



# STAFFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## NEWSLETTER January 2021

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*Hon. President:* Dr John Hunt B.A., Ph.D., F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S., P.G.C.E. tel: 01543 423549

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*Happier Times – our visit to the church of St Mary and St Barlok, Norbury near Ellastone*

***zoom*** Lectures will restart on line on January 15 – full details inside!

***Transactions Volume LII – preview***

***Book reviews***

***Early Motoring in Wolverhampton***

***Sites you can visit anytime***

***Medieval Ordinations in Lichfield***

***Heritage at Risk***

Our cover photograph is a reminder of the happier times in the past when we were able to go on excursions to places of interest in and around Staffordshire. This was our visit a few years ago to the lovely parish church of Norbury in Derbyshire with its wonderful medieval funeral monuments and stained glass. We had tea and cake in the church after a guided tour and then went next door to the small National Trust property, Norbury Manor, with its splendid garden. We have not been able to have any excursions in 2020 but we hope to be able to resume them in the summer of 2021.

## Book Reviews

**England's Saintry Landscape** Trevor James Lichfield Press, 2020, 95 pp, £10-00. ISBN 978-0-905985-94-7

The author is quick to credit W G Hoskins and Eilert Ekwall and their influence is readily apparent in the enthusiasm that permeates this study. Trevor James' contention is that church dedications, place names, pilgrimage routes, local industries, fairs and other local customs contribute to our understanding of the historic religious landscape and the beliefs of the people who inhabited it. Further, the origins of some church dedications and place names would be lost without an assessment of some of the ancillary factors. In all, the author assesses scores of saintly connections from the relatively well known fact that St Michael churches are often on elevated land to the much rarer St Plegmund, St Eata and St Modwen.

The chapter on pilgrimage routes is particularly compelling with a detailed study of the dedication of St Wilfrid churches. The importance of rivers, crossing points and Roman roads is considered together with a recognition that the proximity of inns to churches turned the worldly needs of the pilgrims into profitable business. Inn names were used as what we would now call marketing devices to attract pilgrims.

He does not restrict himself to the explanation of church dedications with evidence also being provided to support the place name of towns, villages and deserted settlements being derived from a saint, perhaps because of his birthplace, even though there may be no local church dedicated to that saint.

His wide geographical knowledge of saintly dedications and connections is impressive. There is scarcely a part of England that is not cited and particular attention is paid to Cornwall and the Midlands. Similarly, the wide range of sources provides a helpful guide for further research. He weaves topographical observations, Court Rolls, Charter Rolls, commercial directories and secondary sources into his narrative and provides an annotated bibliography which will assist those seeking to undertake further research.

The photographs and illustrations are informative.

This book is strongly recommended as a handbook for both the student of saintly influence on the landscape and the casual reader.

Michael Arnold Nuneaton Historical Association

**James of St George and the Castles of the Welsh Wars**, Malcolm Hislop, Pen and Sword, 2020, 302p, £25-00. ISBN 9781526741301

The title of Malcom Hislop's book tends to understate the extent of what he manages to embrace in this important volume.

The role of James of St George in the construction of a number of North Wales castles, such as Harlech, Beaumaris, Caernarvon and Conway, is amply covered. In particular he emphasises the research of A. J. Taylor into the nature of the expertise and design capability that James of St George brought with him from the Savoy region. In particular he identifies architectural characteristics which occur in Welsh castles, such as the wide use of latrine turrets and specifically segmental-headed two-light windows in the great gatehouse at Harlech, which have their origin in the Savoyard region in which he had worked

for many years before being recruited to Edward I's service. This is an important testimony to the role of this famous castle-builder.

Whilst it is important as an examination of James of St George's contribution in Wales, there are also important sections on castle provision elsewhere in Wales and also in Scotland, where, in fact, James of St George finished his service with Edward I.

This is extraordinarily well-illustrated with many good quality photographs and very clear ground plans. These make this book an ideal reference source and also a very useful *aide memoire* for the inveterate castle visitor.

Trevor James

**Tracing Your Ancestors in Lunatic Asylums: a Guide for Family Historians**, Michelle Higgs, Pen and Sword, 2019, 196p, £14-99. ISBN 978 1 52674 485 2

My great-great-grandmother Emma Wood's brother, Theophilus Wood, died in the Warwickshire Lunatic Asylum in 1871. It was his extraordinary fore-name that initially attracted my attention but it was sad to note the location of his death.

This guide by Michelle Higgs has provided me with sufficient background to explore what had happened to my distant relative. This basket-maker, working on the River Anker at Polesworth in North Warwickshire, was dispatched, as his condition worsened, to his local county asylum at Hatton.

Michelle has explored how the identification of mental health has changed over time in Britain. This is clearly explained against a background of how the regulations and legislation have changed, and how that has affected the nature of the treatment, and indeed the premises in which such treatment has occurred. There has been an evolution in the treatment of mental health. Interestingly some of the early descriptions of mental difficulty often described as being forms of 'melancholy' rather than our modern label of 'depression'. She explains how the people experiencing epilepsy became linked to the treatment of mental health, despite its source and causation being very different.

This is a very helpful book. It reviews the current literature and provides useful advice on accessing and using sources. Its particular merit, from this reviewer's point of view, is the provision of a number of very carefully and sensitively developed case studies which enable the reader to see how various cases developed, and how they were treated, over periods of time.

Trevor James

**Petit's Tours of Old Staffordshire**, Philip Modiano, RPS Publications 2019, 180p [with 185 images], £14.00 ISBN 978-1-9164931-0-0

Occasionally a remarkable book appears on a most unexpected subject. Philip Modiano's research into the life and creative output of the Reverend John Louis Petit is one such work.

Modiano presents this relatively unknown clergyman, who became a participant in the great mid-19th Century debate, with Gilbert Scott and Pugin, over approaches to church architectural design and modification, and was also a hugely talented water colourist, through a very imaginative approach. What he has done is to assemble a very substantial collection of Petit's water colours, predominately churches but also industrial and other scenes, in the form of a series of eight very accessible tours through Staffordshire and the fringes of Shropshire and Derbyshire.

The high quality of Petit's water colours is more than reflected by the illustrations provided. Some additional items from further afield also reveal his wider observational activity, with Cartmel Priory, Fribourg and Dinon being indications of how far away his water colouring had taken him. The author does suggest that Petit's work is closer to French Impressionism than to his contemporary Pre-Raphaelites. In accepting this analysis one has to record that Petit's water colours do provide an excellent source to support our knowledge of the development of many churches in Staffordshire and

nearby counties. His water colours of St Bartholomew's at Tong, 'that Cathedral of the south Midlands' or at St Oswald's at Ashbourne amply confirm his importance as a source for local historians and topographers as they try to 'read' the landscape. A classic example is his water colour of the entry porch at St Michael-on-Greenhill at Lichfield, so astounding that a painting of 1828 provides a modern day awareness that this porch has basically remained unchanged for almost two hundred years.

What is so astonishing is that much of John Louis Petit's water colouring was kept by descendants and relatives of his sister Emma and were being stored in an old house in Surrey until 1957, after which many were auctioned by a new owner of the house in phases until 1999. It is estimated that he left a collection of 10-15,000 items of work, drawings as well as water colours.

This book is a fitting tribute to an extraordinarily talented artist, with his home county of Staffordshire taking centre stage; and the manner of presentation is a significant achievement by the author.

Trevor James

**Tracing Your Poor Ancestors: A Guide for Family Historians**, Stuart A Raymond, Pen and Sword, 2020, 196p, £14-99. ISBN 9781526742933

This is a very helpful aide memoire for anyone wishing to find out what their impoverished ancestors may have experienced. Inevitably it cannot provide precise answers to the most specific of enquiries but it does explain very carefully what resources are available, and offers good bibliographical references.

In every section documentary examples, from Stuart Raymond's experience, reveal what might be discovered by a determined researcher.

This is an ambitious book and it succeeds in explaining the nature of early poverty before the Elizabethan Poor Laws of 1597 and 1601; the manner in which the poor were managed, indoors and outdoors, until the transformative Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834; and the universal treatment of the poor in more recent times. For example, in the latter element we learn how workhouses evolved into hospitals for the poorest of people. The latter has implications for our own times because, for example, both my grandmothers were reluctant to be taken to their neighbourhood hospitals because they remembered that they occupied former workhouse premises. The memory of this form of care, latterly ameliorated, still was, and for some still is, part of a community-held fear of what the workhouse had represented.

Particularly helpful, from my perspective, was the section which explained and differentiated between vagrants and paupers. Equally the last section is an extraordinarily useful introduction to a host of miscellaneous possible additional avenues to explore, such as adoption and friendly society membership.

This is strongly recommended.

Trevor James

**Harecastle's Canal and Railway Tunnels** — Allan C Baker & Mike G Fell 208pp, 275x210mm, about 200 pictures, 40 maps & plans (some in several sections), 20 documents and 5 diagrams, hardback, Lightmoor Press, Unit 144B, Lydney Trading Estate, Harbour Road, Lydney GL15 5EJ, 2019, ISBN 978 1 911 038 62 7, £25

Quiz question: How many transport tunnels have there been at Harecastle? Two canal tunnels, of course: James Brindley's (2,880 yards long, built 1766–75, closed 1918) and Thomas Telford's (2,926 yards, 1824–27, still open). The North Staffordshire Railway's line, engineered by George Parker Bidder, had three tunnels (1846–48). The South Tunnel, 1,763 yards long, was for much of its length between the two canal tunnels but some 18 feet above them. The Middle and North Tunnels were much shorter, 178 and 127 yards respectively. Electrification (1964–66), under William Fitzgerald Beatty, the Regional Chief Civil Engineer, caused the line to be diverted and a new tunnel 272 yards long built; the North

Tunnel was opened out and the Middle and South Tunnels abandoned. Hence the answer to the quiz question is 'six'. Thoroughly researched and well referenced, the book discusses the options considered before each tunnel was constructed. On two occasions (1820 and 1912), diverting the canal through the Bath Pool Valley (the route later used by the electrified railway) was investigated but rejected because of the costs including back-pumping and the delays to boats by having some sixteen extra locks. The only tunnel for which the costs are known is Telford's. His initial rough estimate was £60,000; the final cost was £112,681 but this included increasing the width of the tunnel to incorporate a towpath. A particularly interesting chapter concerns the electric tugs, originally (1914–31) battery operated, and later (1931–54) using power from an overhead cable. The chapters on the building of the railway diversion and the repair works needed to the canal tunnel (1973–77) include several photographs showing the use of narrow gauge and monorail construction railways. Railway operations near both ends of the tunnels, at Kids Grove (where the station has had five different names) and at Chatterley, are explained and extensively illustrated. The final chapter investigates the coal and iron mines in Harecastle Hill and their relationships to the tunnels. The book is produced to Black Dwarf's usual high standards. In summary, a rewarding study of an out-of-the-ordinary subject.

Peter Brown (reprinted from News and Views, the journal of the North Staffordshire Historians)

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## **The Black Death**

An elderly parish priest was tending his garden near a convent when a passerby stopped to inquire after the priest's much-loved roses.

*"Not bad," said the priest, "but they suffer from a disease peculiar to this area known as the black death."*

*"What on earth is that?" asked the passerby, anxious to increase his garden knowledge.*

*"Nuns with scissors."* said the parish priest.

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## **1-3 Winton Square, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire** **Melanie Morris, 2020**

### **Introduction**





Nos. 1-3 Winton Square is a grade II listed building, first listed on 19th April 1972. It lies within Winton Square Conservation Area, designated in October 1972, and forms one side of the formal square designed by the North Staffordshire Railway Company as part of the development of Stoke-on-Trent Railway Station.

Nos. 1-3 Winton Square were designed initially by the surveyor Henry Arthur Hunt (1810–1889, knighted in 1876) in 1847-49 as a 'sister' range to Nos. 4-6 Winton Square, although there were some subtle differences from the outset and differences which have evolved. The plans were designed to be interlocking S-shaped spaces, introducing irregularity in the outside appearance into a largely symmetrical plan form for each dwelling. The later extensions have further exaggerated the irregularity and Gothic character, changing the plan form in each case.

From the mid 1840s the railway companies started to build their own locomotives and rolling stock with the consequent emergence of railway towns such as Swindon and Crewe. By the 1840s, integrated sites were constructing the components and assembling them on site. As the headquarters of the North Staffordshire Railway, Stoke-on-Trent incorporated these functions, which is why they needed their more specialised engineering staff to be living near the works. Of the residents, John Curphey Forsyth, Thomas Weatherburn Dodds, and William Henry Stubbs were the most famous resident engineers, living at various times in No. 3 and No. 2.

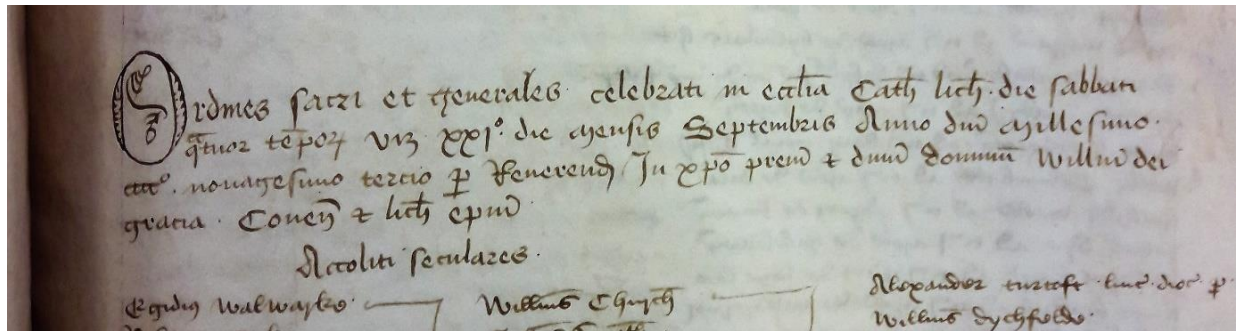
Of the surviving buildings along the North Staffordshire Railway, Stone Station (1848) and Sandon Railway Station (1849-50) bear direct comparison with the architectural style adopted by H A Hunt for Stoke-on-Trent and Winton Square but there are no directly comparable houses of this ilk for senior railway employees. The neo-Jacobean style of architecture is one which was being widely used in the 1840s and was seen as quintessentially English. The original buildings were all constructed in English bond brickwork with an orange-red brick for the main walling, with diaperwork in blue brick. The dressed window and door surrounds are sandstone. Many of the windows are sashes with a single horizontal glazing bar, supplemented by casements with two horizontal glazing bars at Lower Ground level. The same details are found on the main station buildings fronting Station Road and the brickwork along the station buildings to the platforms. This style of brick detailing is a signature of the architect, which is found throughout the buildings surrounding Winton Square and within the railway ensemble, creating a harmonious whole.

The conversion of the building to office use has led to the loss of all historic panelled doors throughout the building, with the exception of the external doors, most of which are replacements based on traditional forms. There are also no historic fireplaces. The internal layout has been heavily altered, as can be seen from the phase plans. Most of these alterations appear to have been carried out during the 1980s refurbishment and change to office use. The building does retain, however, a number of traditional plaster cornices at ground floor level, which have been hidden under suspended ceilings.

The analysis discusses the historic context for the buildings, the changing plan form and the better-known residents.



only be held on six days in the year, all Saturdays, four Ember Days and two others. In the Coventry and Lichfield diocese most ordinations took place four times a year on the Ember days, which were periods of prayer and fasting.



Heading of the list of ordinands in the cathedral of Lichfield on Saturday 21 September 1493 by Bishop William Smith from his register SRO B/A/1/13

The ordination ceremony was held wherever it was convenient for the bishop, sometimes in the Cathedral in Lichfield sometimes elsewhere. (A very large group were ordained at the Abbey church of St Peter in Shrewsbury in December 1494.) Several bishops carried out ordinations at their manor at Haywood and Bishop William Bothe was in the habit of ordaining small groups at his manor at Clayton in Lancashire; at other times ordinations were not carried out by the diocesan bishop but by his suffragan bishops, and sometimes parish churches were used.

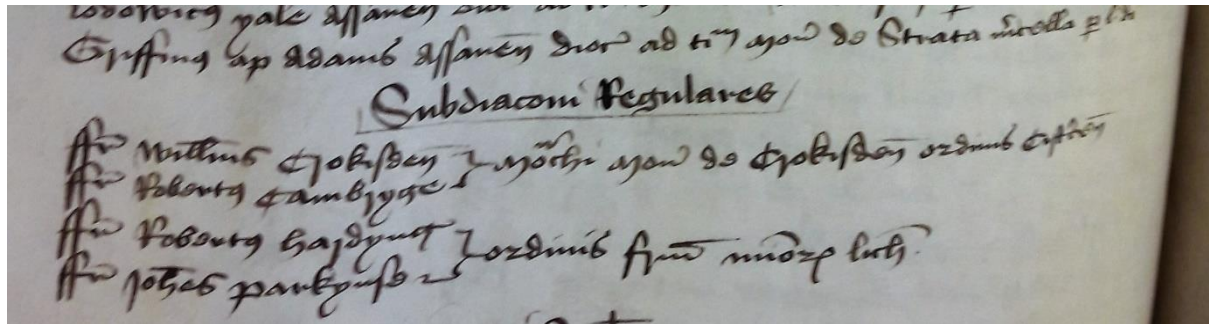


A medieval ordination

About a quarter of those ordained were religious, that is men who had taken vows and become monks or friars and those that were from monasteries in the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield normally were ordained by the bishop or his suffragan. The numbers involved could be substantial for example on 20 September 1449 John, Bishop of Insulensis (a suffragan) ordained 67 men including 24 secular priests. Pre-Reformation the diocese was extensive including Staffordshire, Derbyshire, north Shropshire, north Warwickshire, Cheshire and Lancashire south of the Ribble. Most ordinations were held in Staffordshire so that much travelling was involved. Candidates would know when to present themselves for ordination but not where, and letters must have been sent out by the diocesan clerks to inform archdeacons and rural deans of the place so that they could notify individual candidates. The logistics of the whole procedure were substantial; monks of the Abbeys of Whalley and Sawley in Lancashire faced a journey of 180km to reach Lichfield, which would be on foot, there and back four times in a period of a year or two, and many monks from Whalley made

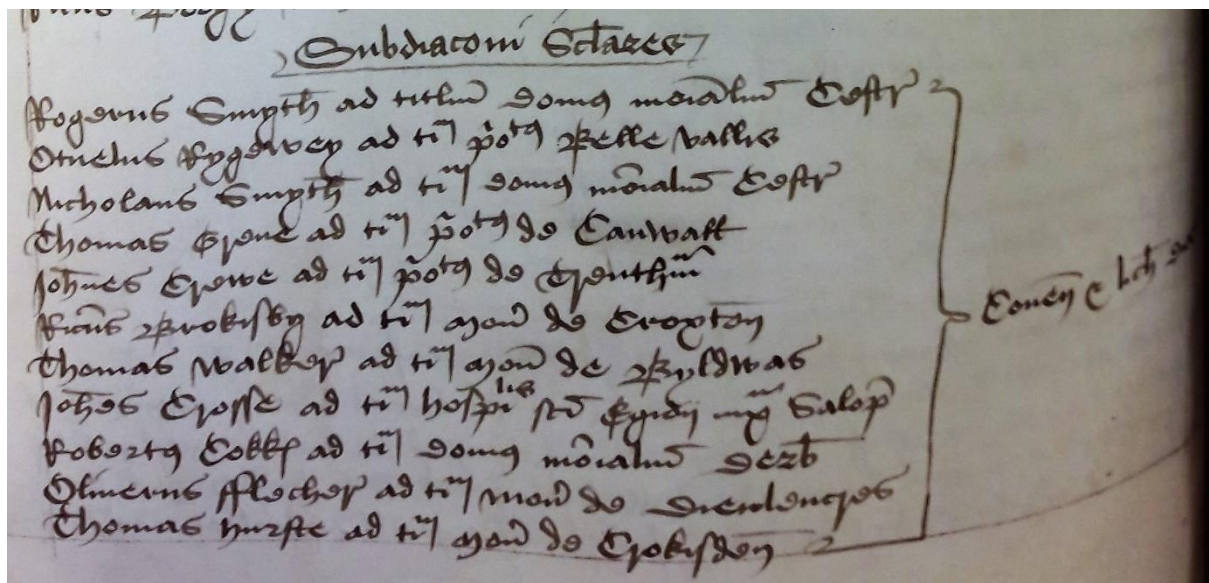


these journeys. A few religious from outside the diocese were ordained here too, but these were not from very far outside, for example the abbeys of Evesham and Halesowen in the diocese of Worcester.



A typical entry in the list of ordinands. Brothers William Croksden and Robert Cambryge of the Cistercian monastery of Croxden and Brothers Robert Hardynot and John Parkynson, friars minor of Lichfield were ordained subdeacons by Thomas Ford, bishop of Achonry, a suffragan bishop, on March 24 1494/5 at the prebendial church of Eccleshall. SRO/B/A/13

Three quarters of those ordained were secular, that is not monks or friars. Only those of appropriate status and with the necessary training and knowledge could be ordained and a man presenting himself for ordination had to prove his title. Title started as proof that the candidate was of suitable social status and had some financial support but quickly became an endorsement from a religious house that the candidate was suitable.



Secular Subdeacons presenting for ordination 19 December 1495 in Lichfield Cathedral by Thomas Bishop of Archany, each listing the source of their titles; in order the house of the nuns of Chester, the priory of Belle Valle (Beauvale), the house of the nuns of Chester, the priory of Canwell, the priory of Trentham, the monastery of Croxden, the monastery of Buildwas, the hospital of St Giles (St Egidus) Shrewsbury, the house of the nuns of Derby, the monastery of Dieulacres, the monastery of Croxden. SRO B/A/13

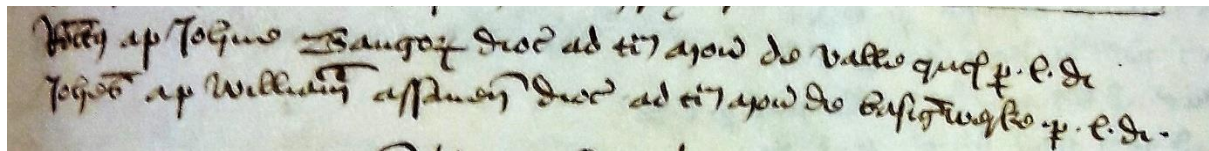
Some have argued that these religious houses were acting as clearing houses for those who wished to be ordained but it is not at all clear how titles were obtained or quite what a candidate had to do to obtain one. They were though important and in the lists of those ordained the origin of their title is always recorded.

The religious houses that provided these titles were not confined to those within the diocese and many were in the areas around the diocese; but mostly within counties adjoining the

diocese with a few slightly further away. Furthest away were the small monastery of Cymmer near Dolgellau, the priory of St Frideswide in Oxford, Furness Abbey in Cumbria and the priory of Shelford in Nottinghamshire.

Some of the houses granting titles were those of nuns - the very small and impoverished nunnery of Cookshill in Worcestershire was a regular provider of titles. In general it seems that the smaller establishments were more active in this field with the larger monasteries for example that of St Mary in Coventry providing titles for very few. Another frequent supplier of title was the hospital of St Giles in Shrewsbury - a small hospital for lepers. The nunnery at Farewell regularly gave titles but the house of the friars minor in Lichfield itself gave very few. The whole enterprise of giving titles needs more research as it is not at all well understood, either just what the title implied and why such small monasteries gave so many titles.

Most secular candidates were from the local diocese of Lichfield and Coventry but some came from elsewhere but to be ordained outside of their own diocese letters dismissory from their bishop were needed and the production of these is recorded on the registers.



*The ordination of two Welsh candidates with letters dismissory (p.l.di.), Robert ap John from the diocese of Bangor, title from the monastery of Valle Crucis and John ap William from the diocese of St Asaph, title from the monastery of Basingwerk in 1493 SRO B/A/13*

Candidates for ordination would all have been young; those wishing to be ordained as acolytes might be in their late teens with others being ordained as priests in their mid to late twenties. The whole enterprise was complex and the numbers sometimes quite large. Regularly a hundred men were ordained at one ceremony and on occasion many more. But where were the candidates accommodated before and after the ceremony? Housing and feeding 100 men is no easy task. It must though have been a congenial occasion, a chance to meet others, to talk, exchange ideas and to debate as well as eat and drink, and given that these were mostly young men to enjoy themselves a bit. We know very little about the organisation of these events; even the writing and delivering of letters around the diocese telling candidates where they were to assemble for the ceremony was a major task. These events were very important in church life – and indeed still are – hence the care with which they have been recorded in the bishop's registers. With the numbers involved services must have been very long and tiring for the bishop, which is perhaps why so often they avoided it and delegated the task to a suffragan.

Historians have used these lists mainly to identify individual ordinands as relevant to monastic histories but little attention has been paid to the mechanism of ordination and the importance or otherwise of the large gatherings of both secular and regular clergy at these events. The registers are all available in the Staffordshire Record Office; some have been transcribed and printed (those of Walter Langton, Roger Stretton and William Bothe) but others are still waiting for this level of attention.

The following illustration shows an ordination conducted in Spain but given the universality of the Roman Catholic Church in western Europe at the time were such scenes commonplace in Lichfield in the fifteenth century?





A painting by the Catalan artist Jaume Huguet (1412-92) from his Retaule de Saint Vicent de Sarrià, of 1455-60 which is now in the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya in Barcelona. In this panel St Vincent is ordained as deacon by his Bishop, St Valerius of Saragossa: we can delight in the details of liturgy and contemporary life and costume such paintings record. As a painting it is a splendid representation of the beauty of medieval ritual and practice.

*STAFFORDSHIRE RECORD SOCIETY*

Registered Charity: 228205

is pleased to announce the publication of its latest volume

*Occasional Paper no. 5* ISBN 978 0 90171 916 4

**SWYNFEN JERVIS MP**  
**1797–1867**

**Radical Landowner, Poetaster,  
Pteridologist and Shakespearian**

SIMON SWYNFEN JERVIS

Swynfen Jervis was only five years old when in 1802 he inherited the Darlaston estate near Stone as the heir of a childless cousin, whose formidable widow – ‘the Dragon’ – took care of his early years. The experience may have fashioned his unconventional character as a member of the landed gentry – founder member of the Reform Club, Radical MP, opponent of the Corn Laws and church tithes, and supporter of the railways. But his interests were wide-ranging, with literary and theatrical contacts in London and himself a poet (of sorts) and author of *A Dictionary of the Language of Shakspeare* [sic], published the year after his death. Whilst at Darlaston he rebuilt the mansion house and indulged the Victorian craze for ferns.

A scrap book compiled for the marriage of his daughter in 1856 provides an opportunity to delve more deeply into his family relationships and friendships, notably with Christina Rossetti who contributed an otherwise unknown quatrain on a pet cockatoo, cruelly ‘murdered’ by a dog called Turk. Portraits by Delaroche and Delacroix are further delights in this memoir of a Staffordshire ‘original’.

Price to non-members is £12 *plus* postage and packing: £3 for UK and £10 for rest of the world. Orders to be placed with the Society’s honorary secretary:

Dr Matthew Blake, Staffordshire Record Society, William Salt Library,  
Eastgate Street, STAFFORD ST16 2LZ matthew.blake@btinternet.com

For the Society please consult its website: [www.s-h-c.org.uk](http://www.s-h-c.org.uk)

*Pteridology is the study of ferns. Ed.*

## **Zoom lectures are around the corner !**

Elsewhere in this Newsletter you will find the programme of **Zoom Lectures** in place for the coming spring. Starting with ‘**Aethelflaed Warrior Queen**’ to be presented to a Zoom audience on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 8.00 pm, the speaker **Joanna Arman**. An email will be issued to the Membership, probably on the day 15<sup>th</sup> January, with the necessary information as to how to participate. So, be ready !



## EARLY MOTORING

Some years ago Mr Peter Lester approached the Society with a query about Sunbeam Motor Cars of Wolverhampton. In spite of my best efforts I was unable to help him but he nevertheless sent me some information about the company. This has recently come to light as a result of Lockdown excavations in my filing cabinet. The Prospectus of the Sunbeam Motor Car Company Limited, dated 11 January 1905, states that it has been formed to purchase and take over as a going concern (as from September 1 1904) and further develop the Motor Car business of John Marston Limited, makers of the Sunbeam Cycles.

The main object in forming the present Company is to introduce more capital into the business, to provide for the extension of the Works, and the additional working capital which is needed to cope with its increasing volume. On offer are 40,000 shares of £1 each.

The business is carried on at the Moorfield Works, Blakenhall, Wolverhampton, these having been especially planned for the Motor Car Industry. They are at present capable of turning out two finished cars a week and there are orders on the books sufficient to keep the Works fully occupied until the middle of May. It is intended to extend the Works to enable the Company to turn out at least four cars a week of standard pattern.



The report of the Estate Agents follows with a valuation of £15,000. John Marston had been in business for three years and recorded profits of more than £600 in the second year, more than £700 in the third year. In the five months ending 31 January 1904 profits were £4,270 and in the corresponding five months ending 31 January 1905, £11,127.

The policy of the Company for the past two years has been to make one type of car only...so that every part is standardised with the result that the cost of production has been considerably curtailed enabling the Company to reduce the price of their 12 H.P. Standard pattern car from 500 to 430 guineas for the present season.

I also received some photocopied pages from the journal *The Car*, No. 86, January 13 1904.

CARS AND HOW TO DRIVE THEM      No. XXXIII-THE SUNBEAM by the Hon. Maurice Gifford

The article includes three photographs but sadly the poor quality of early photocopiers makes it difficult to reproduce them. If there are any Sunbeam aficionados out there I would gladly pass on the pages.

Mr Gifford says that because he was impressed with reports of the car's performance on a non-stop Glasgow to London run, he asked Marstons to send a car over for a trial run. Considering he lived in Gloucestershire this was very good of them. He explained that he could not drive himself, having lost an arm in the Matabele Rebellion in 1896. His wife though, after a few lessons, was soon able to handle the car.

There are three photographs of her in the driving seat (wearing a fetching flat cap) one of which was taken after she won the Grimesthorpe Park point-to-point contest.



The article gives a very detailed mechanical description of the car – I particularly like the idea of artillery wheels. Mr Gifford did his own maintenance with the assistance of a man to clean it. It has already done 2,500 miles. Hints as to Driving contain detailed instructions on changing gear with the advice not to proceed beyond second speed until you have mastered the steering. Further Hints include ‘always carry a spare accumulator’.

In conclusion he says ‘I may add that I have found that this car will climb almost any hill on the second speed with a full load, and in towns, by throttling down the steering column accelerator, you can run on the fourth speed at eight miles an hour very silently, which is a great advantage and leaves your feet free for the brake and clutch. In fact, I have found the car very easy to manage in every respect.’

There is a sad ending to this story, Mr. Gifford accidentally set light to his clothing and died on July 1 1910.

## Betty Fox

*Sunbeam motor cars were produced in Wolverhampton from 1901 to 1934 when the company was taken over by the Rootes Brothers who a few years later started the Sunbeam-Talbot range. Ed.*

## EVEN EARLIER MOTORING

From *The Staffordshire Advertiser* November 11 1833

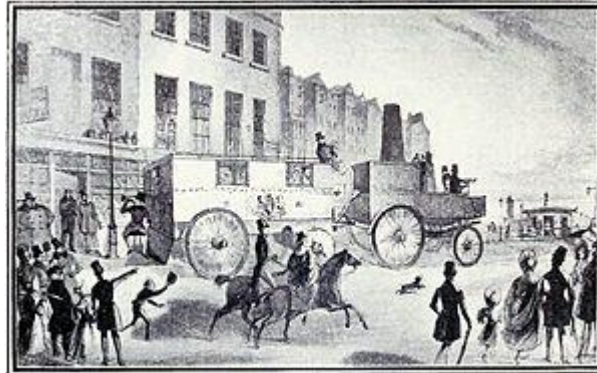
**SIR C. DANCE'S STEAM CARRIAGE** – This carriage started from London at 4 o'clock on Friday morning, for Birmingham, at which town it was expected to arrive between 4 and 5 o'clock in the afternoon. It had an Omnibus attached containing the gentlemen who engaged it for the journey.

Having ascended Highgate-hill, they arrived at the Wellington Inn, a distance of five miles from London, in thirty-three minutes. Here a small leakage in one of the pipes being discovered, it was considered prudent to repair it,

by which a delay of five hours was occasioned. The carriage again started about half-past nine, and proceeded without any accident to Stoney Stratford, where it arrived at six in the evening.

The carriage moved at the rate of *eight* miles an hour, exclusive of stoppages, the road being as bad as it possibly could be for the purpose, and the omnibus laden with twenty persons and their luggage, in addition to several sacks of coke, &c.

It was then fully intended to proceed to Birmingham on the following morning; but, when on the point of starting, it was discovered that the damaged pipe was again defective, it was determined to proceed no further – the gentlemen considering the objects of the experiment to be fully and satisfactorily answered, and being unwilling to occasion disappointment by again risking the possibility of a similar occurrence.



*The Steam Carriage in Brighton*

The party consisted of Mr. Telford, Col. Paisley, Messrs. Rickman, Bramah, Donkin, Thomas, Field, MacNeil, Simpson, Carpmael, Gordon and several other scientific men. “These eminent engineers we are assured (says the *Birmingham Gazette*) expressed their decided opinion, that although the engine had been put to a test beyond its fair power, the practicability of the undertaking was completely established, and that an engine properly constructed on the same principles would be equal to whatever might be required of it. We understand also, that the greatest satisfaction was expressed by all persons who saw the carriage in its progress, and that but one opinion appeared to be entertained by those who witnessed the performance – that its ultimate success was placed beyond the possibility of a doubt.”

There are scientific men, however, who entertain great doubts whether steam carriages can be brought into work on common roads, without such perpetual derangements of the machinery as will render the use of them inexpedient.

Betty Fox

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## MORE BOOKS/PODCASTS

**Boudica at Mancetter: The Latin, the Land, The Logistics**, Margaret Hughes, Atherstone Civic Society, 2020, 256p, £10-00 [and £3-00 p + p]. ISBN 978-0-9551803-3-0. Enquiries to [secretary@atherstonecivicsociety.co.uk](mailto:secretary@atherstonecivicsociety.co.uk)

One of the locational mysteries of the history of these islands is where exactly did Queen Boudica fight her final battle in AD 60 against her Roman opponents.

Margaret Hughes has examined the source material and the etymological and topographical evidence for a site at Mancetter in Warwickshire and she presents a very carefully reasoned argument for it to have been the location of that highly significant battle. She has provided a very interesting analysis of the place name evidence; and she has explored the detail of the site close by the archaeological remains of the Roman fort, in which the present-day parish church stands, and she reasons that this matches the clues provided by Tacitus.

Margaret has very carefully provided us with a very objective analysis of the arguments in favour of the other principal sites that are considered possible alternative locations for this battle. These include circumstantial evidence such as their juxtaposition to the Watling Street and the availability of water and other resources.

Margaret’s hypothesis shares a weakness suffered by all the other principal nominations, at Hints, High Cross, Catthorpe and Towcester. The discovery of battlefield archaeology, artefacts or extensive skeletal evidence would have helped to decide the most likely location but none has emerged.

What we do have is a very coherent and carefully argued assessment of the evidence and that is a hallmark of Margaret’s research and a compliment to her scholarship. This is a valuable contribution to the debate.

Trevor James

Lockdown may be a terrible time for local history societies, but it is a good time to research and write local history, if resources are available online. This year Ridware Study Group members have produced two publications:

**Friends in Arms: Colonel Lewis Chadwick and Colonel Simon Rugeley in the English Civil War 1642-48, by Mark Eades. £8**

Lewis Chadwick and Simon Rugeley were friends from childhood, growing up at Ridware Hall and Hawkesyard respectively. They would have lived quiet lives as country gentlemen, if the Civil War had not intervened, and propelled them into prominence in Staffordshire. Both fought for Parliament, and their letters to their commander, Lord Denbigh, reveal much about the fighting in and administration of the county. Mark Eades has researched and written the history of the conflict through their eyes, and provides a transcription of the letters to Lord Denbigh.

**A History of Armitage Potbank, Part 1: 1809-1900, by Richard Ewing. £8**

This excellent history of the Armitage pottery covers its troubled early history, and then its incredible rise under the leadership of Edward Johns as a producer of sanitary ware. Extensive research has gone into the development of its products and the daily lives of the men who worked there, providing a snapshot of life in a Victorian industrial village.

(If you would like to purchase copies, please contact David Smith (Tel: (01543) 307456; email: [david.smith5500@ntlworld.com](mailto:david.smith5500@ntlworld.com)).

**Podcasts on Wroxeter and the Roman West Midlands**

Amongst several podcasts about the region, History West Midlands has recently released podcasts by Dr Roger White of the University of Birmingham on Wroxeter Roman city and the Roman West Midlands.

<https://historywm.com/podcasts>

**Domesday DNA: Edgeworth. Daniel Edgeworth, 2nd ed. 2020. Self-published, USA. ISBN 978-1-538-08821-0. Available from [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk) at £12.37.**

*The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records for 1085 that ‘the king had important deliberations and exhaustive discussions with his council about this land, how it was peopled and with what sort of men’.<sup>1</sup> The author of this book contends that one of those men, the Domesday holder of lands in Gloucestershire, was Herman de Dreux on account of the rarity of his first name amongst known Domesday landholders, and, later charter evidence, which he uses to create a convincing identification.

From this, he goes on to trace the subsequent history of Herman’s descendants, and how one branch took the surname Edgeworth to identify themselves, and the family subsequently spread into a number of English counties, including Staffordshire, which will be of interest to those concerned with medieval and post-medieval families in this county. He argues that John of Blithfield (c.1179-1205) and his subsequent descendants including the Bagot family of Blithfield are many of the direct descents of Herman de Dreux, who he suggests lived between c.1066 and died sometime after 1137. This would make him approximately 20 years old at the time of the Domesday survey. Altogether, some 11 different surnames of families spread across 9 shires are identified as being descents of Herman de Dreux. He himself is identified as a son of Baldric, constable of France, grandson of Germond de Montfort and thus a descendant of the Counts of Hainault and Dukes of Lotharingia.

The remainder of the book contains some biographies of notable members of the Edgeworth family in the north-west of England, Ireland, and later to English colonies in north America, from whom the author is descended.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, trans. G. N. Garmonsway, London, 1972, p.216. This is of course the origin of the Domesday survey.



Domesday landholders are cited as the progenitors of many English families, and what makes the text more interesting is the author's attempt to use the science of modern genetics to try to link the Edgeworth family and their descendants and identify origins for Herman de Dreux if his earlier historical work is accepted. Using the Edgeworth Surname Project, part of Family Tree DNA, he has sought to identify and 'map' the DNA of living Edgeworths (in the US) to determine if these modern Edgeworths share sufficient material to show a common descent. He also seeks to show linkages between specific parts (haplogroups) of his (and their) DNA with DNA samples extracted (and published) from various European burials from the Bronze Age to c.1000AD. This, whilst not as conclusive as the author would like, does show some interesting linkages to specific parts of Britain, including what he regards as Viking-origin Scottish families. More evidence would make this section more convincing. This is clearly work in progress and as noted would benefit from further genetic samples and a clearer link to recent genetic research on the origins of modern-day Europeans. It is disappointing that references to well-known large-scale DNA projects with a clear, rigorous academic and scientific base such as the Oxford University People of the British Isles project led by Sir Walter Bodmer are marked by their absence. Such comparison would enable a more nuanced understanding of the author's suggestions in the text as well as placing his work in a wider context.

The book is copiously illustrated with a number of extracts from relevant medieval and later documents (shown as 6 appendices) and includes copies of seals and early modern portraits. The 9 pedigrees outlined at the end of the text show the inter-relationships and linkages of the many branches of the family and repay some considerable study. The bibliography is comprehensive and thorough, enabling a clear understanding of the origin of the author's source material, even if his handling of it, including some translations may lack academic rigour.

Steve Lewitt

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## ***Why you should read Transactions Vol LII***

***Mike Hodder, with additional notes from Nigel Tringham***

The 52<sup>nd</sup> volume of the Society's *Transactions* is expected to be published early in 2021. It contains articles ranging chronologically from the Bronze Age to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and geographically from Uttoxeter to Brewood. They include the results of archaeological excavations and survey, art historical studies and documentary research.

In 'Ceremonial Circles: An early Bronze Age funerary landscape at Uttoxeter Quarry', Antony Mustchin and Andy Richmond report on the excavation of ring ditches and cremation burials near confluence of the Rivers Tean and Dove. The earliest features found were pits containing middle Neolithic decorated pottery and it may not be coincidental that the same location was chosen for four large early Bronze Age circular enclosures and cremations, pits and possible timber structures. The cremated remains, some of which were in urns, were possibly token deposits and they were from individuals of a range of ages, where it could be determined. Later in the Bronze Age the site was occupied by a burnt mound and a field system. The funerary complex complements ring ditches along the Rivers Tame and Trent, including some at their confluence and others at Tucklesholme (*Transactions* 39).

The excavation of a line of 44 pits extending for at least 205 metres is described by Steven Teague, Carl Champness and Leo Webley in 'An Iron Age pit alignment at Engleton Lane,

Brewood'. Pottery and radiocarbon dating suggest a middle Iron Age date similar to that of pit alignments excavated around the Tame and Trent confluence (and at Handsacre on the HS2 route). The alignments may have served as symbolic territorial boundaries.

Although Chad is well-known as Lichfield's patron saint, David Lepine's article 'Glorious confessor': the cult of St Chad at Lichfield Cathedral during the later Middle Ages' is the first to discuss in detail just *how* he was commemorated: in shrines, altars, liturgy, statues, and depictions in stained glass. The author also reveals how popular Chad was in the wider diocese, with fraternities numbering 1000s of people. The article contains colour photographs of relevant parts of the cathedral, and also stained glass in York Minster which relates to the saint.

Staffordshire has very few surviving pre-Elizabethan churchwardens' accounts, and the only extensive ones in print are those for Walsall. It is a welcome addition, therefore, to have those for Yoxall (1541--55) and Lichfield St Michael (1554--57), edited by Ian Atherton and Matthew Blake, with a detailed introduction, in 'Yoxall churchwardens' accounts, 1541-55'. Such accounts illuminate the local reaction to the Reformation -- compliance was the hall-mark here -- as well as parish activities, such as 'summer games' at Yoxall.

Christopher Welch's article, 'Early coal and ironstone mining on Cannock Chase' combines the author's own field survey with lidar data (captured in the recent Chase through Time project and displayed as striking visualisations), and with geological information and documentary evidence from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards (and including early 17<sup>th</sup> century accounts of new deep mine shafts dug then). The exposed coalfield is in the area occupied by the medieval Beaudesert Park and extending to its north-east and south-west. It is broken by faults but there are no steeply dipping seams. The remains of coal mining comprise shafts, sometimes with an upcast mound. Some lines of shafts are soughs- underground drainage channelling water into a stream. More coal was produced than could be consumed by domestic use in surrounding settlements, so it is suggested that the coal was used by the salt industry in Weston, and carried there by packhorse over Essex Bridge.

Recent archaeological work in Staffordshire is summarised by Shane Kelleher. Excavations at Tatenhill revealed a Mesolithic structure, a Bronze Age barrow and Bronze Age houses, and a Romano-British settlement. Iron Age pits, a ring-gully and four-posters found in Lichfield may have formed an arena where corpses were exposed, rather than a settlement. A medieval boundary wall found near Lichfield Cathedral was probably part of Bishop Langton's work in the Close.

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## **You don't have to book: some sites you can visit anytime**

**Mike Hodder**

In the current pandemic, organisations such as English Heritage and the National Trust have necessarily introduced a prior booking requirement for access to the pay-to-enter sites they manage. However, there are also many easily accessible sites in Staffordshire and neighbouring areas that are freely open (including some managed by these organisations), and winter and early spring are particularly good times to visit, depending of course on what restrictions on movement are in force at the time. The following suggestions for visits complement the Birmingham and Black Country sites mentioned in my article in the September Newsletter and include some prehistoric, Roman and medieval sites which are well-known, and others which may not be.

You may well have been to Castle Ring, the fine Iron Age hill fort in Cannock Chase (and if not, you really ought to!), but this site is always worth another visit. In south Staffordshire, the fort on Kinver Edge (National Trust, unrestricted access) is perhaps less well-known but has

similarly substantial ramparts. By way of contrast and a little further away, Wall Fort (not the Staffordshire Wall!) is in a low-lying location near Kinnersley, just north of Telford (SJ 681178). It is explained by a roadside panel at the entrance to a footpath path around the site.

The well-known Roman baths and mansio at Wall are still open all the time, but the well-preserved Roman road in Sutton Park, a mile-and-a-half stretch of the Rykniel Street between Wall and Metchley, is much less appreciated although it is easily accessible. You can walk along the raised gravel road surface (the *agger*) and alongside you can see the side ditches and pits beyond them from which gravel was dug to construct the road. Along the Watling Street from Wall, the Roman site at Mancetter near Atherstone is described by explanatory panels along a heritage trail. It includes earthworks of a late Roman “burgus” fortification straddling Watling Street, like that at Wall.

The Anglo-Saxon and Viking periods have left relatively few visible remains in Staffordshire and its immediate surroundings, but you can see Anglo-Saxon carved cross shafts at Ilam and Leek, and at Ingleby near Repton a footpath runs through a group of Viking barrows (SK 341258).

Medieval remains are far more numerous. At Stafford Castle the partly medieval keep sits on top of a motte which is accompanied by the earthworks of two baileys. At the lesser-known Seckington near Tamworth there were never any stone buildings. The prominent motte and bailey earthworks are accessible by a footpath near the church. Further afield, the motte at Brinklow on the Fosse Way in Warwickshire has two baileys, and there is prominent ridge and furrow next to it (<https://bwas-online.co.uk/home/see-it-for-free-listings/brinklow-castle/>). The most substantial visible remains of a medieval monastery in Staffordshire are at those at Croxden Abbey (English Heritage, open every day). Further afield, at Bordesley Abbey near Redditch you can see the excavated remains of the church, and its surroundings, which are easily accessible along footpaths, include the boundary bank, a millpond and fishponds along the diverted course of the River Arrow. In Shropshire, the substantial remains of the abbeys of Buildwas, Haughmond and Lilleshall (all English Heritage) are currently freely accessible every day (Wenlock Priory has restricted, bookable access).

*It is advisable to check the English Heritage and the National Trust websites for current information about sites managed by them before you travel.*

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## **Lucy Smith: Asylums PhD Update**

By Lucy Smith

Just over a year ago I joined the Asylums Project team at the Staffordshire Record Office as a postgraduate researcher on an ESRC funded CASE Studentship in partnership with Keele University. In this note I give an update on my work with the Project Team over the last twelve months and a brief description of my research.

During the six months before beginning my PhD at Keele, I spent one day each week volunteering with the Project Team to assist with cataloguing the case notes. This experience proved very useful, since it enabled me to gain some insight into patterns of admission to the asylums over time and to start to identify areas that were relevant to my research and might be worthy of further investigation. Previous research for my MA dissertation had focused on the early years of the Stafford Asylum but, as I soon discovered, there is a vast amount of further documentation relating to later years at Stafford and to the institutions at Burntwood and Cheddleton. I was extremely fortunate to be given access to the Strong Rooms to explore the collection which includes everything from enormous case books which are almost too heavy to lift, to fragile fragments of letters between patients and their loved ones. For the first few months, until lockdown forced the Record Office to close, I was able to browse through Committee minutes, annual reports, weekly returns, building plans, promotional material and photographs as I developed my background knowledge of the Staffordshire Asylums.

A key element of any research project is the opportunity to share it with a wider audience, ensuring that it has relevance outside of academia, and I have felt privileged, thanks to my collaboration with the Staffordshire Archives and Heritage Service, to be able to do this through a variety of formats. At the end of February, shortly before lockdown began, I was able to share some of the asylums' most interesting sources with history and psychology students from Stafford College during a series of Study Sessions organised by Engagement Officer Matthew Blake. 'Hands-on' events such as these are a great way to bring learning to life and increase access to archive material and it also provided an opportunity for us to discuss how mental health care in the past compared with the experience of student practitioners today. I hope that, as Covid restrictions start to ease, it will soon become possible to offer further events like these to more local colleges, sixth forms and other groups with an interest in the history of mental health care. I have also been delighted to be able to contribute articles for the Blog as well as being involved in planning for the forthcoming Asylums Exhibition which will open in Autumn 2021 before touring various venues throughout the region.

My research sets out to examine nineteenth century understanding of the relationship between work and mental health. Employment in the workshops, farm or grounds of the asylum was recognised as a highly effective form of therapy from very early on, promoting good physical health and diverting morbid thoughts. Yet for many patients, occupation was identified as a significant factor in the deterioration of their mental health prior to admission. Covering a hundred years from the opening of the Stafford Asylum in October 1818 to the end of the First World War, I consider how work-related mental illness was perceived by patients, families, medical professionals, local employers and the wider community during this period and how they responded to the challenge of assisting patients to improve their mental well-being and return to their former employment. Many thousands of patients were admitted to the asylums but it will soon be possible to identify cases in order to research specific themes thanks to the work of the staff and volunteers on the project team who have spent the last year and a half cataloguing case records to produce an online index of early records for family historians together with an anonymised database of information extracted from later files for research purposes. Work is still ongoing, but I have been fortunate in having access to data from some of the earlier records enabling me to begin to identify cases in which patients were admitted for reasons related to their employment and discover what their experience can tell us about this aspect of mental health care. I am also keen to explore the degree to which the stress of working in mental health care was recognised during the nineteenth century including the steps taken to alleviate the pressures of work for the men and women who were employed in the asylums and what happened to staff who were unable to cope in this environment. (from the Asylums Project Blog)

### **The Availability of copies of Transactions in Staffordshire County Libraries**

The Society was notified in December 2020 that the Staffordshire Library Service was cancelling the subscription to the Society's Transactions forthwith. For very many years the Library Service has subscribed to multiple copies of Transactions for the libraries in Newcastle, Stafford, Burton, Lichfield, Tamworth, Cannock and Leek and this cancellation came as a surprise. The Society wrote to Victoria Wilson, the County Council Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture, who replied indicating that the Council was prepared to reinstate one subscription for a copy of the journal to be held at Tamworth Library from where it could be borrowed by members of the public throughout the county under the inter-library loan scheme.

The Society remains disappointed that free, instant and unfettered access to Transactions at the other 6 main libraries in the county is no longer possible, as well as to the loss of income that cancellation of subscriptions represents.

Nevertheless the Society continues to fully support the publication of Transactions as a journal of record for significant archaeological and historical research in the county.

As previewed elsewhere in this newsletter the next volume of Transactions is due to be published in the Spring of this year.



## **SA&HS Annual Membership Subscriptions due 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020**

If your SA&HS Membership subscription has not yet been renewed for 2020-2021, it is now overdue. The rates have not changed and remain:

Individual Membership	£20.00
Joint Membership	£30.00
Student/Unwaged	£15.00

You can make payment by:

- Sending a cheque in the post payable to SA&HS
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The address for sending a cheque or cash is:

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If you wish to query your subscription please email: [kjboutthere@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:kjboutthere@yahoo.co.uk)

Many thanks for your continuing support of SA&HS. **Keith Billington**

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***Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society***

### ***The ZOOM Lecture Season 2021***

*15th January*

Joanna Arman (University of Winchester)  
*Aethelflaed: Warrior Queen of Mercia*

<i>22nd January</i>	<i><u>Mary Ruddy &amp; Glenn Rose</u> HS2 in the West Midlands</i>
<i>29th January</i>	<i><u>Dr Mathew Morris</u> Revealing Grey Friars (Work that continued after The King Under The Car Park)</i>
<i>5th February</i>	<i><u>Dr Nick Daffern</u> The Ice Age and Palaeolithic. AKA West Midlands Safari Park</i>
<i>12th February</i>	<i><u>Giles Carey</u> Caus Castle and Castle Pulverbach, Shropshire</i>
<i>19th February</i>	<i><u>Bob Williams</u> Lichfield and Hatherton Canal</i>
<i>26th February</i>	<i>TBC - Invite out</i>
<i>5th March</i>	<i><u>Dr Charlotte Ball</u> Medicine and Magic in Anglo Saxon England</i>
<i>12th March</i>	<i><u>Matthew Champion</u> Medieval Graffiti: The Lost Voices of England's Churches</i>
<i>19th March</i>	<i><u>Dr Andrew Sargent</u> Early Medieval Cult of St Chad Lichfield and the Lands of St Chad</i>
<i>26th March</i>	<i>TBC - Invite out</i>

*Lectures will start at 8.00pm and members will be able to join the website at least ten minutes before then. Members will receive an e mail in advance giving further details of the speaker and subject and a further email on the day giving the access code. There will be opportunities after the talk for questions. Please remember to mute you microphone!*

*This newsletter edited for the Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society  
by Richard Totty [richard.totty4@gmail.com](mailto:richard.totty4@gmail.com)*

*Views expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Society.*

*Visit our website for more information about the Society; **www.sahs.uk.net***