



**AVON LOCAL HISTORY AND
ARCHAEOLOGY**
registered charity no. 270930

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ALHA ITEMS

ALHA LOCAL HISTORY DAY 2018

A flyer for this event is attached.

NEW ALHA BOOKLET – VICTORIAN MODEL FARMS

A flyer for this booklet is attached, with a price reduction for orders before **15 February 2018**.

EVENTS AND SOURCES

ELIZABETH RALPH

Soroptimist International of Bristol have replaced a missing plaque on a tree at B Bond, Bristol, dedicated to [former City Archivist Elizabeth Ralph](#). Miss Ralph, a member of the

Soroptimists, worked at Bristol Record Office from 1937 until she retired as City Archivist in 1971.

WOMEN'S VOTE CENTENARY GRANT SCHEME

This £1.5 million government fund is intended to support local and community groups across England in celebrating the centenary of women gaining the right to vote. Two types of grant are offered:

1. Approximately 150 **Small Grants** of between £300 and £2,000 for grassroots projects to run small-scale events and activities to celebrate the centenary of women gaining the vote. There will be three bidding rounds during 2018.
2. Up to 30 **Large Grants** of between £2,000 and £125,000. These will fund projects that increase the understanding of, and engagement with, democracy, and encourage women to participate in public life. There will be two bidding rounds during 2018.

More details and how to apply at <https://www.womensvotecentenaryfund.co.uk/>

A FORGOTTEN LANDSCAPE PROJECT

Latest at <https://us11.campaign-archive.com/?u=5a1c4370a35827939f3c8d02b&id=161be10593#ourtalks>

MEDIEVAL STREET LIFE

ALHA trustee Professor Peter Fleming (UWE) and Dr James Davis (Queen's U Belfast) are organising an event on the subject of '*Medieval Street Life: Bristol*', at **The Watershed, Bristol, 5pm Sunday 18 February**. It is a public event, organised in conjunction with the British Academy and *Historic Towns Atlas*. There is also a preceding walking tour of Bristol, led by Peter Fleming, though the capacity for this is more limited than for the evening seminar. For the evening event, there is a fee (£3) to help pay for the reception. Register via Eventbrite online at: www.eventbrite.com or email: james.davis@qub.ac.uk

BRITISH AGRICULTURAL HISTORY SOCIETY's Spring Conference 2018 will be held at the **Cannington Campus** of Bridgwater and Taunton College just outside Bridgwater, **26 to 28 March 2018**. Programme includes **Dr John Morgan** (University of Manchester) on Water Management in Britain in the Seventeenth Century; **Rob Wilson-North** (Exmoor National Park) on the Knight Family and the Reclamation of Exmoor Forest, 1820-1890; **Professor Edmund Cannon** (University of Bristol) on the Economics of Grain Storage in England, Seventeenth to Nineteenth Century; **Professor Jane Whittle** (University of Exeter) and **Dr Mark Hailwood** (University of Bristol) on Women's Work in Early Modern England; and **Professor Doug Hurt** (Purdue University). There will also be a new researchers' session and an excursion on the afternoon of Tuesday 27 March to the **Somerset Museum of Rural Life** in Glastonbury. Online booking will open 1 February. <http://www.bahs.org.uk>

GLOUCESTERSHIRE ARCHIVES CLOSURE

GA will be closing 4.30pm Wednesday 28 February 2018 and reopening in the refurbished Hub 9am 13 March 2018.

YATTON BURIALS

Archaeological investigation at Arnolds Way, Yatton, prior to the second phase of a development of new houses, has unearthed a large burial ground: about 300 graves.

<http://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/local-news/roman-burial-site-300-graves-1032543>

There have been Britanno-Roman and earlier finds in the locality. Large numbers of graves might imply a large settlement, a battleground, more plague than the local miracle-working relics could cope with, or a religious foundation. When the findings are published (those for the first phase of the development are still awaited), interpretation and speculation can begin.

BRISTOL ARCHIVES EXHIBITION: REBUILDING POSTWAR BRISTOL

Through highlights from two photographic collections at Bristol Archives, this exhibition charts how Bristol was redesigned and redeveloped after WWII. <https://www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/bristol-archives/whats-on/new-beginning-rebuilding-post-war-bristol/> **Until 25 May 2018.**

The searchroom should be open after stocktaking **from Tuesday 29 January 2018.**

VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY: THE SODBURYS

Dr Alex Craven, researcher for the VCH volume to include the Sodburys, wrote this for the latest VCH newsletter:

Now, after three years of working on the history of Cheltenham, I am engaged on a new project, researching the modern history of the three Sodbury parishes, the medieval history of which has already been researched by Beth Hartland. The three parishes are quite different in character. Old Sodbury, the largest of the three, was divided between a number of manors and estates which over time were acquired by the nobility of neighbouring parishes, such as the Dukes of Beaufort in Badminton and the Codringtons of Dodington. Much of the north of the parish was covered by the large open commons it shared with the adjoining parishes. The smaller parish of Little Sodbury is most notable for the impressive Tudor mansion which still stands there, where the prominent Protestant reformer William Tyndale was resident as a tutor for a time in the early 1520s. The borough of Chipping Sodbury was originally a chapelry of Old Sodbury, and it was surrounded by that parish. It was never a large town, but it lay along an important route which connected Bristol and the south-west with the midlands via Cirencester and the Cotswolds. We think of Chipping Sodbury now as a charming market town that has retained its quaint character despite the modern expansion of its neighbour, Yate. However, reading the manorial court records exposes a much less harmonious community during the early modern period. At the time the town was not incorporated, and it remained under the authority of the medieval court leet, overseen by a steward (appointed by the lord of the manor), and administered by a bailiff and a constable, appointed each year from among the inhabitants. An order of the leet jury of 1589 reveals that the bailiff of the borough was then required to provide an annual breakfast 'for mutual love and increasing of friendship' within the town, but these events were apparently being invaded by 'many disordered and uncivil persons' causing the 'disquieting' of the town. Subsequently these 6 breakfasts were to be restricted only to the burgesses and heads of households 'according to

ancient custom' (GA, D2071/B4). There is then a long gap in the records of manor courts, until the years immediately after the Restoration, which reveal the town still to be riven with strife and discord (GA, D2071/M1). In 1663 a woman called Elizabeth Nash was presented by the court jury for spitting in the face of one John Burford. The document is damaged, but she was probably presented for being a 'common scold', a woman who challenged the perceived norms of gendered behaviour, by being quarrelsome or by challenging the authority of men. The constable was ordered to 'cuck' her - that is to dunk her in the river on a ducking stool - but in the following year the jury presented that he had 'not well & truly executed his office for the Cuckinge of the scolds'. The jury ordered that Elizabeth and two other women accused of being scolds should be cucked before the following midsummer's day. Although we hear no more about these women's fate, we learn of numerous other challenges to authority within the small town during the 1660s. In 1665 a man was presented for having abused the bailiff and the steward in the execution of their offices, and for having called into the question the authority of the court. In the following year, another man drew blood in an affray as he broke open the common pound (where stray animals were impounded until a fine was paid for their recovery). In 1667 the outgoing constable himself was fined the hefty sum of 40 shillings (£2) for having refused the orders of the justices and the steward to keep the peace, instead allowing a tumult to continue within the court. Two more men were presented for tumultuous behaviour in the following year although, unless the annual court at Chipping Sodbury was a particularly violent event, this was presumably the same incident. George Aldin the shoemaker was presented for making a disturbance in the court by coming in drunk and striking the individuals that stood near him. Another man, John Butt the butcher, was also presented for drunken misbehaviour, in his case 'giving ill language in the court'. Although the

court records do not survive after 1669, we have some further suggestion of the friction with the town with a note in a jury presentment of 1681 that the town's stocks, pillory and cucking stool all stood in good repair. The town seems to have been much less disordered by the 19th century,

although the jury of 1855 complained that a number of residents were guilty of 'the pernicious practice' of letting off fireworks at night, to the disturbance and endangerment of the town (GA, D2700/MD1/1). Perhaps some things never change. *Alex Craven*

OFFERS

TWENTIETH CENTURY ORDNANCE SURVEY MAPS

Bristol Regional Environmental Record Centre is about to move from St Nicholas Church, Baldwin St, Bristol to Blaise Castle. Volunteer Daisy Bickley has been sorting out 1:1250 and 1:2500 OS maps acquired from BARAS (Archaeology, now dismantled). There are duplicates mostly from the 1950s to 1994. They are being given away free to local history groups. 'Because of our imminent move one solution would be for someone from your Group to take them all. They are heavy but don't take a lot of space, say 5' x 3' x 2' overall.' Daisy Bickley, daisy@thebickleys.plus.com

PUBLICATIONS NOTICED

Maggie Shapland, *The ups and downs of the Clifton Rocks Railway and the Clifton Spa. The definitive history*, published by ALHA member **Bristol Industrial Archaeological Society** on behalf of the Clifton Rocks Railway. ISBN 978-1-908905-05-5. £15 plus post and packing. On sale in Clifton library, Princess Victoria St, the Suspension Bridge Visitor Centre, and Bristol Archives, or on-line from <http://www.cliftonrocksrailway.org.uk>. *Maggie Shapland writes*: 'The book is 317 pages long, extensively illustrated about 430 images, many in colour, and is a good quality publication. It starts with the development of the Hotwell Spa and the Clifton Spa to put the story into context as to why the railway came to be built. It then gives details of the people involved with constructing and running the railway, the problems of construction, details of operation and maintenance and railway artefacts and oral history. Details of the development of the Pump Room, hotel and Turkish baths are then given, followed by requisition and conversion during the war for use by BOAC for barrage balloon offices and workshop, shelters for residents overnight, and the BBC as a transmitting station day and night. Again operation, artefacts and oral history is given for each of these stories. There then follows the years of dereliction after the war, and the work done by volunteers from 2005. The last chapter deals with restoration versus conservation, and why the railway will never run again. There is an extensive glossary, and index, and a foreword by Sir George White. All funds from the sale go to the railway trust.'

ALHA member **Marshfield & District Local History Society** launched its *Marshfield Heritage Walking Trail* leaflet on 19 December. The photo shows chairman David Colbourne holding a copy of the leaflet, at the launch.

James and Judith Hodsdon, ed., *A grand gossip: the Bletchley Park diary of Basil Cottle*, Wills Hall Association, Bristol. BC was a Bristol University lecturer. £11.95 on Amazon or from Wills Hall, Parrys Lane, Bristol BS9 1AE.



COMMENTARY

Lay subsidy 1334

Local history is full of the unexpected. Take the Lay Subsidy of 1334: no literary prizewinner, not easy to decipher in the original, but readable in full in a printed edition of 1975, and piecemeal on various websites. To pay for their wars medieval kings levied one-off taxes (subsidies) on their squeezable subjects. The lay subsidy of 1334 was extracted from communities, other than religious foundations. Each borough and vill was assessed to pay a sum (£13.75 in the case of **Hawkesbury**, £75 at **Backwell**) which can be taken as a relative indicator of how wealthy the community was and, by inference, roughly how many people lived there.

In our area it is not surprising that **Bristol**, assessed at £2,200, had the biggest assessment: thriving borough, international port, huge hinterland via the Severn, markets galore, staple monopoly, many merchants not short of a groat or two. Nor is it surprising that **Bath** was hit with a big assessment: busy market town, growing merchant class, visitors to the abbey and the spring. What is surprising is just how large Bristol's

Kuznets curve

Simon Kuznets does not feature in local histories of our area. Not many people born in Belarus do. He was an economist, not that that should be held against him. His big idea was the Kuznets curve, a graphical expression of the proposition that as a free market economy grows, inequalities at first increase, then decline once the economy has matured. His idea was unusual, in that most economists think up theories about how people ought or can be predicted to behave, whereas SK derived his idea from empirical observation of what actually happened in the real world economies he studied. He then came up with theories to explain why. SK fits the jibe that economists see something working in practice and wonder whether it will work in theory. SK's idea has been

assessment was compared with Bath's: double or four times as big, one could understand, but 16 times? Or was Bath's assessment lower because much of its wealth had been cornered by the abbey?

Another surprise is the comparatively large assessments on communities no longer considered major centres: both **Marshfield** and **Wroughton** were assessed more highly than **Bath**; **Wraxall**, **West Harptree** and **Portbury** each higher than **Thornbury**. **Marshfield**, assessed at £270, was the fourth largest in Gloucestershire, and twice as big as **Bath**. What explanations could there be? Sheep, wool, cloth? Unlike **Marshfield**, **Wroughton** was not on a main trade route.

There are some unexpected omissions: **Yate** and **Chipping Sodbury** had been founded about the same time, but only Yate was assessed. Perhaps its assessment (larger than **Bath**'s) was high because the two places were lumped together, as were **Aust** with **Redwick**, and **Shipham** with **Rowberrow**?

Worth looking into.

attacked by other economists, some on the ground that the economies he studied were those of south American countries which, being colonial, catholic and corrupt, are not typical. But some economic historians think SK's idea may help answer questions such as how large cities grow; why unskilled labour moves from the countryside into towns; and, more recently, why growing economies tend to produce more environmental pollution, and take steps to reduce or control it only when the economy has reached maturity or, as some would say, when the affluent can afford or can be persuaded to pay.

If Kuznets's idea was based on empirical observation and boils down to propositions of fact, it ought to be testable if relevant

evidence can be found. Local history people could look for such evidence in our area. The sorts of local investigation into inequalities of wealth and income canvassed in *Update* 30 November 2016 might be a place to start. Another approach might be to look at when action was taken in various parts of our area to reduce or prevent various kinds of environmental pollution. Lime burning? Sewage? Noxious effluvia? Smog? Lead in petrol? Diesel particulates? Cynics will say that what has caused action to be taken is not so much economic forces as intolerable situations directly affecting those in power.

Thus parliament did not do anything to reduce pollution or prevent the Thames until the Great Stink of 1858 got up the noses of members of parliament, and if media reports are anything to go by, it looks as if the houses of parliament will not get repaired and maintained until an MP gets electrocuted, killed by a collapsed ceiling or eaten by a rat. Did similar considerations apply to public health reforms in **Bristol** and **Bath** in the 19th century? Will similar considerations apply to atmospheric pollution today?

CAN YOU HELP?

KEYNSHAM & CHEW VALLEY FLOOD MEMORIAL APPEAL

Richard Dyson, Chairman of Keynsham & Saltford Local History Society, writes: 2018 sees the 50th anniversary of the great flood of 1968. This event is etched on the memories of everyone who lived in the Chew Valley and much of the Bristol area at the time. It brought tragedy and misery, but also many examples of heroism and selflessness. Much has been written about the flood and at previous anniversaries exhibitions and dramatic productions have been staged to commemorate it.

Yet, apart from one flood level marker, Keynsham has no physical reminder of that



night, and no memorial to those who died when their car was swept off the Chew Bridge in the town centre.

ALHA member **Keynsham & Saltford Local History Society** believes it is time to rectify this omission and is proposing a project to construct a permanent commemoration of the event. Many bridges along the River Chew were destroyed or irreparably damaged by the flood. One of these was the ancient County Bridge at Keynsham, on the Bitton Road. Built into the north parapet of this was the County Bridge Stone, sometimes known locally as the Abbot's Seat as it may have come from Keynsham Abbey. (An alternative theory, equally plausible, is that it was originally built into a Roman crossing of the River Avon at Trajectus, now generally thought to be at Keynsham.) Older residents have fond memories of sitting with "one foot in Somerset and the other in Gloucestershire". The ancient stone was swept away

but later recovered; since then it has been out of sight in various Council archaeology stores.

The Society is planning to re-erect this stone in **Keynsham Memorial Park** with a commemorative plaque and an explanation of the history of the stone and the events of 10 July 1968 to inform future generations. The project has the support of Keynsham Town

Council and permission to use and display the stone has been obtained from B&NES Council.

To display the stone in an appropriate way has a substantial cost and the Society is launching a public appeal to raise £5,000. It is hoped that the memorial will be unveiled on 10 July 2018.

If any readers have a connection with Keynsham and the events of that night and wish to contribute to the appeal, a donation form can be downloaded from the Society's website www.keysalthist.org.uk. Details of how to donate online are also posted on the website.

HANHAM COURT – HOLE IN POUND WALL

Roy Crew of ALHA member **Hanham Local History Society** says a team has cleared brambles and other foliage around an old animal pound located near the entrance to **Hanham Court**. It has revealed a letter box-sized opening in the pound wall, pictures of both sides



attached. Can anyone say what it was used for? hanhamhistory@gmail.com

NHS EXPERIENCES

A London-based TV Production company called 7Wonder is making a BBC4 documentary series titled *The People's History of the NHS*. 'This three part series is a crowdsourced history of the health service, told through mementos and objects from staff and patients. In partnership with the University of Warwick's History department and the Wellcome collection, these films will uncover a seventy year history of the NHS.

'We are trying to speak to as many people as possible who may have a story to tell or an interesting object to show us from the last 70 years and I am getting in touch to see if you and your society might be able to help us with our hunt. We are looking for potential stories from 1948 to today that can reflect positive or negative experiences related to the NHS!

'There is a link here to our very recently set up twitter page: https://twitter.com/stories_NHS. Any help/ideas/pointers would also be greatly appreciated. If you or any of your members would like to discuss the project in more depth then I can be reached on this email address or on 020 3701 7615.' Tom Macrae, 7 WONDER, 0203 701 7615; 07787423594; tommacrae@7wonder.co.uk; Twitter: @7WonderUK

SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE SECOND WORLD WAR STORIES

Alison Catlin writes: South Gloucestershire Council has been awarded funding by the Heritage Lottery Fund for our *South Gloucestershire Second World War Stories* project. The project will explore the impact of the Second World War and growing up in the post war period.

'We are recruiting 2 part time project officers for 18 months starting April 2018. They will research the Second World War in South Gloucestershire. Please do let us know if you have any photos or information that you have already collected about the Second World War in South Gloucestershire. They will use their research to inspire reminiscence sessions for

older people to share memories and they will record a selection of their stories through further interviews.

‘We aim to create a small collection of stories that are easily accessible. For a younger generation raised on You Tube, we want to create a series of short films that are concise and engaging. With these, we aim to create a real understanding of what the war and post war periods were like and seek to generate understanding between different generations. We will share the project through schools workshops, public events, a touring exhibition, publishing the stories and films on-line alongside resources for future work and extending existing digital platforms such as Know Your Place. We hope to hold some special commemoration events featuring evacuation days with Avon Valley Railway. As part of the project we will also work with Gloucestershire Archives to provide some training to museums and heritage groups on digital archiving.

‘Following on from the great work that has been carried out on the First World War, we also hope you will support us to commemorate those who were lost in the Second World War by publishing stories of Second World War soldiers commemorated on local war memorials on an update of the First World War website. Please do let us know if you already hold any information on Second World War casualties.

‘We look forward to collaborating with you on this project. If you have any comments or questions, please contact Alison Catlin on Alison.catlin@southglos.gov.uk or call 01454 865835. I work part time, Tuesday to Friday mornings. South Gloucestershire Council, PO Box 1954, Community Cultural Services, Bristol, BS37 0DD’