

STAFFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER January 2007

Cover photograph: Part of the procession at the opening
of Lichfield Medieval Market, July 2006

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JANUARY 2007

NEWSLETTER

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This Newsletter comes to you courtesy of a very temporary editor and will of necessity be a shorter version and a somewhat different style from that produced so ably over the years by Steve Campbell-Kelly. Steve and his wife Lesley are moving house and business to the Gower Peninsula and while we wish them every success in their new venture we are very sorry to lose them. Steve has been a member of the Society and associated with the digs at Wall, man and boy, for more years than he cares to remember. He has also served on the Committee since 1990 and latterly as Secretary and Newsletter Editor.

We desperately need someone to take over this vital task of informing our members twice a year, in January and September, of the delights in store for them. There would be a great deal of support from Committee members as regards the content and you do not need to concern yourself with the distribution, that is all taken care of by the Membership Secretary and her well trained spouse.

PLEASE, SOMEONE, GIVE IT A TRY!

Lecture Programme for the remainder of the Season:

26 January 2007 Portable Antiquities Caroline Johnson

Caroline Johnson has been in post as the Finds Liaison Officer for Staffordshire & West Midlands with the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) for two and a half years, mainly based at Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, but also partly at the Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent. The majority of her work involves recording archaeological artefacts found by metal-detectorists, field walkers and other members of the general public. Most of the finds recorded are metallic (coins and artefacts), but pottery, flint, glass and other materials are also logged. As part of this work, Caroline attends a "What is it?" Finds Identification session at the Potteries Museum where she meets finders who bring in artefacts to record. All artefacts are recorded on the PAS website www.finds.org.uk and can be viewed by members of the public as well as the information being passed to the local Historic Environment Record office for their records of the archaeology in the local area. Additionally, Caroline helps to organise many other outreach projects in her area to promote the work of the PAS to schools, universities and local societies.

The lecture this evening will give a general overview of the PAS and the working of the Treasure Act, in which Finds Liaison Officers are also involved. The lecture will continue to talk about finds recorded from the local area, including some recently recorded Bronze Age and Early Medieval finds, the latter being particularly uncommon this far west in the country.

9 February 2007 Servants in 19th Century Staffordshire Pamela Sambrook

Since retiring from her career as a museum curator, Dr. Sambrook has been working as a freelance writer and researcher, specialising in the history of domestic service from the 17th Century onwards. The author of four books, she has also run courses for Birmingham, Keele and Open Universities and works on short term contracts for the National Trust, helping to restore the domestic offices of country houses. Her recent research project involved a search of the 1851 census enumeration books for selected areas of Staffordshire, analysing the employment structure of domestic servants - most of them living a far cry from the relative comfort of the country house.

23 February 2007 Aspects of the Civil War period David Appleby

David Appleby received his PhD in History from Keele University in 2005. He obtained his BA in Art History at De Montfort, Leicester. After several years in industry, he returned to academe to gain an MA from the University of Essex, specialising in the study of maimed soldiers and war widows of the English Civil War. He has presented papers and chaired panels at a range of conferences in Britain, Europe and the USA, and has over a decade's experience of teaching for South Staffs WEA and latterly at Keele University. Various author and co-author of a number of books and articles on the Civil War, Victorian photographers and British canal tunnels, David's first major academic monograph (on Puritan clergy ejected from the Church of England in 1662) is due to be published by Manchester University Press in 2007.

The lecture this evening will present an account of the difficult choices faced by Staffordshire people when choosing sides in 1642 and also in attempting to live under a succession of regimes in the years that followed. During the course of the evening we will explore the various records and sources - both primary and secondary - which have informed (or misinformed) our modern perspectives of the period.

9 March 2007 "The Lichfield Angel" and Illuminated Manuscripts Michelle Brown
Civic Evening at St. Michael's Church, Greenhill, Lichfield, 7.30pm for 8.00pm

Professor Brown is based at The British Library and specialises in Illuminated Manuscripts but has visited Lichfield a number of times with her involvement with the "Lichfield Angel" at the Cathedral. The lecture this evening will cover both these subjects commencing with the "Angel".

Admission to this Civic Evening lecture will be by ticket only, obtainable from Jenny Wilson at meetings in the New Year, price £4 for Members and £6 for Non-members. You may also apply by telephoning 01827 67619 before February 23rd 2007. Please note that the evening begins with a Sherry Reception at 7.30pm with a prompt start at 8.00pm. There is plenty of parking at the Medical Centre or Tesco's. Please do not attempt to park in the Graveyard.

23 March 2007 Gypsies in Birmingham Ted Rudge

Since retiring Ted has completed and obtained a BPhil (Humanities) and became National Senior Learner of the Year 2005. Writer of the book, "Brumroamin", about the Birmingham and Midland Romany Gypsy and Traveller Culture, he uncovers the forgotten history of the Gypsies in Birmingham.

30 March 2007

Brick buildings in Staffordshire 1500-1760

Mike Kingman

Mike Kingman recently retired as Senior Lecturer in Geography at University of Central England, having taught landscape history for many years.

The subject of the lecture is based on recent doctoral research in Staffordshire and the Midlands on the diffusion of brick. Surprisingly in a county in which there has been so much research into the extractive industries, there has not previously been any attempt to date or assess the volume of early brick building in Staffordshire.

Should any Member have a particular subject they wish to hear or have heard a good and well presented talk which they feel others in the Society would benefit from, then please either email meetingssecretary@sahs.britishlibrary.net, write or phone a member of the Committee until we have a new Newsletter Editor.

Membership

The Society is pleased to welcome the following:- Ruth Prentice from Sweden; Susan Lupton – Lichfield; Elaine McCulloch – Tutbury; Bronwen Ross – Shenstone; Mr. D. & Mrs. P. Ridge – Croxall.

It occurs to me that our application forms do not ask for a title, therefore I apologise to these ladies for not knowing whether they are Miss, Mrs. or Ms.

News has recently reached the Committee that Dr. John Cole, our former President and one-time Secretary, has resigned from the Society and is now living in Kenilworth at Kenilworth House. We last saw John at a lecture meeting in October and are deeply saddened to hear of this.

Obituary

We are very sorry to have to record the death of Richard Allen. The Society sends its sincere condolences to his wife Carol, at present living in Carnforth but previously working as an archaeologist in the West Midlands. They were members for many years. Richard will be remembered by members for his dispensing of the Christmas Cheer at our December meetings in the past.

Your Committee has learnt of the death of Bob Morris, former Hon Treasurer to the Society from 1980 to 1987. Bob had moved away from Lichfield many years ago and in retirement was believed to have been living in Worcestershire. He died in July 2005 at the age of 63.

Another loss to the Society occurred when Michael Allen, a member for 18 years and living at Coton Green, Tamworth, died suddenly at Christmas. He had been battling against leukaemia for some time.

Subscriptions

There are still a few outstanding – if this is highlighted, please send £23 for family membership or £16.50 (note: not £16 as printed on the original application form) for individuals to: Mrs. F.E. Fox, 6, Lawson Close, Aldridge, Walsall, WS9 0RX.

Transactions

Volume XLI has arrived from the printers and will be distributed during January.

Out and About

Llanidloes. The final Society outing to Llanidloes in September last year was extremely well supported. Wales lived up to its reputation for wind and rain but I really think we got wetter waiting for the coach in Lichfield.

We were accorded an extremely warm welcome by Dr. David Stephenson and Jan Hillier at the Old Market Hall and given an entertaining and thorough history of the town and the building, which dates from the early 17th century and is the only surviving timber-framed market hall in Wales. The exhibition on timber framed buildings and their preservation was very well done and kept us interested until lunchtime. With so many hostelrys to choose from we were soon accommodated and rejoined Dr. Stephenson for a tour of the town.

He showed us many buildings of interest, some in the process of being sympathetically restored to new uses. The old and new Lock-ups were pointed out, the textile mill, previously producing Welsh flannel but now converted into apartments, the two Chapels, Baptist and United Reformed, fighting it out on opposite sides of Short Bridge Street, the monumental Wesleyan Methodist building and the equally impressive Welsh Calvinistic Chapel. The arcaded Town Hall contains the local museum and the elegant railway station (1864-1962) is now used as offices. We had no access to these buildings, but were able to spend some time in St. Idloe's Church, admiring the early medieval arcading which had come from Abbey Cwm Hir after the Dissolution of the Monasteries, also the hammerbeam roof and the carved gilded angels. The church, which dates from the mid-16th century also incorporates a massive 14th century "Montgomeryshire Tower".

Clearing skies and a journey through beautiful scenery, with a stop for tea in Welshpool, completed a very satisfactory day.

The Cave at Nerja, Spain

During our holiday in November, Geoff and I had the opportunity to visit these caves which have been designated an Artistic Historical Monument. They were only discovered in 1959 by two young boys truanting from school, looking for bats. The interior has been lit and steps constructed, along with a large area turned into an auditorium, so that the public may safely explore. It is impossible to describe the vastness of the cave, it measures some 7,200 metres from North to South and only about one third is open to the public. Phenominal stalagmites and stalactites have formed over millions of years. One area seems to form an enormous set of organ pipes and other formations have been given names. In another area the clusters of stalactites are very reminiscent of some of the carved ceilings in the Alhambra – or should that be the other way round?

Several artefacts such as bone fish hooks, bracelets, arrows and loom weights are on display and also the skeleton of a young woman found in the cave who was buried about 8,300 years ago. The cave seems to have been occupied for about 25,000 years and then sealed up for the next 4,000 years until the recent discovery. There are more than 600 painted and engraved motifs on the walls, mainly dating from the Paleolithic period and depicting deer, goats and fish using red, black and yellow pigments, although these are not made obvious to the visitor.

If ever you find yourselves in Andalucia - do go!

Betty Fox

Notes and Dates for your Diary

The Society continues to receive Newsletters from the Wolverhampton History & Heritage Society and the Birmingham & District Local History Association. The latest edition of the latter's publication "The Birmingham Historian" contains articles on the Ladywood General Election battle of 1924 between Neville Chamberlain and Oswald Moseley; Suffragettes in Birmingham in 1909; Christmas in Birmingham in the 1950's; Lady Luxborough's letters to William Shenstone and A Brummie Admiral – The Hon. Sir S.A. Gough-Calthorpe, K.C.B. It also has an index to Issues 1-28.

The University of Birmingham has issued a leaflet "Joseph Priestley's Birmingham" a trail of 18th century Birmingham, available from libraries.

Staffordshire Record Office announces the success of its appeal to acquire the Sutherland Papers and work has begun on a two-year project towards creating an on-line resource that will bring the collection to greater public awareness. An important aspect of the website will be the creation of a database of names gleaned from rentals, wages books, town and village surveys etc. This will be the work of volunteers and if any one would like to help, please get in touch with Sheila Pill on 01785 854584 or email: spp@staffordshire.gov.uk for further details.

Walsall Local History Centre will be closed to the public for essential re-wiring and other work for about 6 weeks from Monday, January 29th to Friday, March 9th 2007. For further information ring 01922 721305.

Lichfield Joint Record Office has a new Archivist, Andrew George, late of Leeds Record Office.

The annual CBA "News from the Past" takes place this year on Saturday, February 10th 2007, 10.00am to 5.00pm, Arts Lecture room 3, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston Campus, Birmingham B13 2TT. Fees, payable in advance, are £17 for members of CBA, £22 for non-members. Prior booking essential, closing date January 29th. Contact Dr. John Hunt on 01543 423549 or Dr. Mike Hodder on 0121 464 7797 for application forms.

University of Birmingham Day Schools: Leaflets are available at meetings, topics include The uniting of England, Jane Austen Study Day, Birmingham's Minority Communities, Late medieval and early modern Birmingham, On the Ancestral Trail.

At the time of going to press we do not have a date for the Staffordshire Archaeology Day. Look out for announcements at lecture evenings or contact a Committee member.

The Society celebrates its 50th Anniversary this year. The actual date of the first meeting was September 19th 1957. This will fall on a Wednesday in 2007 and your Committee is making tentative plans for a celebration in the form of a meal and a talk. At the moment we are considering the merits of a sit-down dinner with a short talk or a buffet with a longer one. Members will be canvassed at the next meeting. Make your preference known. We intend to hold the event in Lichfield.

Outings

Peter Evans is looking to organise a Spring outing to the village of Laxton, Nottinghamshire to look at medieval farming methods. Further, more detailed, information will follow.

And now for something completely different... Taken from the Staffordshire Advertiser, "Marriages" September 5, 1840 (having first appeared in the Worcester Chronicle)

On the 22d ult. at the Parish church of Himbleton, by the Rev. John Vernon, James Hobbins, Esq. of Chaddesley Corbett, after a lengthened courtship of four days, to Harriet, youngest daughter of Mr. William Chambers, of the New House, Himbleton. The youthful bridegroom was rather past his prime, being in his 77th year, and consequently had no time to lose; so his fair bride (who has seen nearly sixteen summers) took pity on him, and took him off-hand "for better or worse" – after he had settled upon her the whole of his property, amounting to upwards of 800l, a year. It seems that the newly made Benedict offered his hand and heart the previous Monday to Miss Susannah Chambers (the bride's elder sister), and on being refused, made overtures to the next sister, Miss Ann, from whom he also received a repulse; but, determined not to be balked in his intention to obtain a young wife, and remembering that "faint heart ne'er won fair lady," he tried a third time, and, as before stated, was successful, Miss Harriet being unable to resist the pressing solicitations of her persevering wooer. The loving couple are now at Liverpool spending the honeymoon.

And from The Staffordshire Advertiser, "Deaths" September 19, 1840

James Hobbins of Chaddesley Corbett. On Monday week he was stepping into his carriage with his young bride, when he fell down and was taken up a corpse...

Emails

STOP PRESS:

We have just been informed that britishlibrary.net is going to cease as a provider of email and web page services on March 31st 2007. This will mean us having to source a new provider – not difficult but a nuisance. More information as and when it becomes available...

Your Committee would like to know how many members have email addresses, and to this end we ask you to please fill in the slip below and return it to a Committee member at a meeting or to Dr. John Hunt, 75, Lower Road, Hednesford, WS12 1ND. Or, of course, you could always email him at john@jrhunt.demon.co.uk using sahs as the subject. Needless to say this information will stay with the Society and not be divulged to a third party.

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Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society Membership

NAME.....

Email address.....

'Phone number.....

STAFFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP 2006/7

TITLE.....NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

.....POST CODE.....

EMAIL.....PHONE NO.....

Single membership £16.50; Family £23; Student/Unwaged £11 (This does not include persons in receipt of retirement pensions)

I/We enclose For the year 2006/7

Please send to: Mrs. F.E. Fox, 6, Lawson Close, Aldridge, Walsall, WS9 0RX

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GIFT AID DECLARATION

To

STAFFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Choosing to Gift Aid the subscriptions or donations you make to the SAHS will allow the Society, which enjoys Charitable status, to reclaim from the Inland Revenue the basic rate of Income Tax paid on the amount of those subscriptions or donations without any cost to you, the Member. It is only necessary to fill in the form once.

To do this you must be a UK Income Tax / Capital Gains Tax payer and have paid an amount at least equal to the tax the Society reclaims in the Tax year concerned.

Declaration:

Member's Full Name.....

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I would like the Staffordshire Archaeological & Historical Society (SAHS) to treat as Gift Aid all subscriptions and donations I have made on or since 6 April 2000 and all subscriptions and donations I make from the date of this declaration.

Signature.....Date.....

Please return this form either by hand at a lecture meeting or by post to the Honorary Treasurer, Keith Billington, 32, Birchwood Road, Lichfield, WS14 9UW