its centenary, the Society is presenting a volume of essays on a wide range of archaeological, historical and architectural subjects. These essays, by a number of distinguished contributors, cover a wide span from the prehistoric to the nineteenth century, reflecting the interests of the Society's members. The subjects are local, but many bear on themes of national interest. Available from the Hon. Secretary, Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, 9A Pembroke Road, Bristol BS8 3AU. (Members of the B.G.A.S. receive this volume free of charge).

NOTES ON LOCAL RECORD SERIES:

SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE PROBATE INVENTORIES AT WORCESTER AND GLOUCESTER
1536-1650

Probate inventories form one of the most useful series of documents for local historians: they are lists of goods made after a person's death, often on a room-by-room basis, and contain invaluable information on housing, furniture, crops, livestock, working tools, farming equipment, clothes and books. Some idea of their value can be gained from those transcribed by the Frampton Cotterell Local History Research Group and to be published in the spring by Messrs. Phillimore as The Goods and Chattels of Our Forefathers (edited by J.S. Moore): these cover the parishes of Frampton Cotterell, Iron Acton, Stoke Gifford, Westerleigh and Winterbourne during the period 1539 to 1801.

Before 1541-2, Gloucestershire east of the Severn was part of the diocese of Worcester, where the earliest surviving South Gloucestershire inventories are to be found. After 1542, the south western part became the diocese of Bristol, for which inventories exist from 1609; the rest of South Gloucestershire was part of the diocese of Gloucester, though only a few inventories survive for the period 1587 to 1650.

The inventories listed below are all that are known to survive in the main probate series, though there may be others among the Cause Papers dealing with testamentary disputes. Estimates and photocopies can be obtained from the respective record offices: Herefordshire and Worcestershire Record Office, St. Helen's Church, Fish Street, Worcester; Gloucester Diocesan Record Office, Gloucester City Library, Brunswick Road, Gloucester. Entries underlined refer to inventories printed in The Goods and Chattels of our Forefathers.

A. WORCESTER PROBATE INVENTORIES (Ref. 008.7 BA 3585/Year/Number):

Alice Syfford, Horton, 1536/366
Robert Cookson, Siston, 1538/194
Richard Dymock, Siston, 1538/135
John Grome, Marshfield, 1538/181 (list of debts only)
Jean Reed, Doynton, 1538/295
John Tayte, Hanham, 1538/290
Jean Alyn, Widow, Cromhall, 1539/293
Richard Cootes, Wapley, 1539/300
Henry Dagge, Frampton Cotterell, 1539/294
Thomas Francom, Chipping Sodbury, 1539/297
John Hemyng, Marshfield, 1539/298
William Mericke, Stoke Gifford, 1539/375
John Neale, Yate, 1539/291
Robert Saccheffield, Wickwar, 1539/292
Jean Smyth, Widow, Dyrham, 1539/302
Richard Stevens, Dyrham, 1539/301
John Stringer, Tortworth, 1540/304

B. GLOUCESTER PROBATE INVENTORIES (Ref. Gl.Inv./Year/Number):

Thomas Atwood, Iron Acton, tailor, 1587/14
Thomas Chipp, Thornbury, weaver, 1587/47
Thomas Ell, Wickwar, 1587/11
Thomas Patch, Thornbury, 1587/39
Thomas Prigge, Westerleigh, 1587/60
Thomas Russell, Rockhampton, husbandman, 1587/21
Thomas Smith, Thornbury, curate, 1587/52
Thomas Tiler, Frampton Cotterell, husbandman, 1587/29
Thomas Whytfilde, Thornbury, husbandman, 1587/20
Thomas Willes, Hanham, 1587/31

Isabel Belsyre, Frampton Cotterell, widow, 1622/10
 Joan Mason, Great Badminton, widow, 1622/3
 John Neale, Yate, 1622/41
 John Rogers, Westerleigh, 1622/45
 John Simmes, Acton Turville, husbandman, 1622/47
 Joseph Terrill, Tormarton, 1622/48
 John Tyler, Tytherington, 1622/1
 John Ward, Abson, yeoman, 1622/52
 William Creed, Leighterton, husbandman, 1623/10
William Pickard, Westerleigh, yeoman, 1623/1
 Joyce Carter, Bitton, widow, 1633/37
 James Hickes, Abson, yeoman, 1633/11
 John Hooper, Yate, yeoman, 1633/5
 John Russell, Oldbury-on-Severn, yeoman, 1633/35
 John Williams, Chipping Sodbury, mercer, 1633/31
 John Butler alias Lewis, Dodington, 1637/13
 John Clarke, Didmarton, husbandman, 1637/1
 John Hicks, Charfield, yeoman, 1637/4
 John Long, Fortworth, yeoman, 1637/14
 John Luce, Horton, husbandman, 1637/6
 Joan Shipway, Didmarton, widow, 1637/19
 William Clarke, Great Badminton, yeoman, 1640/8
 William Fowler, Wapley, yeoman, 1640/9
 William Osborne, Doynton, yeoman, 1640/5
 William Smith, Iron Acton, 1640/7
 Thomas Tylie, Bitton, husbandman, 1645/1
 John Barber, Charfield, husbandman, 1646/4
 John Britton, Bitton, coalminer, 1646/20
 Catherine England, Chipping Sodbury, widow, 1646/27
 Agnes Ford, Bitton, widow, 1646/28
 Agnes Friend, Thornbury, widow, 1646/30
 Silvester Weare, Great Badminton, widow, 1646/66
 Agnes Webb, Thornbury, ? widow, 1646/67
 John White, Kingswood (nr. Wotton-under-Edge), clothworker, 1646/69
 John Edwards, Rockhampton, 1647/11
Edward Marten, Iron Acton, yeoman, 1647/8
Edward Thomas, Iron Acton, yeoman, 1647/3
 Richard Camborne, Dyrham, husbandman, 1648/38
 Robert Davis, Thornbury, 1648/6
Robert Gale, Iron Acton, carpenter, 1648/24
 Margaret Latimer, Wapley, widow, 1648/23
 Robert Nichols, Abson, husbandman, 1648/37
 Robert Taylor, Thornbury, 1648/42
 Mary Watkins, Pucklechurch, widow, 1648/25
 Michael Cheltenham, Marshfield, dyer, 1649/1
 William Fry, Marshfield, 1650/7
 William Sheppard, Thornbury, yeoman, 1650/6

Since only 9 out of the total of 74 inventories for the area have so far been printed, there is plenty of scope to enlarge our knowledge of local agriculture and the standard of living in the century between the Dissolution of the Monasteries and the execution of Charles I.

JOHN S. MOORE