



## AVON LOCAL HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

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*Eastman Johnson, 1868*

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Website: [www.alha.org.uk](http://www.alha.org.uk)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AvonLocalHistoryandArchaeology>

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### ALHA ITEMS

#### ALHA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2021 annual general meeting will be held online, starting at **7pm on Wednesday 17 November 2021**. Notices have been given by e-mail to those members (groups and societies and individuals) who have given ALHA an e-mail address for contact, and by post to those

members who have not. Those who wish to attend the meeting are asked to notify the secretary, Catherine Dixon, at [blackrockcfd@hotmail.com](mailto:blackrockcfd@hotmail.com), who will supply the link to join the meeting together with the Zoom ID and password.

Attendees' attention is drawn to a notice on the Zoom website that, starting 1 November 2021, customers will need to update their Zoom client to ensure their software is no more than nine months behind the current version before using the platform. ALHA does not know what this would involve, but we expect that if someone wanting to attend a Zoom meeting has not updated their software, either they may not be able to access the meeting, or they may have to download updates before they can join the meeting. In case that should cause delay or frustration on the day, attendees may wish to ensure well beforehand that their Zoom software is up to date, which is advisable anyway from a security point of view.

### **ANNUAL LECTURE**

Following the annual general meeting, at approximately 7.30pm, the annual ALHA lecture will be given by Dr Richard Stone, Lecturer in the History Department at the University of Bristol. He has titled his talk *Standing on the Shoulders of Giants, Holding a Laptop: Researching Bristol's History in the 21st Century*.

RS's research focuses on the Atlantic slave economy and its economic legacies. His first book, *Bristol and the Birth of the Atlantic Economy, 1500-1700* is under contract with Boydell and Brewer. Since 2017 RS has been examining the links between the University of Bristol and slavery. This research has both helped to shape institutional policy, and been cited widely in the international press.

### **WEBSITE MANAGER – TINA LANE**

Welcome to Tina Lane, who is to take over managing ALHA's website from Bob Lawrence.

Tina Lane is a contemporary visual artist and researcher studying for a PhD in Art History, Practice and Theory at Southampton Solent University. After completing her BA in Fine Art, she travelled in Asia before returning to the UK to complete her MA at Winchester School of Art. Her practice now explores the lives of working class women in art from the 1970s to the present day, using her own background of growing up on a council estate in **Bristol**. She has a passionate love of the history, archaeology and developments of the area that she feels connected to from childhood.

The committee hopes Tina will play a big part in developing the new website ALHA is commissioning to replace our existing one, and much more.

### **NEW WEBSITE**

ALHA's website team has assessed bids, and has recommended the committee to commission the new website from Community Sites, a company based in Brighton with experience of design and hosting of sites for, and recommended by, charities and other community groups including several concerned with local history or archaeology. The committee has accepted the website team's recommendations, and will now produce a design brief and negotiate a contract with Community Sites. The cost, likely to be in the order of £4,600 and with annual hosting and maintenance charges of over £300, will be ALHA's largest ever single purchase. ALHA will pay for it by selling some of its investment, which will still leave ALHA with ample reserves for foreseeable commitments and unexpected contingencies.

### **BOOKLETS**

Stocks of ALHA booklet no. 15, *Homoeopathy in Bristol 1840-1925*, by Dr Michael Whitfield, are now **sold out**, the last one having been sold to a purchaser in Canada.

Stocks are low of booklet no 4, *Dr Goodeve and Cooks Folly*, also by MW; no.18, *Chemistry in Bristol into the early twentieth century* by Brian Vincent and the late Raymond Holland; and no. 24, *Wilkins of Westbury & Redland: the life and writings of Rev Dr Henry John Wilkins (1865-1941)* by Richard Coates. If you would like to order a copy before they cease to be available from ALHA, please do so via the ALHA website or from the treasurer.

## EVENTS AND SOURCES

### WESTON SUPER MARE & DISTRICT FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

*Jenny Towey, Chair, WsM & D FHS, writes:* The **Weston-super-Mare & District Family History Society** will re-commence actual meetings on **8 December 2021** at a new venue, **Our lady of Lourdes church hall, Baytree Road**, and at a new time: **2.30pm to 5pm**. We now meet on the second Wednesday of the month excluding August. Any enquiries to the Secretary, 125 Totterdown Road, WsM, BS23 4LW. More at [http://wsmfhs.org.uk/society\\_news\\_view.php?nID=444](http://wsmfhs.org.uk/society_news_view.php?nID=444)

### SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE PRINCIPAL MANSION HOUSES

*You rang, m'lord?* is an online exhibition by **Gloucestershire Archives** offering samples of the type of historic country house estates records held in the archives: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives/learning-for-all/online-exhibitions/you-rang-m-lord-historic-country-house-estates-of-south-gloucestershire/> The exhibition consists of 20 taster images (maps, accounts, prints, photographs, estate accounts, surveys etc), each with a short explanation and contextual information. The houses are **Dodington, Badminton** and **Dyrham**; as well as the big houses themselves, **Dyrham** and **Hinton with West Littleton** also feature. Fascinating not just for the detail, but prompting all sorts of questions: about, for example, territoriality and exclusion, conspicuous consumption when agricultural labourers were starving, financial control below stairs, and the use of plum pudding as a means of social control. More please.

### ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE SEVERN ESTUARY - CONFERENCE

The Severn Estuary Levels Research Committee will be holding a one day conference on *The Archaeology of the Severn Estuary* at the **Lysaghts Institute, Orb Drive, Newport, NP19 0RA** on **Saturday 6 November 2021 10am to 4.30pm**.



Tickets are £20 each (£10 student/unwaged) which includes tea/coffee/Danish pastries/biscuits in morning and afternoon breaks and buffet lunch.

Speakers include: Prof. Stephen Rippon on the reclamation and exploitation of the wetlands in the Roman period; Prof Aidan O'Sullivan on the value of

experimental archaeology in wetlands; Dr Toby Jones on the medieval Newport Ship and what has been discovered during its analysis and conservation; Dr Alex Bayliss on palaeo-environmental data and dating analysis about Neolithic farmers; Dr Alan Cattell on how over 850 (largely unpublished) cores can reveal the hidden Holocene landscapes of **Avonmouth**.

Booking required via Eventbrite, where more details are available including location map: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/archaeology-of-the-severn-estuary-conference> .

## ARCHAEOLOGY ONLINE TALKS

Bristol City Museum's *Archaeology Online* talks have resumed. Next up are

- **Wednesday 24 Nov 2021**  
- *the Genetic Prehistory of Britain* with Dr Tom Booth
- **Wednesday 26 Jan 2022** - *Isca: the Roman Legionary Fortress at Caerleon* with Dr Peter Guest

Book via the **Bristol Museums** website at

<https://www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/whats-on>



## BRISTOL MUSEUM ONLINE TALKS

Online talks from **UWE Regional History Centre** and **M Shed** include

- Professor Peter Malpass, *Housing the people in Victorian Bristol*, **Thursday 18 November 2021**, details and booking at <https://www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/m-shed/whats-on/housing-the-people-in-victorian-bristol/>
- Kate Brooks, 'She is capable but sullen and troublesome': *Analysis of the Muller Orphan Homes' Dismissal Books, 1850 – 1900*: **Thursday 6 December 2021**, details and booking at <https://www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/m-shed/whats-on/she-is-capable-but-sullen-and-troublesome-analysis-of-the-muller-orphan-homes-dismissal-books-1850-1900/>

## SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE HERITAGE FORUM

Powerpoints of presentations to the forum on 8 October 2021 are now online at <https://www.southglos.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/museums-and-galleries/heritage-partnership-meetings/>, together with those from earlier forum meetings. They include brief details of the *Stories from the South Gloucestershire Indian community* project and a discussion about how we address the significance of slavery and its role in creating the wealth that underpins this area.



## BLAISE HAMLET

Roger Leech draws attention to planning applications by the National Trust to instal secondary glazing in windows in cottages at Blaise hamlet, **Henbury**. The cottages are occupied. Occupants want to heat economically and responsibly. Conservationists object.

## DR MARTIN CROSSLEY EVANS MBE

Dr Martin Crossley Evans died 18 October 2021 after lengthy ill-health and disability. MJCE, formerly a warden of Bristol University halls of residence and secretary to the University's convocation, was not a member of ALHA, did not offer ALHA any publications, and did not speak to local groups or societies, but served on the Councils of ALHA members **Bristol Record Society** and **Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society**, whose publications committee he chaired for some years. His own publications, apart from articles, many on nineteenth century evangelicals, included a booklet for Bristol Branch of the

Historical Association (no. 99, 1999) on *Hannah More*, and he edited and contributed to 'A Grand City' – 'Life, Movement and Work'; *Bristol in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: essays in honour of Gerard Leighton FSA*, (B&GAS 2010). A collector of manuscripts and memorabilia, MJCE had detailed knowledge of the religious history of **Bristol** in the nineteenth century and of the history of Bristol University, promoted use of the University's special collections, and was generous with advice and information. Full obituaries will appear elsewhere in due course.

## 1921 CENSUS

The National Archives has announced that the 1921 census data will be released **6 January 2022** via *FindMyPlace*: [https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/news/1921-census-online-publication-date-announced/?utm\\_source=emailmarketing&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=census\\_announcement\\_27\\_october\\_2021&utm\\_content=2021-10-27](https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/news/1921-census-online-publication-date-announced/?utm_source=emailmarketing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=census_announcement_27_october_2021&utm_content=2021-10-27) and [www.findmypast.co.uk/1921-census](http://www.findmypast.co.uk/1921-census) .

## BOOKS AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS NOTICED

ALHA member **Bristol Record Society** held its annual general meeting 27 October 2021. After the meeting **BRS**'s three latest publications were introduced by their volume editors:

- 72 *The Bristol Poll Book 1852*, editor: John Stevens
- 73 *Orphans, widows and guardians in medieval and early modern Bristol: the Register of Recognizances, 1333-1594*, editor: Susan Scott
- 74 *Atlantic venture accounts of eighteenth century Bristol*, editors: Alison Brown and Jonathan Harlow.

Members of **BRS** who have paid their subscriptions receive a file of each volume in portable digital format; printed copies can be purchased when they are available.

## COMMENTARY AND RESPONSES

### Reviews – a response

In ALHA Newsletter 168 Dr Harlow reviewed two books by Peter Cullimore: *Saints, Crooks & Slavers* and *Pills, Shocks & Jabs*. *Peter Cullimore writes*:

Although Dr Harlow is entitled to his opinion and has a right to state it, I found the review unnecessarily and unjustifiably harsh. Also, the overall tone was patronising and at times quite hurtful, especially in a publication aimed at enthusiastic amateur and hobby historians, as well as professionals.

Dr Harlow's criticism of the title *Saints, Crooks & Slavers* misses the point. It's deliberately ambiguous, as so many other authors of non-fiction have sought to achieve. "Saints" can be taken literally, or as a synonym for exceptionally good people who help others. It's the same with "Crooks" - literally tricksters/criminals, or else having that family name - in Jacob's case both. Dr Harlow acknowledges the deliberate pun in those first two words of the title. So it's illogical for him to say of my third word: "This won't do!"

Again, "Slavers" could literally mean slave traders, or it might be an expression for people who work very hard, just as someone described as a "slave driver" may not actually have slaves, or be trading in them. It can also mean a metaphorical boss pushing employees to the limit. That ambiguity in the title was deliberate, so it seems wrong to interpret the word "Slavers" in this context as one that "won't do".

Dr Harlow implies that I'm an opportunist, trying to "cash in", as he puts it, "on any Bristol link with slavery, however remote". It's hard to "cash in" with a non-profit book published by a non-for-profit publisher. Also, I explain fully the context in the narrative. *Saints, Crooks & Slavers* tells you in detail about Bristol merchant Andrew Dury's former family ownership of slaves on their sugar plantations in Barbados for a whole century. It tells you that Andrew sold up there for a fortune, before Shurmer married his daughter when the Durys were back in Bristol. Andrew Dury then became Shurmer's neighbour and fellow leading Quaker in Stokes Croft for 20 years. Hardly a "remote" connection with slavery. And yes, I used the word "Slavers" in the plural because the Durys were a family of slave owners in the plural, who feature prominently in the book.

As for "Dr" Bath, I've made it very clear in both books that he was not a trained doctor and it was just a nickname. He did have a medical practice, as Sarah Fox tells us in her Diary, and he did dispense his pills free to the poor. I explain in *Pills, Shocks & Jabs* that in a largely unregulated market, anyone could call himself a doctor, and that the qualification needed to do so validly was a university medical degree. Apart from one chapter heading, I label Shurmer "Doctor" or "Dr" Bath, with quotation marks, to show he was not a qualified practitioner. None of this disqualifies him from heading my list of Quaker doctors.

Dr Harlow seems to have misunderstood what *Pills, Shocks & Jabs* is about. To describe the book as a "set of portraits, in chronological order, of medical persons in Bristol in the eighteenth century" is a gross over-simplification. Dr Harlow ignores its coherent narrative thread, explaining the web of connections between all these exceptional individual practitioners and medical charity organisers. The reader is told how religious dissenters were drawn to medicine as a career in England's Quaker stronghold because of their shared moral duty to help the sick and needy, and because they were less hampered by prejudice against them than in some other professions.

The book gives a vivid picture of their common bond - living in the same small community as their patients, worshipping with them and socialising in each other's homes. These doctors and philanthropists therefore all knew and helped each other, so that Quakers gained a disproportionately large influence in shaping Bristol's healthcare, despite forming a tiny minority of the population. For instance, the first eight treasurers at the Infirmary were all Quakers. All this is a central theme of *Pills, Shocks & Jabs*, but Dr Harlow leaves it out entirely in his review. I therefore contest his assertion that it's "not strong on background".

There is also a quite lengthy section on a Methodist, John Wesley, as passionate advocate and organiser of electrical medicine to cure many physical ailments. He even practised it on himself. So the "Remarkable Dissenting Doctors" were indeed remarkable, even if the term "Doctors" is sometimes used loosely. Dr Harlow is wrong to claim that in the book they are all Quakers or Anglicans. Would it really matter if they were, anyway?

Finally, *Pills, Shocks & Jabs* may not have an Index, but it does include a "Who's Who" of the main characters.

Anybody would feel insulted by the language and tone used by the reviewer, in addition to the substance of some of the criticisms. The reviewer gives the impression of having decided in advance he wasn't going to like the books, then not bothering to go much beyond just reading the title and looking at the pictures, before trashing the contents in your newsletter. I'm told using the word "Slavers" in one title "won't do". I'm accused of being an opportunist "cashing in" on any Bristol links with the slave trade, "however remote", of being weak on background to the stories about individual medics, of giving "far-fetched" info about Thomas Jefferson trialling Jenner's vaccine on his slaves.

The reviewer gives no evidence, either, for his claim that 'Pills, Shocks & Jabs' is just "a set of portraits in chronological order of medical persons in Bristol". He ignores the central

thread running throughout the book of Quakers flourishing in medicine because they were less hampered by establishment prejudice in that profession, and could help each other to succeed. The book explains in detail how these practitioners benefited from a shared background - all living in the same tiny religious and social community between Stokes Croft and the Old City.

*Pills, Shocks & Jabs* even supplies annotated maps to pinpoint where each featured medic lived and practised. None of this is mentioned in the review, nor are the many other details about healthcare in Georgian Bristol included in the book, like illegal body snatching for Infirmary dissection training and the early introduction of free vaccinations.

### **The Rhubarb, Barton Hill**

*David Evans* points out that at one time the Rhubarb Tavern (ALHA e-updates 31 July and 31 August 2021) was listed. The circumstances of its ceasing to be listed are obscure.

### **Reviews reviewed**

Peter Cullimore's strictures (above) about Dr Harlow's reviews (ALHA Newsletter 168, 30 September 2021) of his books *Saints, Crooks & Slavers* and *Pills, Shocks & Jabs* might lead us to ask what reviews are for. As often on things to do with history, answers depend on viewpoint.

For authors, reviews advertise: unless people know that a book exists, they will not buy it or badger librarians into stocking it, and even a scathing review tells readers that a book exists. Some authors are gratified by seeing their book reviewed because they see the review as giving them attention. Some authors may actually be interested in what other people think about their book or its subject.

Publishers want books reviewed for much the same reasons. For most publishers it is cheaper to send a reviewer a review copy than to advertise in a newspaper or magazine. The publisher who advertised a local history book on television would be the subject of a Bateman cartoon. Reviews in a specialist publication can reach a targeted audience. Publishers often ask authors to suggest to whom to send copies of a book for review: some authors, one suspects, suggest publications or reviewers they know will give a favourable review. Publishers also value the advertising, not just of their books, but of themselves as publishers: readers of a review may note that a publisher has published something on, say, history or archaeology, and may submit their babies for fostering and adoption, or may recommend that publisher to other authors.

One would hope that most reviewers see themselves as supplying a service to readers: evaluating quality by various criteria; informing people that a book exists; pointing out errors or omissions; putting the book in the context of what has already been published on the book's subject matter and the current state of knowledge; warning readers against the over-priced, the false, the bogus, the deceitful, the biased, the politically blinkered, the malicious and so on. Some reviewers review books only in order to get free copies. The scope for that is now reduced as commercial publishers try to save postage, cut costs and boost profits (or reduce losses) by supplying to a reviewer only a file in portable document format. Some reviewers see themselves as authors and their review as a little book: Look at me: admire my erudition, my knowledge of the subject, literary style, cleverness, cultural sophistication and so on. Some reviewers use reviews to air their own opinions, prejudices or hobbyhorses. ALHA's reviews editor, Dr Harlow, for example, has a thing about (ie, deplores) books and articles that do not cite sources. His 'There are several other stories but as they are unreferenced, so they shall be unreviewed.' (Newsletter 165) and 'Me, I'll stick to it: if not referenced to sources, then not history' (Newsletter 167) seem a bit over the top. It might save him some effort, but what flowers will blush unseen as a result? Some reviewers barely

refer to the book but write what purports to be a review in the form of an essay on the same subject matter as the book's, with sparse reference to the book and no evaluation of its content. A recent TLS review succeeded, over several column inches, in not saying anything about the book purported to be under review. Some academics use reviews to do down competitors, to express personal animosity, or to disparage others working in the same field. Peer review, they call it.

One suspects that most readers read reviews to find out what has recently been published, especially on subjects they are interested in. Searching publishers' websites for what may have been published recently takes time, even with the electric internet; a review can tell you more quickly. Some readers ignore reviews. Western civilisation has not collapsed as a result. Others take notice of what a review says, but it is not clear whether or how many people buy a book because of a positive review or decide not to because of a negative one. Some readers notice that a reviewer's opinions or tastes match or are close to their own, so they follow a particular reviewer: probably more so for historical fiction than for history or biography. Readers who recognise a reviewer's prejudices, obsessions or politics will make allowances or move on to the next item.

Whether librarians read reviews is one of the mysteries of the profession, as is much of the mechanics of libraries' book selection and purchasing. Sometimes we get a glimpse, as in 1981 when Avon County Council banned a Murdoch newspaper from its public libraries, but that was almost certainly on political instruction. Do librarians' professional journals carry reviews? To cover the whole spectrum of new fiction, non-fiction, reference, local, children's, audio and the rest looks praiseworthy but impracticable. For a specialist librarian not to read reviews of books on their specialist subject seems inadvisable, if not reprehensible. Do publishers follow the practice of big pharma and treat librarians to lavish alcohol-laced conferences in luxury hotels in Severn Beach? Anonymised clinical trials for new local history books?

### **Local foods**

Lamb from the Cambrian mountains and watercress have been the first foods to be given protection under the UK's post-EU register of protected food and drink names: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cambrian-mountains-lamb-and-watercress-officially-register-as-latest-uk-geographical-indications> . Local history people may wonder what foods in or from our area might qualify for similar protection. **Ashton Gate** pies? **Wickwar** alpaca? Given the diversity of our area's geology and the consequent variety of our agriculture – sheep on Mendip and Cotswolds, beef and dairy in the Vale and the Levels, cornlands, orchards, polythene tunnels and so on – we might have expected our area's clammy cells to be o'erbrimmed with distinctive traditional foods crying out for legal protection from misrepresenters. But our area has produced nothing comparable with Cornish pasties, Devonshire cream, Yorkshire pudding or Melton Mowbray pies.

The dominance or popularity of locally tagged foods seems to be haphazard and fortuitous. Claims to local protection seem ludicrous, and the reasons advanced range from the spurious to the bizarre. 'Watercress has been added because of its production methods, associated with steadily flowing water, which deserve special status because it has remained unaltered by selection and breeding – meaning that its unique flavour has remained largely unchanged for generations.' Are we seriously to believe that the idea (concept?) of a pie made of cooked pork in a raised case of hot water crust pastry arose only in Leicestershire? Or that pies made there are different from those made elsewhere and should be immune from competition? Or that pies made in one place should be protected from competition whether there is anything distinctive about them or not? If the Cornish invented pasties as a convenient way of feeding miners miles underground, why did the same not happen in other



mining areas including **Nailsea, Pensford, Coalpit Heath, Kingswood** or **Radstock**? Many food names lost their local connection long ago. Cheese names at first marked where the cheese was made, but by the mid nineteenth century they denoted either the process of manufacture or the style or characteristics of the product, wherever made. Of the 20 million tons of cheddar made in 2020, only half came from Europe. What is in the supermarket is likely to have come from Canada or Cornwall.

**Bath** buns, which in 1801 gave Jane Austen a stomach upset and no wonder, are said to have been devised by William Oliver of **Bath** Mineral Water Hospital fame to nourish his underfed patients. Bath buns seem to be distinguished only by having large sugar crystals stuck to the top with a sugar glaze. Sally Lunn's are a brand of Bath bun, and as buns go are large and light. Their name is said to derive from a mispronunciation of the name of a Huguenot baker, which might be consistent with their texture resembling brioche, but they are probably no more than one baker's variant on a local oral recipe. For both Bath buns and Sally Lunn's the origins are obscure, there is little or no documentary evidence, there is more than one oral tradition, and what information there is has been expanded and decorated with marketing and tourism hype.

In the days before pigs were shot, butchers sold Bath chaps: chaps, that is, in the sense of pigs' cheeks, mostly fat but often including tongue, cured in brine and sugar, and in the 1950s sometimes coated with high-visibility breadcrumbs. There is no pressure for their makers to be legally protected from dastardly imitators in **Chipping Sodbury, Midsomer Norton**, Chippenham or Denmark.

Local beers tend to be short-lived (in the sense that their brewers do not last long) which I am told in many cases is something to be thankful for. None of our local ciders has attained national fame. Kingston Black, one of the UK's few single-variety ciders, is made from a variety once the most widely grown in the west of England. In the 1970s there were claims that the strain originated in **Kingston Seymour**, but as the variety's other name is Taunton Black, Kingston St Mary near Taunton seems a more likely origin.

Has **Bristol** sherry any better claim to legal protection? Although sherry is imported from Spain, Bristol milk and its derivative Bristol cream do have some claim to be regarded as local. The place name, perhaps once applied humorously, might be thought to indicate only the port (the harbour, that is) of importation, but there is evidence that **Bristol** wine merchants mixed their own blends in **Bristol**, even if they did not stick little union jacks on the labels. It is only recently that the blending has been done in Spain. The first written reference to Bristol milk is from 1634 (a little before the period covered by Dr Harlow's latest ALHA booklet, no. 33, *The trade of Bristol in the later seventeenth century*, £4.15 post free from the treasurer or via the ALHA website). Samuel Pepys mentioned it, Bristol milk that is, in 1668, and Thomas Fuller in 1684. Bristol cream was trademarked by Harveys in 1882, presumably to create a brand for a blend containing more oloroso, and therefore sweeter, than previous blends.

Not an impressive list, and unlikely to be medically encouraged apart from **Bath** Oliver biscuits, said to have been invented also by William Oliver when he realised that his cholesterol- and sugar-packed buns were doing his patients more harm than good. What is the local history perspective? Have people in our area been better at importing distinctive foods than at inventing and marketing our own? Or have there been locally distinctive foods, but the traditions (brands?) have not survived?

## **Boots**

Announcements - <https://www.artistresidence.co.uk/our-hotels/bristol/> - that a hotel is opening in premises of a former boot factory in **St Paul's, Bristol**, ('Located in the creative St Pauls community, just minutes from Bristol's city centre') give us several reminders.

First, of how widespread and important boots were before the mid twentieth century, not just as work- sports- and fashion-wear but as normal ordinary footwear, at least for working men; and for boys, if the family could afford boots. In the traditional idiom it is the boot, not the shoe or sock, that is on the other foot. When, how and why did shoes take over? Have changes in laws about safety at work, as well as the irrationality of fashion, prompted a revival of the boot?

Second, of how widespread and important was the use of leather before the advent of rubber and plastics. Footwear, harness, protective clothing all used leather. Leather had uses from barbers' strops through keeping your trousers up and thrashing children to making drive belts for machinery. Tanneries abounded, and made their presence smelt. How, when and why did leather decline? Was the pattern the same in our area as elsewhere? Bristol now has only one tannery, Ware's at the **Rownham** end of **Ashton Gate**. The absence of smell suggests that what goes on behind its long windowless wall is specialised and high-tech.

Third, that until well into the twentieth century manufacturing was done in residential areas, and not just by weavers and felt-hatters working at home long before coronavirus made people think that might be a good idea. Early maps, readily comparable on *Know Your Place*, show manufacturing cheek by jowl with domestic living. In **Bristol** from medieval times into the eighteenth century it was not uncommon for manufacturing to be done in a back room, for the goods to be sold in a room fronting the street, and for the family to eat, sleep and argue behind and above. When, how and why did the idea of separating manufacturing from day to day residence emerge? In his *The town house in medieval and early modern Bristol* (English Heritage 2004) Roger Leech showed how some traders built garden houses somewhat out of the centre of town in places like **Cotham**; what later became the Rhubarb tavern (ALHA e-updates 31 July and 31 August 2021 and above) in **Barton Hill** is thought to have been originally a garden house. A significant shift seems to have started in the eighteenth century when wealthy merchants and manufacturers built family houses, several in **Clifton**, to get away from the muck and murk of central Bristol. Hence houses like the former Bishop's House (1711), Goldney (from 1722), Clifton Hill House (from 1746) and so on. Another possible explanation is financial: property in town would have been more valuable, so it might have made financial sense to use it to generate income from manufacturing or trade, and to move the family's financially unproductive day to day living to healthier, more spacious, more comfortable and greener surroundings on cheaper land. Is that testable? Did something similar happen in **Bath** and **Kingswood**? Perhaps not: coal owners like the Berkeleys, the Braggs and the Whittucks never lived as it were over the shop.

Did the pattern of bootmaking, or of leatherwork generally, change differently in **Bristol, Bath, Kingswood**?

[Image, Brittons 1968, Mirrorpix]

One suspects that, as with other industries, the introduction of large-scale factories in the nineteenth century altered the local economy somewhat. And what about rural areas? Leather was required in agriculture, not least for harnessing, steering and flogging horses. Were there local leatherworkers, or did farmers buy from manufacturers in the towns?



## Greenville Collins

An enquiry was received last week via an ALHA member society about a chart of the **Bristol channel** published in the late 17th century. That is the period covered by Dr Jonathan Harlow's latest ALHA booklet, no. 33, *The trade of Bristol in the later seventeenth century*, available from the treasurer or via the ALHA website. The marine surveyor who drew the chart was called Collins. His first name was printed as Greenville, but as seventeenth century spelling was not standardised, he may have been called Greenville, Grenville, Greville or even Grenfell.

Collins was a captain in the royal navy. A short account of his adventurous life is in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* at <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/5938>. Some time after 1680 he proposed a survey of the whole coastline of Britain. Trinity House, which had started with the aim of regulating pilotage but by then had extended its remit to maritime safety more generally, adopted his venture and funded it. The work took seven years and cost £1,914 10s, more than triple his original estimate. From 1683 Collins was styled royal hydrographer. British seafarers had relied on charts made mostly by or for Dutch merchants, so royal interest in Collins's work is understandable for reasons of trade and, depending on what view you take of British relations with the Dutch, national security. In 1693 about a third of Collins's charts were engraved and published in folio size. Neither Bristol Central Reference Library nor Bristol Archives has a full set of them, but Bristol Archives has two charts of the Bristol Channel and Avon, catalogued under BristolPlans/arranged/245. The British Library has a 1693 print of the full set, and others of later date. Copies of several of the charts are in the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich. They are catalogued at <https://www.rmg.co.uk/collections/search/greenvile%20collins%20maps>.

Each chart is dedicated to individuals. One of the south coast including Cornwall, dated 1686, is dedicated to the bishop of **Bristol** (Jonathan Trelawny, appointed 1685 but not of constitutional fame until 1688); one of the Essex coast, dated 1686, to Samuel Pepys, who was MP for Harwich 1685 to 1688 as well as being secretary to the Admiralty and an elder brother of Trinity House; one, dated 1700, of the Bristol channel to Robert Southwell of **Kingsweston**, secretary for Ireland under William and Mary from 1690. One of the port of Bristol and the Avon, dated 1685, is dedicated to Robert Yate Esq., 'Mayor of Bristol and Master of the Merchants' Hall.' Yate was not mayor until 1693. He sat as MP for **Bristol** 1695 to 1710. He lived at the **Red Lodge** and owned the predecessor of Charlton House at **Wraxall**. As he was not Master of the SMV until 1692 to 1694, his description as mayor and Master might have been a mistake or flattery, but is more likely to reflect his offices at the time of printing in 1693.

Both the corporation as harbour authority and members of the SMV would benefit from Collins's maps in so far as they displayed information not already known. In conducting his surveys Collins would have benefited from the co-operation of both the corporation (because of its jurisdiction over a large area of the Bristol channel) and the SMV (who ran the docks and controlled navigation), so Collins may have named Yate out of gratitude or politeness, or in recognition of mutual benefit. Another of those things that contributed to Bristol's later prosperity.

## CAN YOU HELP?

### Social history

ALHA member **Marshfield & District Local History Society** is planning a project on the social history of **Marshfield** with the tentative title *Marshfield through the ages: A social*

*history*. The Society is looking for a social historian, perhaps retired, to act as occasional advisor and consultant. Offers and suggestions please to Rita Lees, secretary of the Society, at [ritalees@btinternet.com](mailto:ritalees@btinternet.com) .

## QUOTE

Caesar also granted citizenship to all practitioners of medicine and professors of liberal arts living in Rome, to encourage them to stay and to induce others to come.

Suetonius, *Divus Julius* (Life of Julius Caesar) 42.