



Bringing local history to life

From the editor

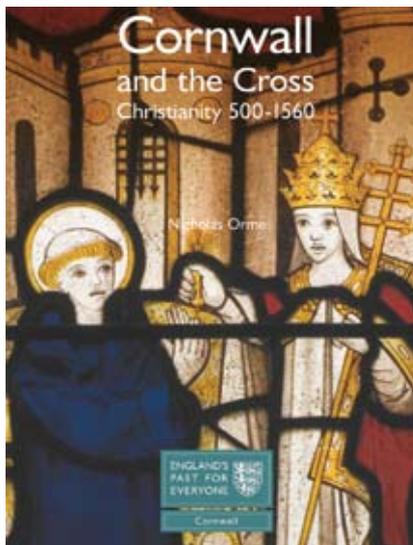
This issue celebrates the launch of our second paperback, a history of Christianity in Cornwall. The Cornwall team also announce exciting news of a continuation project, researching the parishes of 'China Clay Country'.

The Ledbury town crier, William Turberfield, has written an interesting article on the 19th-century construction of the Barrett Browning Memorial Institute and we look at a pre-Reformation will found in Derbyshire.

The star of our 'Meet the Team' article this quarter is our Finance & Contracts Officer, Nafisa Gaffar and we introduce one of our Exmoor volunteers, Juliet Prentice.

We also have a report of a family history day in County Durham, volunteer events in Oxfordshire, Kent and Exmoor, and news of an outreach project in Cornwall.

Bishop of Truro to launch first Cornwall paperback



The Cornwall book cover

The Right Revd William Ind, the Bishop of Truro, will launch the first of our Cornwall paperbacks at St Michael's Mount on Saturday 29 September.

The day will begin with pupils from Camborne Science and Community College, who have been involved

in the EPE school project, retracing the footsteps of medieval pilgrims through Marazion. Once at the Mount they will take part in a treasure hunt and at 3pm Bishop Bill will lead them, and other guests, back across the causeway to the mainland. Here Bishop Bill, who also wrote the foreword to the book, will host the official launch, witnessed by various Cornish dignitaries.

Cornwall and the Cross: Christianity 500-1560 is written by Professor Nicholas Orme, a specialist on the history of the Church and society in England, and particularly Cornwall. The book looks at the history of Christianity in Cornwall from the end of the Roman Empire to the Reformation. It also explores the role of the community, from building parish churches to staging religious plays.

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County Durham team attend family history event

Browsing the County Durham exhibition



The Durham team joined a varied programme of speakers and exhibitors at the 2007 Federation of Family History Societies' annual meeting, held in Durham. This presented an opportunity to publicise the VCH and EPE nationally, as family historians from many parts of the country attended. It also gave the county editor, Gill Cookson, a chance to try her skills

erecting the new Durham EPE banner, ideally a job for someone a foot taller.

Gill had been invited to talk on 18th and 19th century family businesses in the north of England. A room packed with genealogists heard about freemasons in Sunderland and Quakers in Darlington – outcomes of the Durham research – as examples of business networking. This was also a chance to raise the wider profile of VCH county volumes, the new EPE paperback series, and various VCH and EPE websites, including British History On Line. The audience were particularly interested in the new sources with potential for family history that we have published on the web, including volunteers' transcripts of wills, directories and freemasons' membership lists.

How did we do?

We would like to send a huge thank you to all those volunteers who have sent back evaluation forms. It's great to see such positive feedback on our projects, as well as getting a good idea of what we need to do differently next time.

It is not too late for any volunteers who have completed projects to provide feedback. Your group leader will supply the forms, along with a stamped addressed envelope.

All evaluation forms are treated anonymously and confidentially and go straight to Aretha at national office for review.

No matter how large or small you felt your contribution was, your feedback is very important to us so keep those forms coming!

Studying pre-Reformation wills in Derbyshire

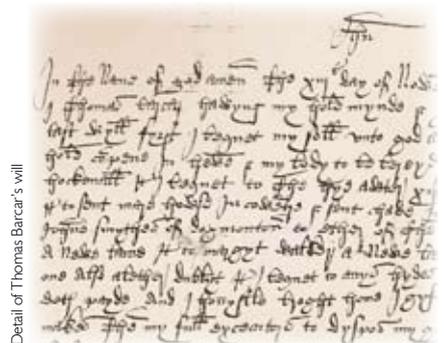
In the Spring term, the Derbyshire EPE volunteer group looked at a sample of probate records to see what light they shed on the parish of Ault Hucknall in the 16th and 17th centuries. Among them was this 1536 will of Thomas Barcar. Although short, it encapsulates many of the characteristics of pre- Reformation wills, as well as providing new information on Ault Hucknall parish church.

In the name of god amen the xiii day of November the yere of owr lorde god 1536 I Thomas Barcar having my hole mynde and gud remembaras make thys my testement and last wyll first I bequet my soll unto god almyghty and to owr lade sent mare to all the hole compene in heven and my body to be bereyd in the paryshe chyrche of sent John Baptyes in Hockenall Item I bequet to the hye awter xiid Item to

the making of the Rowde loft iiis iiiid Item to sent mare howse in Coventre and sent Chade in Lechefeld to ether of them iid Item to too sones of John Smythes of Docmonton to ether of them a newe lame Item to Thomas Claye Robert Claye sone a newe lame Item to Margyt Walker a new lame Item I bequet to John my son my best jakytt but one also alether dublyt Item I bequet to Anys Hydes viis the resedewe of my gudes unbequet my dets payde and I honystle broght home I gyfe and bequet to Jone my wife and Renald my sone and makes them my full executors to dyspos my gudes for the helthe of my sole as thaye things best

Thes beryng wetness John Lodlame Robert Lodlame Wylliam Tatersall Robert Claye Roger Moldyng wythe other mon

For those having trouble interpreting the somewhat quaint contemporary English, the main provisions of the will are bequests to the parish church of 3s 4d to help pay for a new rood screen, 2d each to the cathedrals in Coventry and Lichfield and a new lamb each to John Smythes, Robert Claye and Margaret Walker. The references to the Virgin Mary and the 'Company of Heaven' are sure signs of a pre-Reformation will.



Detail of Thomas Barcar's will

Cornwall develops new project

Camborne School pupils working on the religious sites project



Here in Cornwall the launch of our first paperback, *Cornwall and the Cross* is just days away (more on the front page). The launch event also celebrates the end of our school project with the pupils of Camborne School, whose research on Christianity in Cornwall will form the basis of teaching packs.

Dr Joanna Mattingly has sent the text for our second book, on the fishing communities of Newlyn and Mousehole, to London and we are enjoying the lull before the storm when work on maps and images must begin. We will keep you informed on progress in due course, but we have some exciting news to share.

The Victoria County History of Cornwall Trust has learned much during the life of these two projects and has been keen to continue with this important work. After a great deal of discussion we have selected our next project – a study of the eight ancient parishes of the 'China Clay Country' from the earliest possible times, and the influence the china clay industry has had on the life of these communities.

It has taken over a year to complete the funding bid. We employed a professional bid writer whose advice has been invaluable.

Exeter University and the Cornwall Record Office have been working with us and we are pleased that two of the most important 'clay' organisations, The China Clay Country Park and the China Clay History Society, have agreed to become partners and serve on our Advisory Council.

Building on lessons learned, Cornwall Record Office staff will provide basic training for all the project volunteers in researching primary source materials. This training will be augmented by our County Historic Environment Service and, over the coming months, whilst awaiting the outcome of our bid, we will be using one parish as a research template to ensure this large project proceeds smoothly.

Even before we have made a formal public announcement we are being contacted by people keen to volunteer. We have our 'schools' project team' in place and job descriptions for Project Leader and Volunteer Team Leader(s) have been written. We just need the funding and then we will be away. However, there is a Board of Trustees determined that, one way or the other, the 'clay country' will be given the VCH treatment. Watch this space!

From the project manager

It's been another busy quarter with little chance of things slowing down.

In central office we're editing the County Durham and Bristol paperbacks. The first is a study of the origins of Sunderland and the second looks at immigration and the city of Bristol for the past 1000 years. All involved have done sterling work to get the manuscripts ready in time and both books are on track for publication by the end of the year.

We are looking forward to attending the launch of the first of our two Cornwall paperbacks at an event on St Michael's Mount at the end of September. Thanks must go to Coral Pepper, the Cornwall administrator, for all the hard work she has put into organising this event.

Later in October we will start running the campaign for the public launch of our Explore website, which is looking fantastic. Mel will be in touch soon regarding publicity in your local area.

November brings our next round of Research Planning Meetings in London and Neil is busy organising the dates.

On 22 November we will be holding our annual Learning Forum, which this year will focus on lessons learned from our volunteer and school projects. Aretha is finalising a programme, and invites will be issued in October.

And finally, I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at our annual EPE Party on 22 November, which follows the Learning Forum. It will be hosted by the Institute of Historical Research and will be a chance to meet up with friends and colleagues from across the counties.



Meet the team

Nafisa Gaffar - Finance Officer & Contracts Officer

Nafisa Gaffar, Finance & Contracts Officer



I joined the EPE project in June 2005 and work part-time as the Finance & Contracts Officer.

My day-to-day tasks include liaising with finance officers and team leaders in county teams, reconciling credit card statements and financial transactions and processing invoices and expense forms.

I am also responsible for producing financial reports for the Heritage

Lottery Fund drawdowns, which have to be submitted every quarter. I am also required to report on cashflows to the EPE Project Board and to provide financial summaries for quarterly research planning meetings and the EPE Annual Report.

In 2005 I completed the Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) qualification and started the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) course the following year. I am now studying the third, and final, level for this qualification. So far I have studied topics including auditing and assurance, financial reporting and corporate and business law. Being responsible for the accountability of the EPE finances has enabled me to use my learning in a practical way.

Exmoor and Kent celebrate

Exmoor

Exmoor will mark the successful completion of their schools and volunteer projects, with a celebration at Exmoor National Park, Dulverton on the 26 September 2007.

The event, postponed from earlier in the year, will showcase the hard work of the volunteers and thank them for their commitment over the course of the project.

Kent

Kent will also be celebrating the result of their two year project with a showcase of work and celebratory event on 27 October 2007 at Greenwich University, Medway Campus.

The evening will provide a forum for volunteers to talk about their experiences on the project, from setting up exhibitions and photographing buildings to searching through newspapers.

Guest speakers will talk about specialist areas of the project and an exhibition of some of the themes taken up in the book is planned.

Volunteers complete building surveys in Kent



Heritage Open Days Ledbury



EPE displays in the Heritage Centre

Herefordshire volunteers hosted an event at the Heritage Centre, Ledbury, as part of Heritage Open Days 2007.

On 7 and 8 September the Centre was open for visitors to see the fine timber framing and roof structure of the upper room, not normally open to the public. They were also able to view the work of the England's Past for Everyone project in Ledbury and talk to some of the volunteers involved.

The displays showed examples of research by volunteers working on documents such as parish registers, census enumerators' books and wills and inventories. Notes taken from one of the oral history interviews and work by the building recording group were also exhibited. Maps and photographs showing the changes to the High Street over the last 150 years drew a lot of interest and the booklet on the Street Names of Ledbury, written by volunteers, was available for sale.

As well as reviewing the work of the last eighteen months, the display explained that we are just about to begin research on medieval Ledbury. Over 100 people came and expressed much interest in, and support for, the EPE project, as well as appreciating the opportunity to see a part of the building not normally open to the public.



Ledbury's past revealed



The Barrett Browning Memorial Institute, Ledbury

In 1889 William Russell of Ledbury offered £50 towards a clock tower, for the benefit of the town. After much public debate it was thought appropriate to create a memorial to the poetess Elizabeth Barrett Browning, who had spent her childhood and youth at Hope End, Ledbury.

Two half timbered houses and the adjoining tannery on the corner of Homend and Bye Street were purchased and it was agreed that a lecture room, reading room and caretaker's flat would also be built.

An open competition was won by Mr Brightwen Binyon, an architect from Ipswich. An exhibition of all the competition entries was held in

the town hall and the entry fee of one shilling per head was given to the building fund.

The building contract was awarded to a Mr George Hill, and a public subscription list was launched to fund fixtures and fittings.

Mr William Russell, who had originally offered money for the clock tower, had died but his widow gave £1,500 for a four dial clock tower in his memory.

The old buildings were demolished, Bye Street was widened and a sewer and a water-course covered in.

The official opening of the clock tower was performed by Sir Henry Rider Haggard, the famous English novelist (1856-1925), on Thursday 16 January 1896.

In 1938, the Barrett Browning Institute became a public library. John Masefield, the Poet Laureate, who was a native of the town, performed the opening ceremony on 11 November 1938. The Library is still operating today.

This item is based on an article written by Mr William Turberfield, Ledbury Town Crier. The full article can be found on the EPE website.

Reaching out



Water carrier Newlyn Harbour, 1907 (detail) Courtesy NMR

Cornwall is about to embark on an EPE outreach project with Penlee House Museum and Gallery and Land's End and District U3A.

Artist Tamsin Pender and members of the U3A Group will use the artefacts from the museum as a starting point for examining the history of the fishing communities of Newlyn and Mousehole.

The group will master the art of traditional methods such as drawing, making stencils out of copper foil and printing.

The purpose of the project is to bring new audiences into the museum, whilst promoting the second Cornwall paperback about the fishing communities of Newlyn and Mousehole, due to be published in 2008.

Website update



Detail of Mary Magdalene, sketched by Patrick Welham

Since the launch of the Explore website in June, staff and volunteers in the counties and central office have been busy adding images, text and other resources to the database.

Resources from the Codford project are now online and we're adding more every day to tie in with the launch of our latest book, a study of Christianity in Cornwall.



New Henley project



An expectant Henley audience at the EPE presentation, April 2007

Work is hotting up in the Thames-side town of Henley, where the second of Oxfordshire's EPE projects is now officially underway. Following a presentation to a packed and enthusiastic hall in April, two evening meetings with potential volunteers were held during June and July. Out of that has emerged the beginnings of a Henley wills group and a census group, both of which will be meeting

during the autumn to firm up plans for research.

Mary Hodges, founder of our highly successful Burford Probate Group, has kindly agreed to give some training in reading wills, which should get things off to a lively start. Other people have expressed an interest in working on newspapers, local sporting history, and 18th-century social life.

Meanwhile the Oxfordshire Buildings Record, our co-partners on the Burford project, arranged a recording day in Henley during August, looking at the remains of a former malthouse – malting was a major industry in Henley from the 16th and 17th centuries. Another local buildings expert, Ruth Gibson, is arranging for some dendrochronology in the town – more on that in a future EPE News.

The Burford project is meanwhile approaching its climax. The completed text for the paperback is with the EPE Editorial team, and should be going to press this year, for a launch in the spring. Some additional resources are already available on the new Explore website, with a mass of other material to follow – wills, photographs, building histories, and more.

Volunteer case study: Juliet Prentice, Exmoor



Juliet Prentice, Exmoor volunteer

I am an artist based in Tiverton, Devon. Since graduating I have worked within the arts in relation to the environment, disability and mental health. Our enthusiastic volunteer group leader Anne Todd introduced me to EPE and I soon became excited and inspired by all the project has to offer. It is fabulous

being a part of creating an interesting and accessible learning resource for the local community that will inform and enrich their lives.

Since joining the project, I have researched desertions and farmsteads on Exmoor. I have been fascinated working with the tithe maps and early censuses. It has been awesome to touch, smell and see the old papers and hand written scripts. I have valued meeting the community and feel honoured to have heard their stories. During the winter I worked on databases which taught me new computer skills. It has been great to offer my creativity and fantastic to work alongside inspirational people who have a common goal.

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

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

