



*Staffordshire Archaeological  
and Historical Society*



**NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2014**

Web: [www.sahs.uk.net](http://www.sahs.uk.net)

Issue No 117

email: [sahs@sahs.uk.net](mailto:sahs@sahs.uk.net)



**A Concert by Coope, Boyes & Simpson**

Remembrance Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2014

“In Flanders Fields”

Songs and Words of the Tommies and for Peace

The Guildhall, Lichfield

In association with Lichfield Arts

President: Dr. J Hunt

Tel: 01543423549

Hon. General Secretary:

Position Vacant

Hon. Treasurer: Mr K Billington

Tel: 01543278989.

## Presidents Welcome Message

Members of this Society will not need to look far to be reminded of the real enthusiasm and fascination that our past and our heritage can stimulate in people of all ages. In the last couple of years, in our region alone, we have seen the long queues snaking their way around any venue displaying pieces from the Staffordshire Hoard, and the excited anticipation associated with the new exhibition opening in October this year. We have been intrigued by the discovery of Richard III's burial and the following debate on 'what next'; and interest in the First World War, and its impact upon people and communities, has never been greater, as witnessed by the programming on television and radio, and by the hundreds of community and other projects that have arisen in association, many supported through the Heritage Lottery Fund. Recent work on Cannock Chase serves to highlight Staffordshire's contribution.

So heritage matters! But this cannot be taken for granted when it comes to the wider world of political decision-making and financial priorities. This is why the role of advocacy is a key responsibility for all groups who take a serious interest in our heritage, constantly putting the case for why heritage matters.

Such challenges can only be addressed through partnership and multi-agency fora, one of which for the West Midlands is the 'Historic Environment Forum' currently bringing together nearly twenty organisations with a remit to monitor, liaise and promote the region's historic environment. With 'English Heritage' the HEF annually reflects on this in its publication of *Heritage Counts* (see [www.heritagecounts.org.uk](http://www.heritagecounts.org.uk)), the 2014 edition to be released on November 12<sup>th</sup>. I would urge members to take a look at these publications, particularly the forthcoming issue where the underpinning theme is the 'value of heritage', looking for instance at the tourist economy in our region, the role of volunteering, and specific items on heritage restoration rejuvenating Potteries industry; and work on Cannock Chase leading towards the Great War commemorative trail.

On a national level, members may be interested to know that the 'Heritage Alliance', with an eye to the forthcoming General Election, has published its own manifesto for the future of the independent heritage movement in England. Noting that heritage-led tourism contributes more than £26 billion a year to the national economy, the manifesto calls on all political parties to realise the power of heritage and to:

- create a positive tax regime for maintenance and conservation;
- put heritage at the heart of sustainable development;
- attract more investment into heritage;
- secure the protection of our heritage.

More information may be found on the Heritage Alliance website.

Meanwhile, with your continued support, we trust that our Society will go from strength to strength, as part of which the committee welcomes you to our 2014-15 season where once again we can anticipate a varied programme of Friday evening meetings; we look forward to seeing you there and hope you enjoy them as much as we do.

John Hunt. President, Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society.

## A Note from the Newsletter Editor

Once again I have received enough 'copy' to generate this September Newsletter. I thank all those correspondents who have responded to my calls for copy and provided me with all the necessary words and pictures. You will have found out now that the Committee has taken the decision to follow the example from West Midlands CBA to make Email the principal method of distributing the Newsletter. Please read the item by our Treasurer on Page 6 in this Newsletter.

The next Newsletter will be issued at the end of January 2015. Please email any proof read copy that you would like to be included by 24<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

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

## MEETINGS FOR THE NEW SEASON 2014-2015

All our Meetings take place at St Marys in the Market Square, Lichfield at 8.00pm (except for the AGM). They are free for Members and £3.00 for Visitors. Membership applications are always available at the Meetings.

### Note

The lectures for this season are somewhat different in scope with more emphasis on World War One. I do hope that it pleases most Members; that we all find something to our taste and it that comes up to the Society's expectations. There are some talks related to World War One which are, I think, are not mainstream subjects that will be out there for the next few years – maybe next year we will have more mainstream subjects.

Brian Bull

**26<sup>th</sup> September 2014**

**Tony Habberley**

**Neolithic Farm to Roman Villa Estate**

Acton Trussell in Staffordshire is a Romano-British Villa site that has known occupation since Neolithic times and Tony Habberley will update the Society with the more recent work that has been carried out.

**10<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

**Trevor James**

**St Wilfrid: The First English Saint**

Wilfrid of Ripon is believed to have been the first English saint and he has important links with Lichfield and Mercia. Trevor James has identified, using topographical evidence, the pilgrimage route to his shrine at Ripon. The timing of this lecture has been chosen to coincide with St Wilfrid's day on 12 October

**24<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

**John Bishop**

**Chinese Labour Corps**

What did the world's most populous nation do in the Great War Daddy? Nothing?! Well, not quite. 140,000 Chinese came to Europe - to work as labourers.

John Bishop's grandfather was a sergeant with the Chinese Labour Corps in France from 1917 and this connection led eventually to the novel *The Chinese Attack* (2012). John, who was a College principal in Birmingham in an earlier life, will outline some of the features of this little-known aspect of WW1.

**7<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

**Rev Michael Fisher**

**Pugin: The Staffordshire Connection**

Michael Fisher is a widely-recognised authority on the art and architecture of the English Gothic Revival, particularly the life and work of A.W.N.Pugin, the dominant figure in 19<sup>th</sup> century architecture, whose works figures so prominently in the Midlands. He is the author of several critically acclaimed books.

**21<sup>st</sup> November 2014**

**Kirsty Nicol**

**Operation Kiwi**

The model of Messines Ridge was built during World War 1 on Cannock Chase as a training aid for the New Zealand forces in readiness for the assault on German lines and the talk will cover its history and rediscovery with a full excavation during 2013.

5<sup>th</sup> December 2014

**AGM 7.30pm**

followed by

**Dr Michael Hodder**

**The Archaeology of Sutton Park**

The basis of this talk is Mike Hodder's long term work on Sutton Park which culminated in the publication of the book which provides the title of the talk.

Mike Hodder is Planning Archaeologist (Planning Control) with Birmingham City Council.

20<sup>th</sup> February 2015

**Terry Cudbird**

**Walking the Retreat**

The opening month of the Great War ended in the Battle of the Marne (6-9<sup>th</sup> September 1914). The French and British army's were forced into a long retreat subsequently regrouping to mount a successful counter-attack. During the retreat to the Marne over a million soldiers marched twenty miles a day carrying 60lb packs in temperatures above thirty degrees. Often short of food and only managing short snatches of rest, they fought a series of engagements over two weeks which ended in a battle from the plains of Lorraine to the gates of Paris. The march tested them to the limits of endurance and beyond. Terry's talk will recreate the March and battles for us by word and picture.

Terry Cudbird read history at Cambridge and subsequently studied French history at University College London and in France.

6<sup>th</sup> March 2015

**Simon Buteux**

**Newman Coffin Fittings Works**

Simon Buteux is Director at Birmingham Conservation Trust and the landmark project currently is the 'time capsule' known as Newman Coffin Fittings Works which ran from 1894 to 1999. The Works is located in the Jewellery Quarter of Birmingham. The talk will cover the discovery of the works including what was found and the subsequent conservation of the works.

20<sup>th</sup> March 2015

**Dr Oliver Harris**

**From Neolithic Bones to Viking Boats and Whitby Jet**

New discoveries have been made on the Ardnamurchan Peninsula, Western Scotland. It will look at the ongoing work of the Ardnamurchan Transitions Project in Western Scotland that is Co-Directed by Dr Oliver Harris. The project examines how we can think about long-term change in a particular landscape, and the finds from the project include in situ Neolithic human remains more than 5500 years old, Bronze Age jet beads and the first intact Viking boat burial excavated by archaeologists on the UK mainland.

Dr. Oliver Harris is Lecturer in Archaeology in the School of Archaeology & Ancient History, University of Leicester. He specialises in prehistoric archaeology, particularly the Neolithic and archaeological theory. Academic publications include the co-authored *The Body in History* (CUP, 2013), which was awarded two PROSE awards from the American Association of Publishers as best book in Archaeology and Anthropology and best book in the Social Sciences for 2013. Oliver has also published a number of academic and written for public interest in *Current Archaeology*, *British Archaeology* and *The Sunday Times*. He is the director of the Ardnamurchan Transitions Project which looks at long-term landscape occupation on the west coast of Scotland.

10<sup>th</sup> April 2015

Bob Meeson

The Saint in St. Editha's, Tamworth

Research for the Staffordshire VCH into the early history of St Editha's Church in Tamworth has picked up on an excavation in the crypt in 1977 and a subsequent survey of the building by members of this Society. St Editha's Church stands within Offa's 8<sup>th</sup>-century Mercian palace enclosure and on the site of churches dating from that time. In a liberally illustrated talk, drawing on parallels elsewhere in Mercia, Bob will argue that c.913 the church may have been re-founded by Aethelred and Aethelflaed, Lady of the Mercians, and that remnants of the early west end of the nave survived until the fourteenth century, and when they were dismantled the crypt was remodeled as a reliquary chapel. Were these parts of the church intended for relics of St Editha?

Bob a former Secretary of this Society, Bob worked for the Staffordshire County Archaeology Service before taking early retirement to work as an independent historic buildings consultant. He served for 23 years as the archaeological consultant on Lichfield Diocesan Advisory Committee. He has lectured widely, published numerous papers, and illustrated books on vernacular architecture. His current research interest is medieval roof structures.

17<sup>th</sup> April 2015

Dr Simon Davies

Aston Hall, Birmingham

The Jacobean mansion of Aston Hall is one of Birmingham's often overlooked historical gems. Its early history and the lives of the Holte family, who had it built, often seem not unlike a modern soap opera with tales of treachery, disinheritance and even the involvement of the King on the eve of the English Civil War. This talk seeks to introduce the hall's early history, explain why it was built where it was, and how architecture was used to influence visitors, and also relates the sad story of Sir Thomas Holte, its first inhabitant.

1<sup>st</sup> May 2015

Professor Dawn Hadley

The Viking Winter Camp at Torksey, Lincs.

This talk will outline the results of recent research on the Viking winter camp of 872-3 at Torksey in Lincolnshire, which is collaboration between the departments of Archaeology at the Universities of Sheffield and York. Metal-detecting in the fields to the north of the modern village have recovered a wealth of artefacts associated with the over-wintering that is recorded in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, including Anglo-Saxon silver pennies, Northumbrian copper-alloy 'stycas', Arabic dirhams, gold, silver and copper ingots and hack-metal, and weights, all of which are indicative of the Viking use of a bullion economy. The paper will consider what this evidence reveals about the nature of the impact of the Viking 'great army', which raided eastern and northern England in the 860s and 870s. The landscape setting of the Viking winter camp will also be explored, and the impact of the over-wintering on the subsequent development of the small town, or borough, at Torksey will also be examined.

Dawn Hadley is Professor of Medieval Archaeology at Sheffield University.

## **Electronic Delivery of this Newsletter Issue No. 117 for September 2014**

A significant number of Members, the substantial majority, will have received this latest Society Newsletter electronically via email.

Your Committee, after some deliberation, has taken the decision that from now on the delivery of each of the three SA&HS Newsletters produced per year will be done wherever possible by email. The transmitted version arrives earlier and is in colour and can of course be viewed on screen as well as a print taken if desired.

For those Memberships without an email address recorded, you will still receive the paper version through your letter boxes. This printed version is not in colour, because of cost considerations, and it may be delivered to you by hand or alternatively by using Royal Mail.

The object of the exercise is to reduce both printing and postage costs and use the money saved in more productive ways, together with helping keep the Books in trim as outgoings in general tend to inexorably rise.

Having said all this, if any Member would prefer instead still to receive the hardcopy Newsletter from us, please contact the Honorary Treasurer who will note your preference on our mailing listings.

In taking the step which we have, we are following similar change of practice undertaken by many of our peer Groups and Societies. It is hoped that enjoyment of the Newsletters will not be compromised in any way; rather we would expect it to be enhanced. A number of Members had already, by arrangement and request, been getting the previous Newsletters by email to their PC, laptop or tablet.

If any Member has an email address which it is now apparent we do not have on record, please advise the Honorary Treasurer at: [treasurer@sahs.uk.net](mailto:treasurer@sahs.uk.net)

Keith Billington

### **From Staffordshire Archives Facebook Page – August 23**

Some of you may have noticed this week that we have been really lucky to receive HLF funding for a two year project to work on the Great War Staffordshire Appeal Tribunal Records. All military appeal tribunal records across the country were ordered to be destroyed after the war – but an oversight meant those in Staffordshire survived. The project aims to index all the records and make the index available online.

More details can be found at:

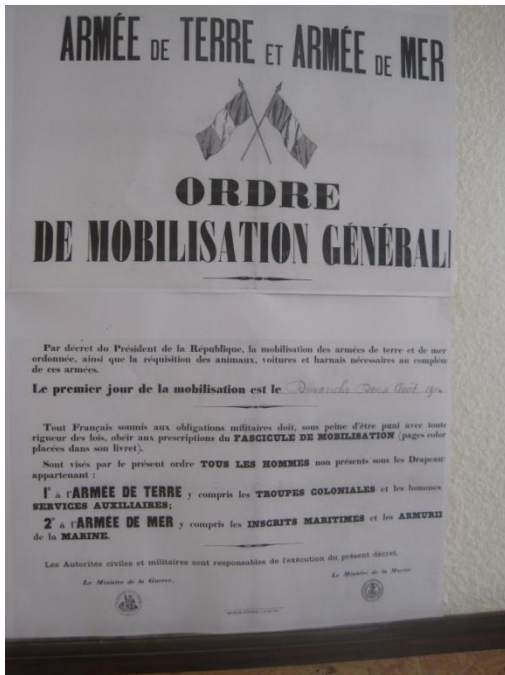
<http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/leisure/archives/Military-Appeals-Tribunal.aspx>

Richard Totty



## The First Weekend of August 1914, A Village Commemoration.

One hundred years ago, the term “sleepy English village” applied to many places far from the coast and the city. Communications were slower then, compared with their instant nature today. The fastest way of travelling was by train, which involved money, letter writing and planning well ahead. Yet during those summer months of 1914, England’s rulers and politicians were spiralling into a European war, closely followed by full world war status. What was life like in the typical English village before these world events made their impact?



War against Germany was declared in England on Tuesday August 4<sup>th</sup>. Two days before that France had had the Call to Arms.

This August, 100 years later, Yoxall village, 8 miles north of Lichfield and a day's journey from Birmingham by horse and cart, put on an exhibition to show how people were living and working in the village in the beginning of the twentieth century. The coronation of King George V and Queen Alexandra had taken place in 1910 and people had coronation mugs to remember the event.

Yoxall wanted to recognise the centenary of the start of WW1 and set up a committee of 6 people to organise the commemoration weekend, the first weekend in August. We felt we needed more than an exhibition of old photographs and writings, although these aspects are very important and were well catered for. Hence a more ambitious project was set in motion. The aim was to show the present residents and visitors to Yoxall how villagers lived 100 years ago and what was important for them in their daily lives.

### The French call to Arms

Yoxall then was only half its present size, a nuclear village set around a tributary of the R. Trent. There was a thriving church, a school and even a cottage hospital. Yoxall was self sufficient. Most of the dwellings were in this nucleated area, with some larger properties strung along the roads leading towards Sudbury, Barton-u-Needwood and Lichfield. The Parish held two large estates and their Halls, Longcroft and the smaller Old Hall.

I set about visiting neighbours and residents in this older part of our present day village, to see if they had furniture and artefacts with which we could set up a “village home” within the Village Hall. We were aiming for three rooms at first, a kitchen, a parlour and an outside yard. At first the response was slow, but as the promises built up, word got around and more and more offers flooded in. By the end of July we were ready. Set up day was the Friday afternoon of the 1<sup>st</sup> August. One of our committee, Charles, had co-opted his brother's help and they picked up the large, heavy items of room and yard furniture in their van. People brought round their own smaller items. All items had to be carefully identified and linked with the owner. We realised that we almost had enough for a bedroom too. Within an hour that afternoon, another committee member, Sarah, had persuaded her husband to forage for a bed head in their loft, and bring it to the Village Hall, walking it down Main Street. By Saturday morning Charles had constructed the bed and the bedroom came to life around it. We opened the doors at 10.00 am after some very hard work by the Committee!

The Village Hall, that week end, held a tea room, organised by the village fete committee. There was an art display by the Yoxall art group, the subjects based on Yoxall just before the war, and four fully furnished rooms showing a typical village home. All the rooms, kitchen, parlour, bedroom and outside yard space were furnished



from the items sent in. A few artefacts came from a collection stored in a portakabin in Burntwood, which needed new homes. Sadly, we understandably could not put in a kitchen range, but we did have an enormous Belfast sink, a parlour fireplace, a huge mangle and an outside water pump. I could even supply a genuine 100 year old Aspidistra! For 2 days the volunteers served hot drinks and homemade fruit cakes and Victoria sponges donated by villagers. By the close on Saturday we had had over two hundred people through the doors and the tea room sent out a request for more cakes!



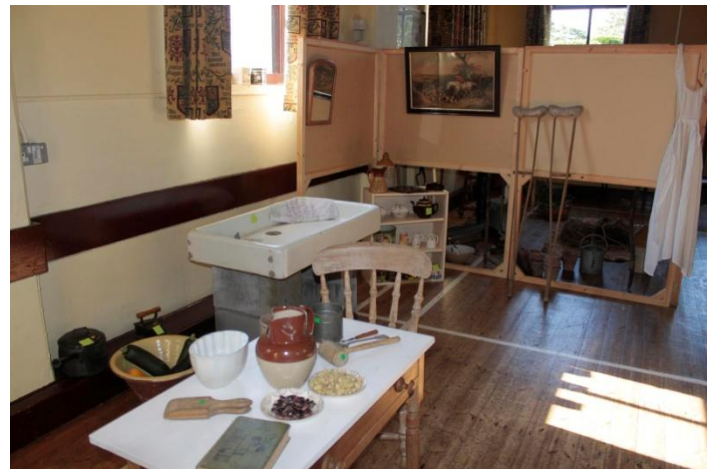
The Church ran a big photographic display, incorporating information about the young men who volunteered for enlistment, and the church was filled with flowers, simple arrangement incorporating both wild and cottage garden flowers. The Flower Guild also embellished our rooms in the Village Hall. The Craft Guild unveiled their planned memorial banner to the memories of the Yoxall fallen, due to be worked throughout the course of the next 4 year years and completed for Nov. 11<sup>th</sup> 1918.

The Rev Cory and his Sister in the Parlour

On the Sunday there were more 'donations' to enliven the displays, so much so that the bedroom now had two floral 'gozunders' to add realism! By the close on Sunday we had probably had another one hundred people and all the cakes had gone. By six-o'clock all the display items were all back to the owners (mostly!).



The Yard



The Kitchen

This weekend is the start of a 4 year project, following the course of WW1 as it affected the lives of Yoxall people. Donations from the tea room have already paid the expenses for the weekend and left a residue in the kitty to fund future similar activities. Watch this space.

Jean Norris

Thanks to Warren Bradley for the four pictures of the Bedroom, the Parlour, the Yard and the Kitchen.

Thanks also the Rev Mal Hawsworth for posing as the Rev Cory who was the Rector of Yoxall in 1914 and to Shirley Fisher as his Sister.



## WILLIAM HUTTON (1723-1815)

“Who is this guy” you ask.



WILLIAM HUTTON.

(Picture from the book *Life of William Hutton*)

William Hutton – Historian, poet, for the period prolific author, bookseller, paper merchant and last but not least a man who walked everywhere. I had heard of him previously but as usual not attached any significance to the man, so the name drifted off into the deep archive of the mind. I then came across him again just recently when I was reading ‘*Under Another Sky*’ by Charlotte Higgins. Higgins refers to Hutton in the book which is about journeys in Roman Britain. There is a copy in Lichfield Library for interested.

Hutton had it appears back in 1802 written a volume about Hadrian’s Wall – now there is nothing remarkable about that considering all the books that have been written about the ‘Wall’, sometimes analysing with ‘the eye of faith’ every twig and stone along its route.

What is more interesting about Hutton and his account is that not only did he walk along the wall in both directions but he also walked from his home in Birmingham. This is a journey of some 600 miles round trip. Remarkably our man did this 35 day expedition in 1801 commencing on 4<sup>th</sup> July and returning to Birmingham 7<sup>th</sup> August, giving an average walking speed of 17 miles per day and Hutton is 78 years of age!!! You do the maths! There is hope for us all!

Furthermore his daughter Catherine, who became an historian and a writer publishing several volumes, accompanied him on his travels albeit she travelled with a servant on a coach horse.

It worked like this... Hutton would leave their overnight accommodation about four in the morning on foot and Catherine would depart some hours later. They would meet up some miles further along the road and breakfast together with Catherine then departing on the horse and William setting off walking. They would meet up again at the end of the day, where Catherine had organised an overnight stay in an Inn. On each of the expeditions this exercise would be repeated every day. On the Hadrian’s Wall trip Catherine did stop in the Lake District where she stayed until William returned. Thence they returned home in the same fashion.

Anyway back to our man William Hutton...

William was born on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1723 at Derby. He was at least the fourth or fifth child of William Hutton (a Wool Comber) and Anne Ward (first of three wives). At the age of seven William was apprenticed for seven years to a Derby silk mill and this was followed by a further seven years apprenticeship as a stocking maker at the Nottingham mill of his Uncle George Hutton.

After the death of George Hutton in 1746 William continued to work as a journeyman stocking maker whilst at the same time teaching himself bookbinding and saw this could be an alternative occupation. However the local materials he needed were to his mind inferior and he knew better quality was available, so borrowing the money he walked to London (260 miles round trip) and bought better quality materials – I said this guy walked everywhere!. He proposed to set up shop in Birmingham as a bookseller and bookbinder but as a preliminary step he set himself up in a shop at Southwell, Notts again walking to and from Derby (30 miles round trip). The shop at Southwell however was not that successful so a shop was opened in Birmingham (6 Bull Street). This shop prospered and a move to High Street undertaken (The site of this shop is now Waterstones - a bookseller, previous to that it was Times Furnishing. The building was designed by Burnett and Eprile and built between 1936 and 1938. There is a 'Blue Plaque' attached to the front).

During the rebuilding of the house at High Street Birmingham in 1775 the dormant historian within him was stimulated by the discovery of medieval remains which he recorded and followed this by writing The History of Birmingham in 1781.



*(Both my photos)*



In this new location William prospered better and in 1755 he married Sarah Cock from Ashton-upon-Trent. A daughter Catherine was born in 1756 and a son Thomas born in 1757. Two further sons were born but sadly died in infancy.

A paper warehouse was established in High Street during 1756 and later in 1759 a paper mill was built at Handsworth Heath but not being the success hoped for was abandoned in 1762.

In 1769 William purchased land for a country house at Bennett's Hill, Saltley now Washwood Heath Road. The road does actually incline up to Washwood Heath from Saltley so the name Bennett's Hill may have been an earlier name for the highway – I am still trying to find out (The spelling could be Benet or Bennett as I have seen both in context). Today it is actually quite difficult to imagine Saltley as ever having been rural but even on 1890 maps there is very little development. The house named on the maps as Bennett's Hill House existed until at least 1917 after being rebuilt following the 1791 riots in Birmingham but had disappeared from the 1920 maps.

It transpired that both of his houses at High Street, Birmingham and Bennett's Hill, Saltley together with a property of William's in New Street Birmingham were burned down during the riots of July 1791. This is after he had, so he thought, bribed the mob into leaving his property alone.

William spent his last years at Bennett's Hill, Saltley walking into Birmingham and back from there as the need arose and in 1793 relinquished the business to his son Thomas on his marriage. This enabled William to 'retire' and concentrate on his tours to North Wales, Scarborough and Coatham with Catherine his daughter although now in his 80's Hutton relented from his walking and undertook these particular tours by chaise but considerable walking was also undertaken en route to and at the destinations. William was in addition elected as a Fellow of the Antiquarian Society of Scotland (F.A.S.S.)

William died on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1815 at Bennett's Hill and the apothecary declared 'a total wearing out of the structure without disease'. This is not surprising considering the number of walking tours undertaken during his life. He is buried at Aston parish churchyard. Besides the Blue Plaque in High Street, Hutton is also remembered at Derby where there is a Bas Relief on the Exeter Bridge close to the mill where the original apprenticeship was undertaken.

## William Hutton's writings...

*An History of Birmingham* (1781) *Journey to London* (1784) *Courts of requests* (1787)

*Battle of Bosworth Field* (1788) *History of Blackpool* (1788)

*A dissertation on juries with a description of the Hundred Court* (1788)

*History of the Hundred Courts* (1790) *History of Derby* (1791) *The Barbers, a poem* (1793)

*Edgar and Elfrida, a poem* (1793) *The History of the Roman Wall* (1802)

*Remarks upon North Wales* (1803) *Tour to Scarborough* (1803)

*Poems, chiefly tales* (1804) *Trip to Coatham* (1808)

*Autobiography – The Life of William Hutton* (1815)

Brian Bull.

## Chemistry and The Great War

A recent article in Chemistry in Britain has reviewed the contribution made by chemists to the war effort in 1914-1918. This aspect of the history of the Great War has been little studied by historians of the war who concentrate on the battles on sea, land and in the air. But without a huge expansion of the chemistry industry and the rapid development of novel solutions applied to the manufacture of essential materials, this country would have been without an effective defence, and in no position to oppose German advances.

At the beginning of the war both sides were short of explosives for artillery shells. Chemists needed to invent new processes to make these and to build new chemical plant to manufacture them. But it was not only explosives that were in short supply here; synthetic dyes for uniforms had until 1914 been mainly imported from Germany (where would the Army be without khaki?), as were the high quality glass used in telescopes, binoculars and periscopes and the means of producing these items to a suitable standard was urgent.

For explosives such as TNT (trinitrotoluene) and nitroglycerine Britain relied on supplies of the main raw material caliche, a potassium nitrate containing mineral from Chile. When these became scarce during the German U Boat campaigns in 1915, it was clear that other sources needed to be found. In fact both sides faced the same problem and chemists in Britain and Germany were engaged in a race to find alternatives. The result was more or less a draw, the two sides using different routes to synthesise the necessary ingredients from readily available materials. One example was the development of the fermentation process for the manufacture of acetone (used in cordite) by Chaim Weizmann at the University of Manchester. (British gratitude to Weizmann, an ardent Zionist, led to official support to his dreams of developing a Jewish homeland in Palestine.)

The Great War was the first conflict in which more soldiers died from enemy action than from disease. At the start of the war the German pharmaceutical industry was in a much better position to manufacture the increased supplies of antiseptics, disinfectants, analgesics, anaesthetics and medicines needed. In Britain the pharmaceutical industry was in its infancy and the Government turned to University Chemistry Departments to manufacture established products and develop new ones. It was a team at the University of Edinburgh who introduced one of the most widely used antiseptics – a mixture of calcium hypochlorite and boric acid which on dissolving in water produced hypochlorous acid. As far as I can see there is very little information about this aspect of the war effort available although it was vital in saving lives.

The Chemical Society Library was an essential source of information – it held an unrivalled collection of German Chemical literature and it was this information which materially helped the British War Effort. But in 1916 the Chemical Society came under sustained attack from the media because nine eminent German chemists had been made Honorary Fellows of the Society and the press ran articles with such headlines as 'Poison Gas Man F.C.S.' alleging that these fellows had assisted in the manufacture of poison gas; not that the press had any

clear information that any of the nine had actually worked on the development of poison gas. The Chemical Society caved in and removed the names of the nine from the register of Fellows. One of the nine was Emile Fischer, Nobel Prize winner in 1903 for his work on carbohydrates and proteins, who having lost two of his own sons in the war, committed suicide in 1919, weary of the waste of the war. The survivors of the nine were quietly reinstated in 1929.

In the absence of men women were recruited en masse into the munitions factories and also into the chemical research laboratories; doing much dangerous and health destroying work in the process. Most of these women have no memorials – their names have not been recorded and it is less easy to remember their contributions than those of the soldiers, sailors and airmen who fought in the armed forces. Nevertheless the war would not have been won without them.

In Staffordshire the firm of Joseph Sankey and Sons received substantial orders from the Ministry of Munitions during the First World War, and from November 1915, the Albert Street Works in Bilston became a Controlled Establishment under the authority of the Ministry of Munitions. Albert Street and other works produced field kitchens, mine hemispheres, aeroplane parts and bombs, rifle grenades, mortar bombs, and shell bodies. They also produced steel helmets. In order to cope with this increased demand, Sankeys took on large number of female workers during the war years, and at one time employed over 600 women.

At the end of the war many plants for the production of war materials were converted to peacetime use supplying fertilizers, pharmaceuticals, paints, plastics, textiles and other materials for civilian use forming a foundation for a successful and prosperous chemical industry that has served this country well ever since.



Munitions workers at Siemens, Stafford

*See M Sutton, Chemistry in Britain August 2014*

Richard Totty

## **Coope, Boyes and Simpson**

Coope, Boyes and Simpson are a powerful trio of capella vocalists ‘determined to keep alive the memory of Great War victims’.

Their show ‘In Flanders Fields’ has received a recent 4 star review in the Guardian. They will be playing a series of concerts this year to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of WW1.

Coope, Boyes and Simpson have performed on former battlefields, among the memorials of Tyne Cot and at concert halls in Britain and on the Continent. More recently they have also been working with Michael Morpurgo.

In their own words they perform with the ‘biting humour of the Tommie’s wartime experiences’. They are certainly as likely to leave you with a tear in the eye, as they are to make you smile.

Last year, in association with Lichfield Arts, we jointly presented ‘Blast from the Past’ at the Guildhall, Lichfield. I think all who attended would agree it was a most enjoyable evening.

This year, on Remembrance Sunday, November 9<sup>th</sup> we are proud to announce that Coope, Boyes and Simpson are performing ‘In Flanders Fields’ as our joint venture.

Please make a note of the date in your diary. I will inform Members of ticket sales details at Friday lectures and will again become the booking office for the Society.

Peter Evans

## **Annual Membership Subscription Renewal – The PayPal Option**

Annual subscriptions were due for renewal @ 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014. The rates are unchanged from a year ago and are: Individual Membership £20.00, Joint Membership £30.00, Concessionary Membership (Students and Unwaged) £15.00.

Many of you will be paying by cash or cheque (a number have already paid), or indeed for some it is taken care of automatically via bank standing order.

There is another option though, which is a convenient way to renew, if you choose to do it using your PC, tablet or other device. Log on to the Society’s website [www.sahs.uk.net](http://www.sahs.uk.net) and from the home page follow the links for subscription payment using PayPal. Select the type of Membership you are renewing and with your bank card details to hand make the appropriate payment to SA&HS electronically – it goes through to our PayPal Account.

It is easy for us to keep our subscription records up to date as PayPal always email a full details of payer, etc. advice to the Honorary Treasurer immediately on the payment transaction occurring. It is a secure and certain way of paying us. The payer also receives an email confirmation.

It’s just another way to renew which a number of you have taken up already.

Keith Billington



## Field Trip to the Tower Brewery, Walsitch Maltings, Burton-on-Trent

Date: Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2014

The Society and guests made a return visit to the Tower Brewery, an independent family brewery established by John Mills in 2001. It is located in the water tower of the Walsitch Maltings, who supplied malt to Thomas Salt and Company. Salt's once ranked with Bass, Worthington and Allsopps as a major brewer, not just on the local scene but also worldwide. This included exporting its famed IPA to the lucrative Indian market. Expansion in the 1870s included a new suite of buildings, with their traditional gabled kiln roofs with vent tops. Salt's was taken over by Bass in 1927 for the considerable sum of £1.17 million. Today many of these buildings are still extant, but are used for storage by several Burton companies.



The Victorian water tower itself had been abandoned for many years and was due to be demolished, until being bought by John Mills. Broken windows in the uppermost floor, where the reservoir once held the water, had become filled instead with 6 tons of pigeon droppings. John's first job on purchasing the Walsitch Maltings tower was to shovel the guano into bags and lower it down the three storeys by crane. The new brewery is now pigeon free and happily only the aroma of beer fills the air.

After meeting in John's excellent tap room – a micropub and museum in its own right – the tour commenced on the top floor. This is accessed today by a spiral staircase, though originally there was only an inspection funnel with a hatch. The reservoir was supplied by Salt's own borehole, from the underlying sandstones, with its gypsum rich water that Burton is famed for. The large water tank was bitumen lined. The party also marvelled at the craftsmanship of the pine beams and trusses, upon one of which was a signature, message and date denoting when the building had originally become redundant in 1957.

Tower Brewery relies on gravity to feed the grist case and supply the water pressure. On the second floor we were able to sample the different malts and hops that are used making the beers at the Tower Brewery.

On the ground floor we saw John's modern brewing equipment, where the final product is fermented and barrelled. We then returned to the warmth and hospitality of the tap room, with its log burning stove and



fascinating collection of mirrors, jugs and brewing memorabilia.



John brews 5 regular beers and 4 rotating, seasonal ales. The Walsitch Maltings' conversion was awarded a Civic Society Historical Building restoration award. The plaque is displayed on the wall at the front of the building. Yet again, we could only concur that this was a well deserved accolade and thank John Mills for an erudite and entertaining tour of the historic Tower Brewery.

Peter Evans

## Friends of Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archives (FoSSA)

Members are reminded that the Society has a subscription to FoSSA and this allows six SAHS members to attend FoSSA events at the rate for FoSSA members. Upcoming FoSSA events are:

1. A visit to the newly built and opened Archives at Dudley on Monday 6 October 2014 at 10.15am,
2. A talk by Sarah Charlton 'To the Manor Born – an introduction to the manorial records of Staffordshire' in the Staffordshire Record Office, Stafford, on Tuesday 14 October at 7.00pm, and
3. The AGM, also in the Staffordshire Record Office, on Monday 3 November at 7.30pm. Afterwards Dr Mike Kingman will talk on 'Pre Renaissance Brick Buildings of Staffordshire'.

All enquiries to Richard Totty [richard.totty4@gmail.com](mailto:richard.totty4@gmail.com)

### Lichfield Record Office

Recent Newsletters have reported on the proposals for the future development of the Staffordshire Archive Service and in particular the plans to bring all collections together onto a new extended site at the Staffordshire Record Office, which will mean the closure of the Lichfield Record Office. A bid was submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund in the early summer for finance for the project but in July it was learned that the bid was not successful. The HLF had several concerns including the way in which the Archive Service might interact with the community and also advised that a consultant be appointed to develop the plans for the Stafford site further. However the submission of a revised bid would be welcomed.

The project team is now addressing the concerns of the HLF and beginning the preparation of a second proposal. A revised bid for funds will be made in February 2015 and once new designs have been drawn up there will be a further consultation process to which all members can contribute as individual archive users. Meanwhile my understanding is that the Lichfield Record Office will remain open as usual.

Richard Totty August 2014

### News of the Transactions Volume XLVII

The text for the next transactions has now been sent to the printers, who say that we should have the printed volume by early December.

It will be a monograph, i.e. just one report, a large one by Oxford Archaeology on excavations in 2009-10 on the site of the new Staffordshire County Council headquarters in central Stafford (so at least some good will have come out of the great expense).

The title is not very gripping: *Excavations at Tipping Street, Stafford, 2009-10: Possible Iron Age Roundhouses, Three Stafford-type Ware Kilns, and Medieval and Post-Medieval Urban Remains* (I'll see if the authors can alter it for the front cover).

BUT the Stafford Ware pottery finds, which date from the mid 9th to end of the 10th Century, are both of *regional* and *national* significance. This is very much emphasised in the discussion (including some comments from Professor John Blair at Oxford). The excavators also found a complete, early modern 'Bartmann' jug which was buried in such a way that it was probably intended to ward off evil spirits.

Nigel Tringham

## Field Trip to Fault Mine, Tutbury

**Date: Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2014**

This was a prestigious trip for the Society to the Fault Mine, owned by British Gypsum (Saint-Gobain), who rarely allows access to the area.

Geologically the strata including the Tutbury Gypsum seams belong to the Upper Triassic Period and were formed c 237 million years ago. 'Tutbury' was just north of the equator on the edge of the Tethys Ocean. Evaporites, including gypsum, formed sub-aerially on mud flats or sabkhas along the water table, but just below the surface where it was saturated with sea water.

Alabaster was extracted for its translucent quality and decorative coloured veining from the eleventh century. The western front of St Mary's Church, Tutbury is an early example; the Queen's repair of a Unicorn's horn is a more recent! The present mine opened in 1838 to extract gypsum for plaster. Since 1952, the gypsum content of the mine has decreased. Today the mine extracts a mixture of gypsum and anhydrite known as cement rock. The mine is the oldest and the largest gypsum mine in Britain. It covers 13 square kilometres and has reserves in excess of 20 years.



Although expecting to tour the working face by Landover, we discovered that the mine was active on our given day. However, Noel Worley (the former Minerals and Estate Manager) explained to the group that we would be walking into the mine to explore the old workings. Jean Norris in the previous Newsletter has already described our morning underground. Suffice to say, as a former geologist, my personal memory is of the sulphate monolith, where gypsum had broken through the Mercian mudstone to form a diapir. Features such as these were expertly described by Noel, whose knowledge of geology and feeling for the history of the mine and its surrounding area was explicit.

After lunch at the mine offices, the afternoon was spent exploring the Fault crater and its environs. Members of the Society will need no reminding of the 1944 explosion, which created a crater covering some 12 acres and was 50 meters in depth. It is said to have been the largest non-nuclear explosion ever known. 70 people were killed, not just from the mine but also in the surrounding area. The mine was occupied by the Air Ministry from 1937 and used for storing munitions. Officially the cause is unknown, though in best Cluedo-ese, it was probably the Italian prisoners-of-war with the brass chisel.

Tea was taken in St. Werburgh's Church, Hanbury, where local alabaster has been much used in the pulpit, font and exclusively on monuments to Sir John de Hanbury (died 1303) and Ralph Adderley (died 1595). The group then returned to the mine area, to end a most exhausting, but enjoyable day.

Many thanks to Gail Higgs for help in organising the visit and to Dr. Noel Worley, whose infectious enthusiasm and knowledge was first class throughout.

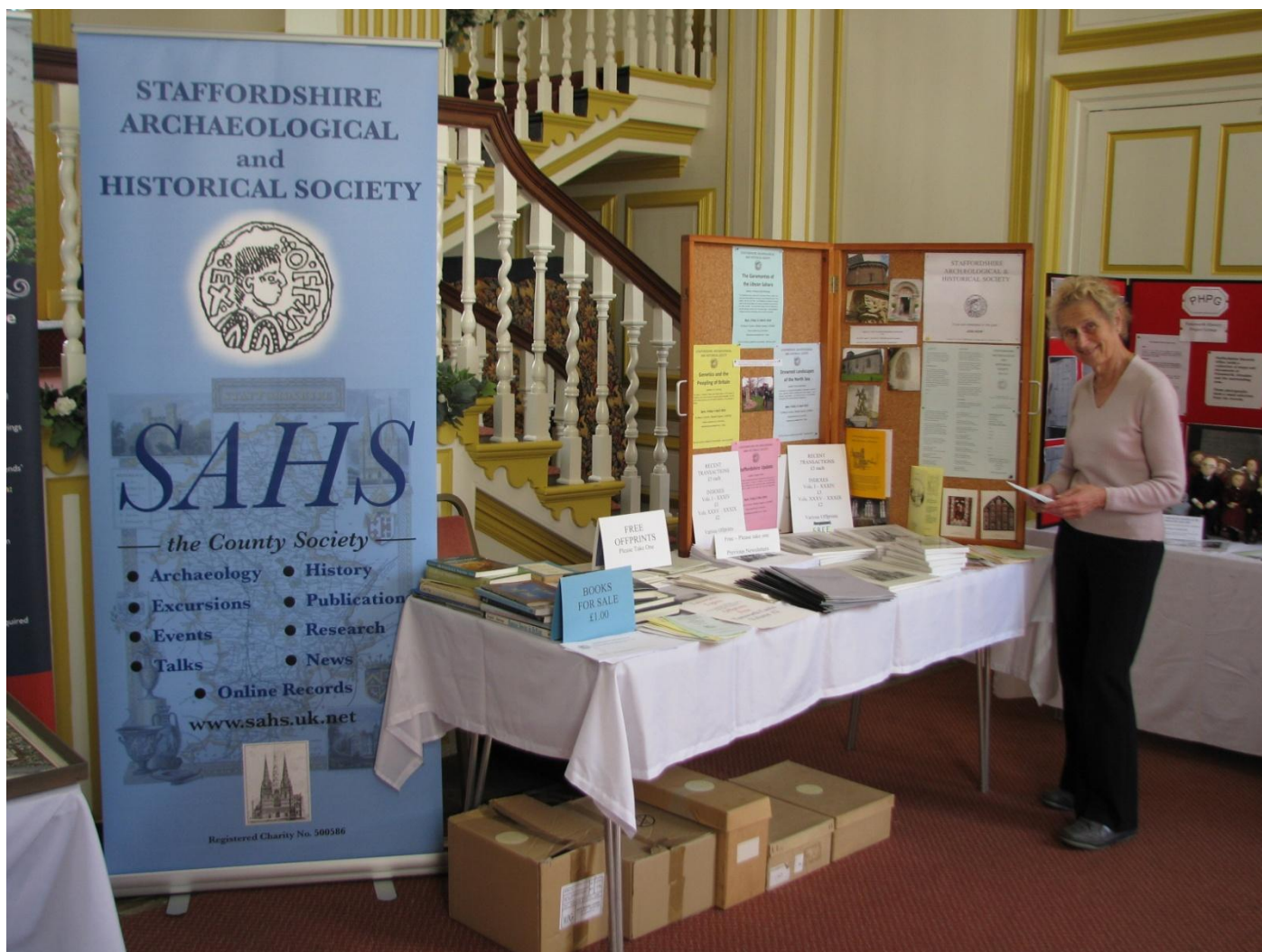
Peter Evans



### 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Middleton Hall History Fair 8<sup>th</sup> June 2014

As in the previous two years your Society was invited to attend the History Fair at Middleton Hall held this year on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> June and organised once again by the Peel Society. The event was unfortunately fairly sparsely attended but those that did turn up paid very close attention to our stall it has to be said and it was very much worth our while being there. A number of new Memberships signed up and the takings for the day were swelled by the sale of our various literatures available which included items from the extensive library of the late Jim Gould. Much material was also lapped up being given away, rather than sold, in the form of off-prints of articles from our Transactions. I attended along with Jenny Wilson to represent SA&HS and Jenny can be seen in the accompanying photograph in front of our display readying for the day ahead.

Keith Billington



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August 2014

#### NEW ARCHAEOPRESS TITLES & BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORTS – AUGUST 2014

We are very pleased to list below a selection and brief details of our some of our new Archaeopress Archaeology titles & BAR volumes for August 2014. Full details and catalogues can be found on our website [www.archaeopress.com](http://www.archaeopress.com).

Our new Autumn Catalogue is available to download now with all our latest titles and extensive backlist organised by subject area.

#### Archaeopress Archaeology – new for August 2014

*Ships, Saints and Sealore: Cultural Heritage and Ethnography of the Mediterranean and the Red Sea* edited by Dionisius A. Agius, Timmy Gambin and Athena Trakadas with contributions by Harriet Nash. 2014. ISBN 9781905739950. £32.00 –available in printed paperback or pdf eBook editions

*Towns in the Dark: Urban Transformations from Late Roman Britain to Anglo-Saxon England* by Gavin Speed. 2014. ISBN 9781784910044. £34.00. –available in printed paperback or pdf eBook editions

*The Prehistoric Burial Sites of Northern Ireland* by Harry and June Welsh. 2014. ISBN 9781784910068. £63.00. –available in printed paperback or pdf eBook editions

*Body, Cosmos and Eternity: New Trends of Research on Iconography and Symbolism of Ancient Egyptian Coffins* edited by Rogério Sousa. Archaeopress Egyptology 3. 2014. ISBN 9781784910020. £35.00. –available in printed paperback or pdf eBook editions

#### BAR British Series – New for August 2014

*A Social Topography of the Commote of Caerwedros in Ceredigion within its Regional Context during the Sixteenth Century* by G. Lynn Morgan. ISBN 9781407312934. £29.00. (BAR 601, 2014)

*The Gresham Ship Project A 16th-Century Merchantman Wrecked in the Princes Channel, Thames Estuary Volume I: Excavation and Hull Studies* edited by Jens Auer and Thijs J. Maarleveld. ISBN 9781407312101. £28.00. (BAR 602, 2014)

#### Digital Editions – New for August 2014

*Vici in Roman Gaul* by Monica Rorison. ISBN 1841712272. £18.00. (BAR S933, 2001)

*The Impact of Rome on Settlement in the Northwestern and Danube Provinces Lectures held at the Winckelmann-Institut der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin in winter 1998/99* edited by Stefan Altekamp and Alfred Schäfer. ISBN 1841712191. £18.00. (BAR S921, 2001)



**STAFFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP 2014-15**

Membership fees: Individual £20, Joint £30, Student/Unemployed £15

Title.....

Names(s).....

Address.....

Postcode .....

Email .....

Phone.....

I agree to allow the Society to contact me/us by email and telephone.

I/we enclose £..... for my/our subscription for the year 2014/15 for Individual / Joint / Student / Unemployed.

Signed .....

Date .....

Please send to Ms S Lupton, 71 Birchwood Road, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS14 9UN

Note: Direct Payments can be made using the PayPal system on the Web site.



**GIFT AID DECLARATION**

TO: STAFFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Choosing to Gift Aid the Subscription or donations you make to the SAHS will allow the Society, which enjoys Charitable status, to reclaim from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs 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 the form in 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:

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I would like the Staffordshire Archaeological & Historical Society (SAHS) to treat as Gift Aid all Subscriptions and Donations I make from the Date of this Declaration.

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

Please return to the Honorary Treasurer, Keith Billington, 4 Gainsbrook Crescent, Norton Canes, Cannock. WS11 9TN or by hand to me at a Meeting.

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