



Writing the French version of the Newsletter: Jean-Baptiste Mauzaisse, 1833

AVON LOCAL HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

30 April 2019

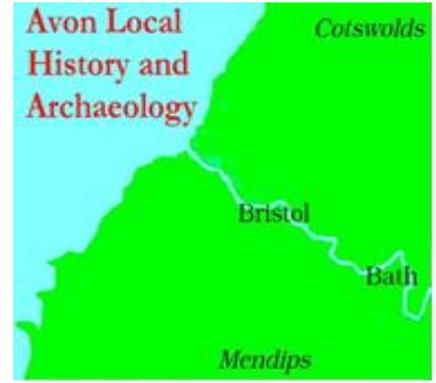
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ALHA ITEMS

ALHA LOCAL HISTORY DAY 2019 – GETTING ABOUT

ALHA's 2019 local history day on the topic of **transport**, broadly interpreted, was held at Thornbury Leisure Centre on 27 April 2019. ALHA's committee would like to thank all who contributed to the event, held for the first time at that venue. ALHA's events team welcomes feedback on the venue and any aspect of the event.

FACEBOOK FOR MEMBER GROUPS AND SOCIETIES

Isla Kouassi-Kan of the ALHA facebook team writes: Some of our member societies do not have a Facebook page, whether that be due to personal preference, the lack of time or just an inability to do so.

ALHA's social media team has come up with the idea to offer our member societies who are not currently utilising the social media platform, to have a post put up on Facebook (by us) with the details of your society for free. There is no obligation to take up this offer of

course but, if you do wish to then we would appreciate a 50-100 word write up about your society and perhaps a few historic photographs to go along with the text if you want to. Please send the details of this to our email at: avonlocalhistoryandarchaeology@gmail.com If you would rather not do that then we can also do that part for you and create an ad on your behalf.

The ALHA Facebook team post forthcoming events that they obtain from the ALHA website page <https://www.alha.org.uk/Events%20list%20by%20date.pdf>

Not all our member societies have the resources to submit their programmes to ALHA on an annual basis or may not wish to do so we can offer this as an alternative also.

ALHA SUMMER WALKS PROGRAMME 2019

ORGANISED BY MIKE HOOPER. NO NEED TO PRE-BOOK BUT THERE WILL BE A £2 FEE PAYABLE ON THE DAY. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES PLEASE TELEPHONE **MIKE HOOPER ON 0117 9775512 (Mobile: 07443 229499)**

MONDAY 13 MAY – GLENSIDE HOSPITAL AND MUSEUM, FISHPONDS

Leader Stella Mann – Curator at the Glenside Museum for psychiatric health

Walk How did the Victorians look after their patients? How does this compare to today? A short walk around the hospital and grounds finishing at the museum for refreshments

Meet at 6:45pm for 7pm start The museum car park. Entrance opposite the Old Tavern pub. BS16 1DD

MONDAY 24 JUNE – SALTFORD BRASS MILL

Leader Patrick Beazley – and the mill's volunteer team

Walk See how the team have put recent grants to use to make the mill a fabulous place to visit

Meet at 6:45pm for 7pm start The Shallows car park BS31 3EG

MONDAY 15 JULY – OLD MARKET STREET, BRISTOL

Leader Mike Manson – Local historian and author

Walk Just outside the old castle walls: Old Market street was the original marketplace. A walk with a lot of history packed into a small area

Meet at 6:45pm for 7pm start The Stag and Hounds pub BS2 0EJ

SUNDAY 11 AUGUST – THORNBURY (Cost £3)

Leader Jane Marks of Thornbury & District Museum

Walk A guided walk along the High Street. See how it compares to Old Market, Bristol

Meet at 1:45pm for 2pm start
Meet at the Museum in Chapel Street, between the Cossham Hall and the Wheatsheaf pub.
BS35 2BJ

EVENTS AND SOURCES

ACTON COURT, IRON ACTON

Acton Court gardens will be open under the National Gardens Scheme on **Sundays 2, 9 and 16 June 2019**, and there will be tours of the house and grounds under heritage open days on **Friday 13, Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 September 2019**. More at <http://www.actoncourt.com/events#Acton-Court-Open-Days-2019>

BRUNEL LETTERS



Retired engineer Roger Henley is reported to have discovered in the **Port of Bristol** archives letters and other papers written by IKB 1832-1846. IKB expresses concern about, among other things, the discharging of raw sewage into the floating harbour, and various forms of pollution from works, including the Great Western Railway, for many of which he himself was responsible.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/apr/02/letters-reveal-isambard-kingdom-brunels-pollution-concerns> . They have been donated to the SS Great Britain Trust.

ORAL HISTORY TRAINING OFFERED

Oral history training led by Paul Evans of Gloucestershire Archives on **Thursday 11 July 2019** at the **South Gloucestershire Council Offices, Badminton Road, Yate, BS37, 5AF**. <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/oral-history-training-with-paul-evans-of-gloucestershire-archives-tickets-60123818961>

GLOUCESTERSHIRE FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Congratulations to **GFHS**, celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. By the time you read this they will probably have held their special event on **Sunday 28 April, 10-3** at their new home in the **Gloucestershire Heritage Hub, Alvin Street, Gloucester, GFL1 3DW**, but for more please see the website www.gfhs.org.uk; Tel 01452 524344

SOUTH GLOS COUNCIL COMMUNITY GROUPS GRANTS

Alison Southern draws attention to South Gloucestershire Council's scheme for **grants to community groups**. 'The Area Wide Grant Scheme is open for applications from registered community groups that are delivering projects and services across the S.Glos area – are any of your heritage groups likely to be interested? Applications must directly meet the needs of

residents in at least 6 of the 14 Community Engagement Forum (CEF) areas or the equivalent in ward areas. The deadline for applications is **8 May 2019** so do come and have a chat soonest if you need clarification. There will be another AWG round later in the year that is likely to be over-subscribed, whereas this round has a very short lead-in time, so interest may be limited.' Alison Southern, grants support officer SGC, <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/community-and-living/grants>

SOMERSET HERITAGE CENTRE DAY COURSES

The Centre's contributions to local and community history month include:

- **14 May 11.00 am - 12.30 pm at the Somerset Heritage Centre: *Know Your Place: Know Your Place*** is a digital, interactive resource aimed at inspiring people to become engaged with their local heritage. Join Archivist, Eve Bickerton, for a demonstration of how the website works and how you can use it.
- **16 May 9.30 am - 4.00 pm at Taunton library: *Resources For Local Studies At The Glass Box, Taunton Library*** Join us for a day course looking at the resources available at the [Somerset Heritage Centre](#) for researching local history, looking at land, buildings, people, and social history using a combination of archival, printed and online resources.

More at https://swheritage.org.uk/news_tags/local-and-community-history-month/

STOKE BISHOP AND EASTER COMPTON

Jenny Weeks writes: **Stoke Bishop Local History Group** has arranged an additional event not in its published programme. The group's *Leaving Home to Fight* about Stoke Bishop and its WW1 soldiers (available from Bristol Archives (£10) and by email) came to the attention of members of All Saints church, **Compton**

Greenfield, who noticed a number of familiar surnames. This talk will concentrate on the men and families with connections to the Comptons and their occupations before and after WW1. Talk *Stoke Bishop and Easter Compton WWI Connections*; Speakers: Liz Tomlinson and Jenny Weeks; **7:30 Wednesday 22 May 2019, Easter Compton Village Hall, Main Road, Easter Compton, BS35 5SJ**. No charge, plenty of parking behind the hall.



Picture shows Washingpool farm today. It was owned by Kossuth Robinson of **Stoke Bishop**. His grave in All Saints churchyard, **Compton Greenfield** also commemorates his 3 sons who died in WW1.

sblocalhistory@gmail.com; 07780 438303

WHAT LIES BENEATH THE SOUTH LAWN AT ASHTON COURT ESTATE?

Anthony Roberts writes: Be an Archaeologist for the Day! This is a rare opportunity to actually have a go at archaeology on an iconic Bristol landmark, **Ashton Court**. Members of the public can pre-book an opportunity to participate in the dig and experience being an archaeologist for a day. This is a great opportunity to engage with the history of Ashton Court and help to add more to the understanding of the long and varied history of this famous Bristol landmark.

On selected days from **23 June to 18 July 2019**, a community archaeological investigation will be conducted to investigate the results of a geophysical survey carried out



in 2018. During last year's dry summer parch marks appeared on the South Lawn at Ashton Court, hinting at a hidden history waiting to be uncovered. A geophysical survey of the lawn identified possible archaeological remains that took the form of potential rooms of a building. An engraving, dated 1791, shows a wing of the mansion that no longer exists where the scorch marks appeared. This wing was removed during alterations to the Court, at the same time that the current double frontage of the building was constructed.

Some contemporary garden features may also be waiting to be uncovered.

A number of Bristol schools have been invited to participate in the excavation as part of Historic England's Heritage Schools programme. Students will learn about the rich heritage of the grand Ashton Court buildings and have the chance to experience hands-on excavation.

The excavation is being conducted by Archeoscan with the kind permission of Bristol City Council and supported by Artspace Lifespace and Historic England. These popular digging experiences cost £30pp per day. Anyone wishing to participate in the excavation should contact Archeoscan on archeoscan@hotmail.co.uk for more information or to book a place. Further details are on the Archeoscan website www.archeoscan.com. 07901 746140 Email: archeoscan@hotmail.co.uk

COMMENTARY AND RESPONSES

Sackler

According to media reports, the National Portrait Gallery has refused a big donation from the Sackler foundation, a USA family trust that donates to charitable causes. Other galleries have followed suit: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-47661685>. Sackler has announced that it will cease donating to UK institutions: <http://www.newsbelow.co.uk/sackler-trust-halts-new-philanthropic-giving-due-to-opioid-lawsuits-126885/>. The background is allegations, originating from campaigners in the USA, that Sackler money derives from dividends from a family company which manufactured and marketed opioid drugs, with widespread socially and medically damaging effects.

A similar controversy occurred in 2016, when BP cut its sponsorship of the British Museum, following protests that BP's exploitation of fossil fuels and contributions to global overheating are morally offensive. Institutions should reject such money, it is argued, on the ground that it was improperly acquired. The principle can be applied to all museums, art galleries, libraries and other public and charitable institutions. It is particularly relevant in the UK, where government policies have cut tax-derived funding for museums, art galleries and so on, have cut general grants to the local authorities that run them, and have restricted the amounts that local authorities can raise from local taxation. Some councils, including **Bristol's**, have responded by ostensibly transferring management of museums to semi-autonomous trusts, one of whose functions is to raise money by begging donations from the public and from major donors such as Sackler.

In judging whether an act is morally permissible, most people nowadays go by gut or emotional reaction; or they apply common sense consequentialist principles: does the act do good rather than harm? The approach derives from the utilitarian philosophers Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. Its most prominent modern exponent is the Australian philosopher Peter Singer. If you judge an act by its consequences, the making of a donation to a public museum is morally permissible, because it does not harm anybody, and has the potential to do a lot of good. A museum's acceptance of a donation is morally permissible because the museum will apply it for the public benefit. That the money was improperly acquired by the donor is considered immaterial to the moral calculation of consequences: what happened in the past is, in accountancy jargon, sunk, and is not relevant to decisions about future consequences.

So why is accepting a Sackler donation considered wrong? One argument is that money is tainted if it was improperly acquired. HM Revenue and Customs has warned charities against accepting what HMRC calls 'tainted donations:' http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/charities/guidance-notes/annex8/annex_viii.htm, and the Charity Commission has published guidance on how to avoid them: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550694/Tool_6.pdf. The use of the word 'tainted' in the original CC guidance had associations with notions of contamination, pollution, defilement: such ideas go back centuries and appear in many religions, and there is a touch of superstition about it. Jews and muslims shunning pigs as unclean are but two examples of numerous taboos with religious origins, most of which are now regarded by others, at any rate in western countries, as primitive and without rational justification. For many years the Methodist church would not accept money derived from gambling or from making or selling alcohol. Its current position is at <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-church/views-of-the-church/gambling/>. It did not stop the **New Room in Bristol** from funding its refurbishment with a Heritage Lottery Fund grant. It would be interesting to read the minutes.

There is a similar strand in UK criminal law. It is an offence to receive goods if you know them to have been stolen. Nowadays the justification for this rule is practical: fencing has to be made a crime in order to block evasion of the basic laws of theft. But in earlier times a similar rule derived from the notion that stolen goods are rendered impure by theft. That may be related to rules in early English law which required coroners to condemn things or animals that had caused death. One case in 1841 involved the Great Western Railway. Deodands (etymologically, things to be given to God) were not abolished in UK law until 1846.

In our area Hannah More (**Fishponds, Bristol, Nailsea, Wrington, Clifton**) and other anti-slavery campaigners refused to buy sugar, on the grounds that to do so contributed to the profits of slave owners and slave traffickers and hence supported and encouraged what they did. HM's stance would nowadays be termed a boycott, but that expression dates only from 1880, when the Irish Land League urged people not to deal with a land agent of that name, in order to pressure him into reducing rents. Trade unions 'black' the products of employers with whom they are in dispute. In the 1970s people refused to buy South African goods in the hope of undermining apartheid. Recently people in our area have refused to buy Kraft (Mondelez) products and brands in supermarkets in protest against that company's breaking of promises it made about continuing manufacturing at **Somerdale**. In the C19, many anglicans and nonconformists hereabouts refused to deal with catholics: a sort of boycott, or was it fear of religious contamination? HM's stance was not just about economic pressure: it was based on the idea that sugar was morally polluted by acts done in producing it. She took only sugar produced in the east Indies, because, she said, it had 'no blood on it.'

Our area has a more general problem, in that much of the profits of slave-owning and -trafficking found their way into our present economies and institutions and into the fabric of our towns, especially **Bristol** and **Bath**. Plantation and slave owners and slave traders used their profits or the compensation for abolition or both to build houses (the Georgian House museum in Great George Street, **Bristol** and Leigh Court at **Abbots Leigh** are examples), and to found banks and endow churches and schools. Is it wrong for us to continue to benefit from these products of tainted money? If scientists at one of our area's universities are awarded a Nobel prize for discovering how to make the 36 bus run on time, ought they to turn the prize down on the ground that Nobel's money came from armaments? So far as is known, no Russian oligarch or African politician has offered millions to the museums at **Radstock, Thornbury or Kingswood**, but if any of our museums is offered big money from an international kleptocrat, should it refuse? Or does a consequentialist view of morality say that what makes gifts right or wrong is not what people did in the past (for which we can have no moral responsibility) but what use we make of them in the future?

Change

Historians keep reminding us that the pace of change has never been greater. Compare any aspect of ordinary life nowadays in our area, from **Milton to Marshfield**, from **Redwick to Radstock** and from **Winscombe to Wickwar**, with what it must have been like at various times past, and we have to acknowledge that the changes have been great, that the number of changes has been increasing, and that the rate of change has got faster. Many changes have come from inventions and discoveries: steam, electricity, the internal combustion engine, nuclear power; radio, television, the internet; machines, computing, communications, medicine and so on. Only in clothing and house design have things not changed much.

Historians contrast the amount and speed of recent and present-day change with pictures of a past that was static or changing only slowly. We are asked to admire stable societies, long-established families, manors and estates and their big houses passing down from generation to generation, supported by loyal workers year on year.

It is true that there were long periods on medieval manors when little changed. **Abbots Leigh** and **Filton** are examples, and they could have been typical. But there were several disrupters. The shorter that people's lifespans were, the quicker the population turned over. Bad harvests, epidemics and sheer ignorance resulted in deaths and vacancies. Some people moved in order to survive. The dissolution of the monasteries shook up land ownerships. If a family owned property, claims of entitlement by the eldest son forced younger ones to find work or wife, and daughters to find husbands, somewhere else. By the 18th century many families owned land in more than one county, and had relations and other connections in several parts of the country. That allowed them, paid them, and often required them, to move around. When inclosures made people landless, many moved out of agriculture or into towns. Annual engagement of servants and agricultural labourers allowed, or forced, people to go away. So did soldiering and war. Canals, turnpikes and railways facilitated mobility. As the Scots discovered, education allows you to cash in its benefits somewhere else.

Change and its acceleration may be characteristic of recent times and the present day, but change and movement have always been the norm. Those who would like a static society defy not only evolution, but history as well.

Llandoger Trow

Bristol's Llandoger Trow is reported to be closing: <https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/whats-on/food-drink/bristol-pub-llandoger-trow-closing-2683530>. Cue media alarm, end of the

world etc. Its closing is not, of itself, of historic significance. Businesses fail and change hands all the time. What is important about the building is its survival as an example of a design, method of construction and lifestyle from an age long past: for good reason was a photograph of its façade chosen for the cover of Roger Leech's *The town house in medieval and early modern Bristol* (English Heritage 2014).

Local history people will be more interested in the reasons why the pub is closing. Some might see it as an example of a wider phenomenon as more and more public houses close in most parts of the country. Many reasons are given: price competition from supermarkets and more recently from sellers on the internet; higher taxes on sale of alcohol; increases in business rates; rival entertainments such as television; rival social spaces such as coffee shops; and in many instances the character of some pubs and the people they attract, or lack of character in the liquids sold. Some landlords have modified what they offer, eg food (hence the addition of 'gastropub' to the advertisers' vocabulary), televised football, quizzes and other side attractions aimed at getting in customers who would otherwise see no reason to enter, let alone buy anything. Some advertise themselves as selling real ale, from which unkind cynics would draw the obvious inference. But the general tendency seems to be towards closure.

Others might see pubs closing as an example of a wider decline in community facilities: not just of pubs but also of village shops, sub-post offices, newsagents and nonconformist chapels. Contrary to political spin and folk myth, many of these community facilities are of comparatively recent origin: few villages had shops before the nineteenth century, Methodist chapels could not have preceded Methodism, and sub-post offices could not have preceded the cheap and universal postal service. Alehouses, by contrast, seem to have existed from time immemorial, their origins obscured in the alcoholic haze in which our medieval predecessors, wisely avoiding water, must have drifted about. The decline of these institutions, especially in villages and the countryside, is also attributed to various causes: less religious observance and religious belief (the result of more widespread and longer education?); technological changes (telephone, internet); and changes in distribution (supermarkets, mail order and the internet again). Some say the decline stems from changes in the function of villages: no longer places where you live near your agricultural, mining or craft employment, or from which the local squire sucks his rents, but places the urban affluent appropriate by outbidding the locals. That shift started hereabouts in the eighteenth century when merchants moved out of Bristol to **Clifton**, and has become more pronounced as people find urban living unpleasant or conclude that an internet-based business can be run from anywhere.

Others would generalise even further and link pub closures to a more general decline in communal and co-operative activity, as with trade unions, mutual insurance companies and mutual building societies. They would trace the change to the shift in the 1980s in attitudes to communal effort, more recently accelerated by people who want social contact getting it from social media via the internet. However you look at it, the future of local pubs seems doubtful. Better start delving into local history.