



## Bringing local history to life

### From the editor

Welcome to the Spring 2007 edition of EPE News.

Thank you to all those who provided articles for this issue. It's great to find out what you've been up to and it's important that we continue to keep each other informed of our achievements.

In this edition we celebrate the launch of our first EPE book, which is fantastic news for all involved. We have two new features, 'Meet the team' and 'Volunteer case study',

which tell us how and why people are involved in the project. We also have news and updates from across the counties, including a write-up of a successful exhibition recently held in Kent. Enjoy!



A host of golden daffodils...

### Wiltshire launches first EPE paperback

The first book in the EPE series, *Codford: wool and war in Wiltshire*, will be launched next month in the Codford Village Hall.

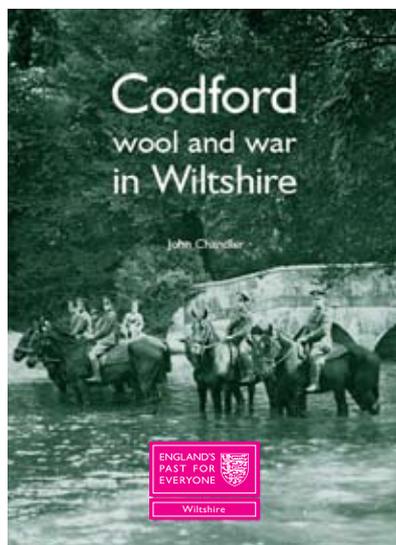
You are welcome to join us at the launch on Saturday 21 April from

2pm. The day will include an illustrated lecture by Rex Sawyer, local historian and author of *Little Imber on the Down*.

There will also be a local history fair, with exhibitors including local museums, history and record societies, and a display of the EPE projects completed by the children of Wylve Valley school. The publishers of the book, Phillimore & Co. Ltd, will also attend.

*Codford: wool and war in Wiltshire* explores why the landscape and architecture of this agrarian parish look the way they do, and how its people, their livelihoods and social connections have made it what it is. From early Anglo-Saxon settlement to important military garrison this book evokes the history of many similar places.

Further information can be found on the [Wiltshire EPE site](http://Wiltshire EPE site).



The Wiltshire book cover

### In this issue

#### page one

From the editor  
Wiltshire launches first EPE paperback  
*book launch and local history fair*

#### page two

Bristol update  
*report from the Bristol VGL*  
From the project manager  
*update from Catherine Cavanagh*

#### page three

Kent holds local exhibition  
*display at Medway archives centre*  
Cornwall says thanks  
*Cornwall volunteer party*  
'Explore' to be launched this summer  
*the website launch*

#### page four

Meet the team  
*Matthew Bristow, HERM*  
Ledbury volunteers stoned!  
*the origins of Ledbury building stone*

#### page five

Recording Old Shute  
*Exmoor volunteer research*  
Oxfordshire gearing up  
*report from the Oxfordshire team leader*

#### page six

'Origins' eagerly awaited!  
*update on County Durham book*  
Volunteer case study  
*Philip Cousins, Derbyshire*

## Bristol update by Gill James, Volunteer Group Leader

The emphasis is changing here in Bristol. Many volunteers have finished their research. Some will now be involved in proof-reading before the book goes to press, whilst others will be identifying content for the EPE interactive website. The Bristol communications website is regularly updated, thanks to the efforts of experienced IT volunteer Jane Stone.

Jinx Newley, who has been researching 16th century Bristol Apprentice Records for Peter Fleming, has now completed her work on Welsh apprentices in Bristol. In collaboration with Margaret Macgregor, an archivist at the Bristol Record Office, Jinx published an article in the *Regional Historian*, in which she explains the difficulties she encountered with Welsh names. In particular the name Llewellyn was recorded variously as huelyn, lewelyng, llelyn, flewelen, Ap ffluelyln and pulwelyng.

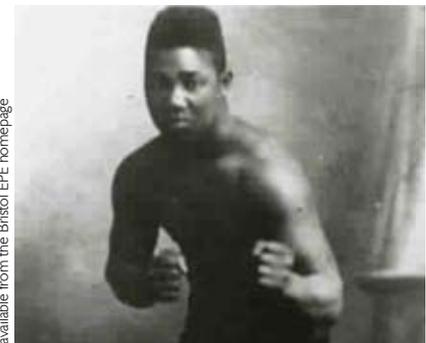
Volunteers Gary Evans and Sarah-Joy Maddeaux have continued to supply Peter with material for his chapter on 16th and 17th century Bristol, and Spencer Dimmock, EPE

Exmoor, has kindly allowed his work on Bristol apprentices to be used.

Jill Prasad and Pam Sheppard attended an oral history training session with Madge Dresser. Jill then visited Dhek Bhal, a South Asian women's group in Bristol and will return to interview more of the members about their lives in Bristol. Recently Pam Sheppard and Madge interviewed four members of Bristol's Polish Catholic church after mass. Pam has also interviewed a Bristol resident from Somalia and is currently in discussions with other Somalis living in the city. Peter Courtier has found more material on the Bristol council for Racial Equality and set up an interview with a police officer who worked in Bristol in the 1980s.

The Bristol EPE project is very grateful to both Zehra Haq of Dhek Bhat, Celina and Alina Domagala of the Polish Church and Mukhtyar Singh Bhakerd of the Chelsea Road Gurdwara in Bristol for enabling us to interview members of their respective communities.

Kathleen Charles has recently been in touch about inaccurate portrayals



Dixie Brown. Further information on Dixie is available from the Bristol EPE homepage

of her grandfather, boxer Dixie Brown. Kathleen was upset that a 2007 calendar, part funded by EPE, described her grandfather as a well-known Bristol boxer from St. Lucia in the 1930s, who sadly was found at the end of his life begging in the city.

Kathleen wished it to be known that Dixie had not died a lone and destitute beggar, but the much loved father and 'grandfer' of a large Bristol family. He had nine children and 30 grandchildren and was popular throughout the city. Kathleen and her family have kindly agreed to allow EPE and the Bristol Black Archives Project to copy and digitise fragile family photos and documents, for archiving at the Bristol Records Office. This will ensure Dixie Brown is remembered without condescension or misrepresentation.

## From the project manager

Congratulations to Mel Hackett for another interesting and attractive newsletter. Mel also designed our Annual Report which is now available from the 'About EPE' section of the website .

We've now completed two extremely busy years of the EPE project, and 2007 is going to be no exception, with several books going to press, and the parliamentary launch of the 'Explore England's Past' website in June.

Since the last EPE News, I've managed to address some of my personal aims, which include visiting the county projects and learning more about the schools programme. I 'shadowed' Aretha George and Simon Townley at an inspiring education meeting with the Henley Rowing Museum, which has great schools resources. Back in February, I attended Andrew Hann's opening lecture for the exhibition of volunteer work at the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre.

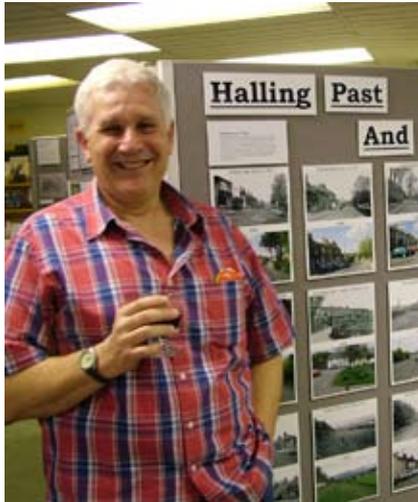
I also visited Burford for the first time on 24 March, when the Oxfordshire team held a Volunteer Day to showcase the results of research to date, and was impressed by the dedication and expertise of the volunteers. The talks were stimulating and the team are keeping us on our toes with lots of suggestions for the website.

Please keep giving us feedback on the websites, and the project in general, by emailing [epe@sas.ac.uk](mailto:epe@sas.ac.uk).



## Kent holds local exhibition

Kent volunteer, Roger Smoothy, with photographs of Halling. Roger digitised the photographs of Halling 'past' and took new photographs of Halling 'present'.



Dr Andrew Hann, Kent Team Leader, recently gave a lecture entitled 'The Lower Medway Valley and the Wider World', at the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre (MALSC) in Strood.

The lecture launched a two month exhibition on the history of the lower Medway valley, which provided a showcase for the excellent research completed by the Kent volunteers.

Photographs of Halling 'past and present', the findings of a village survey recently completed in Eccles, a case-study of the Burham Cement Works and a history of the Hook family in Snodland were all displayed. The exhibition considered relationships between the Medway Valley, Kent, London and the wider world and illustrated how issues such as employment, mobility and migration influenced them.

The exhibition has been well-received by visitors to MALSC.

## Cornwall says thanks



Cornwall volunteers and record office staff

On the evening of Thursday 18 January over 60 people gathered at the Truro Record Office to enjoy good food, a few glasses of wine and sparkling conversation!

The event was organised to say thank you to the many volunteers who have been working on VCH and EPE projects in Cornwall; some since 2002. As well as volunteers the event was attended by trustees, advisers and EPE Education and Skills Manager, Aretha George. Record Office staff very kindly gave their time to host the party, transforming the search room into a glamorous party venue, and refreshments were prepared by the Administrator's husband.

An exhibition of volunteer work encouraged volunteers to share their research findings with each other. A large map dotted with red stickers marked the parishes which have been visited and recorded by volunteers, and a sample of completed parish questionnaires were available for guests to browse.

A press photographer recorded the evening and we are determined that the event will be noted in the County Archives. Many years from now, when the very last piece in Cornwall's VCH jigsaw is dropped into place, we too will be part of our history!

by Coral Pepper, Administrator

## 'Explore' website to be launched this summer

Our interactive website 'Explore' will be launched this summer at an event at the Houses of Parliament.

The launch will take place on 11 June at a reception in Portcullis House. The event also marks the start of a week-long exhibition being held in the Upper Waiting Hall, to raise the profile of the Victoria County History and its new work.

The Explore website is one of the three key outputs of the EPE project; the other two being the paperback books and the learning and schools resources.

Visitors will be able to use the site to explore the project areas and the people and places within. From there they will have access to thousands of resources collected by our volunteers and county teams, such as images, audio files and historical documents.

Material is now being uploaded and a training programme for counties will be rolled out during 2007. The site will be regularly updated, as and when new material is found.

It is hoped that 'Explore' will be used by a wide range of people, including history students, teachers, school children and those simply interested in learning more about their local area.

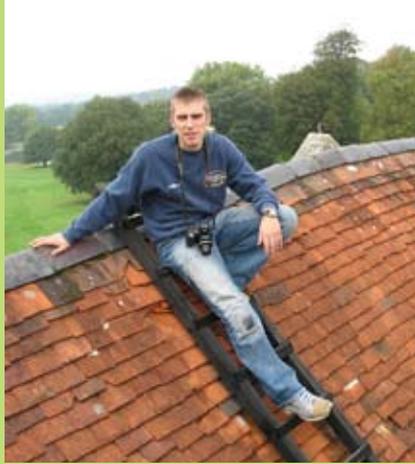
## Get involved

We're now looking for London-based volunteers to help us input material onto our interactive website. Training will be provided. If you would like to be involved, or know anyone who might be interested, please contact [catherine.cavanagh@sas.ac.uk](mailto:catherine.cavanagh@sas.ac.uk)



## Meet the team

### Matthew Bristow – Historic Environment Research Manager



Matt on the roof of Parham House

Having left the University of Leicester in 2003 with a BA in History and Archaeology and an MA in Landscape Studies, I gained project management experience with an Environmental Management company before taking up this position in September 2005.

My principal role within the EPE project is to develop and manage the generation of material relating to historic buildings and the historic landscape for incorporation into

the EPE paperback series, the Explore website and the education projects. This material is produced by experts who are selected to work on the various EPE projects following an invitation to tender. Each EPE county budget includes funds to commission an architectural consultant and in collaboration with the project team leaders, I have devised complimentary architectural studies, produced briefs and issued contracts for 12 of the 15 EPE projects; 5 of these studies have been completed.

In Herefordshire, to compliment the first volume covering Ledbury from 1558 to the present day, a study surveying and analysing the vernacular architecture of the town was planned, with special attention paid to its famous black and white timber-framed buildings. Local vernacular buildings expert, Duncan James was selected to conduct the study and is currently working closely with the Team Leader, Sylvia

Pinches to deliver it by the beginning of June for incorporation into the paperback.

As Historic Environment Research Manager I am also responsible for managing the commissioning and delivery of the photographs taken for the project by English Heritage as well as the new maps drawn by the UCL draftsman, Cath D'Alton for the EPE series. In addition to these tasks, I also help edit the paperbacks and contribute my own research material, such as on Hylton Castle, for the first Sunderland paperback.

The final element of this position is as assistant to the VCH Architectural Editor, Elizabeth Williamson. As such I have taken on a number of small research tasks to compensate, in part, for the time Elizabeth spends on EPE work. I am currently working for VCH on Northamptonshire vol 7, researching and writing about the physical development of Corby after 1930.

## Ledbury volunteers stoned! by Sylvia Pinches, Team Leader

On 20 February Dr Peter Oliver of the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust came to speak to the Ledbury Buildings Group volunteers on the building stones of Ledbury. He gave an introductory talk at the project base in the Heritage Centre about the geology of the area. Ledbury is just to the south west of the Malvern Hills. This is an area of fascinating and complex geology, now designated a site of international importance.

Dog Hill, immediately to the east of Ledbury, is mainly composed of

limestone and was heavily quarried in the past. As the land dips towards the west it gives way to old red sandstone, forming the characteristic heavy red soil of Herefordshire. Having explained the two main types of stone we would find in Ledbury buildings, Peter issued us all with hand lenses and off we went to explore.

The sight of a group of people, lenses to eyes and noses to the wall, caused some amusement to passers-by, but we were entranced by the grainy structure of the stones and the many fossils of shells and

coral that we found. We also learnt to spot the finer imported stones often used for shop frontages and to give the appearance of wealth and solidity in the building of banks. We will all go around with our eyes much more open in future.



Volunteers with Dr Peter Oliver



## Recording Old Shute by Peter Maunder, Exmoor volunteer

A number of us from the Tiverton Archaeology Group volunteered to get involved in the England's Past for Everyone project on Exmoor.

Three colleagues and I chose to work on the Farmsteads project. We have now recorded four sites, the most recent being Old Shute, which was such a large group of buildings, it took two visits to complete.

Old Shute is set in a beautiful and secluded valley within the southern foothills of Exmoor, a few miles to the west of Dulverton. Its land today is all permanent pasture used for grazing sheep and cattle, but the extensive complex of traditional farm buildings tells us that in the past there was a much wider range of activities taking place on the farm.

The task given to us as volunteers is to record all of the buildings on

the farmstead, ranging from the farmhouse itself, to the smallest of outbuildings such as privies and dog kennels! The work involves measuring the external dimensions of all of the buildings, noting the materials from which they are constructed, and also the size and position of openings such as doors and windows, and any other features of interest. Having been provided with a digital camera, we also take plenty of photographs both outside and inside the buildings, forming a visual record of the farmstead as it is today.

There are records of a settlement on this site dating back to the thirteenth century, but the buildings we see today all date from the mid nineteenth century when a lot of money was spent there by the then new owner of the farm, building what must then have been everything that a modern farmer



Exmoor volunteers recording the farmstead

could possibly need. Aside from the farmhouse, there were sixteen farm buildings which included three two storey linhays, pigstyes, stables, a chicken house, and an impressive bank threshing barn with associated roundhouse for a horse mill, all arranged around a central farmyard.

Sadly today none of these buildings is in use other than for storage, and stabling, but they have benefited from recent repairs to roofs, which should ensure their survival for years to come.

## Oxfordshire gearing up by Simon Townley, Team Leader



Calendars, Burford

The Oxfordshire EPE team is in for a busy few months – pulling together its Burford material as the project approaches completion, and preparing to launch its follow-up project on Henley.

The Burford project has been looking at the town's stone and timber buildings and the people who lived in them – not just the grand houses, but the everyday buildings which line the town's streets. More than 60 volunteers have taken part, measuring buildings, transcribing wills, and taking photographs. The results are now feeding into a paperback which will bring all this together – backed up by a mass of detailed information on the web, which will be invaluable to family and building historians. A big thankyou meeting for volunteers is being held on 24 March, in the Methodist Chapel on High Street – this was built as a town house for the local Jordan family around 1725, to designs by the

well known architect Francis Smith of Warwick.

Meanwhile EPE is turning its sights on Henley, where a meeting to whip up local interest and recruit volunteers is set for 17 April. The Henley Historical and Archaeological Group and Henley River & Rowing Museum have already expressed their enthusiasm, and given help in a number of ways. Watch this space.

The picture (by a volunteer) shows Calendars, one of several Burford houses whose roof has been tree-ringing dated as part of EPE. We now know that the timbers were felled in 1473, and that the whole house was built in one go – probably for one of Burford's wealthy wool merchants.



## 'Origins' eagerly awaited! by Christine Newman, Team Researcher

St Peter's Church, Sunderland



Work is now well advanced on *Sunderland and its Origins: monks and mariners* with publication scheduled for late 2007. We are already getting quite a few enquiries about the book's progress – including some from the regional press and television – and it seems that the appearance of 'Origins' is eagerly awaited!

The book's co-authors, Maureen Meikle and Christine Newman, explore the history of the town

from prehistoric times through to the creation of the parish of Sunderland in 1719. Sunderland's Anglo-Saxon history is particularly fascinating, with much of what we know coming from the writings of Bede, born on the lands belonging to the monastery of St Peter's at Wearmouth (Monkwearmouth) and its twin establishment, St Paul's at Jarrow. Bede spent his early years at Monkwearmouth, before transferring to Jarrow, thus witnessing the development of the twin monasteries as focal points of early Christianity in the north and major centres of cultural and intellectual excellence in Anglo Saxon England. The book covers the history of this period in detail and includes a section on St Peter's monastery written by the eminent archaeologist, Professor Rosemary Cramp, who undertook the

excavation of the site in the early 1960s.

The book goes on to explore Sunderland's development, from a small medieval borough and fishing port, through to the first stirrings of its coal export trade in the closing years of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It was from this point that the transformation of Sunderland began, its story thereafter one of continued growth and economic success. 'Origins' traces the progress of this growth, charting the expansion of the port, its trade and associated industries, its fortunes during the Civil War when the town was for a time occupied by the Scottish army, and its later development into a prosperous borough and commercial centre. An excellent collection of images, maps and plans has been brought together to illustrate the volume.

## Volunteer case study - Philip Cousins, Derbyshire

Philip Cousins, Derbyshire volunteer



I live and work in Chesterfield and I am married with a grown-up daughter. I work at a 650 bed acute NHS hospital as an Electrical Maintenance Manager and I was formerly active in local government at parish council member level.

My involvement with EPE came through membership of the Derbyshire Victoria County History Trust (VCH); I have been interested in local history for many years. I edit

the VCH Trust newsletter and organise the local history fair, both of which heavily feature the work of the EPE project.

I have been able to contribute to the project by bringing in my experience as a volunteer and my organisational and communication skills. I have also learned new skills, for example website editing. I particularly enjoy seeing things through: the local history fair and our launch event were enjoyable to work on. As an amateur, I am keen to see what EPE can bring to local history. The blend of local history and academic research with a popular edge appeals to me.

For more volunteer case studies visit our 'Get Involved' pages on the EPE website.

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](mailto:melanie.hackett@sas.ac.uk)

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