



Bringing local history to life

From the editor

Welcome to the summer 2009 edition of EPE News.

In this issue we celebrate the arrival of our Exmoor paperback (with congratulations to Sir Ranulph Fiennes, who provided probably the best reason yet for not attending a launch), as well as the conclusion of our County Durham school project and the Derbyshire volunteer project.

Exmoor book launched

The launch of our latest paperback, *'Exmoor: The Making of an English Upland'*, including a foreword written by Sir Ranulph Fiennes, took place on Wednesday 3 June at Dulverton Town Hall.

Guests were welcomed by Rob Wilson North of Exmoor National Park on a lovely early summer's day. Lady Gass, Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, launched the book and author, Mary Siraut, said a few words. Somerset's County Heritage Officer, Tom Mayberry, thanked all those involved in the Exmoor project and the Director of the Victoria County History, Professor John Beckett, presented copies to several people.

Guests, included artist Ann le Bas whose painting of Devon Closewool sheep being herded along an Exmoor lane graces the book's cover. We were treated to tea and

We have news of VCH research in Brighton and Hove, more on our Schools Learning Zone and further information on how to book a place at our end-of-project conference in October.

Meet our new Content Assistant, Nick Hall, and look out for our celebrities in Oxfordshire, coming soon to a screen near you (possibly...).

delicious cakes and were able to buy signed copies of the book. Copies of the book are available from our publisher's website www.phillimore.co.uk

Guests also saw images of work by the volunteers, and photographs from the Explore Exmoor website.

Our next book, *'Ledbury: a Market Town and its Tudor Heritage'* will be launched on 29 July.



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EPE volunteers support new Rochester project



Our Kent volunteers, now supporting the Rochester project

Volunteers in Kent are bringing their EPE skills to an exciting new project at the Rochester City Archives.

Funded by Heritage Lottery Fund and Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School through the Friends of Medway Archives and Local Studies

(FOMA), the project will uncover the secrets of 500 boxes of material stored at Rochester City Archives, making their contents available to research for the first time.

The project is expected to last for three years and will be led by a professional archivist. Two volunteer teams of 16 will sort, arrange and catalogue the collection, and identify documents requiring conservation and repair.

The collection will eventually be made available online and volunteers will mount touring exhibitions and produce interpretation packs and CDROMs. The material will also be developed for use in schools.

Focus on: Exploring Surrey's Past



Exploring Surrey's Past home page

A collaborative project in Surrey is providing online access to local history and archaeology records.

Exploring Surrey's Past is a Surrey Heritage Project supported by Heritage Lottery Fund and Surrey County Council.

Working with a number of local partners including museums and local history centres, the project has made a range of online resources available from their website. Materials include Surrey's Historic Environment Record, archives from the Surrey History Centre and various databases, many of which are available online for the first time.

The website can be searched by postcode, keyword or through specific databases. Visitors to the site can also explore themes, people, places and time, and provide comments on the resources.

For further information visit www.exploringsurreyspast.org.uk or email info@exploringsurreyspast.org.uk

Slavery and the elite

EPE Bristol author, Madge Dresser, will provide a key paper at a forthcoming conference exploring the links between the country house in Britain and the Atlantic slave trade.

Taking place on 21 November at the LSE, London, the event will promote wider understanding of the many ways in which the fortunes of the landed elite were intertwined with slavery and the slave trade.

For further information email slavery@english-heritage.org.uk

Derbyshire celebrates



Hardwick Hall, the focus of our next Derbyshire book

Things have been busy in Derbyshire this quarter, with a couple of events to mark the completion of EPE projects in the county.

In May we celebrated the end of the volunteer project, combining the last volunteer meeting at the Doe Lea Resource Centre with celebratory cakes. The group of ten volunteers has been led by Dudley Fowkes to provide research for both the Bolsover and Hardwick projects. A number of the volunteers will continue to support the work of the Victoria County History in Derbyshire.

In June a 'knowledge transfer' event was held at County Hall in Matlock to celebrate the end of the EPE projects on Bolsover and Hardwick Hall and to look forward to new VCH work in the county.

Attended by representatives from the University of Nottingham, Derbyshire County Council and the VCH Derbyshire Trust, the event included presentations from the volunteers on their current research, including work for a VCH topographical volume on Bolsover, to be completed by 2011.

The EPE paperback '*Bolsover: Castle, Town and Colliery*' is available to buy from www.phillimore.co.uk. '*Hardwick Hall: a Great House and its Estate*' will be published later in 2009.

Oh we do like to be beside the seaside

Chain Pier from the east in mid 1820s.
The ferry to Dieppe (started in the 1760s) ran from this pier.
Courtesy of Pat and Sue Berry



The VCH volume for the City of Brighton and Hove covers an area within what were once twelve medieval parishes, of which six border the sea and six spread up the South Downs. By 1100, most of the seaward parishes gained little from their coastline which was lined either with chalk cliffs or lagoons of shallow water. The value of proximity to the sea did not emerge until the Tudor period when Brighton emerged as a town dependent on long distance fishing in the North Sea. The fishing boats were pulled up onto a substantial shingle beach and all went well until its loss from erosion coincided with the decline in herring shoals in the North Sea due, it seems, to over fishing. Meanwhile the populations of most of the other parishes declined as farming became more extensive. Settlements shrank. Some became single farms and then in three cases, fashionable villas with farms discreetly attached.

When long-distance fishing failed to support Brighton, the whole area had a problem supporting those without work. Tourism at Brighton, where access to the sea was best, helped to employ people who were no longer required on the surrounding farmland. From the 1730s a few tourists arrived, then from the 1750s so many that facilities such as assembly rooms and libraries were built. In the 1780s the throngs at this fashionable watering

place attracted the Prince of Wales, who was at the time pursuing Mrs Fitzherbert, another visitor to the resort. The Napoleonic Wars helped to boost tourism because there were so many soldiers along this stretch of vulnerable coast that visitors felt safe, even though the Lord Lieutenant for the county thought that the bay was the most likely spot for Napoleon to invade because the water was so shallow.

After the Wars ended, the town took a new approach to attracting visitors. Large planned estates such as Kemp Town and Brunswick Town were built and capital poured into new tourist attractions such as the Chain Pier (pictured).

I believe that I am the only VCH volunteer editor. American Express funded the secondment of an employee, Mrs J. Lank for a year with four further volunteers helping with the research and a fifth due to start soon. I am also grateful to my husband Pat for the help he has given.

Two articles relating to this research have been published in the journal of the Georgian Group and I am hoping to send out two more articles this year as well as try to get most of the first part of the volume shaped up. I am also giving talks on the work to raise awareness of the VCH.

Sue Berry

In Victorian Sunderland

The last of our EPE school projects was completed this term.

The County Durham project was coordinated by Janette Hilton from Living History North East, based at the Old Donnison School, Sunderland. The project involved two Year 5 classes (ages 9 – 10) from Hill View Junior School, who used local history research to explore the Victorian east end of Sunderland.

The project ran over five weeks during the school spring term; the pupils visited the Old Donnison School and surrounding area for the project activity sessions. These sessions included timeline and mapping activities; a walking and photography tour; clay modelling and taking part in a Victorian classroom experience, which was the highlight for most of the pupils!

EPE Education and Skills Manager, Skye Dillon, attended the project celebration event at Hill View Junior School in April, where each pupil was presented with a memory/ photo booklet and an Old Donnison School History Detective badge.

The educational material from this project will be uploaded to our *Schools Learning Zone* in the winter.



Pupils enjoy a clay modelling workshop



Meet the team

Nick Hall, Content Assistant



I joined EPE in March. As Content Assistant, my role is to review and evaluate the schools projects which have been completed so far. The task is challenging but fulfilling: allowing me to gain a better understanding of how each school project was planned and implemented across the different counties, and drawing recommendations from that.

I work closely with the Education and Skills Manager and also provide support to the Production Team. Further to the extension of my contract with EPE, I now look forward to seeing the project through to its conclusion next year.

I also work as a part-time research assistant for the Campaign for Science and Engineering (CaSE) – a leading advocacy group for the scientific community in the UK.

Prior to joining EPE I worked as a researcher in the Houses of Parliament, and interned at the Fabian Society and OpenDemocracy. I have an MA (Hons) in Russian Politics from the School of Slavonic and East European Studies and a BA (Hons) in History from the University of Warwick.

Volunteers at Royal Cornwall Show



Fran Deacon 'taken over' by Miss Elizabeth Hicks

We enjoyed another "first" this year. No, our entry did not win any prizes but for the first time our stand was manned by volunteers. Each day they took charge to tell the public of their exciting year working on our 'template' for parish research. They have been transcribing late 18th C and early 19th C probate documents

for St Stephen in Brannel parish. One will, with 69 beneficiaries, really fired their imagination. Miss Elizabeth Hicks, who died in 1843, owned property, mineral rights, extensive personal effects and money, and we are endeavouring to discover more about her and the long list of people important to her.

Fran Deacon, who transcribed this will, has really been taken over by Elizabeth Hicks, and we fear we are going to have to wean her away and give her something else to stick her teeth into.

After this 'holiday' the team turns its attention to leases, maps, newspapers, and births, deaths and marriages.

From the project manager

Kerry Whitston, VCH and EPE Publications Manager, left us in June to take up a new post elsewhere in the university, editing student resources. Kerry has overseen most of the fifteen EPE paperbacks as they moved through the production process and was ready for a new challenge. We are grateful to her for all her hard work, and we are relieved that Jess Davies has taken on the challenge of publications manager. She is soon to be joined by Sarah Byrne as production assistant.

Sadly, Carly de Jonge is also leaving, to return to the Australian High Commission. Nick Hall will continue to provide invaluable support until the end of the project. Gill Cookson's term has also come to an end, as the second Sunderland book goes to the publisher.

Volunteers don't leave so easily and their enthusiasm and hard work continues to produce impressive results, many of which can be seen on the Explore website. Also, if you haven't yet visited *Schools Learning Zone*, there are now five sets of resources online, including medieval illustrations for the Cornwall project.

The recent Exmoor book launch was one of my favourites, partly catching up with the team there but also another chance to explore the places in Mary's book. I even saw a Harrier hawk over Hawkridge.

Please note that the EPE conference in Bristol is now booking and will include our end-of-project party. I'm already getting excited having seen the venue. On the subject of learning and outreach, I attended the launch of the new Public History MA at Royal Holloway in June and, judging by the calibre of the speakers, it's going to be an excellent course.



Schools Learning Zone updated

Illustration for Cornwall school resources, created by Louise Ho



Oxfordshire and Cornwall Teacher Packs are now available from our free learning website, *Schools Learning Zone (SLZ)*.

The material for Oxfordshire was written for EPE by Jill Hutchinson of the River and Rowing Museum, Henley, and is designed to explore the buildings of Henley-on-Thames and Burford. The pack of lesson plans, resources and trail activities

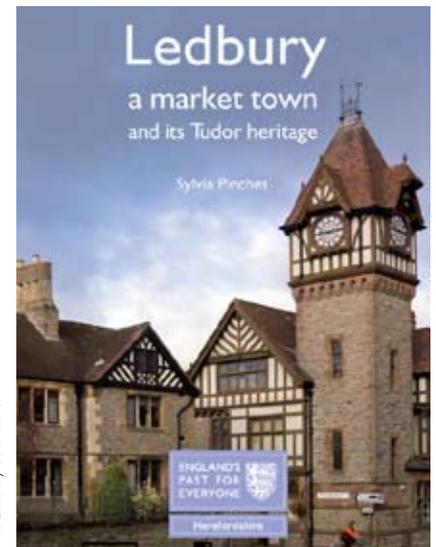
supports both teaching and learning about various styles and eras of buildings.

The second of two Cornwall Teacher Packs to be added to the SLZ shows how Christianity became established in Cornwall. Through interactive and creative activities, pupils explore the history of Cornish saints and how medieval people related to their churches and pilgrimage. The material was written for EPE by John Welham, a History Advanced Skills Teacher in Cornwall.

Both of these new additions to SLZ promote learning outside the classroom and offer many opportunities for cross-curricular activities.

Further resources will be added throughout the year. To download these free packs and others, visit www.EnglandsPastForEveryone.org.uk/Schools

Ledbury book previewed



The Ledbury book cover

The manuscript of our Ledbury paperback received a nod of approval from staff and students at the University of Gloucestershire this month.

The book was previewed as part of the University's 'Celebrate' event, a showcase of research achievements for the academic year.

EPE conference now booking

Booking is now available for the EPE conference, taking place 2-3 October at Armada House, Bristol.

'Is England's Past for Everyone? *Learning and Outreach in the Historic Environment*' is a must for those who value the opportunity to share ideas with colleagues and contribute to best practise debate.

We have have lots of knowledgeable guests lined up to speak, including Baroness Andrews, Chair of English Heritage and historian and broadcaster Michael Wood, plus presentations from EPE staff and others from the learning, heritage and publishing sectors. We're also holding a series of useful workshops on topics such as using sources and running volunteer groups. Or why

not take part in a historical tour around the city?

Places will fill up quickly so visit EnglandsPastforEveryone.org.uk/conference



Poster image courtesy of Gloria Ojulari Sule

Local history goes global

The Victoria County History hosted a groundbreaking international event at the Institute of Historical Research this month.

The VCH International Symposium is the first of its kind to look at the different ways in which local and regional history is practised across the globe.

The event opened with the annual Marc Fitch Lecture, this year given by Professor John Morrill entitled *The British Revolution in the English Provinces 1640-9*.

With papers from Japan, Norway, and South Africa, to name but a few, it is intended that the symposium will become a regular opportunity for ideas-sharing and debate.



Oxfordshire dig with Time Team

Filming for the 17th series of Time Team took place at Burford Priory in April. The team had been invited to investigate the history of the site by the owner of the house, who allowed unprecedented access to the building and surrounding grounds. As co-author of the EPE Burford book, Antonia Catchpole was invited to appear as a local history expert, filming a variety of scenes about the history of the site and town with Tony Robinson and Stewart Ainsworth (although whether these will survive the cutting room floor is another question!). The main aim of the excavations was to find evidence for the medieval hospital believed to have stood on the site of the Priory, and to set the features found into their local social and topographic context, relating them to the origins, development and expansion of the medieval town.

Day 1 saw a trench opened in front of the house to investigate geophysical evidence for a possible east-west wall. Excavation revealed a large, buttressed wall with associated pottery of mid-late 12th century date, supporting the contention that the hospital was founded between 1147 and 1183 by the earl of Gloucester. An extension to the trench produced an abutting

wall thought to represent the foundations of a late 13th century arcade known to have stood on this alignment before the restoration of the Priory in the early 20th century. No evidence for a similar arcade was found on the opposite (south) side of the medieval building, despite Phil Harding's best efforts.

Meanwhile, trenches were also dug in the vegetable garden behind the house, one of which produced Saxon pottery associated with a possible structure, prompting the suggestion that the earliest settlement in Burford may have stood on the high ground to the west of the present town. Other trenches revealed evidence for post-medieval activity, presumably connected with the occupation of the Priory by the Lenthall family from the 17th to 19th centuries. Finally, a small exploratory trench dug beneath the altar of the 17th century Lenthall chapel (a Time Team first), demonstrated that the chapel had been built over a pre-existing wall, possibly marking the precinct of the medieval hospital.

The Time Team work is the first large scale archaeological investigation in the Burford area and has provided invaluable, and

unexpected, evidence for pre-urban settlement as well as tangible proof of the 12th century hospital. An excavation report is being prepared by Wessex Archaeology which will be made available online. The programme is due to be screened in the New Year.

Hoskins conference

The University of Leicester was the location for the 'Local History in Britain after Hoskins' conference this month, marking the 50th anniversary of the publication of *Local History in England* by WG Hoskins.

Hosted by the Centre for English Local History and the British Association for Local History, the event included a number of papers from our own staff on topics such as buildings in local history and immigration history in Bristol. Professor John Beckett, Director VCH provided a keynote address.

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



Phil and Henry looking for the south arcade



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