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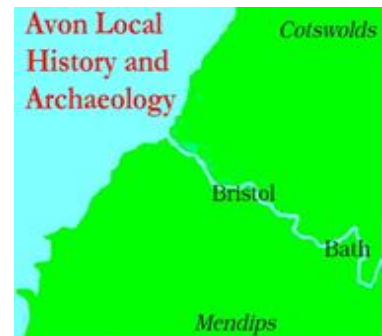
AVON LOCAL HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

registered charity no. 270930

UPDATE
28 February 2018

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ALHA ITEMS

ALHA LOCAL HISTORY DAY 2018

A flyer for this event is attached.

EVENTS AND SOURCES

A FORGOTTEN LANDSCAPE PROJECT

Latest from the project at <https://us11.campaign-archive.com/?u=5a1c4370a35827939f3c8d02b&id=2434fd4154> Talks include *The*

Southwells and the slave economy: exploring what the archives tell us, **Saturday 17 March, 19:00 – 20:30**, **Kings Weston House**, Kings Weston Lane, Bristol BS11 0UR. Historian Madge Dresser, University of the West of England, and David Martyn, Chair of the Kings Weston Action Group, will look at the history of the Southwell family who built Kings Weston House. What evidence is there to indicate the Southwell's involvement in the Atlantic slave economy? This event is free but booking is essential. To book click [here](#).



For more on **Kingsweston**, please see under CAN YOU HELP? Below.

SWFED SPRING FORUM

The South Western Federation of Museums and Art Galleries (SWFed) is an umbrella group representing the South West's museums, art galleries and heritage sites, including Bristol Museum and Art Gallery and independent museums. Its spring conference is *Together for Archaeology*, **29 March 2018, 10:00 – 16:00**, **Bath Guildhall and The Roman Baths**.

Booking link: togetherforarchaeology.eventbrite.co.uk

GLOUCESTERSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

Gloucestershire Local History Association's Local History Day, *Between the Wars: Life in Gloucestershire 1919 – 1939*, **Saturday April 28th 2018, Churchdown Community Centre, Parton Road, Churchdown**, Gloucester, GL3 2JH. Programme includes Alan Crosby on *The local history of inter-war England: themes and challenges*, and David Eveleigh on *Suburban Vernacular - housing and domestic style, 1919-1939*. Admission free, thanks to external sponsorship. www.gloshistory.org.uk

SOMERSET HERITAGE CENTRE

Somerset Heritage Centre courses are listed at <https://www.swheritage.org.uk/somerset-archives>. Next one is *Resources for Local History*, **Tuesday 20 March 9.30 am to 4.00 pm**, 'a day course looking at archival and printed resources available at the Somerset Heritage Centre and online for researching local history, looking at land, buildings, people, and social history.' £20 per person (£10 concessions ie students / those receiving state benefits (including pension credits). Booking essential: call 01823 278805 or email somersetarchives@swheritage.org.uk. [Somerset Heritage Centre](#), Brunel Way, Norton Fitzwarren, Taunton, TA2 6SF

MINORITY RELIGIONS' BUILDINGS

The Society of Antiquaries and Historic England offer a day seminar on *The heritage of minority faith buildings in the 20th century*, **Monday 12 March 2018**, at Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1J 0BE. £12. <https://www.sal.org.uk/events/2018/03/heritage-of-minority-faith-buildings/>

ARCHAEOLOGY DIGS GUIDE

The magazine *Current Archaeology* publishes a list of current and forthcoming digs. If your group wants a dig listed, the contact is cp@currentpublishing.com

~~FESTIVAL OF ARCHAEOLOGY 2018~~

The Council for British Archaeology says funding cuts mean it will not be organising any festival of archaeology in July 2018. It will try to organise one for 2019, the CBA's 75th anniversary. <http://new.archaeologyuk.org/>

MARY GODWIN PLAQUE, BATH

A new plaque has been put up outside the pump room and roman baths to mark the print shop above which Mary Shelley, author of Frankenstein, lived when she was in Bath, and where she is thought to have written most of the book.

OFFERS

Digital projector

Secondhand (new 2010) digital projector Acer X110P (VGA only, so no HDMI or audio connections) offered in the first instance to an ALHA local history group or society that could make use of it. Donation to ALHA appreciated. For more description please ask the treasurer, wm.evans@btopenworld.com, 0117 968 4979.

Britain on Film: South Asian Britain

The Independent Cinema Office is a registered charity that brings non-commercial films to audiences who may not normally have access to them. In collaboration with the British Film Institute it has launched *Britain on Film on Tour* - a series of archive film programmes featuring film from archives across the UK, available to the British public for the first time. *Britain on Film: South Asian Britain* explores the history of Britain's South Asian communities originally from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Featuring films from 1902-1989, the programme contains an unusually early study of London's multiculturalism in 1924, a festival at Britain's first mosque and Indian regiments being mobilised for the Second World War; 1959 Indian Independence celebrations in Leicester, a Sikh wedding, and Asian fashion and jewellery workshops; Bangladeshi migrants to 1970s East End facing a hostile reception and second generation youths in the 1980s exploring the roots of their culture in music and dance, alongside deeper questions of what it means to be a young British Asian. *Britain on Film: South Asian Britain* is available to libraries, museums, galleries, and community groups, to hire from as little as £20+VAT – a reduction of 80% of the commercial rate. More details at: <https://www.independentcinemaoffice.org.uk/films/south-asian-britain/> Jemma Buckley, Independent Cinema Office, 3rd Floor, Kenilworth House, 79-80 Margaret Street, London, W1W 8TA Direct: 020 7079 5950; fax: 020 7636 7121; www.independentcinemaoffice.org.uk

PUBLICATIONS NOTICED

Rachel Hewitt, *A revolution of feeling: the decade that forged the modern mind*, Granta 2017, £25. Looks at the 1790s through five individuals including Thomas Beddoes (Bristol's Pneumatic Institution) and Tom Wedgwood (who was a patient at the Institution, and helped subsidise Coleridge).

Jane Duffus, *The women who build Bristol 1184-2018*, Tangent books 2018 £12.99. www.tangentbooks.co.uk , Unit 5.16 Paintworks, Bristol BS4 3EH, 0117 972 0645

BOOK FORTHCOMING



Liz Tomlinson and Jenny Weeks of Stoke Bishop Local History Group, *Leaving Home to Fight - the lives behind the names on Stoke Bishop's War Memorials*. The story of the men on the WW1 war memorials of Stoke Bishop and their families is told in a new book to be published in April 2018. More details, and a review, in the next ALHA Newsletter.

The book is 140 pages, in colour, and will go on sale on 27 April 2018. Available from Stoke Bishop Local History Group sblocalhistory@gmail.com, [Stoke Lodge Adult Learning Centre](#), Shirehampton Road, BS9 1BN, [Stoke Bishop Fruiterers](#) 63 Stoke Hill BS9 1EP, and other local outlets. Jenny Weeks, Stoke Bishop Local History Group, 07780 438303; 0117 9686010; sblocalhistory@gmail.com

COMMENTARY

THE OTHER BEDMINSTER

From *Cynthia J. Crosson*, Trustee and Archivist, The Historical Society of the Somerset Hills, P.O. BOX 136, BASKING RIDGE, NEW JERSEY 07920

Thank you so much for your letter and note about the two **Bedminsters** (POTUS in Bemi, ALHA online update 31 August 2017). It is wonderful to hear about Avon Local History and Archaeology and its support of local history organizations in its part of the UK.

To answer your question, Bedminster and Somerset County, New Jersey are indeed named after their counterparts in England, according to our sources. The Berkeley connection stems from the 1664 gift of land by King Charles II to his brother, James, Duke of York, who in turn gave the land to close court friends, John, Lord Berkeley, and Sir George Carteret. The territory became known as Nova Caesaria or New Jersey as a tribute to Carteret's Isle of Jersey home that had offered refuge to Charles II while the Cromwells ruled the Commonwealth. The two "proprietors" divided New Jersey in half, with Carteret in the east and Berkeley in the west. In 1674, Lord Berkeley sold his interest in West Jersey. William Penn was one of four buyers of this land.

While William Penn II was in New Jersey, he is best known for settling

Pennsylvania as a haven for those seeking religious freedom, particularly Quakers.

King Charles II of England had a large loan with Penn's father, after whose death, King Charles settled by granting Penn a large area west and south of New Jersey on March 4, 1681. Penn called the area Sylvania (Latin for woods), which Charles changed to Pennsylvania in honor of the elder Penn. Perhaps the king was glad to have a place where religious and political outsiders (like the Quakers, or the Whigs, who wanted more influence for the people's representatives) could have their own place, far away from England. One of the first counties of Pennsylvania was called Bucks County, named after Buckinghamshire (Bucks) in England, where the Penn's family seat was.

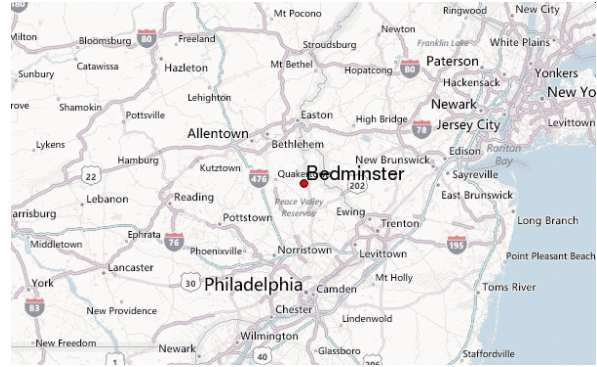
In New Jersey, the western part of Middlesex became Somerset County in 1688 and bore the name of Somerset County in England, where Lord Berkeley had been victorious in battle in 1658.

Bedminster Township is in the northwestern portion of Somerset County. The Royal Charter creating the Township was made in the name of King George II on April 4, 1749. Early settlers in this area came

from Germany, Holland, England, Northern Ireland and Scotland. Many were in search of religious freedom. In 1740, a settlement of Scots built a Presbyterian Church that was the first church within Bedminster Township.

Bedminster, New Jersey was primarily comprised of working farms until the 1800s, when wealthy landowners began buying up smaller farms to create large estates. When a train line went in in the late 1800's, the Somerset Hills became a playground for the titans of finance and industry in New York who were able to ride the trains to their vacation homes in New Jersey. The estates became more and more elaborate as time went on and many are featured in books about the 'gilded age.' The goal was to emulate the landed gentry of the

UK. Ironic.



My sources are a book called *Bedminster Township: 250 Years* written by township historian Prich Matthews, published in 1999. Another source is *The Story of An Old Farm* by Andrew D. Mellick, published in 1889.

I hope this is helpful. Please let me know if you have additional questions.

Cumberland basin

According to newspaper reports, Mayor Marvin would like to replace Bristol's **Cumberland Basin** road system with a new bridge further downstream. That would release land for housing, presumably on stilts above flood level. The challenge that faced the engineer who designed the flyovers was how to reconcile the need to keep traffic (at 1960s volumes) moving



with the wish to let through occasional tall-masted boats. The engineer died some years ago, so he would not be offended by the destruction of his ingenious solution, which directs vehicles to one of the two bridges while the other is being swung. If the bridge is not to be high, and if boats are still to be let through, the same problem will remain. If however the mayor was irked at being delayed by a bridge swing, and if the intention is to have a fixed low-level bridge that will keep boats with tall masts out of the floating harbour if they are not already in it, those designing the scheme might consider some local history input. If previous attempts to nail down moveable bridges are anything to go by, an

attempt to do the same at Cumberland Basin may take a long time and involve a rough ride.

Before the Frome in Bristol's **Centre** was covered over, for many years it was crossed by a drawbridge. It was where Baldwin Street now bisects the Centre, and a pub was named after it. The drawbridge was raised to let boats pass. They were pulled through by men hauling on ropes. Delays to traffic were frequent, and could last 20 minutes. In 1835 councillor Richard Smith proposed that the drawbridge be replaced by a fixed one. (RS, by the way, was the surgeon who skinned the corpse of the **Hanham** murderer John Horwood for binding the book now in M Shed. Interesting chap, RS that is: perhaps ALHA ought to ask Michael Whitfield or some other medically-minded local historian to write him up for an ALHA booklet). RS having put forward his proposal, there followed nearly 60 years of discussion, argument and shouting. Not until 1893 was the drawbridge replaced by a fixed bridge, presumably to keep the trams on time and George White quiet. Another exhibit for the museum of public authority decision-making suggested in ALHA update October 2016?

Redcliffe Bridge, of bascule mechanism, was designed in the late 1930s to cross the floating harbour between The Grove and Redcliffe Way. In the 1960s Bristol city council planned to complete the inner circuit road by extending Redcliff Way along The Grove and

across St Augustine's Reach and Canons' Marsh into Anchor Road and Jacob's Wells Road. That involved screwing down Redcliffe Bridge. Opposition was fierce, not least from those who, for no reason other than reactionary nostalgia, wanted to keep open the city docks, then used by

the occasional sand boat. The scheme was delayed. It became unaffordable because of inflation and interest rate rises, and politically unacceptable because of concerns about the effects of large-scale road schemes. Avon county council abandoned the project.

Landscape and nature

Naturalists say that railway cuttings, where larger animals including humans are kept out by fences, are examples of what happens when land is left to itself. The slopes of the cutting, untouched by human hand or hoe, revert to grass, scrub, and in due course trees. Observation of the effects of public expenditure cuts on the maintenance of public parks, and an experiment conducted (or rather, allowed to happen) by archaeologists in the 1970s, suggest that the naturalists are right. Nature takes over again; the plants and animals that were previously weeded out, kept out or shot gradually resume occupation, so that the land returns to the state it was in before it was put to human active use. An instance has recently come to attention in Bristol: residents in Cromwell Road, **St Andrew's**, cut down trees in a railway cutting that were obstructing their view of what remains of Bristol's third spa. The felling angered other people, who valued the trees as part of their view.

<https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-news/residents-cut-down-wood-bristol-1129002>

What if the withdrawal of human intervention happens on a large scale? Archaeologists and historians say that in our area, as elsewhere in England, the amount of land used for agriculture was seriously reduced on two occasions: after the romans left Britain, and after the Black Death. When the roman empire disintegrated, goes one (disputed) narrative, and the vitamin D-depleted legions departed, Britain no longer had military protection and discipline, so undefended areas became exposed to lawlessness and marauders. Some rural areas were depopulated as people moved to towns for safety; others, because the departure of the legions and their dependents reduced demand for agricultural products; others, because crops they had grown for export were no longer demanded;

so farming declined, and much land that had been cultivated reverted to waste. After the Black Death, goes the other narrative, there were no longer enough people to plough fields, sow seeds, harvest crops, grope cows and do the myriad other things that an agricultural economy depends on. So again, much land that had been farmed was abandoned.

Could that sort of thing happen again on a scale large enough to alter local landscapes? If the UK leaves the EU, one consequence will be the cessation of EU farm subsidies, much criticised, among other things, for paying money to farmers for owning or occupying land. Some of those policies have involved paying farmers money to take out of cultivation or grazing land used to grow foods which the EU over-produces: at various times, wine (practical suggestions for reducing the wine lake were not taken up), grains and, of recent years, milk. Farmers are given incentives to set aside land from agriculture. That has happened in many places in our area on a small scale, represented to a suspicious public as encouraging tree planting, wildlife conservation and other ecological benefits. But if agricultural subsidies cease on a large scale (as might happen if the UK government decides not to continue them because it has other priorities such as the NHS, education, housing, defence, pensions, bus passes or whatever else the political party in power decides will get votes at the next election), then the stretches of land ceasing to be cultivated could be significant. That might be exacerbated if the UK imports, whether voluntarily or pursuant to international trade agreements, more foodstuffs from non-EU countries at prices with which UK farmers cannot compete.

Dairy farming and grain production, which have formed and maintained landscapes hereabouts, are still important in many parts of our area, and dominate many people's habitats. Once again, we may be witnessing local history in the making.

Survival of the atypical

Most historians and archaeologists accept that if there are no surviving documents or artefacts relevant to a subject, there is not much that can be said about it. Those who write history fiction or archaeology theory may demur, but proper history and archaeology depends on documents



and artefacts having survived. Whether a document or artefact has survived will depend on many factors, including chance. Ancient papyrus rotted, burned, and could be eaten. It has survived only in rare environmental conditions

such as those around the Dead Sea and Oxyrhynchus. Parchment is sturdier, but vulnerable to damp, fire, insects, worms, rats and manufacturers of lampshades. Stone lasts, but can be recycled, as happened to the buildings around **Bath's** roman spring, Bath's first abbey, and **Bristol's** castle. Anything made of metal has the potential to last longer, but can be melted down and turned into something else. Because there are so many reasons why some things have survived and others not, we cannot be sure that what has survived is typical or representative of the age, let alone the civilisation, in which it was created. Two examples: marble fireplaces and coins.

Bristol city museum has images of over 30 stuart and jacobean white marble fireplaces in or removed from local houses. Examples of the real thing are in the Red House and in the museum café. They share stylistic features: caryatids or telamones each side of the hearth, scroll corbels supporting the mantelpiece, various pre-palladian neoclassical motifs. From the numbers surviving or recorded one might infer that that was what 16th and 17th century fireplaces were like. But all houses had fireplaces

(hence the hearth tax). Larger Georgian houses might have had a score. Fireplaces differed in size, style, function and weight. Those that survived did so because you cannot easily or cheaply move or modify several tons of marble. You would not want to stub your toe against one. If the thought of shifting one ever entered your head, you'd take one look and decide to leave it where it was. Of the more numerous but less expensive, more modest, fireplaces, few remain. It is the rarities that have survived, not the typical.

Our predecessors from various times past have left us samples of their coins – or other people's coins - sometimes in quantity when a hoard is found, as at **Thornbury** in 2004. Nowadays money in its various forms, mostly imaginary, so pervades and underpins ordinary life - locally, nationally and internationally – that we can forget that widespread use of coin is comparatively recent. One suspects that most roman coinage was used to pay soldiers. Saxon kings had mints, as did the normans, but only the warlords and the big merchants will have had much use for coin. On manors, only the lord and his steward had much need of money: our agricultural labourer ancestors did not jangle pocketfuls of change. Until the 19th century most local communities used barter. In places like **Bath** and **Bristol** the more sophisticated merchants will have kept accounts and practised set-off, striking balances and settling in cash only at certain times of the year such as lady day or **at St James's, St Paul's or Lansdown** fairs. As late as 1813 the **Bath** schoolmaster John Naish used set-off and exchange in dealings with parents and suppliers almost as much as he did cash. Traces of barter and set-off, however, survive only in accounts, which few people kept, and few have survived. Coins, being metal, have survived, and give the impression that they were more important than they actually were.

CAN YOU HELP?

HELPING OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS DO LH RESEARCH

Jenny Zmroczek writes: 'The Open University will be running a day school for students on the MA in Local History on **19 May 2018 at St Mary Redcliffe and Temple School, Bristol**. The module focuses on the themes: Religion; Poverty and Welfare; Crime, Police

and Penal Policy; Industrialisation; Urban History and the Role of Families, in the period 1750-1950.

‘Some of our students have never visited an archive or carried out any primary source research, so we would like to give them the opportunity to hear local historians talking about their research. This could be one historian giving a paper and answering questions, or two historians giving short papers or talks about their research. We hope this would be of mutual benefit, as we can promise an interested and appreciative audience.

‘We could devote an hour or an hour and a half to this part of our programme and we can cover expenses. The day runs from 11 to 4, and we can time the session to suit speakers’ requirements.’

If you think you could help, please contact Dr Jenny Zmroczek at j.c.zmroczek@open.ac.uk or call her on 01603 411638.

KINGSWESTON VANBURGH LETTER APPEAL

Kingsweston Action Group wants to raise £500 by 18 March 2018 to buy a letter, dated 1713, from John Vanbrugh to Edward Southwell, describing the construction of the latter’s house. It is intended to be deposited in Bristol Archives, which already holds a similar letter. KWAG, 75A Alma Road, Bristol BS8 2DW; <http://www.kwag.org.uk/>