



## Bringing local history to life

### From the editor

Welcome to EPE News.

In this issue we have an interesting item from our Sussex team on the dendrochronology work taking place at Parham House. We also have a summary of the recent EPE Learning Forum held at the University of London, and news from all 10 counties involved in the project.

Best wishes for 2007!



Burham Brick and Cement Works

### The brickies' shift

by Dean Jones, Kent volunteer

George Smeed was the owner of Burham Brick and Cement Works in the 1860s and 1870s.

He tolerated drunkenness, bad language and fighting but insisted that his workers observed the Lord's day without work or beer.

This was very unusual in the industry as it meant the kilns had to be re-lit early on Monday morning.

Sundays became known as the 'brickies' shift', when they lay in bed all day while their only set of underwear was washed and dried!

### Project manager update

Our new quarterly newsletter is intended to let staff, volunteers, friends and others know what England's Past for Everyone is doing around the country. As you'll see, our diverse activities are united by enthusiasm and the shared aim of making local history more accessible. What's the point in research if we don't show people what we've found?

EPE represents a new way of working for the Victoria County History, not only in how we publish local history but how we study it, and who helps us. We're setting up 15 new projects, alongside the challenge of producing books, websites and learning programmes within two year periods. It's not always been easy, but it's certainly exciting and enjoyable.

Our new 'Explore England's Past' website will be launched in June at the Houses of Parliament, so we'll be spending the first few months of the year entering the results of the research into the online database. We hope that it will provide a flexible resource for all learners, who will be able to search images, documents and audio visual material using Google Maps, timelines and themes.

A key element of the project is education and skills, and we are intending to make a significant contribution to both the school curriculum and lifelong learning, through local and ...

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... national partnerships. Already, 250 volunteers have taken part in activities ranging from building recording and transcription of wills to writing newsletters. And more people are always welcome to get involved.

I'd like to start the year with a big thank you for all the hard work that has made the project such a success to date. In particular, to the volunteers without whom the research would be less inspired, more limited and not as satisfying. And to staff and colleagues for their passion and achievements. Last, but certainly not least, we are hugely grateful for funding, support in kind and a great deal of time contributed by all our partners including HLF for our £3.5 million grant.

We're keen to hear from everyone involved whatever their perspective, so please send articles to Mel and let people know what you're up to.

## Paperback update

Codford in Wiltshire is the subject of our first paperback book published by Phillimore. The launch will take place in Codford on 21 April 2007 to commemorate ANZAC Day (25 April), the anniversary of the first major military action fought by the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps during the First World War. Codford served as a military garrison during World Wars I and II and is the site of the second largest ANZAC cemetery in the UK.

*The Church in Cornwall: from the Romans to the Reformation* will be launched at the end of September with a high profile event at St Michael's Mount. The next book will be the *Origins of Sunderland* from the County Durham team. *Immigrants in the City: 1001 years of identity and ethnicity in Bristol* will be published by the end of 2007.

## 'Bess' lecture a local success

In September, Derbyshire EPE Team Leader, Philip Riden, gave an illustrated talk entitled "'Bess of Hardwick" and the rise of the Cavendish family'. The event proved a real hit with local people, selling over 200 tickets at the Chesterfield Library Lecture Theatre venue. The Duchess and the Dowager Duchess of Devonshire also attended. New light was thrown on one of the best-known figures of the Elizabethan



Hardwick Hall today

than age; Elizabeth, known as Bess, of Hardwick. Philip Riden has been revisiting her amazing life story. He explained to the audience how the daughter of a small landowner managed to marry a leading London civil servant, then the Captain of Queen Elizabeth's Guard, and finally one of the wealthiest noblemen in England.

## This Old House



Herefordshire volunteers receive a tour from Catherine Wilson. (far right)

Herefordshire Team Leader, Sylvia Pinches, organised a visit for the volunteers to the Old House in Hereford. Built in 1621, the timber-framed house in the centre of the town is now a fascinating museum, giving an insight into daily life in Jacobean times. The volunteers enjoyed



Derbyshire Team Leader, Philip Riden, with the Duchess and Dowager Duchess of Devonshire

Bess built Hardwick Hall for herself, which still stands today as a monument to her success.

Philip also explained the EPE project and gave an outline to the audience of the work in Derbyshire. Material presented in this lecture will be incorporated in the second of the two EPE Derbyshire publications, *Hardwick Hall, Estate and Village*.

The lecture was arranged by Derbyshire County Council's Cultural and Community Services as part of the Historical Association's Local and Community History Month. It was organised in conjunction with the EPE team and the Derbyshire Victoria County History Trust.

a special tour by Catherine Wilson, author of the *Old House* guidebook.

The volunteers saw examples of some of the seventeenth century domestic furniture and furnishings that they have been reading about in their wills and inventories work, such as joint stools, andirons, and sways.

## 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)



## Cornwall update



Newlyn Harbour, Cornwall

It is fair to say that in Cornwall things are buzzing! Nicholas Orme is close to completing his EPE paperback - *The Church in Cornwall: from the Romans to the Reformation*. And Joanna Mattingly is busy drafting *The Fishing Communities of Newlyn and Mousehole*.

Both education projects are well underway – the religious history module will be available to schools county-wide and the fishing communities module will reach students in approximately 35 schools in the far west of Cornwall.

We are planning a big party to celebrate the excellent work of our volunteers. Throughout the project they have been involved in a variety of activities including researching wills, minute books, school records, correspondence, parish churches etc. The party will be held in our County Record Office on 18th January 2007. What a great way to start a new year!

Even greater celebrations will take place when we launch the first of our volumes in Autumn 2007.

by Coral Pepper, Administrator

## EPE stand attracts new volunteers



The EPE stand at the Ledbury Heritage Open Day

An exhibition on the work of Herefordshire's project was mounted at the Ledbury Heritage Centre on 8-9 September. The event was run as part of the Civic Trust's Heritage Open Days 2006. Volunteer Group Leader Dr Janet Cooper and a rota of volunteers staffed the exhibition over the two days and answered visitors questions.

Each of the volunteer groups displayed some 'work in progress'. Visitors were able to examine photographs of original seventeenth-century wills, accompanied by the transcripts made by the volunteers. Initial results from the census group compared the changing occupations listed in the 1851 and 1861 returns. The preliminary annotated gazetteer of street names was available for examination, as was information about the oral history project.

Over the two days some 130 people came to look at the Heritage Centre and our exhibition. All expressed interest in the history of Ledbury and a few have even joined the volunteers!

## Bristol update



Bristol volunteer group meeting

In November the Bristol project held a volunteer lunch meeting at the St Matthias Campus, UWE. The meeting was attended by 26 volunteers as well as community contacts and potential partners.

Madge Dresser and Peter Fleming, the Bristol Team Leaders, opened the event by providing updates on their chapters for the Bristol paperback, *Identity and the City: A History of Ethnic Minorities in Bristol 1000-2001*.

Volunteers then spoke about their own research work. This includes tracing 17th and 18th century continental migrants, researching the settlement of Welsh apprentices in 16th century Bristol, using Pigot's directory to chart trade developments and recording the experiences of the head teachers in four inner city schools. The new Bristol Volunteer Group Leader, Gill James, also took the opportunity to introduce herself. Gill is an MA History student at UWE.



## Rethinking and reshaping EPE learning

On Thursday 28th November we held our second annual Learning Forum entitled 'Rethinking and reshaping: learning through EPE models'. The event was attended by Team Leaders, education consultants/partners and Volunteer Group Leaders from across the counties.

Able chaired by Don Henson, Head of Education, Council for British Archaeology, this year's forum focused on marketing and evaluation. Counties also provided updates on their volunteer and school projects. The forum also gave delegates the opportunity to feed into the EPE Learning Strategy which is due for review in March 2007.

John Chandler, an author of the Wiltshire paperback, and Michelle Wood, history coordinator at Wylde Valley School in Codford, provided a presentation on their flagship school project, which was completed in October.

Last term, the whole school was split into 4 groups of pupils aged 5-11 years (Key Stages 1 and 2) who presented the results of their 6 week project to each other, teachers and parents. A PowerPoint quiz, models, farming implements and song were used to illustrate developments in local agriculture from pre-history to living memory. Activities involved field trips, writing in Latin, role play, growing grass and building a life-size Iron Age hut in the school grounds, complete with camp fire!

Education resources developed from this project will be available from the EPE website during 2007.

## 'History Matters'

The Derbyshire exhibition stand



Derbyshire's EPE project was highlighted at October's Scarsdale Local History Fair.

Organised by the Derbyshire Victoria County History Trust, the fair was held in conjunction with Chesterfield Borough Council as part of the town's 'Market Festival'.

The National EPE stand, complete with Derbyshire 'banner' had a prominent position in the entrance foyer, with staff available to talk about the project. Derbyshire's new EPE leaflet also had its first airing.

Opened by the Mayor of Chesterfield, Cllr Trudi Mulcaster, the fair was held on Sunday 29 October at the 'Winding Wheel', an exhibition and concert venue in Chesterfield

town centre. Chesterfield's MP, Paul Holmes, was amongst the visitors at the well-attended event. Entrance was free and each visitor received a programme, which included a description of the EPE project.

During the day BBC Radio Sheffield recorded a number of interviews, including one with Derbyshire VCH Chairman Professor David Hey. VCH Director, Professor John Beckett also visited.

The EPE team took some time out to network amongst the 35 exhibitors present, who included local and family history societies and heritage bodies.

Volunteer Philip Cousins undertook a good deal of the work, aided by Derbyshire EPE staff and a willing team of volunteers who helped on the day.

The event was registered with the 'History Matters' campaign' and CSV's 'Make a Difference Day'.

## Exmoor volunteer meetings



Volunteers on the Exmoor project are working in four separate groups researching historic and abandoned farmstead, excavating field boundaries and recording green lanes. They meet regularly to discuss their findings, receive training and hear updates from the Exmoor authors.

The meetings are arranged by the Exmoor Volunteer Group Leader, Anne Todd, and often include a guest speaker. For example, in past meetings volunteers have received presentations on the work of the Bristol EPE project - Identity and the City: A History of Ethnic Minorities in Bristol 1000-2001 - and on the prehistoric landscape of the Royal Forest. Their meeting this month will provide an opportunity to look at the photographs taken throughout the project. Some of the images will be selected to be displayed on the Exmoor EPE stand at the National Park Archaeological Forum in June 2007.



## Dendro-dating Parham House by Jayne Kirk, Research Fellow

Andy Moir at work in Parham House



In the past few months, the Sussex team has been lucky enough to employ dendrochronologist Andy Moir on the Parham House project. Dendrochronology is a method of establishing the felling dates of trees from samples taken from surviving timber, which are then compared with data from related surveys in an overlapping sequence. A preliminary survey of both documentary and physical evidence suggested

that the main roof of the house was constructed in the 1580s, but more detailed research has shown that only part of the building belongs to this date. For ease of reference we have divided the periods of construction into four phases: Phase 1 – the medieval building; Phase 2 – the Elizabethan rebuild of 1577/8 to 1583; Phase 3 – the Jacobean completion of the house around 1632; Phase 4 – later alterations and additions.

We knew that dendro-dating would help enormously in confirming the accuracy of this phasing. But there is a further complication which was the real spur leading to Andy's appointment. We discovered that the roof over the 17th century stairwell appears, to all intents and purposes, to be medieval in both style and

structure. If dating proves this to be so, it gives us firm grounds for believing that the roof came from the original medieval building on the site that was demolished in stages after the Elizabethan building began. We know from documentary sources that part of this was still standing in the mid-19th century.

Andy's report is due almost any day, so we're waiting to see whether our phasing theory is correct. What we do know is that the sampling he did in October was extremely successful and that accurate dating really is going to be possible from the nineteen samples he took. Results will appear in the next EPE News, and we hope that these will tell us exactly what we want to know.

## Oxfordshire update

Carved timberwork - Burford



As Oxfordshire's Burford project approaches completion next year, the volunteer groups have been working hard to finish their contributions. The Oxfordshire office's cupboards and computers are now bursting with several hundred excellent and varied photographs of buildings and building details. As well as many transcripts and keyword-analyses of Burford wills and probate inventories, and several large files of notes and drawings compiled on the 'weekend recording days'. The material has proved invaluable to the

EPE team in preparing draft chapters, and the Wills Group in particular has made several useful suggestions.

A get-together for all our volunteers is being planned for the spring – an opportunity both for the volunteers to feed back on their experience of the project, and for the EPE Team to update them on progress with the paperback, the web, and the next major phase – creating a fully searchable digital asset store of all the material. More details in a future EPE News...

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

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