



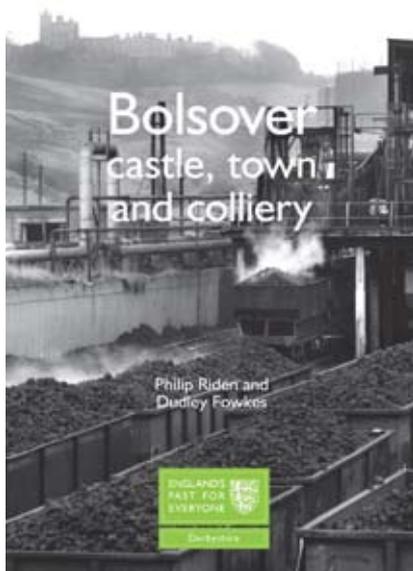
Bringing local history to life

From the editor

In this issue we mark the publication of our sixth paperback, *Bolsover: Castle, Town and Colliery*. We celebrate news of a prestigious award for our book, *Cornwall and the Cross: Christianity 500-1560*, and share some of the positive feedback the EPE paperbacks have received so far.

The star of 'Meet the Team' is our new Education & Skills Manager, Skye Dillon, who joins us from the Centre for Sustainable Heritage, University College London. We have round ups from Herefordshire, County Durham and Oxfordshire and updates on our website and school resources. We also have

Sixth EPE book to be launched



The Bolsover book cover

Our latest paperback, *Bolsover: Castle, Town and Colliery*, will be launched next month at an event at Bolsover Assembly Hall.

Scene from Madge Dresser's play at the Trade It! event



news of a local history event in Kent and our Historic Environment Research Manager shares tales of a damp week spent on Exmoor.

Finally, Dudley Fowkes from the Derbyshire team prescribes some interesting remedies for our autumn ailments...

Written by Derbyshire historians, Philip Riden and Dudley Fowkes, and published by Phillimore & Co. Ltd, the book explores the history of Bolsover, from the castle and the Cavendish family to the model housing of New Bolsover, and charts the changing fortunes of the town's communities from rural origins to post-industrial present.

The book includes new photographs provided by English Heritage and a series of panels which introduce the reader to local history sources.

The Derbyshire team are now working on a second project researching the history of Harwick Hall estate. A school project will be delivered in 2009.

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Cornwall book wins prestigious prize



Temple Church, Bodmin Moor

EPE paperback, *Cornwall and the Cross: Christianity 500-1560*, has received a commendation in the 'Cornwall non-fiction' category at the annual Holyer an Gof awards.

The awards took place in Truro in July. Prizes were presented by the Grand Bard of Gorseth Kernow, Vanessa Beeman.

Written by Professor Nicholas Orme, the book was launched last year

at St Michael's Mount. The launch also included a celebration of the completion of the first Cornwall school project and was attended by the Bishop of Truro.

The book looks at the history of Christianity in Cornwall, from the end of the Roman Empire and into the Reformation. It also explores the role of the community, from building parish churches to staging religious plays.

History centre launched

The Victoria County History is pleased to announce the launch of the Centre for Local History.

The launch of the Centre is another step towards the eventual funding and appointment of a Chair of Local History and the development of a local history research centre on a par with the existing centres of Metropolitan and Contemporary British History within the Institute of Historical Research, University of London.

The centre will support fundraising and research activities including the Locality and Region seminars, research supervision, and the MA in Local and Regional History, which will begin in academic year 2009/10.

The VCH and England's Past for Everyone will continue to exist as previously.

www.clh.ac.uk

Old news...

The County Durham project is celebrating over 300 hours of volunteer work this quarter.

Volunteers have been working in three specific groups. The first is transcribing wills from the Wearside area from 1550-1700. This has included the production of a glossary of terms commonly found in wills of this time. The newspapers group is extracting items of interest from 18th century papers, and a number of volunteers have been working on specific research tasks for EPE and VCH staff.

Volunteers have received training in palaeography and archives research and have met regularly to share their findings. Work is continuing to support our next County Durham paperback, due out in early 2010.

In praise of England's Past for Everyone

Here is a selection of some the positive comments our books have received so far. Keep them coming!

'[This] is a beautifully written and illustrated book, and I am delighted to have a copy. I hope the inhabitants of the district will come to appreciate what a treasure it is'

John Bush, Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire
(on *Codford: Wool and War in Wiltshire*)

'[This] is a fascinating and clearly-written book and the illustrations are superb'

Revd Michael Kippax, Rector,
Parish of St Illogan
(on *Cornwall and the Cross: Christianity 500-1560*)

'[This] book provides the perfect template for any community that wants to go about researching and publishing a record of their own buildings and history.'

Chris Catling, Editor
The Society of Antiquaries of London
Online Newsletter

'The VCH can feel proud of this book and it should sell well - though one fears that even more visitors will be attracted to this already crowded town!'

Chris Dyer,
Professor of Regional & Local
History, University of Leicester

(both on *Burford: Buildings and People in a Cotswold Town*)



'Nine months of bad weather and three months of winter'



An Exmoor landscape

At the beginning of the EPE Exmoor project in September 2005, the then Somerset County Editor, Bob Dunning used this quote to describe the unique nature of Exmoor's climate and to summarise the harsh conditions of upland life which have faced people on the moors since visible settlement began some 8500 years ago. Now, nearly three years on from that meeting, our Exmoor paperback, *Exmoor: The Making of an English Upland*, is approaching

completion under the authorship of current Somerset County Editor, Mary Siraut.

However, Bob Dunning's words were ringing loudly in my ears when I spent the first week of August on Exmoor attempting to photograph a number of buildings and landscapes required as illustrations for the book. Modern digital SLR cameras are amazingly complex pieces of equipment which can compensate

for most light conditions, not to mention the vast array of refinements which can be made to an image using desktop publishing software. That said, as this photograph testifies, the weather that week was far from conducive to photography, although the results were no less dramatic.

The Exmoor paperback is scheduled for a spring 2009 launch and with local interest extremely high, it is hoped that it will be one of the best sellers of the EPE series. The Exmoor project has been extremely successful so far, delivering a wide ranging volunteer programme of farmstead and landscape survey and leading to a continuation project recording local farmers' memories of traditional farming practices. Strong sales of this volume will be the reward which the whole Exmoor EPE team richly deserve and will hopefully pave the way for a further study, examining Exmoor's coastal communities.

From the project manager

Welcome to Skye and Dima, who've already zoomed into action. Statistics are now available for most web pages, which also show the success of Mel's recent marketing initiatives. Further improvements are planned to all our websites, based on the results of user testing.

Find out more about Skye on page four. We both enjoyed a tour of the Derbyshire study areas on one of the few dry days in August. Mel and I also saw the Trade It? street theatre in Bristol; page one has a photo of Madge Dresser's play. This issue of EPE News also includes well-deserved reviews of our paperbacks, and please view the new themed searches on the Explore site.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to formally thank David Bates, who is now preparing the Ford Lectures at the University of East Anglia (or UEA if short of space) without whom there may have been no EPE project! We look forward to working with his successor, Miles Taylor, new Director of the IHR.

Thank you to Kamily, Andy, Elizabeth, Alex and Larry for their help in the office over the summer. We all wish you well with your studies! Also to Sue Connolly, who has added lots of new resources to the Explore site, and John Chandler for his assistance with paperback editing.

Doe Lea Resource Centre, Derbyshire. The building is a 21st century extension to the 1904 Miners Welfare. It is a regular meeting place for the Derbyshire volunteers.





Meet the team

Skye Dillon - Education & Skills Manager



Education & Skills Manager: Skye Dillon

I recently joined EPE as the Education & Skills Manager. I manage the learning programme by coordinating the school, volunteer and outreach projects. I am currently collating school resources from the completed school projects, and am focusing on developing school projects for Derbyshire and County Durham. I am also responsible for developing the online Schools' Learning Zone with our Web Manager, Dima Nemchenko. I hope to increase participation and diversity through further outreach projects, and I look forward to visiting volunteer projects around the counties.

Prior to joining EPE, I was based at University College London (UCL) for almost three years. There I worked for the UCL Centre for Sustainable Heritage as Short Course Coordinator – to oversee and market a suite of short courses for heritage professionals (run in partnership with English Heritage). Previous to this position, I worked as a supply teacher in London for almost two years.

I am South African, and graduated with a Bachelor of Social Science (Honours) in Heritage Studies from the University of Natal in 2002. I continued my studies in South Africa with a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (History and English) in 2003. The following year I came to London to explore and gain work experience – four and half years later I am still here, and rather settled (although I do miss South Africa a lot!). Since 2004, I have been a volunteer at The British Museum, and currently I am a hands-on desk interpreter for the Roman Britain gallery.

A spoonful of sugar?

Local newspapers have proved to be a rich source of information for the work on the Derbyshire parishes of Bolsover and Ault Hucknall. When ploughing through them for relevant material, it is difficult not to be distracted by the frequent adverts for patent remedies. There were no regulatory bodies to worry about in the 1890s and some of the claims made for these concoctions must have seemed far-fetched even to contemporaries.

Pride of place must go to Dr Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People which seemed to have roused more people from their death beds than any other product on earth. However desperate the ailment, and whatever it was, the 'new blood' provided by the pink pills could be relied upon to cure it.

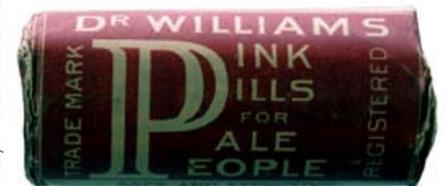


Photo courtesy of Kansas Historical Society

Dr Forde's Bile Beans quickly followed as a cure for all problems with the digestive system, although the claims made for their restorative powers did seem a little more modest.

Finally, lots of people used, even then, to go to hospital for the treatment of piles, but largely it seems without success: but then along comes the miracle cure of Zam Buk ointment, sweeping away piles, eczema and all manner of skin complaints in a jiffy. Bring them all back?

And then there is 'Wicked Willie Winkie', but that's another story!

Themed 'Explore' searches now online



The Feathers Hotel, Ledbury

Development of our Explore website continues, with county teams adding new material every week.

We are now working on a series of themes linking common factors

across our projects. The first three of these, *Norman Churches*, *Burford Buildings Associated with Simon Wisdom* and *Pubs and Inns*, are now available online.

The Norman Churches theme draws on resources from seven of our county projects, from Bristol Cathedral to Winsford Church in Exmoor. Resources include images, parish questionnaires and transcribed documents. More themes will be added as the project progresses.

www.ExploreEnglandsPast.org.uk



Pressing on with Henley

Members of the Henley Census Group enjoy a well-earned break



Since the launch of Oxfordshire's Burford paperback in early June the EPE team and volunteers have been pressing on with the Henley project. In June members of the Census Group took part in another walkabout around parts of the town,

tying in census entries to particular houses. This is surprisingly tricky, since buildings have often been subdivided and then recombined: sometimes the only fixed points are pubs named in the censuses and still in existence. (These also provide

convenient points for a well-earned break and comparison of notes!) We were much helped by the presence of our architectural consultant Ruth Gibson, who has investigated many of the buildings from the inside, and was able to tell the group more about how the houses have developed.

Meanwhile the Oxfordshire EPE Probate Group, originally set up for Burford, is continuing its work on Henley wills and inventories, which are feeding into the 16th- and 17th-century chapters of the Henley paperback. Until the 19th century Henley's economy was inextricably bound up with the Thames river trade, and probate documents give invaluable insights into the lives of its bargemen, as well as of the maltsters and timber merchants who used the river to transport their produce to London.

Investigating Ledbury

Herefordshire volunteers have been keeping themselves busy over the summer months. The medieval documents group has almost finished transcribing the rental of the Bishop of Hereford's Ledbury estate, drawn up in c.1288. The Bishop's own holding dwarfed others and included 479 ½ acres of arable, 28 acres of valuable meadow and a 12 acre vineyard.

The two wills groups are continuing to make good progress transcribing Ledbury wills written before 1700, which include a few surviving early 16th-century wills. More than 250 wills have been transcribed and checked, and are now gradually being uploaded to the Explore website to be accessed by all.

Volunteers have also been braving the elements to complete fieldwork. Based on preliminary research by the aerial photographs group, one group attempted to date hedges near the possible Iron Age Hill Fort of Kilbury camp, by counting the number of species hedges contained. Another group, equipped with tape measures and clipboards, measured the frontages of properties in Southend, High Street, New Street and Homend, under the direction of Nigel Baker from the County Archaeological Service. We had hoped to find evidence of the laying-out of regular plots when the borough was founded in the early 12th-century, but preliminary results have not produced any significant measurements.



Volunteers measuring street frontages

In the autumn a small number of excavations are planned in gardens in the centre of Ledbury. Learn about our findings in the next edition of EPE News!



EPE at Kent History Sunday

The EPE bookmarks provoke discussion amongst visitors



The inclement weather did not dampen the enthusiasm of visitors to Kent's first History Sunday on 7 September 2008. The event was held at the open-air Museum of Kent Life near Maidstone and was combined with the annual hop festival.

Those that found their way to the Kent History Sunday marquee enjoyed a wide range of stalls representing local history societies from all over the county, local archaeologists, local archives and local studies libraries. They were also

able to see the art of paper-making and fine examples of medieval and Victorian costume.

The Kent EPE project was represented by Sandra Dunster on a stall shared with historians Dr June Balshaw and Dr Emma Hanna from the History Department at the University of Greenwich. Volunteers Brian Joyce, Jean Stirk and Rebecca Meade were also on hand during the day, promoting the project to visitors and stall-holders alike and pursuing their own wide-ranging interests in local history.

The day provided a great opportunity to explain the aims of the EPE project in the Medway Towns to a wider audience.

Amongst those expressing a general interest, several potential volunteers were identified and many more signed up to receive EPE News, possibly tempted by the offer of a free mouse mat or bookmark in exchange for their email address.

Sussex schools

Education consultant, Juliette Allaway, has been working with the Sussex team to produce school resources for our Parham House project.

Aimed at Key Stages 1-3 (age 5-14) the resources encourage a cross-curricular approach, focusing on both the architectural and social history of the house. The materials can be used at Parham House and also support the study of the Tudors more generally.

The Sussex resources will be available from our online Schools' Learning Zone from January 2009. Resources from other EPE school projects will also be available.



Parham House evacuees

Volunteer case study: Heather Horner, Oxon

Heather speaking at the 2007 EPE Learning Forum



I am 64 and a retired research scientist. My interest in landscape history lead me to join the Oxfordshire Buildings Record, a local group which got involved in a full tenement survey of Burford for the VCH. The pioneering work of this group proved that volunteers can do valuable, original research and helped to secure Heritage Lottery funding for EPE volunteer projects.

As an EPE volunteer I have had extra tuition in photographing buildings with an English Heritage photographer. I used these skills to take photographs of a specific area of Burford. This work has been published in the Burford paperback.

I have learnt how to read 16th- and 17th-century handwriting; this has been vital in transcribing documents, including wills and inventories, and I have enjoyed putting the people of the past back into the story of the buildings. My scientific background has been helpful for organizing and analysing data, and this project has improved my computing skills. I also coordinate a group of transcribers who meet monthly to puzzle over problem words!

This newsletter is distributed electronically to save resources. If you need a hard copy please contact us.

Please send all enquiries and newsletter contributions to the editor melanie.hackett@sas.ac.uk



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