



## Bringing local history to life

### From the editor

In this issue we are celebrating the launch of our *Schools Learning Zone* at BETT 2009 in January. We have included a two-page Schools Special (p.5-6) which we hope will inspire teachers and other learning professionals to use our resources. Visit us at BETT on Stand T50.

We also have news of two book launches and some exciting archaeological finds in both Herefordshire and Oxfordshire. Our star of *Meet the Team* is new Web Manager, Dima Nemchenko, and Odette Buchanan talks about her experiences as a Kent volunteer.

### Schools Learning Zone to be launched at BETT 2009



Exploring water meadows, Wiltshire © David McGinn

Our exciting new resource, *Schools Learning Zone (SLZ)*, will be launched in January at BETT 2009, Olympia, London.

BETT is the world's largest educational technology event and the perfect venue for promoting our site. Our website will host free, downloadable resources for teachers and interactive activities for pupils. Several resource packs will be available at the launch, and more will be added over the coming year.

The material is aimed at Key Stages 1-3 and has been written by the educational professionals involved in

the EPE school projects. Historical research by EPE volunteers and professional historians has fed into the school projects. The resulting resources have been checked for historical accuracy by VCH and EPE editors and will also be tested and reviewed by a user group throughout 2009.

The online resources are based on our EPE school projects and will also be arranged according to theme and Key Stage. Themes include Tudor history, farming, religious sites and Medieval history. The resources will include lesson plans, historical material, activities and timelines. The material is linked to the National Curriculum, and will also explain how the lessons can be used for cross-curricular learning. The SLZ is intended to be used by teachers and pupils across England and, being case study based, offers inspiration for similar learning outside the EPE counties.

Read more about our projects and resources in the *Schools Special* (p.5-6)

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## VCH Hampshire trials EPE volunteer kit by Jean Morrin, VCH Hampshire

The Hampshire volunteers hard at work



VCH Hampshire has been using elements of the EPE volunteer toolkit to help set-up and manage their volunteer project. The toolkit has been developed to help support local volunteer activities. Documents include guidance on initial skills assessment and evaluation to celebration and legal issues.

Established for nearly a year, the volunteer group aims to produce new VCH Hampshire Red Books, beginning with Basingstoke and its surrounding area. Draft text on one of the parishes, Mapledurwell, should be ready for the website by March 2009 and a plan of work has been devised for the research into the town of Basingstoke.

About 30 volunteers, many from the the Basingstoke Archaeological and Historical Society, have been researching census, trade directories, wills and inventories. A few of the volunteers have previous research and publishing experience but most do not.

Palaeography is learnt at fortnightly meetings of the wills group, when seventeenth century wills and inventories are transcribed. Sarah Lewin of Hampshire Record Office has run palaeography sessions and maps evenings for volunteers. A few volunteers are individually researching the education of the parish on which they are working.

Group walks of Basingstoke and the parishes were organised during the summer which served to familiarize all with the study area as well as encouraging the group to share knowledge and get to know each other.

## Local history takes centre stage in Derbyshire

The book is presented to Councillor Ken Walker



Two Derbyshire events helped launch the latest EPE paperback, *Bolsover: Castle, Town and Colliery*.

On 29 October over 90 guests attended Bolsover's Assembly Hall to mark the official launch. The event was overseen by Robert Gent, Secretary to the Derbyshire VCH Trust and Assistant Director of Derbyshire County Council's Cultural and Community Services. John Bather, Lord Lieutenant of Derbyshire launched the book, and paid tribute to the work of the VCH and the EPE project in Derbyshire. The authors, Philip Riden and Dudley Fowkes, thanked volunteers for their input into the publication, along with the numerous

institutions who had helped with access to material. Professor John Beckett, VCH Director, presented complimentary copies to the Lord Lieutenant and local civic leaders.

Guests included the Chair of the County Council, Councillor Janet Hill; Councillor Ken Walker, Chair of Bolsover District Council; the Mayor and Chair of Old Bolsover Town Council, Councillor Tom Rodda; and Councillor Steve Fritchley, Chair of Scarcliffe Parish Council.

The central team were also on hand to talk to guests about the project and the Explore website which provides free access to additional material on Bolsover.

On Saturday 1 November over 45 local, family history and heritage organisations gathered for the 'Scarsdale Local History Fair' in Chesterfield's Winding Wheel.

Largely sponsored by the EPE project, the event was opened by the Deputy Major of Chesterfield,

Cllr Adrian Kitch, and proved a hit with exhibitors and guests. The EPE stand was prominent in the entrance foyer, and the book's authors spoke to visitors about the Bolsover book and our next project, on the Hardwick estate.

Throughout the day the exhibition was stewarded by volunteers from the Derbyshire Victoria County History Trust, who had organised the event.

The fair, now a biennial favourite in the local and family history calendar, gives an opportunity for groups to network and to promote their activities to members of the public.

Staff and volunteers busy on the stand



## Oxfordshire update



Barbara Allison presents 17th-century clothing

At the time of writing the Oxfordshire team is in a state of excitement following the discovery, just a few days ago, of burials at a site near Henley, where we have been pursuing the site of a 'lost' medieval church.

VCH documentary work identified the probable location some time ago, and the current investigation is the result of a collaboration between the Oxfordshire VCH and EPE

teams, and volunteers from the South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group. As there is much work still to be done a fuller account must wait for a future EPE News: by then, we may have firm dates for the burials.

Meanwhile, interest in Oxfordshire's Burford project has mounted steadily since the launch of our Burford paperback in June. The Oxfordshire Local History Association's autumn meeting was dedicated entirely to the project, with talks by the book's authors and volunteer contributors in the morning, and guided walkabouts in the afternoon. Several people took the opportunity to buy the book – one purchaser confessed that she'd had her local library's copy so long she was embarrassed to renew it again! Several village history groups have asked for talks

on the Burford work, and details are on the EPE and VCH websites.

For Henley, our Census and Probate volunteer groups continue to make interesting discoveries. A recently discovered will and inventory, for instance, have revealed an unknown 17th-century bowling green on the town's edge, associated with a tavern where local gentlemen left their bowls for safe-keeping.

The Oxfordshire schools project is also reaching fruition, with online material being edited for web-mounting, and evaluation underway. In the words of one of the teachers involved, 'I enjoyed all of it – but I really liked seeing the students beaming with pride at all that they have achieved'. See the *Schools Special* (p.5 & 6)

## New school projects for 2009



Kent school pupils learn about maps and the impact of the papermaking industry

Most of our school projects are now complete; feedback and evaluation has been received from all involved in the projects. This information is important for the development of new school projects, and overall evaluation of the EPE Learning Programme. Thanks to everyone involved so far, the success of the

projects, plus the positive feedback from the schools and partnering organisations, shows that interacting with local history can be relevant, cross-curricular and fun for children's learning.

Learning material has been received from the completed school

projects in Bristol, Cornwall, Exmoor, Herefordshire, Kent, Oxfordshire, Sussex and Wiltshire. Dean Smart has completed work on the Bristol Diversity educational material, but will continue to develop new material for EPE in 2009 (a Bristol Multiethnic Trail and an update of the Bristol Slavery Trail).

School projects for County Durham and Derbyshire are planned to run in the spring term 2009. Living History North East has started developing a project for schools in Sunderland, based on Victorian life in the city. Derbyshire County Council has confirmed partnership (with the assistance of a History Advanced Skills Teacher) for a school project in Bolsover. This aims to involve both Key Stage 2 and 3 pupils (ages 7 – 14), and will be based on the theme of coal mining in the area.



## The Exford aisle



The aisle at St Mary Magdalene church, Exford

One of the finest pieces of church architecture in the Exmoor study area is the arcade to the south aisle of St Mary Magdalene church at Exford. This aisle was planned by the parish in the 1530s, just before the Reformation.

On 24 April 1532 George Elsworth, rector of Exford for nearly ten years, made his will. He left the residue of his goods to the parish church of Exford provided that the parishioners made an aisle within ten years. If not, the goods were to be converted to other pious uses for the good of his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed. He clearly was a man of practical action who liked to get things done. He gave 4s to St George's church, Dunster, to pay for the glazing of the west window and all his books to Cleeve Abbey on condition that, within one year of his death, they made a library and placed his books there for the use of the monks.

It was not only the rector who was eager to see the aisle completed. Blacksmith Richard Coppe made his will a few months later giving four sheep to the church and 4d to the sepulchre light. He also gave £3 to the church provided the parish started the task of building the aisle within three years of his death. Robert Crowcombe left a shilling for the aisle and other gifts to the church in the 1530s may have been for the same purpose.

## Meet the team

### *Dima Nemchenko - Web Manager*



Dima posing on his yacht

I joined EPE in July as the new Web Manager, responsible for keeping the national and county sites running, and in charge of all development and additions to our web presence. I've had plenty of challenging projects in the past 12 years working in the private sector, from writing news and publications systems for a media group in the Americas, to supervising the e-Commerce websites of integrated transport providers, GoAhead Ltd, while working for Saatchi & Saatchi in London. I am enjoying the challenge of running the web side of things on EPE.

In September 2008 EPE ran the first round of what we hope will become

regular Usability Testing. Members of the general public were asked to participate in a fairly open-ended, one hour-long session where they were asked to complete three simple tasks using the EPE website at their own pace. Each session was videoed with the consent of the tester, and the results were compiled and analysed to identify ten major action points. Work is now under way on addressing these, after which we will once again hold a round of Usability Testing, and evaluate the results, as part of a regular cycle of testing and development.

I am originally from Moscow, Russia (then the Soviet Union), but due to a long and convoluted life story I ended up going to school and then University in London, where I have ended up staying. I graduated from KCL in 1997 with a BSc in Computer Science, and have since worked both freelance and full-time as a Web Designer, Web Developer and Team Leader for various agencies in London.

## From the project manager

This issue celebrates a key element of all our projects, and certainly one of the most enjoyable - the EPE schools programme.

The delivery of nine exciting projects so far is a testament to the enthusiasm and hard work of teachers and students, together with local education consultants. It has been ably managed by two successive education and skills managers, and the results will be made public on our websites throughout 2009. None of this would have been possible without the underpinning historical research by volunteers and county staff.

More good news is that three of the EPE paperbacks have almost sold out, with reprints anticipated in

the new year. So, be quick if you're buying Christmas presents!

It was good to see so many of you at the EPE party in October. The central team greatly enjoyed the subsequent Bolsover book launch and I took the opportunity to explore more of Derbyshire afterwards.

Our main focus in 2009 will be on further evaluation of the project, planning for continuation, developing our websites, publishing nine more volumes and completing two more schools projects. A number of events will culminate in the EPE conference in October 2009 to share the results of our work.

It remains to wish you all a relaxing Christmas and happy New Year.



## Bringing local history to schools



Skye Dillon, Education & Skills Manager

Welcome to our two-page *Schools Special* to mark the launch of the *Schools Learning Zone* at BETT 2009.

Our school projects form part of the EPE Learning Programme, managed by the Education and Skills Manager, Skye Dillon. The EPE vision to support engagement with local history for life-long learners, young people and school children is delivered through the Learning Programme. EPE is achieving this through projects that

involve volunteers in researching local history materials alongside professional historians, and by developing a programme of practical and online material which encourages the creative use of local history in schools. The educational materials are outputs from exciting projects run with schools in the participating counties.

By February 2010, EPE will have delivered 11 school projects to show how local history can support work across the curriculum in both a primary and secondary setting. With a focus on Key Stages 1 – 3 (ages 5 – 14), and in consultation with teachers, local education authorities and history advisors, the EPE school projects have worked with partners including local museums, galleries and archives, artists and schools, to complete nine practical and innovative projects so far. These

projects have already exceeded their target by involving over 300 children in historical activity across England. Resources have been received from all the completed projects, and are currently being edited for upload to the *Schools Learning Zone*.



Our first school project took place at Wylve Valley School, Wiltshire. The six-week, cross curricular project explored developments in agriculture. Pupils took part in field trips to local water meadows, created maps and built a life-size Iron Age hut.

## Museum partnership provides new experiences for pupils



Exploring building materials and textures

The Oxfordshire school project was developed with a class of students from Mabel Prichard School, an inner city SEN school in Oxford, in partnership with staff from the River & Rowing Museum, Henley. The aim was to engage the students with the history of Henley on Thames and Burford through the buildings and the materials from which they are made, in a cross-curricula approach.

The students visited Henley five times, including going to the weekly market, the church, a train journey and a boat trip. They participated in practical activities at the River & Rowing Museum during each trip, designed to build on their experiences outdoors. In addition, museum staff visited the school twice and the school visited Burford independently.

The students were encouraged to use all their senses and to photograph and record their experiences. The students really enjoyed experiencing the 'real thing', touching the flint and stone of the church, making bricks, hearing the bustle and sounds of the market, and capturing the excitement of a train and boat journey something which none of them had ever experienced before.

Although the students were key stage 3 in age, the activities were developed to support the teaching of History, Geography, Art and English at Key Stages 1 and 2, and aimed to bring the curriculum to life.

The project resulted in eight lesson plans describing the weekly activities. These included using the buildings to stimulate creative writing, creating talking books composed of sound poems, making wattle and daub and bricks; and designing stained glass windows.

The resulting EPE web-based materials will include timelines and illustrated walks around the two towns, with accompanying worksheets for children.

by Valerie Wardlaw & Jill Hutchinson,  
River and Rowing Museum, Henley



## Testing times in Bristol by Dean Smart, EPE Education Consultant

The Bristol school materials focus on multiethnic Bristol and diversity through time, a key part of the new History curriculum for 11-14 year olds. Over the last two terms pupils have been trialling the materials with the city's Advanced Skills Teacher for History, Andy Steward.

Andy, a teacher at Ashton Park in Bristol, believes that learning about the diverse nature of the city in the past is a surprise for many young Bristolians because most don't realise the trading and strategic importance of the city in the past, and are convinced that immigration is a recent trend.

Although the National Curriculum has always required coverage of the multiethnic nature of our islands

through time, teachers have often lacked personal subject knowledge, and textbooks have never quite got this important area right or kept up with the latest scholarship.

This makes EPE's recent groundbreaking book, *Bristol Ethnic Minorities and the City 1000-2001* (by Madge Dresser and Peter Fleming), all the more important. It provided a starting point for the school materials and revealed many intriguing things about Bristol, England and the constantly changing nature of communities.

Young people used trial copies of the web materials and helped us refine our draft materials. As Andy says "you can usually rely on young people to give it to you



St Paul's Carnival c. 1990

straight when testing something and it's always good to see them get hooked by the History, outraged by the injustices of the past and hopeful for a 'happy ending'. [The school materials are] engaging and interesting stuff, as well as being an important tool for learning about diversity as a constant element in a world of change"

## Cornwall resources used across the county by Coral Pepper, EPE Education Consultant

The religious history project © Geoff Hitchens



Cornwall is running two school projects. The first, completed with Cornwall County Council project, 'Sense of Place', is entitled 'Comings and Goings; Mounts Bay'. It looks at the way the ports of Mousehole and Newlyn have developed over time, and gives pupils the chance to share their own ideas for a port of the future.

Working with 'Sense of Place' was timely as they had just launched a transition pack based in Falmouth and had been asked for something similar by a secondary school in Penwith. The author of our Penwith book, Dr Joanna Mattingly,

provided research material for their use. The unit supports the transition for pupils moving between primary and secondary schools. The pilot involved pupils of Mounts Bay School who studied the Jewish settlement in Penzance and fishing in Mounts Bay. They made presentations to governors, visitors and their peers.

Our Religious History schools' project, culminating in a magnificent pilgrimage to St Michael's Mount, focused on the life of the saints and early Christianity in the county. The content was agreed by the author of *Cornwall and the Cross*, Professor Nicholas Orme, and our partner on this project, Advanced Skills Teacher, John Welham.

During the pilot, pupils of Camborne Science & Community College and St Meriadoc Primary School studied the life of Cornish Saints, pilgrimages and local churches, making field

trips to wayside crosses and church buildings. This transition pack is now being used by schools around the county.



Pupils of Ledbury Primary School, Herefordshire, explored the lives of Tudor rich and poor. This included an architectural tour of the town, the opportunity to view original wills, write with quills and ink and build with wattle and daub.

The Schools Learning Zone will be launched in January 2009 and resources will be added throughout the year. Visit our website [www.EnglandsPastforEveryone.org.uk/Schools](http://www.EnglandsPastforEveryone.org.uk/Schools) or email [learning@epe.org.uk](mailto:learning@epe.org.uk) for further details.



## Herefordshire volunteers unearth human bones



Working on a Ledbury pit

Volunteers working on a dig in Ledbury have uncovered fragments of human bone, including part of a skull.

The discoveries were made at Abbots Lodge in the town, home of one of the Herefordshire volunteers. The house is adjacent to St Michael and All Angels Church and it is believed that the graveyard originally extended much further. It is possible

that the Lodge was originally built in the middle of a large medieval graveyard.

The dig was one of number which took place in Ledbury recently. EPE volunteers received training from Chris Atkinson, Community Archaeologist, Herefordshire Archaeology.

Another test pit at 20 Southend revealed a lot of burnt material and metal slag. Oral history, corroborated by research by the volunteers in trade directory, census and parish records, revealed that the King and Russell families traded as blacksmiths on the site in the early nineteenth-century. Shards of medieval pottery have also been found and have been sent for expert analysis.

## Exmoor volunteers inspire oral history project

Exmoor volunteers recorded traditional farm buildings at 30 farmsteads across the moor. During the course of this work they spoke to a number of owners who had a fascinatingly detailed knowledge of how these buildings were used in the past.

As a direct result of the volunteers' work it was decided that a selection of these individuals should be interviewed in order to record their memories of the buildings in particular, but also of the changing pattern of farming life on Exmoor against the backdrop of the buildings.

Jane Golding from English Heritage has carried out the interviews and described the experience as '...an amazing privilege. I have been able to speak to farmers - some in their 80s - who remember working in these traditional buildings when they

Mr. Tucker outside his purpose built 19th-century lambing shed - the only one of its type on Exmoor



were young alongside their fathers and grandfathers; but now of course the buildings are no longer used, they have been made obsolete by modern farming practices'.

The results of this pilot oral history project will be archived in the Somerset Record Office early in 2009. After that we hope to give some training to volunteers to enable them to carry on the process of interviewing and capturing these unique memories.

## New 'red book' launched

by Professor John Beckett, Director, VCH

Sledmere House, on the Northern Wolds, was the extraordinary setting for the launch of David and Susan Neave's volume in the East Riding series on East Buckrose, on 13 November. Well over 100 people crowded into the house, where the owner, Sir Tatton Sykes, was our host. Richard Marriott, formerly Lord Lieutenant, launched the book, David Neave spoke eloquently about the work that he and Susan had done, and I was, as ever, it seems on these occasions, the commercial break – offering copies at a discount for the evening, and the complete set at 35% off.

Peter Clifford of Boydell & Brewer, aided by Kerry Whitston, then ran one of the most successful bookstalls I can ever recall, partly I suspect because it had been cunningly placed next to the queue for the tea and cake which we all enjoyed following the formalities. The Yorkshire Post had already run a major piece about the book, and the Hull Daily Mail took numerous photographs. We finally dispersed in the rain at about six, but those who had not seen inside the house before have vowed to return on another occasion.

The launch was part-sponsored by the University of Hull, our partners in the East Riding project, and Professor Glenn Burgess, Head of Department, came to the launch. Richard Primmer represented the East Riding of Yorkshire Council, the major funders. David and Susan Neave will now move on to finish volume IX in the set, on Driffild.

VCH Yorkshire East Riding VIII, East Buckrose can be purchased from VCH publishers Boydell & Brewer.

[www.boydell.co.uk](http://www.boydell.co.uk)

## Parham preview



Parham House, Sussex - subject of next EPE paperback

The next book in the EPE paperback series was profiled at an event hosted by the Society of Antiquaries of London this month.

Due to be launched in Spring 2009, *Parham: an Elizabethan House and its Restoration* tells the story of the house and the three families that owned it for more than 400 years. It has been transformed many times according to the individual tastes, aspirations and personalities of those who inherited it. Each generation has left its mark and an extraordinary

legacy of papers, pictures and architectural drawings. The book's author, Jayne Kirk has pieced these together to uncover aspects of Parham's history that have never before been committed to paper.

Jayne spoke about her experiences researching the book, including crawling over the interior and exterior of the roof, and the excitement of finding the original architect's drawings in unexpected places.

## Volunteer case study: Odette Buchanan, Kent



Odette Buchanan, Kent volunteer

I am a retired teacher, originally from NW London. I am very proud of my adopted county, and in the summer I am a tour guide for the City of Rochester Society and also a 'Custodian' at Restoration House.

About three years ago we in the Society were asked if we would like to help with research for the EPE Kent project. I was given the task of researching local newspapers. Now came a steep learning curve: how to thread a film onto the spool for

viewing. It took several goes and two very patient archivists before I had the hang of it.

And then - what joy! I was reading 1870s papers and I could visualize the people involved; what they wore, how they spoke and the things they got up to, from stealing cabbages and turnips, to impersonating others to claim Dockyard pensions.

When the project finished I was very sad. I continued with my own research but was overjoyed when the Medway Towns project was announced. So, here I am again; a dab hand at threading film and wearer of white gloves, to say nothing of how my computer skills have improved in the unending research.

## Education on the road



Skye's workshop

It's been a busy few months for education events. In October Skye attended the 'Learning Outside the Classroom' conference hosted by the Department of Children, Schools and Families in Greenwich, London. EPE is a supporter of the Learning Outside the Classroom manifesto and is a member of the LOTC Heritage Sector Partnership. For further details on their work visit [www.lotc.org.uk](http://www.lotc.org.uk)

In November Skye delivered a workshop at the Geography Association and History Association Joint Primary Conference in Leeds. Skye presented the EPE school projects and provided guidance on planning and running similar projects. The conference papers will soon be available online at [www.geography.org.uk/events/gahaconference](http://www.geography.org.uk/events/gahaconference)

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Please send all enquiries and newsletter contributions to the editor [melanie.hackett@sas.ac.uk](mailto:melanie.hackett@sas.ac.uk)



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