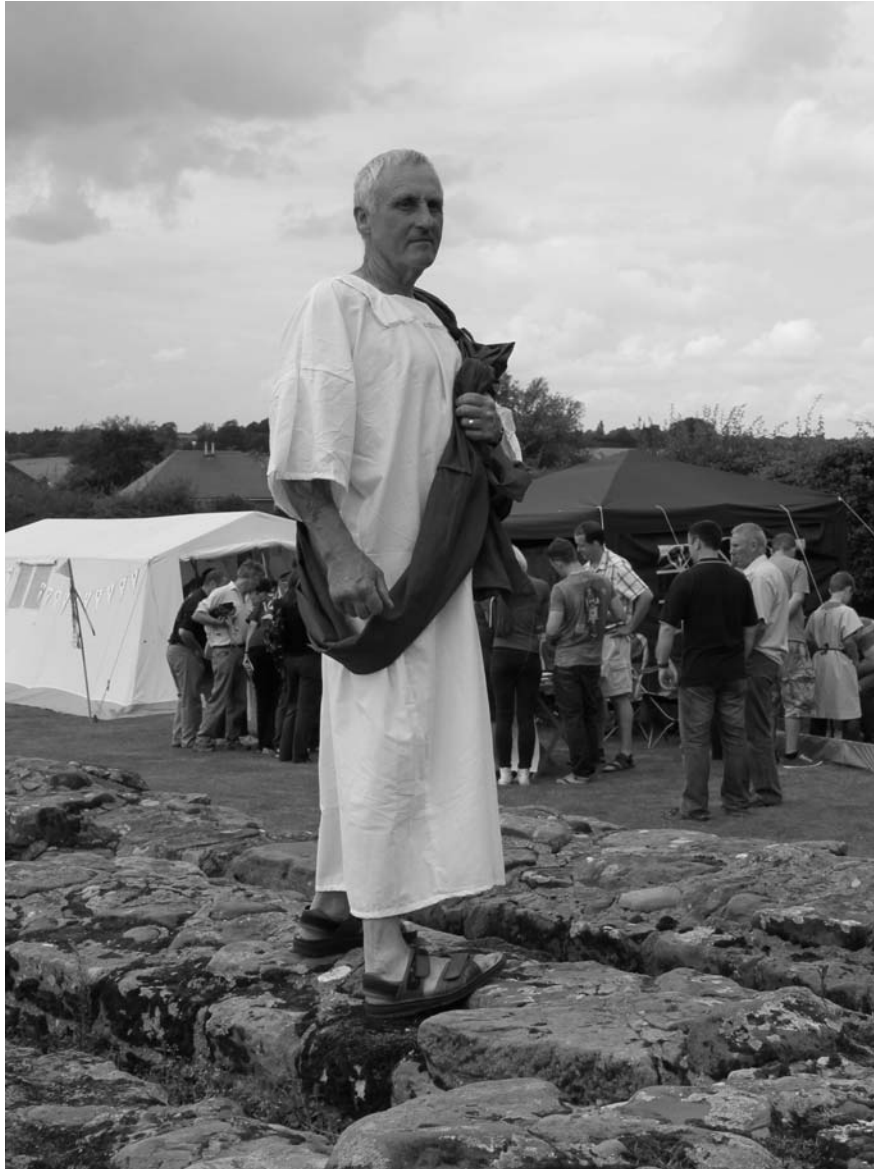


STAFFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2012

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The Noblest Roman?

(Picture by courtesy of J Debney)

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Editors Notes

Welcome to the to the 2012 season of lectures. As usual our Hon. Meetings Secretary, Brian Bull has produced an interesting mix of speakers. We all hope that Dr. Mike Neville will overcome the apparent jinx which prevented him appearing twice before!

I hope that many of you were able to watch Dr. Jon Henderson explain his finds on the TV on 9 Sep., 2011. If you missed that broadcast I'm sure that the live lecture will be just as interesting.

I'm sorry if this Newsletter is a bit short but your Committee Members are busy people and find it hard to settle down a write about some aspect of their professional lives or interest. Luckily we have some noble exceptions as you will find further on.

This raises the point that this Newsletter can only really succeed if you the Members of the Society bring forward items that you would like to see mentioned or better still write a short note or article about an item of interest yourselves.

So please put pen to paper or fingers to keyboards for the next issue in September.

COMMITTEE 20011 – 2012

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LECTURE SEASON 2012

All meetings start at 8.00pm in the St. Mary's Heritage Centre Market Place, Lichfield.

17th February 2012

NED WILLIAMS

PAT COLLINS – KING OF SHOWMEN

Ned Williams has lived in the Black Country since 1962 and has written numerous books having a Black Country bias but including some on fairground subjects and more notably a biography of the subject of tonight's talk. Of course Pat Collins fair still comes to Lichfield although it is now successfully run by Tony Harris.

2nd March 2012

Dr. MIKE NEVELL

THE SALT INDUSTRY IN THE IRON AGE

Mike is the author of a number of books and has appeared on television several times. The talk about the Salt Industry in the Iron Age follows the trip to the Salt Museum at Nantwich a year or so back.

16th March 2012

Dr. JON HENDERSON

PAVLOPETRI – THE WORLD'S OLDEST SUBMERGED SETTLEMENT

Jon is Associate Professor at Nottinghamshire University is an underwater archaeologist with specific interests in submerged prehistoric settlements. The talk tonight will cover the research covering such a submerged prehistoric settlement off the southern coast of Greece.

23rd March 2012

BOB YATE

THE SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE RAILWAY

A railway historian and the author of several Railway history books Bob Yates' talk this evening will cover the history of the South Staffordshire Railway but without venturing into the running of the railway.

13th April 2012

JAN WILLS

THE BECKFORD EXCAVATIONS

Jan wills is the County Archaeologist for Gloucestershire County Council and coming tonight to talk about the excavations at Beckford near Tewksbury which revealed Iron Age settlement.

4th May 2012

Dr. MARK GILLINGS

THE MINILITHS OF EXMOOR PROJECT

The Director of Postgraduate Studies at Leicester University has specialised on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Archaeology. He has written a number of books some being in collaboration. His recent and main research programme has focused on the Miniliths which are described as enigmatic stone settings on Exmoor which is the subject of the talk this evening.

OBITUARY

It is with great sadness that we report the death on December 16th at the age of 92 of Norman Nicoll, known to many as Nic, after a short illness. He had been a member of the Society for over 27 years and had served on the Committee since 1990, retiring only last year. For some years he had looked after the exchange of publications with other archaeological and historical societies, making them available for our members. He also undertook to send our Transactions to the various copyright and national deposit libraries. Several summer visits organized by Norman were enjoyed by members.

At his funeral, which took place at All Saints Church, Rangemore, we learned that he was born in Walsall and attended Queen Mary's Grammar School and Birmingham Technical School, studying science and engineering. He played rugby for Walsall as a hooker. The vicar said that it was a position where one was most likely to get crushed and the thought of Norman's slight frame being subjected to this was somewhat alarming. In 1940 he joined the Royal Navy and served throughout the war. Afterwards he studied furniture and jewellery making at Lichfield School of Art. Later he taught there, retiring in 1983 in the position of Vice-Principal. As a silversmith he became a Freeman of the Worshipful Company of Smiths and Master in 1988. His house at Rangemore included several workshops devoted to various crafts.

He loved gardening, music both classical and jazz and had worked as a volunteer on the Ffestiniog Railway. There was also a Morris Minor 1000 Traveller awaiting restoration, a vehicle used for many family holidays. Norman was also very keen on ancient history and archaeology, visiting famous sites well into his 80s, as well as spending time in Nigeria with his cousin. Membership of the Interplanetary Society gave him an opportunity to meet Yuri Gagarin, Valentina Tereshkova and Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin. Through his interest in astronomy he was a friend of Patrick Moore and knew Arthur C. Clarke. His contribution to that science was recognised by NASA.

An unassuming man, a gentleman, he will be sadly missed. Our sympathies are extended to his children, Ian and Sue.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

If this topic is highlighted, your subscription for 2011/2012 is still outstanding. If you have decided not to continue with membership of the Society I would appreciate a phone call or an email to that effect.

Rates

Single Member £18.50; Family £27; Unwaged £12.50. Cheques made payable to the Society please. Send to Mrs. F.E. Fox, 6, Lawson Close, Aldridge, Walsall, WS9 0RX. 01922 452230 email: bettysemail@talktalk.net

An Application Form is at the rear of this Newsletter.

LOOSE CONNECTIONS: WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE AND NORTHERN THAILAND

As I have related to you on a previous occasion, your correspondent had in May 2009 the good fortune to travel to Northern Thailand. Whilst I was there I came across some scrappy and disarticulated information concerning the existence of caravan routes across Northern Thailand. In addition I also came across an extremely tenuous connection between William Shakespeare and Thailand. Both of these two pieces of information I thought were worthy of further investigation.

So... Since on returning to the United Kingdom this further investigation has indeed commenced; however the threads do finish with frayed ends so it is still incomplete and therefore not totally conclusive.



Chinese-Muslim caravans crossing Northern Thailand are recorded as early as the 15th Century. They existed earlier but recorded information is decidedly scrappy. Little written down!!

The demise of the caravans occurred during the 1920s helped along by the conquest of Upper Burma by the British, the making of the railway Bangkok to Chiang Mai and other more advantageous methods of transporting goods in the modern age.

During the time of the caravans they crossed overland from **Simao** in the **Yunnan Province** of China, through Northern Thailand to the Indian Ocean port of **Mawlamyaing** on the Gulf of Martaban (Myanmar), a distance of approximately 600 miles.

From **Simao** there were three main overland routes through Myanmar and Laos into Thailand via Fang (border with Myanmar), Chiang Khong (border with Laos) and most southerly Nan (near the border with Laos). Then to Chiang Rai or Chiang Mai from Fang; Phrae, Lampang,

Lamphun, departing Thailand via Mae Sariang into Myanmar and continuing southwards to Mawlamyaing on the Gulf of Martaban. The Chiang Rai route took the caravans through the village I had the opportunity to visit in 2009 then to Wiang Pa Pao and Wiang Kalong onward then to Chiang Mai. This route is mainly in valleys where there are villages which were used as overnight stops for the caravans so that the Muleteers and the mules could rest. These overnight stops also gave the muleteers and the villagers alike the chance of trading.

The exports southbound were typically Chinese products – silk, opium, tea, dried fruit, lacquer ware, musk etc., while the northbound caravans brought in gold, copper, cotton, tobacco, ivory, edible birds' nests and many other things principally from The Persian Gulf, India and East Africa.

Anyway I am rambling again. "The Caravans" will be the subject of another article later... I did warn you!!

On discovering the information about the caravans I also found out about a guy by the name of Ralph Fitch (Yes another missive about him will appear – you have been warned, again!) But very briefly – in the late 1500s he and four others were given letters of introduction to various rulers across the Middle East, India and South East Asia. This was under the guise of The Levant Company, the predecessor of the East India Company. Anyway out of all this Fitch made it to Chiang Mai, eventually returning to England after several years. His travelling chums did not fare quite as well – one disappeared completely, one returned to England fairly soon, one stayed put in Middle East and became a priest and one ended up in jail.

However these adventures did not go unnoticed by our man Shakespeare who possibly would have known about Fitch on his return. If he did not actually know him, the exploits may have come to Shakespeare's knowledge by way of Richard Hakluyt's "Principal Navigations...".

So the tenuous link is related to the ship that Fitch and his chums travelled from London aboard and the city in modern day Syria – these being respectively the **Tyger or Tiger** (spelling varies) and **Aleppo**. Aleppo was where the Levant Company was based.

So the Shakespeare link is in the Scottish play- Act 1: Scene 3: 1st Witch...,

“A sailor’s wife.....Her husband’s to Aleppo gone, the master o’ the Tiger”

Brian Bull

Living the Poor Life

A Guide to the Poor Law Union Correspondence, c.1834 to 1871, held at The National Archives



By Paul Carter and Natalie Whistance

Was your ancestor an inmate or officer of a Union Workhouse under the New Poor Law which was introduced in 1834?

Are you studying the political, economic, social or intellectual history of the nineteenth century?

The correspondence between Poor Law Unions, Boards of Guardians and the Poor Law Board opens up the lives of thousands of individuals, and numerous historical themes from the work imposed on inmates such as bone-crushing and stone-breaking, the riots inspired by Guardians' actions, the standards of medical care in the workhouse and many more.

This is a new guide for local and family historians to a set of records which has recently been catalogued and made available to download without payment from the website of The National Archives (TNA MH12). It shows how this correspondence vastly extends our knowledge of life in the workhouse and the attitudes of wider society to poverty in the mid-nineteenth century. The records of 22 selected Poor Law Unions have been catalogued and digitised providing 4.6 million words which are searchable on place, person and subject.

The guide is only available from the British Association for Local History by emailing Dr Gill Draper on development.balh@btinternet.com

The price of £4.99 includes postage and packing.

About the authors: Dr Paul Carter was the Project Director and Natalie Whistance the Records Coordinator and Cataloguing Officer for The National Archives' *Living the Poor Life* project. Images are reproduced by courtesy of TNA.

For any other information contact Dr R Totty. (richard.totty4@virgin.net)

THE CATHEDRAL LIBRARY AND THE KING JAMES BIBLE

Lecture given to SAHS by The Revd. Dr. Pete Wilcox, October 14 2011

Dr. Wilcox began by explaining that his title as Chancellor had nothing to do with money. It simply meant 'gatekeeper' so he was the Gatekeeper of the Cathedral Library. Lichfield has a world class collection of Bibles and the talk was appropriate in this, the 400th Anniversary year of the printing of the King James Bible.

The story of the translation of the Bible into English begins with John Wycliffe. In the 1380s there was a general restlessness and discontent with the Norman aristocracy's concentration on the French language and a wish to go back to Anglo-Saxon roots. Both Wycliffe and Geoffrey Chaucer, who was his contemporary, wanted to work in Middle English as it had now become. It is possible that before this Alfred the Great and the Venerable Bede had tried to render parts of the Vulgate into English but without much success.

Wycliffe worked from the Vulgate, which was a Latin translation of the Scriptures made by St. Jerome in 405 AD. His first version appeared in 1420 and was the work of one scribe. The phrase '*In the beginning was the word*' may have been part of an oral tradition. In these times it was dangerous to take power from the church hierarchy, but Wycliffe believed that the Scriptures should be available for people to read in their native language. He had died of a stroke at his Living in Lutterworth in 1384, having defied 7 papal injunctions. His writings were declared heretical by the Council of Constance in 1414 and his bones were ordered to be dug up, burnt, ground to ash and cast into the River Swift to prevent any sort of shrine being raised to him. The translation of the Bible into English had been made a capital offence in 1401.

It was 3 months work just to copy out the New Testament, but the advent of printing in 1450, founded in Gutenberg and gradually spreading throughout Europe during the next 30 years, made the production of vernacular versions much easier. Even if only 1 person in a hundred could read, he could read it to the other 99. By 1520, many formerly Catholic continental countries had Protestant congregations who could read the Bible in their own language but it was still a capital offence in England.

The next man on the scene was William Tyndale, a Gloucester cotton merchant. He was a scholar and spoke 8 languages, including fluent Hebrew which he had taught himself. Many well educated people could speak several languages - English, French, German, Latin and Greek - but Hebrew was almost unknown in England. Tyndale therefore was able to go back to the original Hebrew and Greek. He petitioned the Bishop of London for permission to print his new version but was refused and fled to Antwerp. Here, in 1526, he printed the first edition of the New Testament in English, on cotton. The first 5 books of the Old Testament followed but he was in grave personal danger and kept having to move house. Finally, in 1536, he was betrayed and executed.

Then, under Henry VIII, England became Protestant. In 1539 every parish church had to have a Bible in English. This was known as the Great Bible. Hans Holbein designed the frontispiece. The translation of the New Testament was borrowed from Tyndale. No-one else could translate it. The rest was taken from the Latin or from Martin Luther's German version. He had translated from the Hebrew.

In 1540 there was a new edition with a preface by Thomas Cranmer. After Henry's death, his son Edward VI was also Protestant, but he died in 1553 and was succeeded by Catholic Mary. Two senior Protestant clergy went to study at Geneva, the home of John Calvin. Calvin, who was a Puritan, started an Academy and appointed a professor of Hebrew.

Mary died in 1558 and England was Protestant again under Elizabeth.

In 1560 the Geneva scholars produced the Geneva or 'Breeches Bible'. In Genesis, after Adam and Eve had discovered their nakedness the translation speaks of '*breeches to gird about them to hide their privities*'.

This was the first Bible to number the verses individually and to prove that translation was an art not a science, alternative meanings were noted in the margins. The type face was Roman rather than Gothic. It did not rely on Tyndale, which was the version used by Shakespeare. His near contemporary, John Donne, however, quotes the Geneva Bible in his poetry.

In England the search began for a Bible to improve on that issued by Henry VIII and by 1568 we had the Bishop's Bible. This was instituted by Bishop Parker, known as 'Nosey Parker'. 12 bishops worked on the text from Tyndale but never conferred with one another so that the resulting work was not consistent or even.

When James II came to the throne in 1603, the church had a new opportunity. At the Hampton Court Conference of 1604, Anglo-Catholics, Protestants and Puritans came together. 42 highly educated skilled linguists were put into 6 groups with 1 group overall. It took 7 years to produce the King James Authorised Version. Its main advantages were that

1. It was entirely faithful to the original Hebrew and Greek
2. It was intelligible
3. It was beautiful

There were many editions, often known by their typographical errors:

The 'He' bible refers to a verse in Ruth which should say '*she went into the city*'. This was corrected in the second issue which then produced an even worse error so that the phrase '*then cometh Jesus*' was rendered as '*then cometh Judas*'. [I do not know where this passage occurs and cannot find it looking quickly through the NT]. This edition was withdrawn immediately and copies are very, very rare but Lichfield has one.

During the recent exhibition of Bibles in the Cathedral, a visitor brought in a copy of the Bishop's Bible which was not in the Lichfield collection but has since been acquired. Someone else brought in another rarity, a copy of the first Catholic Bible in English which is known as the Douai Bible from the town in France where it was produced. The NT had been printed in 1582 and the complete work in two volumes in 1609 and 1610. This too has now been added to the Cathedral's collection.

Rev. Wilcox had recently visited Ireland and included in his itinerary not only the Guinness Brewery but also the Library of Trinity College, Dublin where he saw The Book of Kells. His comment was that while Lichfield no longer has a brewery, it does have St. Chad's Gospel which is 60 years older than the Book of Kells. [I think he said the Library has a first edition of Chaucer too, but my notes are too sketchy to be sure.] There is also in the Library a book from 1200 on Canon Law.

Questions elicited more facts and opinions:

The Apocrypha in the Henry VIII Bible was translated from Latin and in the Bishop's Bible from the Hebrew. The Geneva Bible has no Apocrypha as the translators were Calvinist and would have nothing to do with Catholic dogma.

The edition in which the word 'not' was missed out of the Commandment concerning adultery caused the printer to be fined £32,000 and he consequently went out of business.

The 'Vinegar' Bible has a misprint in an edition of 1717 which should read 'vineyard'.

One edition reads 'brightass' instead of 'brightness' but that is put down to printer's mischief.

A question of why it is printed in 2 columns elicited the suggestion that they were following manuscript practice and also that a small font was easier to read in short lines.

Rev. Wilcox said there was probably a greater degree of literacy in the C14 than had previously been thought and certainly the proliferation of Edward VI Grammar schools in the C16 would increase it.

St. Chad's Gospel was often used as an Oath Book in the past.

The Book of Kells may have started life on Iona and St. Chad's Gospel on Lindisfarne but the similarity of what is known as the *Chi-Rho* page indicates that the two schools of manuscript writers were known to one another.

Rev. Wilcox did not specifically mention the translations from Latin and German of Miles Coverdale, who produced the first complete printed Bible in English in 1535 and also revised the text of the Great Bible of 1539. This was the version favoured by Ann Boleyn. Many copies were burnt in 1546 by an edict of Henry VIII.

My notes taken at the time have been slightly augmented by research on the Internet, the DNB and Who's Who in British History.

Betty Fox

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