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AVON LOCAL HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

registered charity no. 270930

UPDATE
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ALHA ITEMS

MEETINGS AND EVENTS OF MEMBER GROUPS AND SOCIETIES

ALHA publishes on its website, and tries to keep up to date, a list of talks and other events arranged by ALHA member groups and societies. This depends on information being supplied by member groups and societies, so if you are now arranging your meetings for your

next year, please send your list to ALHA's website manager, Bob Lawrence, Flat 1 Chartley, 22 The Avenue, Bristol BS9 1PE lawrence.chartley@btinternet.com.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND JOE BETTEY LECTURE

ALHA's 2017 action-packed annual general meeting and Joe Bettey lecture was at the **Friends' Meeting House, Beckspool Road, Frenchay on Wednesday 18 October 2017**.

The secretary's report was received, the accounts were accepted and the examiner thanked, the constitutional amendments were passed, and the committee was re-elected, except for Dr Harlow, who has stood down. Tribute was warmly paid to his many years of work for ALHA. The lecturer was Professor Helen Meller, born in **Freshford**, formerly professor of history at Nottingham University and author of *Leisure and the changing city, 1870-1914*, which in spite of its general title is about the **Bristol** area. Her lecture, titled *How to live in the modern city: women's contribution in Bristol 1860s-1930s*, looked in particular at the life of Hilda Cashmore (1876-1943). It is hoped that her talk will be published, and that a summary will be included in ALHA's next *Newsletter*. ALHA is grateful to ALHA member **Frenchay Tuckett Society** for hosting the event.

ALHA LOCAL HISTORY DAY 2018 – CALL FOR PAPERS

The theme for next year's local history day, again at UWE's Frenchay campus, on **Saturday 21 April**, will be around **religion and change**, broadly interpreted. ALHA's events subcommittee has received a number of proposals, but it is not too late to offer more. **ALHA invites proposals for talks, presentations and displays**: max 500 words please to Bob Lawrence, Flat 1 Chartley, 22 The Avenue, Bristol BS9 1PE, lawrence.chartley@btinternet.com or William Evans, 5 Parrys Grove, Bristol BS9 1TT, 0117 968 4979, wm.evans@btopenworld.com.

HOW TO CONTACT ALHA FACEBOOK REMINDER

As always, the ALHA Facebook team is seeking to increase the number of visitors to the page. They welcome any suggestions e.g. copy and non-copyright photos. The latter should be submitted as jpegs to the dedicated ALHA Facebook email, avonlocalhistoryandArchaeology@gmail.com

ALHA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2018

In the hope of improving attendance at ALHA's annual general meeting, the events subcommittee is toying with the idea of holding the AGM during the lunch break at the April 2018 local history day. Comments to Peter Fleming, Bob Lawrence or William Evans welcome.

NEW ALHA MEMBER: CAMP

Welcome to **Community Archaeology on the Mendip Plateau**: Founded in 2009, CAMP explores the history and archaeology of the area around **Chewton Mendip**. It is project-based, with members suggesting areas for research. Activities include landscape analysis, earthwork and geophysical surveying, excavation and test-pitting, old map study, documentary research, workshops and standing buildings study. Since 2011 much of CAMP's work has been centred on excavations of a medieval site in Chewton Mendip. Contact Pip Osborne, Green Acres, Green Ore, BA5 3ET, pipgreenore@yahoo.com. Website <http://www.camplat.btck.co.uk/>

EVENTS AND SOURCES

A FORGOTTEN LANDSCAPE PROJECT

Latest at <http://www.aforgottenlandscape.org.uk/latest-news/> or <http://mailchi.mp/8267af2c81fd/9ra2vzxib8-1441201>

The next set of Tuesday talks will be at **St Peter's Church, Cross Hands Road, Pilning BS35 4JB**. All talks start at 7:30 and run for about an hour. They are FREE but you MUST book. The programme includes **Tuesday 7 November 2017**, Manda Forster on *Digging the Toot: results from the community excavation at Oldbury-on-Severn*. For more details on these and other events, and for booking, please go to www.aforgottenlandscape.org.uk/get-involved/events.

SEVERN ESTUARY AND LEVELS RESEARCH COMMITTEE ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2017

A Forgotten Landscape and the Regional History Centre at UWE will host hosting the Severn Estuary and Levels Research Committee Annual Conference, **11 November 2017 9am – 4pm**, at **UWE's Frenchay campus**. 'An exciting day of archaeological presentations highlighting recent discoveries and the results of excavations in the **Severn Estuary and the adjoining wetlands**. Talks will include the marvellously preserved waterlogged archaeological remains from **Finzel's Reach in Bristol**, two dramatic Roman hoards from Gloucestershire (including the 'licking dog' hoard recently in the news), waterlogged Roman coffins from **Banwell**, and community archaeology projects in **north Somerset** and archaeological work from two HLF Landscape Partnership projects in Somerset and Gloucestershire.' Tickets must be booked in advance: £16 (£12 students) including refreshments and lunch and available [here](#). Tel: 0117 9656261. Email: infopoint@uwe.ac.uk

KINGSWOOD HERITAGE MUSEUM

Kingswood Museum has an exhibition about **Staple Hill**. Kingswood Heritage Museum, Tower Lane, Warmley, BS30 8XT: 0117 960 5664; e-mail kingswoodmuseum@gmail.com. Opening hours and other information at <http://www.kingswoodmuseum.org.uk/museum/forthcoming-events/>

WESTON-SUPER-MARE MUSEUM

After refurbishment and updating, WsM museum is now open again, free-entry, 7 days a week 10am – 5pm (closed 25-28 December, New Year's Day and 15-21 January). <http://westonmuseum.org/>

THE NEW ROOM, BROADMEAD, BRISTOL

Latest at <http://www.newroombristol.org.uk/>

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DAY SCHOOLS, BRISTOL

Booking is open for **Bristol City Museum's** next batch of archaeological day schools. Topics include local finds; the art and architecture of **St Mary Redcliffe** (repeated); dating (if in doubt, ask), relative and absolute; and maritime archaeology. Details, costs and booking at <http://www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/m-shed/whats-on/art-architecture-st-mary-redcliffe/>

HARPTREES HISTORY SOCIETY

Leslie Ross writes: This autumn we are celebrating the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Society with **20 years of the Harptrees History Society celebrating more than 1000 years of local history**. The public sessions are on **Sunday 12 and late afternoon of**

Monday 13 November. During the day on the Monday we are running a variety of workshops with Primary School children and their work will be on display later in the afternoon. Free local history exhibition at East Harptree Village Hall, Whitecross Rd, BS40 6AA **Sunday 12 November 11.30 - 5pm and Monday 13 November 3.30 - 6.30pm.** Display boards; archaeological artifacts; research work; DVD show; digital mapping talks; First World War and Women's Institute displays; photographic archive of East and West Harptree, Bishop Sutton and Chew Valley before the Lake; Weston and District Family History Society will provide assistance in family history research. For further information contact Lesley Ross 01761 221758 or Andrew Sandon 01761 221941.

AEROSPACE BRISTOL

Aerospace Bristol is now open at **Patchway**. Details including opening times, prices, arrangements for groups and so on at <http://aerospacebristol.org/>

UWE REGIONAL HISTORY SEMINARS

UWE's regional history centre seminars have started. Next one is **Thursday 16 November 2017, 6pm**, M Shed, Bristol, Dr Mark Hailwood, *What did women do all day in the Tudor and Stuart south-west?* M Shed, Princes Wharf, Wapping Road, Bristol BS1 4RN, www.uwe.ac.uk/research/rhc. Free.

PORTABLE ANTIQUITIES SCHEME

The Portable Antiquities Scheme are holding their annual volunteers conference in **Cardiff** on **18 November 2017**. It is free to attend. This year they will be looking at the stories held within the PAS database. Free tickets to the conference can be booked through <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/past-explorers-conference-2017-telling-tales-tickets-36891588735>. Lauren Speed, Outreach Officer, PAST Explorers Project 0207 323 8293; 07835 124357

BRISTOL'S DISABILITY HISTORY

A History of Place exhibition, *Brave poor things: reclaiming Bristol's disability history*, is at **MShed until 15 April 2017**. Ada Vachell, Clara Hardwick and others. 10am to 5pm Tuesdays to Saturdays, and bank and school holiday Mondays; admission free but donation requested.

PUBLICATIONS NOTICED

Kate Pollard's *Totterdown rising* (2006) has been reissued by Tangent Books, £12.

www.tangentbooks.co.uk

James Bowman, *The real Persuasion: portrait of a real-life Jane Austen heroine*, 2017, Amberley £20. Author claims diarist Katherine Bisshopp, who visited **Clifton**, was JA's model for Anne Elliot.

www.amberley-books.com

Bristol & Avon Family History Society, *Bristol Municipal Cemeteries Burial Registers Volume 2 1883-1991*, covering, it says, burials at **Avonview, Brislington, Canford, Henbury, Ridgeway Park** and **Shirehampton** cemeteries.

Approx. 145,000 records, with bookmarked surname and chronological indexes. Available as a CD (£9 + p&p) and a downloadable PDF file (£7). Further details and orders:

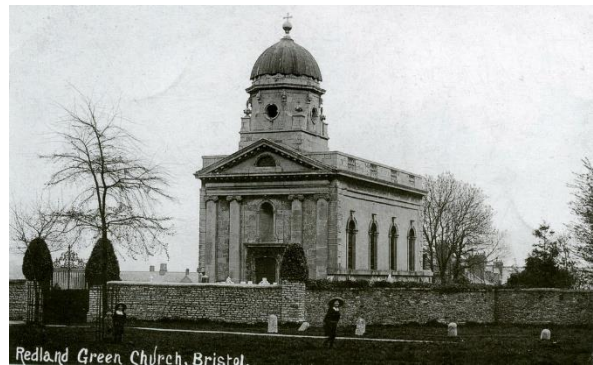
https://www.genfair.co.uk/product_list.php?sid=22&page=102124

Richard Coates, *Your City's Place-Names: Bristol*, English Place-Name Society, 2017. First in a new series. Deals with the main place-names found on modern maps, and some lost or forgotten older names once locally important. The book covers the principal districts (officially or unofficially recognized), a few monuments, the largest open spaces in the **City of Bristol**, and a

fringe of the country beyond, from **Severn Beach** and **Weston in Gordano** to the west to **Chipping Sodbury** and **Saltford** in the east, and from **Yate** in the north to **Stanton Drew** and **Bristol Airport** in the south. ISBN: 978 0 904889 96 3, 219 pp, pb. By direct order, £11 to members of the EPNS, £14 to non-members. English Place-Name Society, The University of Nottingham, Nottingham NG7 2RD, Tel: 0115 9515919, Fax: 0115 951 5924, Email: name-studies@nottingham.ac.uk

Caroline Bateson, *John Cossins of Redland Court, Redland and Cotham Amenities Society* 2017. CB, says the blurb, ‘has researched archives in the City of London and in Bristol to unlock the mystery of John

Cossins. In a fully illustrated booklet she explores Cossins’ life as a member of a City Livery Company in early 18th century London. The high quality craftsmanship he insisted upon in the construction of **Redland Court** is also seen through primary source material.’ £5 plus £1.50 postage and packing, to order from: carolinepbateson@gmail.com



COMMENTARY

Student accommodation

Three recent local events: an application for planning permission to convert the former *Gaumont* cinema in **Baldwin Street, Bristol**, into student flats; the destruction of a Jacobean ceiling by a property developer intending to convert premises in **Small Street, Bristol**, into students flats; and the proposal to convert the original **Bristol Royal Infirmary building** into student flats, and to demolish its neo-byzantine chapel to make way for student flats.

In our area student accommodation is socially, economically and environmentally important, but comparatively recent. The ladies who attended classes at Bristol’s university college in the 1880s did not need student accommodation: they were driven there in their carriages from **Clifton**; some may even have walked if they were prepared to brave the mucky streets. Not until the institution got its charter in 1909 and sought to attract students from further afield did any need for student accommodation arise. When it did, the university bought or rented existing large houses. Goldney House and Clifton Hill House continue that tradition. Bristol University’s first purpose-built hall of residence, Wills Hall in **Stoke Bishop**, designed by George Oatley to copy the staircases and quadrangles of Oxbridge colleges, appeared in 1924, followed

by other purpose-built halls such as Manor Hall in **Clifton** and Churchill, Badock, Hyatt Baker and so on in **Stoke Bishop**. Many students got digs in town: at the **Merchant Venturers’ Technical College in Bristol**, and at **Bath Academy of Art**, lecturers found digs for students, sometimes in their own homes.

At **Bristol Polytechnic and Bath University** student accommodation evolved differently. Government and local authority funding constraints (and the absence of wealthy manufacturer and trader donors, wary of the vagaries of democratic control) meant that those institutions initially could build little in the way of student accommodation, but organised a network of landladies and some landlords who let digs to students. Bath, once a city of lodging houses, resumed readily. Exceptions were the anglican teacher training college of St Matthias at **Fishponds**, which had three purpose-built blocks of flats; and the St John Reade hostel in **Redland**, built by Bristol city council for students at **Redland** college of education and the college of art at **Bower Ashton**.

From the 1980s the number of students needing accommodation rose for several reasons. (1) Polytechnics, and colleges of higher education such as **Newton Park**, became independent of local authority control. (2)

Government policy was to expand the number of students going into higher education; in the early 1960s the proportion of school leavers entering higher education was 4%, and the government wanted to see it approach 50%. (3) Its method was to fix the funding framework so that institutions had to expand or fail, and that also made them compete with each other. (4) Parliament exempted universities from anti-discrimination laws so that they could charge full fees from students from overseas. So the newer universities looked for ways to fund the building of huge amounts of student accommodation. In 1992 **Bristol Polytechnic/UWE** made arrangements with a local builder, Tony Porter, to fund new flats under the tax-free business expansion scheme (which was intended to encourage manufacturers, not property renters); **Bath and Bristol** universities followed suit. Porter's company is now Unite, provider of thousands of student flats and with a stock exchange quotation. In 2016 Unite made pre-tax profits of over £200m out of 49,000 students in 60 institutions in 24 towns, over 40,000 of them in Bristol. Some modern student flats are purpose-built; others were converted from empty offices in the employment downturns of 1992-1993 and 2008 - whenever. The lifting of the cap on student fees gave institutions an income stream that enabled them to borrow large sums for building, including student accommodation.

One approach might be to look at how changes in student accommodation have affected their localities. As elsewhere, the big story of student accommodation is that it has made access to higher education in our area possible for large numbers of students who would not otherwise be able to attend. As late as the 1960s it was possible to commute to the University of **Bristol** by train from **Clevedon and Portishead**; no longer so, and students, not just in **Bath**, now come from afar. The economic and social impact of student flats on places like **Bath and Bristol**

A right to be forgotten?

People, particularly teenagers, post on social media items that they later regret or are ashamed of, but the medium provider continues to store the posts and make them accessible. Digital businesses collect, store and analyse data about the way individuals use their media, and sell that information for profit. Objections to these practices have led

has been considerable. They have provided employment, during construction and when operating. They have changed the characteristics and streetscapes of their localities. They have injected life – and other things – into what might otherwise be dull or derelict areas. They have facilitated the survival of many a small business. They have brought behaviour by inconsiderate students which has infuriated neighbours. They have changed patterns of, and put pressure on, public services from buses to general medical practitioners. Their effect on local housing warrants investigation: in the 1970s charities such as Shelter criticised local authorities for letting short-life accommodation (eg houses bought for road schemes) to students rather than to homeless families: students were represented as privileged competitors for, and usurpers of, scarce public resources.

Changes within student accommodation itself could also be a subject of local history enquiry: changes in how it has been financed, from the points of view of universities, developers, landlords, students and parents; changes in how institutions have allocated places: **Bristol Polytechnic** used to give priority to students from overseas and those returning after a sandwich year in employment, but disability discrimination law has altered priorities; how disciplinary rules and their enforcement have changed; how far halls of residence at **Bristol University** were managed independently of the university's central arrangements; how the role of the university in loco parentis changed over time, especially when the age of majority was reduced to 18 in 1969; how the proportions between discipline and pastoral care have changed in the job of the hall warden. A comprehensive account of the local history of student accommodation in our area would be a worthwhile, interesting and useful study.

to calls for individuals to be given the right to make the holders of the data destroy the record. Thus an individual would be entitled to demand deletion of, say, a photograph, text, search history, browsing log or purchasing record. Ready, as always, to put into circulation a misleading but catchy phrase, the media talk of a 'right to be

forgotten.’ Should local history people be bothered?

The practice of history is based on the concept of truth, of fact. Even postmodernists will concede that it was not in 1966 that the Normans overran England, and that it was not in 1066 that England won the football world cup. All histories, however conceived or expressed, presuppose that past events, however described or spun, and whether or not they are socially constructed, did in fact occur. We deplore the rewriting of history under regimes in soviet Russia, Japan, Turkey and elsewhere. We ridicule attempts in Japan, America, India or the UK to dictate and alter what events are taught in schools as facts. We detest politicians who lie and those who lie for them. We despise those who deny the magnitude or even the happening of Nazi extermination of Jews. It is permissible to play about with interpretation and presentation, but not with empirical fact. We extend that prohibition to the burning of books, whether by religious or political fanatics or fundamentalists.

At the same time we have no compunction about destroying many sorts of record that might be of future archival interest. Household records are routinely destroyed when a dwelling is cleared after

Seasonal greetings from Old Market

In *Invisible: The dangerous allure of the unseen* (Bodley Head 2014), the science writer Philip Ball wrote, not about translation, but the ways in which humans have tried to understand and explain phenomena that have causes not readily apparent, such as chemical changes, electricity, magnetism, light and other waves, radioactivity, and disease. PB looks at alchemy, religious beliefs in the supernatural, chemistry, empirical and theoretical physics, magic, nanotechnology, witchcraft and so on. In discussing ghosts, spiritualism and other attempts to communicate with the dead, a field into which fraudsters and the gullible have flocked, PB mentions the alleged hauntings at Cock Lane near Smithfield in London in 1759-1762, which were reported in newspapers, as was the subsequent criminal trial. The claimed events at Cock Lane share

someone has died. Banks try to offload responsibility for their leaky security by urging customers to destroy paper records to reduce the risk of identity theft. Authors and artists may direct their executor or family to destroy unpublished texts or works of art; Terry Pratchett’s instruction to steamroller his hard drive, considered by some to be a bit on the heavy side, was a recent example. We destroy private correspondence, including diaries, for all sorts of reasons; commercial correspondence too, and not just out of Royal Bank of Scotland motives.

Whether the record is digital or in some other form, and whether it is controlled by the person who created it or by someone else, every act of destruction reduces the material that would otherwise be available to history enquirers. Much of the data that a ‘right to be forgotten’ would cover relates to social history, a big component of local history. The material that would be destroyed could be evidence of social practice, however nasty or regrettable; or it could be of biographical interest, relevant to assessing the character or inner life of someone later considered historically significant. As with the built environment and the landscape, local history people may wish to keep an eye on developments.

remarkable resemblances with those at the **Lamb Inn, West Old Market, Bristol**, between November 1761 and December 1762. The main source for the latter is the diary of William Dyer, a Bristol bookkeeper and a sort of business consultant, who at one time was involved in the Ames’s gunpowder operations at **Littleton near Chew Magna**. Dr Jonathan Barry of Exeter University transcribed and edited Dyer’s diary for **Bristol Record Society** (BRS volume 64, 2012), and has discussed the Lamb Inn occurrences in articles and books about witchcraft in the southwest in the eighteenth century. Dyer was obviously aware of the Cock Lane saga, as were Bristol newspapers. There are so many points of resemblance – dates; lapse of time between the ‘hauntings’; involvement of children; business competition; even down to the ghosts’ use of scratching and knocking to

communicate; the resemblances are uncanny – that readers are bound to wonder about possible connections between what was going on in London and, about the same time, in Bristol. The same people involved, but using different names? Unlikely, because the identity of some of the Bristol participants can be verified from other sources, and pre-GWR travel between London and Bristol would have been rather expensive and slow; but the tenant of the Lamb Inn ran a waggon to London, and competition from a competitor was thought by some to be a motive for the fraud. People reading about the occurrences at Smithfield and replicating them at Lawford's Gate? Unlikely, because although

London and Bristol newspapers reported both sets of occurrences, and local newspapers copied items from newspapers elsewhere, not all the participants were literate, and some were children. People hearing ghost stories, transmitted orally, and spread like urban myths or fake news on social media, and putting on copycat re-enactments? Possible, because some 'hauntings' elsewhere also shared some of the Lamb Inn/Cock Lane features. Or was Dyer, on the face of his diary humourless, naïve, pooterish, superstitious and hedging his bets, in fact in on the occurrences and having a bit of a laugh? Might be worth further investigation?

CAN YOU HELP?

RECORDING SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE BUILDINGS

Anna Morris writes: **Gloucestershire Building Recording Group** are looking for volunteers to help record buildings but also to undertake documentary research, looking at wills and inventories and the like. This would be based mostly at Gloucestershire Archives on Alvin Street and would be warm

and dry, just the thing for the winter months I would have thought! If you are interested in finding out more contact Diane Charlesworth on dianec88@gmail.com. Anna Morris, Archaeologist, Archaeology Service, Shire Hall, Gloucester, GL1 2TH

WINTERBOURNE MEDIEVAL BARN FUNDRAISING

Sue Parsons writes: Located next to **Winterbourne Barn** which was built in 1342, sits a dilapidated 18th century Cart Shed. Our plan is to turn this into a contemporary community centre helping create a space where local people, especially children, can become involved in a place designed for 'making, doing and learning'. By doing this we will help build a strong local community, providing somewhere for different groups of people to come together, meet each other and get involved. We also hope that by creating this community building, we can help generate a real sense of local pride.

Stone-walled, originally open at both ends to allow carts to enter, the building was left to fall into disrepair, and to bring it back into use, it needs major repairs. The roof lets in water and needs re-tiling; many of the rainwater goods need replacing. The roof space needs to be insulated. Stonework repairs are needed and the windows and doors are all rotten and need replacing. There is no electricity or water supply.

We know that local groups and clubs would like to hire the space; we have also had interest from local companies who want to use it for away days. School groups need an education room where learning and activity sessions can happen; societies want to run heritage activities such as workshops and talks. Costing £71,744 to restore, we have raised most of the money but are seeking a grant to kit the building out. We are seeking £4,591 to purchase equipment - ceiling mounted digital projector - £867; floor standing screen - £429; interactive whiteboard - £1,320 and furniture - tables x 5, chairs x 30 and cabinets x 3 - £1,975.

It just needs as many people to log on to the Aviva site and go to the link below to find 'our page' you can then vote for the project - you have 10 votes, also can you please spread

the word in your communities/social groups, workplaces as this will provide a valuable local resource. [Creating Winterbourne's Community Cart Shed - vote for us now in the Aviva Community Fund](#)

BRUNEL MUSEUM NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

Tom Hughes writes: In March 2018, we'll be opening our new museum 'Being Brunel', focused on the fascinating life of Isambard Kingdom Brunel. To ensure this new visitor experience is a real success, we need engaged and committed volunteers to help make it happen. Considering the interests and knowledge of your members, I thought it would be a great idea to share this opportunity with them.

Being Brunel, an exciting new national museum, will be opening alongside the SS *Great Britain* in Bristol at the end of March 2018. The new visitor experience will act as an addition to Brunel's SS Great Britain, Bristol's number one thing to do (TripAdvisor), and around eighty local volunteers are needed to inspire, inform and educate visitors.

Brunel was a great engineer, entrepreneur, designer and showman. The new museum will tell the hero's extraordinary story through never-before-seen personal possessions, as well as interactive exhibits and audio-visual experiences. Being Brunel also recreates the interiors of his London office and the Great Western Steamship Company's Bristol office set within the Grade II* listed Dock Office building, which has been structurally restored as part of the project.

From talking to visitors about Brunel's life to showing original objects from the Brunel collection, local volunteers are needed to help bring history to life and will play a key role in the new museum. Volunteers will also be able to go behind the scenes, get involved in exciting events leading up to the new museum and be part of a lively team.

The SS Great Britain are looking for people who will enjoy engaging with our visitors and would enjoy being part of a vibrant, dynamic team. Volunteers do not need to have any existing knowledge of Brunel, the SS Great Britain or Victorian history. Ideally, volunteers will be able to commit to a minimum of one morning or afternoon each week.

For individuals interested in volunteering, please go online and complete an enquiry form. Alternatively, please email volunteer@ssgreatbritain.org or ring 0117 926 0680. Tom Hughes, marketing assistant, SS Great Britain Trust, tomh@ssgreatbritain.org; 0117 926 0680. See www.ssgreatbritain.org for what's on, venue hire, museum and education news, including the Brunel Institute.