

# STAFFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2011

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### **Roman Centurion Counting!**

(Picture by courtesy of J Debney)

President: Dr. J. Hunt  
Hon. General Secretary: Mr. J. Debney  
Hon. Treasurer: Mr. K. Billington

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## **Presidents Address**

Welcome to the new season of the Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society. In this Newsletter you will find details of both our forthcoming programme of lectures, and the Annual General Meeting on September 30<sup>th</sup> which launches that programme. I hope you will find that there is something for everybody here that will both add to your enjoyment of subjects with which you are familiar and expand your horizons to the less familiar. So I, and all of your committee, look forward to seeing you at our meetings over the next year.

As always at this time of year, we wait to see what kind of winter we might have, and as many members will recall from personal experience, we know that this can have an impact on our meetings schedule. May I therefore take this opportunity to remind all members to keep an eye on the Society's web site, and if you have an e-mail address, make sure that we have got it; in the event of last minute cancellations a notice on the web site and an e-mail to members is often the most effective way of getting a message out.

To look a little further afield, again as we often do in the Society Newsletter at this time of year, many of you will no doubt be aware of the current debate surrounding the **Draft National Planning Policy Framework** that the government issued in July 2011 for consultation. It is clearly aimed at many aspects of national life, but those of us with an interest in archaeology, heritage and the historic environment have a particular concern for what it proposes. Simon Jenkins has already been particularly vocal on behalf of the National Trust and now archaeologists are also being heard. A recent review by the Society of Antiquaries summarised the collective response to date as a concern that the Government is wrongly acting as an advocate for the development sector and consequently is not listening to the legitimate concerns of the heritage sector, pointing out that the national housing crisis is actually something of a 'red herring' in this debate. Government is being called upon to define much more precisely what it means by 'a presumption in favour of sustainable development', and to explain how it will distinguish between standard development and the new sustainable variety, and how these proposals are consistent with its 'Big Society' and 'Localism' agendas. English Heritage have pointed out that the way the new framework is currently worded, moderate or minor harm to heritage assets, such as listed buildings, will be allowed. Only 'substantial harm or loss' will need to be justified and mitigated, a stance that promises a devastating effect on our nationally important buildings and sites. The Institute for Archaeologists has added its voice, arguing that the current proposals would result in a weakening of protection for the historic environment which could lead to sites and buildings of archaeological interest being destroyed without adequate investigation, analysis and dissemination. Better recognition of the positive role played by the historic environment and the public benefits that it brings are needed.

Individuals and organisations must take their own stance on these proposals but in the knowledge that many SAHS members also belong to other local groups interested in history and heritage, I would urge you to look at the proposals and participate in the consultation. This is an important piece of proposed legislation with a potential for far-reaching impact; it is too important to be ignored, and perhaps too significant to be trusted to politicians!

John Hunt.

## **Editors Notes**

A new Season is upon us and the Society is stirring to life again! I do hope you have all had an interesting summer which will result in many items for the January 2012 Newsletter. Anything that you have a special interest in will be welcome so that other members can share your knowledge and enthusiasms!

The date for items to be included will be Fridays 6<sup>th</sup> January 2012. Please let me have the items in Word format, preferably by email so that it is easily included in the text. Thank you in advance.

Hon. Newsletter Editor: Paul Norris Email: [pm.norris@virgin.net](mailto:pm.norris@virgin.net)

## NOTICE OF THE 52<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 2011

**NOTICE is hereby given** that the Annual General Meeting of this Society will take place at 7.30pm on Friday 30th September, 2011, at St. Mary's Heritage Centre, Market Square, Lichfield, prior to the first lecture of the new season at 8.00 pm.

Any member of the Society who wishes to make a committee nomination should first seek the agreement of the nominee and notify the Honorary General Secretary in writing by Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2011. The name of the member who is prepared to second the nomination should also be supplied. The names of the members of the existing Committee who are prepared to continue to serve are set out following this notification.

### **AGENDA**

1. Apologies
- 2 Minutes of the previous AGM
- 3 Matters arising from the Minutes
- 4 Honorary Treasurer's Report
- 5 Honorary Editor's Report
- 6 Other Special Reports
- 7 President's Report
- 8 Election of Committee
- 9 Any Other Business

Copies of the Minutes from the last AGM with the Proposed Committee 2011 - 2012 follow.

Copies of the Society's Annual Accounts for the year to 31st August 2011 will be available at the AGM.

James Debney,  
Honorary General Secretary,  
29 Boldmere Drive, Boldmere,  
Sutton Coldfield,  
West Midlands, B73 5ES.

27<sup>th</sup> August 2011.

## PROPOSED COMMITTEE 2011 – 2012

<b>President</b>	Dr J Hunt
<b>Vice Presidents</b>	Mrs. F E Fox Mrs. D Wilkes
<b>Honorary General Secretary</b>	Mr. J Debney
<b>Honorary Treasurer</b>	Mr. K Billington
<b>Honorary Transactions' Editor</b>	Dr N Tringham
<b>Honorary Membership Secretary</b>	Mrs. F E Fox
<b>Honorary Newsletter Editor</b>	Mr. P Norris
<b>Honorary Meetings Secretary</b>	Mr. B Bull
<b>Honorary Publicity Officer</b>	Ms J Wilson
<b>Other Members of the Committee</b>	Mr P Evans Mr S Walton Mrs D Wilkes  Mrs B Ross
<b>Co-opted Members</b>	Dr R Totty  Up to three co-opted members will be determined by the Committee on the Membership's behalf

**Minutes of the 51<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting of  
Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society - 2010**

**The Annual General Meeting of the Society** was held on Friday October 15<sup>th</sup> 2010 at St. Mary's Heritage Centre, Lichfield. The President, Dr. John Hunt, welcomed members to the meeting.

**Apologies:** Mrs. Betty Fox, Dr. Nigel Tringham, Mrs. Brenda Eley, Mrs. Ros Carlton, Mrs. Bates-Hird, Mr. and Mrs. P. Norris, Clive and Lucy Smith, Mrs. Gair.

**Minutes of the previous AGM** having been published in the Newsletter were taken as read and accepted as a true record by a show of hands. The motion was proposed by Mr. John Salloway.

**Matters Arising:** None

**Hon. Treasurer's Report:** Keith Billington opened by stating that, as previously, his verbal report would be based on the prepared year end accounts, that is to say, as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2010. Again, as previously, copies of these accounts were amongst the AGM membership audience for consideration.

It would be seen that total income for the year was £11365.58. Of this, subscriptions amounted to just over £1900, including a first preliminary internet 'access only' membership of £7.14 (net of costs), residing on a new PayPal account specially opened for the purpose. This relates to a one year subscription, which had been used to access to one past volume.

Significantly, grant funding received during the year had been £7500 or so, comprising the final monies available towards successful completion of the Shenstone Parish Survey Project. Whilst £1000 of this input had been provided by Staffordshire County Council, the principal part had been the agreed second advance of £6484.50 from the Heritage Lottery Fund under the Local Heritage Initiative Scheme.

Gift Aid had yielded £342.00 but, as anticipated, interest earned on Investment Account had been a mere £43.18, rate applicable currently 0.20%.

It would be noticed that the Shenstone Project is confirmed as complete, by virtue of the associated fund in the accounts showing as brought down to nil. Achievement of completion had not required spending all the available funding and the unspent balance of £2375.13 had of necessity been returned to HLF. Notwithstanding, £6934.17 had been spent on the project during the year.

Including these figures, total expenditure was £14921.40. There had been the usual overheads, for example, lecture programme costs, newsletter preparation and despatch, stationery and IT costs, insurance, subscriptions and affiliations, and so on. However, this did not include the publication of the recent Transactions' volume, XLIV, printers' invoice falling for payment in the subsequent period, but neither had there been any institutional subscription income (apart from one late payer) as a consequence of the 18-month time span since the previous volume.

Comparing income versus expenditure, there had been an overspend for the year of £3555.82. However, break-even would have been likely but for three things: 1. donation of £2000 made to the Save the Staffordshire Hoard Campaign; 2. absorption within the funding process at Shenstone Project completion of the £1000 of society funds earmarked for the purpose at the outset in 2004; 3. collapse in interest income.

Now that the Shenstone Project is complete, a review of the society's overall insurance requirement will take place, as members are no longer currently 'out in the field', leading to the possibility of premium reduction.

Page 1 of the accounts confirms a drop in total reserves to £12338.57. This is allocated as: 1. £5338.57 to general purpose/operating fund; 2. £7000.00 transactions publication contingency fund. These total monies are primarily held in the NSB Investment Account (under review).

There were no questions from the AGM Floor.

Adoption of the Accounts (subject to examination and audit) was proposed by Diana Wilkes, seconded by Jenny Wilson and carried by a show of hands.

Then Keith turned to membership subscriptions. These had remained at the same level for five years. With the inevitable rise in costs generally he proposed, on behalf of the committee, the following revised rates (current amounts in brackets): Individual £18.50 (£16.50), Joint/Family £27.00 (£23.00), Concessions £12.50 (£11.00), to apply with effect from 1<sup>st</sup>

September 2011. The Lecture Programme was increasing from 11 evenings per season to 12, again with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2011, and this would be an offset, he said. Non-members would from the same date be charged £3.00 each time, rather than the current £2.50.

There were no objections and the proposal to increase the subscription rates as stated was confirmed from the Floor. The motion was proposed by Mike Brown and seconded by Diana Wilkes, and carried by a show of hands.

In closing, Keith reminded the AGM that all of Volumes I to XLII remain available to members on data disc for the bargain price of £20.00 (non-members £50).

**Hon. Editor's Report:** In the absence of Nigel Tringham his brief report to the meeting was read by James Debney. The next volume of the Transactions is presently being planned, and short articles on Birmingham Archaeology have already been received (including ones related to Manor Farm at Wall and to Shugborough), along with an article on the Staffordshire Water Meadows survey of 2008. The volume will also contain a paper on the 1655 petition by nearly 900 named people against the inclosure of Needwood Forest (a follow-on from the article in the recent volume).

**Special Reports – Membership:** Betty Fox was away on holiday so her report was also read by James Debney. She said that the past year has seen a most welcome increase in membership with 11 new single members and 6 new joint members, set against 3 single and 1 joint subscriptions not renewed, giving a total membership of 142.

Attendance at meetings was also well up on last year, with a total of members 641 and visitors 43. The highest attendance for any meeting was for Ian Bapty's talk on Offa's Dyke.

**President's Report:** John Hunt thanked all the members of the committee for their hard work and support throughout the year, in a combination of skills and in commitment exemplified by the number who served on the committee. He then formally recorded the ending of the Shenstone Project – with relief, noting the enthusiastic reception given to the report in Shenstone. He said the project was particularly indebted to Keith Billington for dealing with the LHI and to Richard Totty for having written the final report. He also noted the contribution of James Debney in producing the digital versions of the report. He thanked everyone for their help in the project and for having produced worthwhile work.

He then turned to the projected replacement for the Civic Evening, saying the support of the members was most useful while this was being considered. But he noted too the constitution of the society which he said had not been reviewed for 15 years. In asking for support for a review process, he said this was now due and was good practice, but it did not mean, necessarily, change. In anticipation, he asked for a temporary amendment to the rule governing committee composition to accommodate the present number, which would last twelve months. This would allow the number of ordinary members to be raised from 4 to 6, and for the number which could be co-opted to the committee to be raised from 3 to 4, which would give a total committee count of 18. The amendment was accepted by the meeting on a show of hands, having been proposed by Anna Hallerton and seconded by Geoff Molyneux. The president's report was also accepted on a show of hands.

**Election of Officers:** John Hunt reviewed the names of the officers of the society; the meeting confirmed their continued roles by a unanimous show of hands. The motion was proposed by Monica Gardner and seconded by Stan Bryant. John then asked that the composition of the committee should be affirmed en bloc. This was also confirmed by the meeting by a unanimous show of hands.

**Any Other Business:** None

The meeting closed at 8.00 p.m. and was followed by a talk given by society members on the Shenstone Project.

James Debney, Honorary General Secretary.

## **INCREASE IN SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Please note that annual subscriptions will increase this year, as approved at last year's AGM – the first time for 5 years – to the following rates: Single member £18.50; Family member £27; Student / Unwaged (excluding pensioners) £12.50. The price of Admission to Visitors rises to £3. Please remit to Mrs. F.E. Fox, 6, Lawson Close, Aldridge, Walsall, WS9 0RX or pay at a meeting.

## **EMAIL ADDRESSES**

The Society is anxious to encourage the use of this method of keeping in touch, particularly when it comes to last minute changes of speaker or letters regarding visits, as it is both cheaper and quicker. We would therefore be very grateful if you would fill in and sign the Membership Application in this newsletter. We will never pass this information on to anyone else. Please keep us up to date with any changes to your email. We also recommend that you check our website for news of changes of speaker, venue or cancellation.

## **OBITUARIES**

The Society is very sorry to have to record the death of a comparatively new member, Air Vice-Marshall Rtd. Michael Brown, who had enriched our understanding by way of his fascinating talk on the subject of the Star of the Nativity entitled "Three Wise Men". We offer our sincere condolences to his wife and family.

The Society is also very sorry to have to report the death in April this year of Francis Wolferstan, formerly of Statfold Hall. Mr. Wolferstan had been a member of the Society for very many years and we had visited Statfold some time ago at his invitation. The house dates back to 1571 and has been in the family since 1590.

Betty Fox

### **Frank Ball**

It is with regret that I have to report the death of Frank Ball on 7<sup>th</sup> Sep 2011 (aged 90). Husband and wife team, Frank and Nancy Ball, ran the excavations at Wall, Staffs between 1978 and 1989. Work was mainly on the Mansio/Bath House site but the Balls conducted a rescue excavation on the Wall Triangle in 1982, in front of residential development.

Frank was on the Committee of the Society from 1977 to 1996: he and Nancy retired from the Society in 2003. They had three reports of the Wall Excavations published in our Proceedings.

Nancy and Frank represented the Society at the Trent and Peak Society and on the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) meetings in London.

Frank and Nancy also worked on the Roman site at Wroxeter under Graham Webster during the summertime. Both gained the respect of many well known doyens of the archaeological world.

The Society offers it sympathy to Nancy at this difficult time.

Diana Wilkes

## **EVENTS**

The Friends of Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archives (FOSSA) have arranged events for the autumn. The Society has a subscription to FoSSA which enables members of the Society to attend these events at the same rates as FoSSA members. Details of the next event are;

Talk by Dr Nick Barratt, TV presenter and leading genealogical researcher , North Staffordshire Conference Centre, Hartshill Stoke on Trent ST4 7NY Monday 17 October 2011 at 7.15pm

Dr Barratt will talk about 'Archives , Personal Heritage and New Media in the 21st Century' discussing the making of such TV hits as 'Who do You Think You Are', 'House Detectives' and 'History Mysteries'; the impact TV and internet media have had on family and local history research -- and how future programmes and Archive Services could develop. Members £15, non members £17.

For tickets send cheque payable to FoSSA and SAE to Gay Lawrence, Events Secretary, Colton House, Colton. Rugeley WS15 3LL

Richard Totty

## **LECTURE SEASON 2011 – 2012**

All meetings start at 8.00pm (AGM at 7.30pm) in the St. Mary's Heritage Centre Market Place, Lichfield.

**30<sup>th</sup> September 2011 +AGM DR MIKE HODDER**

### **BIRMINGHAM ARCHAEOLOGY ROUNDUP**

Planning Archaeologist for Birmingham City Council is coming to talk to the Society about the Archaeological happenings in and around Birmingham. This is something we overlooked in recent years which will be corrected on a biennial basis.

**14<sup>th</sup> October 2011**

**THE REVD DR PETE WILCOX**

### **THE CATHEDRAL LIBRARY AND THE KING JAMES BIBLE**

Pete Wilcox is Canon Chancellor at Lichfield Cathedral and will speak to us about the Cathedral Library and the King James Bible which is 400 years old this year.

**28<sup>th</sup> October 2011**

**PAM WOOLLISCROFT**

### **THE JOSIAH SPODES - POTTERY PIONEERS**

Pam Woolliscroft was until 2008 the Curator of the Spode Museum Trust in Stoke-on-Trent. She also worked at Gladstone Pottery and Chatterley Whitfield Museums amongst others. She has passion for ceramics. Thus the subject for the talk this evening is The Josiah Spodes – Pottery Pioneers.

**11<sup>th</sup> November 2011**

**LINDSEY PORTER**

### **ECTON COPPER MINES - A HISTORY**

Lindsey Porter – a publisher and author based in Derbyshire will speak tonight about particularly the social history of the Ecton Copper Mines located in the Manifold Valley.

**25<sup>th</sup> November 2011**

**STEPHEN DEAN**

### **A ROUNDUP OF RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS IN STAFFORDSHIRE**

Stephen is Principal Archaeologist with the Historic Environment Team at Staffordshire County Council and this evening will generally update the Society with all the Archaeological Works carried out of the past few years. Again this is something we overlooked in recent years which will be corrected on a biennial basis.

**9<sup>th</sup> December 2011**

**Dr. STEVEN BASSETT**

### **FORTIFYING MERCIA – PUBLIC DEFENCES IN THE ANGLO SAXON PERIOD**

Steven is an author of several books; articles etc and at the time of writing this is Senior Lecturer at Birmingham University. This evening he will present a talk covering the Anglo Saxon Period.

**17<sup>th</sup> 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.

**2<sup>nd</sup> March 2012**

**Dr. MIKE NEVELL**

**THE SALT INDUSTRY IN THE IRON AGE**

This is the third go at getting Mike to come and talk to us. Previous invitations have been thwarted by family illness and an accident together with a change of university. Hopefully that is now behind us. 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.

**16<sup>th</sup> 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.

**23<sup>rd</sup> 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.

**13<sup>th</sup> 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.

**4<sup>th</sup> 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.

## **Fieldtrip to the Lapworth Museum of Geology.**

### **University of Birmingham.**

Date: Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> Jan 2011

Leader: Peter Evans

The Lapworth Museum is located in the Grade II listed Aston Webb Building of the University of Birmingham, which retains its original Edwardian setting and interior. There we were met by John Clatworthy, the Museum's Curator, who had tailored a most informative day for the Society.

The morning was spent in one of the Department's laboratories, where John gave an excellent power-point talk on the history of the Museum. In 1875 Mason Science College was founded in Edmund Street, a fine Victorian neo-gothic building, which was formally opened in 1880. In 1900 Mason College was incorporated into the new University of Birmingham. The old college stood until 1962 when it was replaced by the Birmingham Library.

The first Professor of Geology at the University was Charles Lapworth, who was one of the most influential geologists of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Professor Lapworth was responsible for major advances in scientific understanding of Britain's Geology. These include unravelling how the Scottish Highlands were formed and defining the Ordovician Period of geological time. His archive, housed in the Museum, is one of the most complete records of its time.

Other significant individuals include William Murdoch and Fred Shotton. Murdoch was an engineer, inventor and associate of James Watt and Mathew Bolton in the Lunar Society. His important collection is also housed in the Museum. Shotton was Professor of Geology at Birmingham and played a top secret role in the D-Day landings of 1944. It was under his charge that the geology of the Normandy beaches was assessed prior to the invasion of the troops. These and many other amazing stories are explained with a visit to the Lapworth Museum.

After mid-morning coffee and biscuits, John proceeded to show us the internationally important specimens and unique local collection to explain the history of the Earth at global and regional scale. Members were able to handle some of the finest fossils from the Wenlock Limestone, when Central England lay beneath a tropical sea. Specimens from the Coseley coalfield reveal the time when humid swamps of ferns, fish and giant dragonflies covered the Midlands.

From further afield were beautifully preserved crustaceans, insects, fish and pterosaurs from the Solnhofen limestone of Germany. Outstanding collections of fossil fish include materials from Italy, Lebanon, the USA and Brazil. The weird and wonderful creatures from the world famous Burgess Shale of British Columbia showed what life was like 510 Million years ago.

The mineral Collections are similarly diverse, with around 15,000 specimens from all over the world. Many are rare and John pointed out their scientific and historical importance as Members marvelled at the stunning variety of colours and crystals. Archaeological exhibits included flake tools and stone axes.

The afternoon was spent in the Archive Section, which houses geological maps, photographs and scientific instruments.

The first geological maps were drawn and painted by William Smith in 1815, who recognised the regular succession of strata and that these strata could be recognised by the character assemblage of fossils. Not being a member of the geological 'establishment' due to his humble background, he was not recognised for his achievement until 1831. By then his bitter rival George Bellas Greenhough, a President of the Geological Society and later the royal Geographical Society had stolen some of his kudos. Other beautifully drafted and engraved maps are from John MacCulloch and Walker. We were also privy to Lapworth original field sketches relating to his pioneer work and the intriguing Sopworth Models. These were designed by a cabinet maker, using coloured woods to create 3 dimensional models of geological structures as an aid to mining. Fred Shotton's work on the Normandy beaches further illustrated how important geology is as a discipline.

In 2008 the Lapworth Museum was officially designated as possessing collections of outstanding national and international importance by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. In 2009 the entire Natural History Collection the Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery was relocated to the Lapworth Museum. John Clatworthy has a busy time ahead as he attempts to enlarge and update the Museum into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Those on the trip wish him well, but are in no doubt he will succeed, having arranged a day that fully suited our requirements.

Peter Evans

The Lapworth Museum is open from Monday to Friday from 9.00am to 5.00pm. At the weekends it is open from 2.00pm to 5.00pm. Admission is free.

## **ARLEY ARBORETUM**

On a sunny day in June a small group of members visited Arley Arboretum, once in Staffordshire but now in Worcestershire, lead by Peter Evans. The site is a small plateau above the river Severn in delightful rural surroundings. Arley Castle was small Gothick building demolished in 1962 having languished as a girl's school for many years. Some of the outbuildings survive, including a castellated gateway to the Castle and a walled garden with associated service buildings. The nineteenth century owners of the Castle were assiduous collectors of trees and their planting now forms the basis for a very attractive arboretum, carefully developed and extended in recent years. Some magnificent specimens remain, planted well apart so that their form has been able to develop to their full extent. This is particularly true of several Cedars of Lebanon, a huge Tulip Tree, several Redwoods, a True Service tree, a huge Crimean Cedar and even a Black Walnut planted by Sir Joseph Banks. In the walled garden a more recent owner has constructed a small Italianate Garden; the fountain was turned on full for us! We had a leisurely guided tour of the well maintained gardens listening to the sounds of the Severn Valley Steam Railway across the valley. The enthusiastic curator spent most of the day with us sharing his expert knowledge of the collection and of the history of the Castle. We had lunch in the small tea room and had time for a visit to the parish church, an interesting 12<sup>th</sup> century foundation with extensive Tudor and Victorian modifications, and a stroll down through the small village of Arley for an ice cream on the river bank. The Estate, which includes the parish church, the village, the local public house and several farms as well as the Arboretum, extends to 1600 acres and is now managed by a charitable trust. The Arboretum is not well known, but deserves better. It makes a very attractive day's visit.

Richard Totty

June 2011

## **Field Trip to Arley Arboretum and Gardens**

Saturday June 11<sup>th</sup> 2011.

Leader: Peter Evans

The Arley Arboretum and Gardens are situated in the Severn Valley between Bridgenorth and Bewdley. They are run by the Arley Estate who also owns the village of Upper Arley and the adjacent farms. The Society was most fortunate to be guided on the day by Peter Howells, who proved to be a humorous and erudite guide.

The morning was spent outside of the Arboretum and Gardens, as its history was revealed by walking the site of Arley Hall and later Arley Castle.

The picturesque landscape was fully intended by the creator of the arboretum, George Annesley, Viscount Valentia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Mountnorris (1770-1884). He undertook major changes to beautify his home by rerouting the road to the Village, removing houses in the immediate vicinity, enlarging the Park and even taking over a part of the Churchyard to improve his view of the river. Above all, he undertook a major program of planting including rare trees from abroad in the Arboretum. In the 1840's, Gothic Revival became the rage and Lord Mountnorris decided to enhance his mansion and convert it to a castle. The romantic appeal of the castle would be seen projecting above the well wooded countryside, with the Annesley Tower projecting above the Great Tower to 120ft, being supplanted by a flagpole.

In 1852 the property was purchased by the Woodward family, who were to own Arley for 107 years. Each generation were good botanists, but it was the marriage of Robert Woodward to Mary Jane Turner that was to have important consequences for the Arboretum. Her Uncle was Sir William Hooker, Director of the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew between 1841 and 1865 and the leading botanist of the day. The Arley-Kew connection was a very close association for many decades. However two World Wars and the Great Depression diverted attention and resources to more urgent needs. The family moved out of the Castle in 1923. For a time it was a school. Many trees reached a magnificent maturity as we can see them in their glory today, but by 1959 others were dead or dying.

Much of the Estate was sold in that year to Roger Turner. During his forty years at Arley he devoted himself to the long term rehabilitation of the Gardens and Arboretum, employing six gardeners. A successful industrialist, he was a great benefactor to the Village and Church. It also took Roger Turner one year exactly to pull the Castle down! Peter showed us the site of the Castle, now partially replaced by the less visible long low lines of Arley House. Although private, we were given access to the Gatehouse with its Stable and the Castle's overgrown, yet secluded garden. Peter also pointed out the valley known as Naboth's Vineyard. The Earl of Mountnorris had difficulty in gaining possession of the little valley of Kettlebrook because of the obduracy of an old woman who refused to sell her property to him. The name Naboth's Vineyard came to be attached to it, recalling the Old Testament story of Naboth who refused to sell his vineyard to King Ahab despite to royal demand 'give me the vineyard that I may have a garden of herbs because it is near unto my house'.

Lunch was spent in the tea room though some Members picnicked in the Garden or ventured to the villages Harbour Inn. Most made the trip to the Parish Church, with its Kempe stained glass and Crusader tomb.

The afternoon was spent exclusively in the Arboretum and Gardens. We were informed that when Roger Turner died in 1999, he had left the entire Estate, some 1600 acres, to his Charitable Trust. The Trustees decided that the Arboretum was of sufficient importance for it to be extended with the Walled Garden being opened to the public. Peter enthusiastically showed us the Italian garden with its pleached lime trees and the impressive, recently installed fountain. Magnificent Cedars of Lebanon, Wellingtonia and Crimson Pine contrast with the rare Whitty Pear, Sugar Maple and Ginko. Close to the ha-ha we examined the Handkerchief Tree and the Cucumber Tree, all with their own stories to tell. Do you know what the Whitty Pear was used for and why it is unique?

Peter's new projects are the hornbeam maze and a scaled reconstruction of the Castle. This is as well as managing the individual trees (more complicated than you may think), the herbaceous borders and the birds being cared for in the aviary. However, with the help of his three gardeners he is striving to extend its appeal and make the Arboretum and Garden better known.

Peter Evans

The Arley Arboretum and Gardens are open from mid-March to mid-November from 11.00am to 5.00pm from Wednesday to Sunday.

## **VISIT TO FOUR HEREFORDSHIRE CHURCHES, JULY 2011**

We start with the journey – driving through some of the heaviest rain I have ever encountered did not bode well for the day, but by the time we had arrived at Kilpeck it was easing. The sun came out about 11am and from then on we had a beautiful day.

Kilpeck was the delight that John had promised, made even more beautiful by being decorated for a wedding. His knowledge of the building was passed on to us in his own inimitable style. It is rather touching that he credits us with knowing Chartres or Rouen, perhaps one day ... There was some discussion with Mr. Bailey, the churchwarden, over a representation of St. Peter, but we were grateful for their combined expertise in deciphering many of the carvings. The wider landscape containing a castle with at least three baileys and a

deserted village was explained. We moved up the hill behind the castle to see this and watched a squall come over from Wales whilst sheltering under a substantial oak.

Lunch at Kilpeck was followed by a delightful drive to Eaton Bishop and St. Michael and All Angels, where the churchwarden, Kate Price, welcomed us. We were there to see two very beautiful 14<sup>th</sup> century windows. The colours and style were very different from the Victorian glass we see in so many churches. The great pleasure here was being able to get right up to the glass to see the detail of the painting.

We then took the opportunity of visiting St. Mary's, Madley, two or three miles away. This is a very large church serving quite a modest village, the reason being that it was a place of pilgrimage and has a crypt. The glass in the top half of the middle of the east window was saved from an older church and dates from about 1250. Other glass dates from about 1350, but some sections of the same window are a jumble of fragments from 1250 to 1500. Again, it was possible to get right up to the window to marvel at the detail. I particularly remember an exquisite acorn, so delicately painted.

The final destination was St. George's at Brinsop. This was reached by driving in convoy at a scorching pace behind our Leader, along lanes that appeared to be just 2 feet wider than the cars. However, it was worth it because this was a gem. It contained more examples of the Herefordshire School of Sculpture, the prime example being what was probably originally a tympanum showing St. George killing the dragon or serpent. Other representations duplicated things seen at Kilpeck.

It has not been possible to go into great detail but I am sure I speak for everyone in saying it was a wonderful visit in every way and we are very glad that John was able to finally get us there. I know that more people would have gone if we could have laid on transport, but the geography and terrain made that very difficult. Kilpeck is approached by a narrow grassy track, at Eaton Bishop it would have been hard to park a coach. Madley would have been OK but Brinsop quite impossible.

Betty Fox.

## **THE STAFFORDSHIRE TITHE MAP PROJECT**

The payment of one tenth of local produce to the church had been established in Anglo Saxon England before the Norman Conquest. This was originally in kind - every tenth stook of corn, etc. It originally supported the local priest, but in some cases, the right to receive the tithe was acquired by an organisation such as a monastery or college. In early use, 'impropriate' was applied to the annexation of the tithes of a benefice to a religious house. At the Reformation most of these impropriations passed into lay hands so that the word came to be specially associated with the lay possession of tithes. The Tithe Commutation Act 1836 and an amending act in 1837 established a process by which tithes could be converted to money payments. This required the drawing of an accurate map showing all the land in the parish. The series of maps resulting from this legislation provide unprecedented coverage, detail and accuracy.

A map was produced for each "tithe district" that is, one region in which tithes were paid as a unit. In Staffordshire these were mostly parishes or townships. Areas in which tithes had already been commuted were not mapped so that coverage varied widely from county to county. The maps indicated parcels of land and buildings assigning each a number. They also indicated which tithes were still paid to a rector or vicar of the parish and which to a lay impropiator.

The map was accompanied by a schedule in the form of a table with an entry for each map item by number. This showed the owner, occupier and a description of the land use including individual fields – almost always with field names. A preamble gave the name of the tithe owner, the circumstances under which tithes were owed, and the whether the apportionment was subject to an agreement worked out among the parties, or was being imposed by the Crown. Most of the surveying and mapping was carried out by 1841, and the work was largely completed by 1851. In some cases amendments had to be filed as properties were divided or other circumstances intervened. The work was also complicated by numerous irregularities in the way tithes were assessed and variations as to the circumstances of tithe-paying were also considerable. Three copies of these maps and schedules were prepared, one of which was held centrally by the Tithe Commissioners, one locally in

the parish church and one in the Diocesan registry. In Staffordshire the Diocesan copies of the tithe maps and schedules are held in Lichfield Joint Record Office and the Staffordshire Record Office in Stafford has many parish copies. The copies held by the Tithe Commissioners are in the National Archives.

For the local historian the tithe schedules are of particular interest as they give unprecedented information about the families owning and occupying land in the parish and complement the information given in the 1841 census. One can see where the family lived, how much property they occupied, and if they owned their property or were tenants. The schedules give other information, often identifying the use of the property, e.g. wheelwright's shop, public house etc. The difficulty in using the schedules for research is that properties are listed in order of landowner and to find a particular occupier might require a search through 50 or sometimes many more pages of lists of names. If the family were farmers then the land they worked could well be scattered through two or more tithe units. For the Shenstone project Members of the Society transcribed the Shenstone Tithe award and prepared a searchable database of Shenstone residents, which has been made available to the public. Various parts of the tithe map and schedule were illustrated in the Project report, where it is shown how these maps can be used to determine the development of the local landscape.

For the last two years Staffordshire Archives have been running a project to do the same for all the Staffordshire Tithe schedules and a small team has been transcribing and preparing a database. So far about half the county's tithe schedules have been completed, almost all of those for Pirehill Hundred and many of those for the southern half of the county. There are fewer schedules for Totmanslow Hundred – there were fewer people here and much of the land was unproductive and not subject to tithes. Schedules have survived for most Staffordshire Parishes but for some many of the tithes had already been commuted. In for example Burton on Trent only a very small proportion of the properties were subject to tithes by the time that the schedules were drawn up. When complete the database will be one of the most useful tools for family historians who wish to find more detail about the lives of their ancestors. It will also provide a valuable source of information for parish and other local historians. The database of names will be made available on the internet as is the case with other recently prepared databases, such as those of Workhouse Inmates and Parish Apprentices, on the Staffordshire Archives website, but the format is yet to be decided.

(<http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/leisure/archives/home.aspx>)

Other County Archive Services have run similar projects to make the information in tithe maps and schedules more accessible to the public. See for example the Leeds Tithe map project at <http://tithemaps.leeds.gov.uk/> which provides a high resolution image of tithe maps and modern maps, 1890 and 1910 Ordnance survey maps and a 1999 aerial survey side by side as well as a searchable surname database. A similar database exists for Cheshire tithe maps and schedules <http://maps.cheshire.gov.uk/tithemaps/>. Both the Leeds and Cheshire databases are fascinating to investigate. Another project is underway in Worcestershire; <http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/environment-and-planning/archaeology/information-and-advice/historic-environment-record/tithe-and-inclosure-map-project.aspx> but only about a fifth of the county has been covered to date.

These projects show quite clearly just how modern digitisation techniques can make historical data, until recently difficult to access, available freely and easily to all.

Richard Totty

June 2011

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