



# STAFFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## NEWSLETTER January 2022

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

Issue No 139

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

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

*Hon. General Secretary:* Steve Lewitt B.A. (Oxon.), M.A., P.G.C.E., P.G.C.R.M., F.C.I.P.D., F.R.S.A.

*Hon. Treasurer:* Keith Billington A.C.I.B. tel: 01543 278989



*Statue of St. Chad Lichfield Cathedral unveiled June 2021*

*Photo; Brian Bull*

## **The new statue of St. Chad at Lichfield Cathedral by sculptor Peter**

**Walker.** Peter is the Cathedral's Artist in Residence. He is originally from Lichfield, and is an internationally renowned sculptor and artist. Peter is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and member of the Royal Society of British Sculptors. Producing sculptures, paintings, drawings, installation pieces, as well as Son-et-Lumiere, his extensive creative ability has led him to produce over 15 public statues located around the country and have works in private and public collections worldwide. This statue is the first in the Cathedral for over one hundred years.

### ***Far Horizons – early map-books from Lichfield Cathedral Library***

An exhibition in the Chapter House of Lichfield Cathedral

8th January to 27th February 2022

The exhibition will be open when the Cathedral is open. Please check the Lichfield Cathedral website nearer the time for up-to-date information about Cathedral opening times and about one-off closures if there are services in the Cathedral.

**Free admission**

The exhibition comprises 8 volumes selected from Lichfield Cathedral Library's collection of early printed map-books, a collection described by a former head of cartography at the British Library as historically significant. The maps are in bound volumes, which means that only one page can be exhibited in each book, so the exhibition will include images of other pages. The earliest exhibit is a copy of the Nuremburg Chronicle, published in 1493 and the remainder are all from the 16th and 17th centuries including Christopher Saxton's Atlas of the counties of England and Wales, an edition by Hondius of Mercator's Atlas Novus, and two volumes of Willem and Jan Blaeu's Le Theatre du monde.

Lichfield Cathedral Library is not well known but it houses a fine collection of books and documents not all of a religious nature.) (note the magnificent medieval floor tiles)





In addition to the map books displayed in the exhibition the library has a very fine edition of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, less the commonly found spurious 'Ploughman's Tale', but including the spurious link and Cook's 'Tale of Gamelyn'.



One fine hand of c.1420 on the main text; initials are beautifully illuminated in gold and colours; on the replacement leaves is a workmanlike hand of c.1570, and the initials are decorated in red ink.

Provenance: William Seymour, Duke of Somerset; bequeathed by his widow Frances in 1673 to Lichfield Cathedral.

## Hamstall Ridware church painting

A rare example of late medieval art in a Staffordshire church features in an article in the latest issue of the *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 174 (2021). Written by Julian Luxford (of the University of St Andrews) and Lucy Wrapson (of the Hamilton Kerr Institute, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge), it deals with two painted panels of c.1500, now positioned on the north and south side of a wooden reredos on the main altar of Hamstall Ridware church.

Almost certainly the panels were originally on the church's rood screen, but unusually on its *east* side facing the priests and others in the chancel, rather than on the west side facing the congregation (although presumably there were also paintings, now lost, on that side too).

Both intended to inspire devotional prayer, the south-side panel depicts two scenes (not quite fully integrated with each other) – Christ's deposition from the cross and the bearing of the cross, whilst the north-side one depicts the Man of Sorrows in the centre, surrounded by scenes relating to the seven effusions (or sheddings) of blood: circumcision; agony in the garden of Gethsamene; flagellation; crowning with thorns; disrobing; nailing to the cross, and when pierced by a lance.

These effusions of blood were expanded upon in contemporary devotional literature, for example as part of a weekly

reflection on each event, the reader being encouraged to identify personally with the acute agony suffered by Christ, in the kind of – to us – gruesome detail rarely encountered today, and certainly not in Radio 4's somewhat anodyne *Prayer for the Day*.

What is especially significant by the depiction of these scenes on the Hamstall Ridware panel is that, so far as is presently known, it is the *only* such surviving example in an English church.



*Part of one of the panels*

Discussing both panels in great detail, with comments for example on the pigments used, the authors conclude that given the workmanship of the painting the artist was most likely a local man, perhaps from only as far away at Lichfield – something that itself points to a lively provincial interest in both commissioning and executing religious art. Entitled 'Two Fragments of a Painted Screen from Hamstall Ridware, Staffordshire, with Passion Imagery including the Seven Effusions of Christ's Blood', the article has been published as Open Access and can be seen via the Journal's website (copy the link and paste into your browser) :

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00681288.2021.1920729>

Nigel Tringham

## Hamstall Ridware Pigments

The paper described above mentions the pigments used, and indicates that the panels have slightly different palettes, but does not give much detail of the actual pigments. Here are some further notes.

On one side of the panels, originally the front, two expensive pigments have been used in small amounts with cheaper pigments of the same hue in order to give more depth of colour, brilliance and in one case sparkle. These pigments are orpiment and azurite.

Orpiment is a pigment which has a gorgeous deep golden yellow colour. It is arsenic sulphide and is mostly derived from deposits in natural hot water springs. It has been known since Classical times and was used in the medieval period, when it was traded from Asia Minor, probably through Venice, and was then a very expensive material and difficult to come by. It was known to be very poisonous and painting manuals warned against getting it onto your lips. It has a slightly sparkling appearance and was used as a substitute for gilding.

Azurite is copper carbonate and is a mineral not found in Britain so supplies were imported from Germany making it another relatively expensive material. It is a bright pale blue with a greenish tint.

The less expensive pigments used were;

Yellow Ochre (Yellow Earth), a rather dull pigment described as the colour of tawny hair and wood, but very cheap. Chemically it is ferric oxide mixed with clay and sand. It has been used since prehistoric times as a pigment and is widely distributed and easy to find.

Vermilion, mercury sulphide, made by heating mercury and sulphur; the technique was well known by 1500 and had been described in alchemist's manuals since at least 1120. It is an artificial form of the mineral cinnabar. The colour is a deep red with a tinge of orange, and was a standard item in the artist's palette.

Red Lead, made by heating metallic lead corroded by vinegar was known to the Egyptians and Romans. It is a mixed oxide of lead. Another cheap pigment readily available here which gives a bright red colour slightly tinged with orange.

Indigo, a blue pigment made from extracts from the woad plant and thus readily available in England. Unlike the pigments previously described it is an organic compound with a complex structure based on indole. It is a deeper blue than azurite and has a more purplish tinge. It has been used as a dye and a pigment since prehistoric times.

Other colours mentioned, mainly blacks and whites are from very common and cheap sources such as chalk and lamp or bone black.

This is quite a range of colours, and some of them such as azurite and orpiment were costly and would be difficult to source for an artist without connections. The authors hypothesize that the artist(s) were possibly from Lichfield. We know that artists had been employed in Lichfield to create the now lost paintings of the coronation marriage wars and funeral of Edward 1 in the Bishop's Palace. Is this evidence of a continuing tradition in the area?

See Philip Ball: Primary Sources, a Natural History of the Artist's Palette <https://publicdomainreview.org/> July 2020

Note; the Society has a copy of Dr Wrapson's confidential technical report on the analysis of the Hamstall Ridware pigments. To view a copy contact the editor.

88888888888888888888888888888888888888888888888888888888888888

## History in the News

The History community embraces many occupations, all intent on telling our human story better than ever before. Very recent news items have pointed to more exciting developments

Due to the wonders of modern reprographics a facsimile of the priceless Sephardic Jewish codex, known as the Sarajevo Haddadah, is being taken to various locations in Spain for exhibition. This document has been in Sarajevo since 1894 and is too fragile to be moved. However its origins are to be found within the historic Spanish Jewish population of the fourteenth century. It has not been in Spain since 1492, the date at which Jews were expelled from Spain. Its contents all the traditional stories, prayers, rules and rituals of the Passover Feast, with wonderful imagery on its 142-bleached calf-skin pages. This celebration of this astonishing artefact links the present-day thousand-strong Jewish community in Bosnia-Herzegovina, largely of the Sephardic tradition, with the homeland that their community left over five hundred years ago.

[The Guardian, 27 September]

In the cave network underneath the Rock of Gibraltar, a new chamber has been discovered which it is believed has been sealed off from human access for 40,000 years. It is beyond the already-known Gorham Cave complex and it contains lynx, hyena and griffon vulture bones. There is no sign of human intervention and yet, at that same location which is 20 metres above today's sea level, a large dog whelk shell has been discovered. Parallel evidence in the wider cave network has revealed that there was Neanderthal presence in this proximity and the fact that they appear to have lived in the safety of this remote cave, with its storage potential, points to a new level of understanding of the sophistication of Neanderthal community.

[The Guardian, 28 September]

The National Trust has now completed a three-year project conserving, digitising and making available on-line and to visitors a highly significant collection of photographs taken at Sutton Hoo in August 1939. These had been taken by Barbara Wagstaff and Mercie Lack at the very beginning of the discovery and only re-appeared when a 'mystery donor' left them in a bag at the Sutton Hoo site about twelve years ago. The donor was subsequently revealed to be Andrew Lack, great-nephew of Mercie, and the full collection amounts to eleven albums of black and white photographs, some loose prints and, most importantly, an album of colour photographs. As a collection, with the colour element being very important, these help to add to our awareness of the excitement of the early days of the Sutton Hoo discovery, days before it had to be protected from the Second World War.

[The Guardian, 29 September]

Trevor James

---

We are often surprised by the small doodles made by scribes or readers on medieval books and manuscripts – here is one from one in the National Archives (E36/274) of an unpopular bishop – or is it meant to be Archbishop St Thomas Becket?





## MARGARET O’SULLIVAN

The sudden death in September 2021 of Dr Margaret O’Sullivan came as a great shock to all who knew her and valued the work she did as both archivist and historian. Many of our Society’s members will have been helped by her when she was an archivist at the Staffordshire County Record office (1974–86), before moving to Telford (1986–89) and then, as county archivist, to Derbyshire (1989–2010). She had been in post a few years before I arrived in Stafford to work for the Victoria County History and I have an abiding memory of a very energetic person, dealing efficiently with all sorts of queries and cataloguing collections with zest.



During the 1990s she became closely involved with the British Association for Local History, chairing its Publications Committee and then the Association itself in the early 2000s. I too later chaired the Publications Committee, and as she lived in Stone and myself in Stafford we regularly travelled up to London for meetings on the same train, and I always looked forward to being regaled with the latest news about archives at both a local and national level. Of course, there were stories about private owners of archives and how they treated them and wondered whether they should be deposited in the local county record office, but however odd their behaviour might be, Margaret never once uttered a disparaging remark, but simply recounted events anonymously and with a wry smile — thoroughly professional at all times. Moreover, an early riser, she demonstrated just how much one can do before breakfast!

With a particular interest in paintings, especially by women artists in the 19th and 20th centuries, she had in retirement started to write up her research findings in a series of articles, the first of which the Society published in volume LI of its *Transactions*; another will appear in volume LIII, and a third in a later issue. I was confidently looking forward to yet further scholarly and engaging offerings, and it is an immense pity that there will be no more. She had also been in correspondence with our President in a discussion on how artists (such as John Louis Petit, the subject of her 2020 article) interpreted medieval art and architecture, revealing a keen awareness of the role of antiquaries in fashioning our understanding of local societies in the past.

Having contributed greatly to the history of our and neighbouring counties in the course of her public career and as a scholar, she still had much to offer.

Nigel Tringham

---

*The Staffordshire Record Office in Stafford will close for a period of at least eighteen months to two years from March 2022 to allow the adaption of the building to form a new History Centre. Staff and volunteers will be housed in temporary offices in Stafford during the building work. It is intended that there will be a service to provide copies and digital images of items in the collection but hands on access will not be possible. More details will be available closer to the time. The William Salt Library has already closed. Official permission to start the project was given in November 2021. We will keep members informed of progress during the project.*

---

## **2021 Annual General Meeting**

At the request of the Committee of the Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society I write to advise all members of the Society that the 2021 Annual General Meeting of the Society will take place on Friday 18 February 2022 at 7.30pm, at the Guildhall, Lichfield. All members are invited to attend. An agenda and related reports will be circulated to all members in advance of the meeting.

Members should note that the meeting will be held prior to the Society's advertised lecture, which will begin at 8pm at the same location. Should it not prove possible to hold either event in public, the AGM and lecture will go ahead through the medium of a Zoom call.

Steve Lewitt, Honorary Secretary

## **Request for help**

From time to time, the Society receives requests for help relating to enquiries about Staffordshire. Such requests can be about objects, silverware, pottery, artworks and so on, as well as the history of parishes, buildings or people. Occasional requests for comment refer to archaeological or geological finds. It would be very helpful if we can build up a list of members with specialist interests in any of these areas who would be willing to help respond to such questions when they arise.

If you would be willing to help, please respond to me by email giving me your areas of knowledge and your email address so that I can forward any such queries when I receive them. Thank you, and I can assure you that you will not be bombarded!

Steve Lewitt ([slewitt@btinternet.com](mailto:slewitt@btinternet.com)) Honorary Secretary

---

Dr Tamara Atkin, an English literature specialist and book historian from Queen Mary University of London, has discovered two rare manuscript fragments hidden away in a 16th-century book in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. One tells part of the story of Tristan and Iseult, among the most famous



star-crossed lovers of Middle Ages. The other is a fragment of a long-lost poem that scholars had thought to exist but had yet to find anywhere.

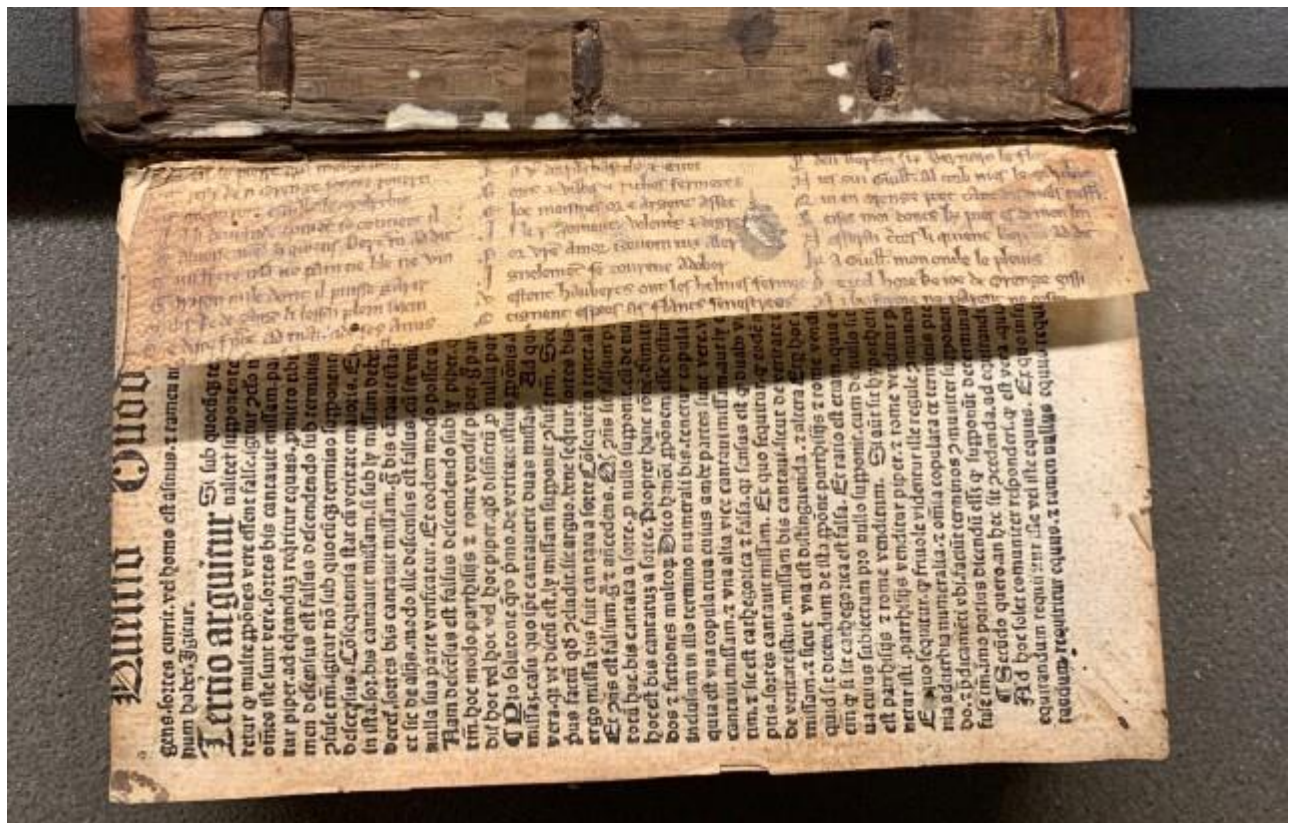


Image of Guillaume fragment. Photo: Tamara Atkin, Courtesy: Bodleian Libraries

The two hand-written parchment fragments were discovered while Dr Atkin was undertaking Leverhulme Trust funded research into the reuse and recycling of old books in the Bodleian Library. Immediately suspecting their importance, she approached academics from the University of Bristol, University of Edinburgh, and University of British Columbia to help with their identification. They are now working together to analyse the two parchment fragments which are thought to come from two French poems: Bérout's *Roman de Tristan* and the hitherto lost *Siège d'Orange*.

Bérout's twelfth-century poem is among the earliest versions of the famed story of Tristan and Iseult – the 'Romeo and Juliet of the Middle Ages'. Until now, the only evidence of its existence had been an incomplete thirteenth-century manuscript in the Bibliothèque nationale de France. The new fragment, which differs significantly from the longer version, demonstrates a wider circulation for the poem than has been previously understood.

The *Siège d'Orange* is a lost poem from a cycle of *chansons de geste* – narrative poems – about Guillaume d'Orange. At just 47 lines, the new Guillaume fragment offers a tiny glimpse at what would have once been a much longer poem. But its discovery proves the existence of a poem that until now was believed to be completely lost.

The new fragment appears to be from a copy of the poem made in England written using the form of French (Anglo-Norman) that was in use in England at the time. The poem is set in the ninth century, during the reign of Louis the Pious, Charlemagne's son and heir. Atkin said that while it is believed to have been composed in the late 12th century, the fragment itself is from a copy made in England in the late 13th century.

*"Il li demande coment se contient il? / Mauuoisement li quiens Bertram ad dit / Tun frere n'ad ne pain ne ble ne vin / Garison nule dont il puisse garir / Mais ke de sang li lessai plein Bacin,"* runs an early section of the fragment, which Philip Bennett, an expert on Guillaume d'Orange from the University of Edinburgh, has translated as: "He asks him, 'How goes it with him?' / 'Badly,' said Count Bertram. / 'Your brother has neither bread nor corn nor wine; / He has no supplies with which to save himself, / Except for one basinful of blood, which I left him.'"

The quoted lines come as Bertram begs the king for help relieving the siege of Orange, a city in the Rhône Valley, describing the dire siege conditions. "In later parts of the fragment we hear him berating the queen (at one point he even calls her *'pute russe'* or 'red-headed whore'), who has objected to her husband leading a relieving army south".

The fragments were found in the binding of a book published in 1528. Throughout the sixteenth century, unwanted manuscripts and printed books were frequently reused for a variety of purposes as paper and parchment were expensive commodities.

**Dr Tamara Atkin of Queen Mary University of London said:** "When I opened this book for the first time, I was extremely excited. It is not uncommon to find manuscripts recycled as waste in the bindings of other books, but they tend to be in Latin and often concern religion. It is relatively rare to find manuscripts containing poems written in the language of everyday life used in this way and to find two in a single book is rarer still!

"It is very likely that the manuscripts from which the fragments were taken were cut up in the bindery and used as 'waste' in the binding of this, and perhaps other books.

"Just as this book was the labour of many hands, I am looking forward to collaboratively revealing these fragments' full significance."

Pooling their expertise, the team will now attempt to discover more about the fragments' journey, including when and where they were copied and how they came to be bound in a book printed many centuries later. They will produce full transcriptions and translations of the fragments, alongside descriptions of their manuscript and bibliographical contexts, to gain a clearer picture of their relationship to the Tristan and Guillaume traditions.

---

Historic England released their latest research report in the summer of 2021; 'Longton, Stoke-on-Trent Ceramic Heritage Action Zone Aerial Investigation' by E Carpentar

- [Longton, Stoke-on-Trent Ceramic Heritage Action Zone Aerial Investigation](#)(opens in a new window)

The Stoke-on-Trent Ceramic Heritage Action Zone is a partnership project to promote awareness of the historic environment to inform delivery of heritage-led economic growth. Historic England's contribution to this Heritage Action Zone includes an analysis of the historic aerial photographs of Longton held in the Historic England archive. These photos range in date from 1927 to 2007 and this report partly serves as a photo essay, providing a variety of different views of Longton and its potworks but also documents some of the other changes made to the town over 80 years. The bulk of the report is concerned with the ceramic industry and with evidence for the modernisation or redevelopment of many of the potworks that took place immediately after the Second World War(1939-1945) and seen in detailed aerial photographs taken between 1945 and 1953. The aerial photographs have also allowed a review of the number of bottle ovens

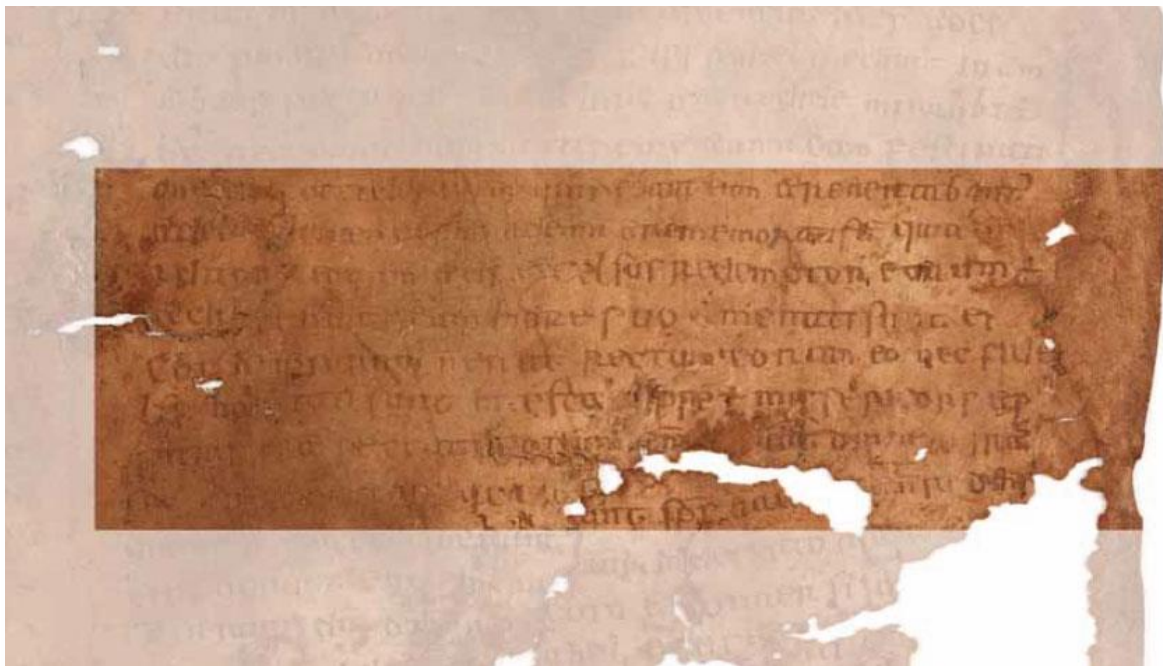
identified within what is now the Longton Conservation Area, and these results are compared with the evidence derived from Ordnance Survey maps. Other aspects of Longton's history associated with the pottery industry include crate making, coal mining and clay digging. Evidence of slum clearance during the 1930s, new houses for those this displaced and the building of prefabs from late 1945 is illustrated and discussed. The impact of the Second World War on Longton is revealed through the numerous air raid shelters seen throughout the town and the Emergency Water Supply reservoirs built for the fire brigade. Other wartime developments identified include a central kitchen, which allows a discussion of wartime communal feeding in the town.

This is an interesting and informative discussion of the social history of a mid 20<sup>th</sup> century area in Staffordshire and shows what can be done using the underused resource of aerial photographs. Note that it is a large file -140 pages, with photographs, and will take a few minutes to download -Ed.

=====

**Last December the press reported that the Faddan More psalter is now on display in Dublin. This book of psalms was found in Faddan More bog, Co. Tipperary in 2006.**

The book was a chance discovery, noticed by the driver in the bucket of his peat-harvesting machine. The Psalter is comprised of sixty sheets of vellum which are divided into five gatherings, or quires. The text is written with iron gall ink, and a number of pigments are used for decoration. It contains the standard 150 psalms. The opening letter of each psalm is marked by a capital while the opening words of psalms 1, 51, and 101 are decorated, a convention used in other Irish psalters.



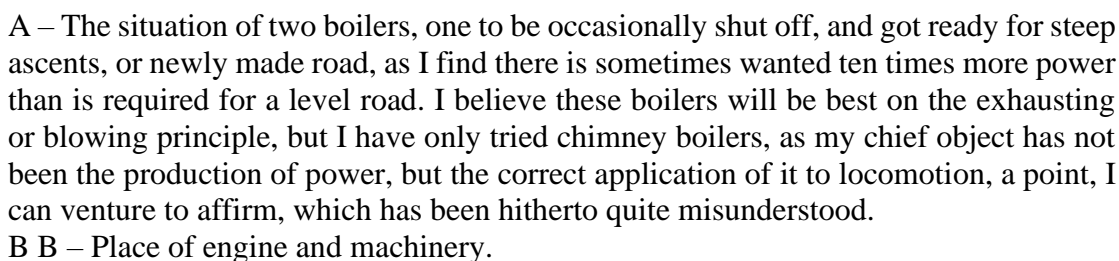
Preservation of the book varies greatly from page to page. In some cases only the edges of the page and some loose letters survive. A wallet-shaped leather cover with a flap protected the Psalter. Three horn buttons are fastened to the flap, and the cover was probably closed by wrapping a leather thong around the buttons. The outside of the cover is painted with black carbon-based pigment. A number of motifs seen on the outside of the cover are probably trial pieces. The inside of the cover is lined with papyrus, a writing material from the eastern Mediterranean, principally Egypt. The reasons for the deposition of the Faddan More Psalter in the bog are unclear, but the story of its discovery and the results of subsequent research make it one of the most



[illegible]

Did any of you follow explore your archives week last November? This was an organised use of twitter to focus on a new archive theme each day for a week. Many archives participated – many of which I have never heard of before and it is clear that during the pandemic almost all have been focussing on digitising records for the internet and also repackaging items stored in an unsuitable manner. There are now extensive collections of photographs, maps, printed and manuscript material all available on the internet. I have been busy exploring some of the more unusual collections that are there. The problem now arises how to find the collections that are of interest to you as there is no national database. Ed.

\*\*\*\*\*



C – A large power wheel, of size in proportion to the obstacles to be overcome. This wheel gives the machine a great facility of motion, either straight, curved, or ascending, and the weight of the carriage being chiefly below the axle, no upsetting can occur.

D – Fly wheel

E – Pilot and pilot wheels

F – Helm lever, fireman, and joggle wheels

G – Triangular pioneer, to push aside loose obstructions

H – Place of water tank

I I I I – Stowage

To the editor of the Staffordshire Advertiser,

Sir,

I now in part make good my promise to you, and send the above sketch and short description of my STEAM TRACTOR CARRIAGE, which I am in hope will provide “one of the noblest results of steam machinery.” It will soon be seen by scientific observers that it is very different in action from any Steam Carriage hitherto invented, and I trust the patronage of the public will in due time be extended to it, and by the test of varied use, prove that it is as different from others in power as in principle; these powers are as yet only partially developed but this warranty which I offer of its climbing on plain wheels an ascent of six inches in every yard, will be to machinists an index of what may be expected to perform, and will I hope induce them to give it a full and fair trial.

My experiments and researches have shown to me that locomotion is quite a distinct branch of mechanical science; its principles have not been treated of in any work that I have had access to, and, though simple, have, I think, never till now been known; therefore - it is not surprising that so many attempts to work steam carriages up steep ascents have failed, - failed to do with steam, urged to twenty horses power [20HP], what four living horses would accomplish. The failure has been owing to the mal-application of the power, not to the want of it; and, as I said in my first letter to you on this subject, the attempts to work up a steep hill, or over a two-inch stone at a dead pull, were as mechanically absurd as those of a man to lift himself off the ground in a basket.

A loco-motive carriage, not drawing a load, may be made, with difficulty, to ascend an inclined plane rising twelve inches at every yard. Yes, Mr. editor, twelve inches at every yard, and this is the extreme elevation I have as yet been able to accomplish on plain wheels. At this elevation the effect of machinery power is to the effect of living horses as two to three, or in other words a three horse engine will only do the work of two horses, including the weight of the machine, which must always be taken as part of the load.

A short dissertation on the leading principles of locomotive science, with their exemplifications in my ‘Tractor Carriage’, which will be a full explanation of it, I intend to make the subject of a future communication,

And am, Sir, your obedient servant,

SAXULA

August 25, 1830

*What a pity he hides his light under a pen-name. Now we will never know whether he succeeded. I cannot read the top word on the side of the covered wagon but the bottom one is LONDON.*

*This is about three years before the success of Sir C. Dance's steam carriage which featured in the January 2021 Newsletter.*

## Thousands more local images preserved online thanks to partnership project

Thousands more fascinating historic images of the West Midlands - including some never previously published – are now available for the public to view thanks to a successful city partnership project.

City of Wolverhampton Archives has been working with the Express & Star newspaper and the University of Wolverhampton to digitise the paper's photograph collection. An incredible 3,500 new photographs have now been added to the free Express & Star Photo Archive at <https://photo-archive.expressandstar.co.uk> for future generations to access. They give an insight into life in Wolverhampton and the Black Country as well as the wider region, including parts of Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire. Of particular interest are newly added photographs from the Second World War. Many of these images were censored during the conflict, disguising names, locations and other details on the images so the enemy didn't know which areas had been bombed.

The photo archive project was initially funded by a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to produce a website and digitise photographs dating back over the past century. Around 3,000 images of the history of the industrial past of the Black Country and its surrounding areas have already been digitised and published on the website. The photographs cover most of the twentieth century but there are earlier images too, including a sketch of Wolverhampton Dispensary in Queen Street from 1829. Because of the high printing costs, very few photographs appeared in the newspaper until the twentieth century. The newly added images cover a wide variety of subjects, including health and emergency services, art and leisure, war and the military, buildings and events and occasions.

They have been catalogued by staff at the city's archives alongside a group of volunteers. Further funding for the project has been given by the Express & Star, Codsall & Bilbrook Historical Society, Wednesfield History Society, the Friends of Wolverhampton Archives as well as local residents George Blackham and Kathy and Patricia Hughes. More photos are being added to the website all the time and the archives staff and volunteers are currently working on cataloguing the next raft of images.

[illegible]

## Excursion

Somewhat tentatively we are organising a visit to West Bromwich Manor House in March of this year





According to the VCH “There was a manor-house at West Bromwich by the early 1220s. The oldest part of the present building, however, is the hall, which is thought to date from c. 1300, a time when the Marnhams had a house in West Bromwich. It has two full bays and a short entry bay, marked by a spere truss, at the south end. Presumably it originally extended further at each end to provide both service and private rooms, but they would have been removed in the earlier 15th century when the present cross wings were built. In the late 15th century a chapel, first referred to in 1552, was added at the east end of the north cross wing. The west wall of the hall was rebuilt when the oriel was added at its north end in the 16th century, and the detached kitchen block to the south-west of the service wing is of about the same date. About 1600 a two-storeyed gatehouse range was built to the east of the hall and the service wing was extended to join it. The enclosing moat is probably contemporary with the hall. Most of it was filled in about 1700, although the section in front of the gatehouse had been filled in earlier to make a forecourt.” In the nineteenth century there were additions and demolitions as the building was used for a variety of purposes, eventually falling derelict. It was bought and restored by West Bromwich Corporation in 1950 and opened as a public house and restaurant in 1961. This Grade 1 listed building is now run as a local history museum. We were unable to arrange a date for the visit at the time of going to press but members who are interested in going should register this interest ([richard.totty4@gmail.com](mailto:richard.totty4@gmail.com)), details should be available later this month (January 2022)

---

It is with sadness that we record that Roger Manning, for over twenty years a member of this Society, passed away peacefully in October 2021. We send our condolence to Enid, Roger’s widow. Roger and Enid regularly attended our meetings at the St Mary Centre and later at the Guildhall, as well as joining the Zoom meetings we have had during the pandemic and will be well known to many members.



---

## **Friends of Shenstone Tower (FoST) – An Update on Project Progress**

### **Repairing Shenstone’s Old Church Tower (St John’s Church Shenstone)**

The construction engineers are making good progress as they advance upwards through the Tower. Greenery has been removed, large block stones, which have deteriorated, (mostly those laid vertically) have been replaced, loose stones have been re-bedded, and the re-pointing of joints has taken place.

*“Shenstone Old Church Tower is a wonderful monument to the history and archaeology of a fascinating village. Although the excavations needed for this redevelopment were only shallow, the*

*potential of church hill remains enormous, almost certainly being the original location of the communities that settled here. Shenstone is the only settlement mentioned in the Domesday survey, implying that it was the Mercians, possibly dating back to the times of the infamous King Penda, who built the first church on the site. This original church was built in the 1270s into a rather large and impressive building, of which the old tower is the only remaining section above ground. It was a great pleasure to work with such a dedicated and committed community group to bring this wonderful building back into use for the community it has served for about 700 years."*

*Dr. David Underhill, Archaeological Research Services*



*Round top window revealed in the bell tower*

In Anglo-Saxon days, and in the period of early Christian church worship, Shenstone would have proved an eminently suitable location for a wooden Saxon church. Its hill is in 'line of sight' from Roman Letocetum, and its location is a mere three miles from the burial site of the Anglo Saxon 'Staffordshire Hoard'. When candles and lamps were lit within the church, on a wintery evening, the light would have been seen shining out from its windows, and from its elevated position the ringing of bells from within its tower would have been heard over the countryside and picked up by people for miles around.

#### **Friends of Shenstone Tower (FoST)**

**December 2021**

The above is the latest 'press release' from FoST, kindly made available to us by Bronwen Ross, project team member. This follows on from previous reports which have appeared in these pages, including the last update which was in SA&HS Newsletter 138.

**Exhibition at the Museum of Cannock Chase, Hednesford.**



**A Case for the Ordinary: Staffordshire's Asylums and the Patient Experience 10th January – 25th February 2022.** Staffordshire was home to three County Asylums which opened during the 19th century: Stafford, Burntwood (shown above) and Cheddleton. In addition, Coton Hill asylum housed private patients from the County Asylum in Stafford. Letters, documents, objects and photographs from the Staffordshire Archive and Heritage Service collections reveal details about treatments, patients, staff and the daily routine within their walls. Find out how effective the asylums were in helping the people who were sent to them and how these institutions changed and developed over time. This fascinating exhibition has been developed by Staffordshire Archives and Heritage with funding from the Wellcome Trust and supported by Keele University and the University of Birmingham. Open Tuesday to Saturday 11.00am to 4.00pm.

### **Charles Close Society Meeting**

The next Charles Close Society midland meeting will be another 'bring and tell' evening at Wall village hall on Tuesday 25th January at 7.30pm. All curious people welcome!

-----

Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society 2022 Programme

**Live Lectures at The Guildhall at 8.00pm (unless otherwise noted)**

February to May 2022

18th February     David Moore MA

Lichfield (Sandfields) Waterworks Trust



The lecture tonight will bring us up to date with the happenings over the past few years. David came to us last in April 2016 so an update is overdue.

Dave Moore's association with history began inauspiciously. He was thrown off the History CSE course at secondary school for failing to show an interest and failing to hand in any course work. His working career started with an apprenticeship in the construction industry with an upward path leading to management in the private sector. Despite his worst efforts in school, Dave has always maintained interest in history. He travels widely in pursuit of his passion for industrial heritage and social history. Early retirement allowed Dave to deepen his interests by studying public history at Ruskin college, Oxford, for which he was awarded an MA. Dave's other skills of photography, film-making and technology support his work in the public history arena.

4th March

Dr Chris Patrick

### Recent Archaeological and Historical Investigations in Birmingham

THIS LECTURE COMMENCES AT 7.30pm

Chris trained as a Field Archaeologist with the Birmingham University Field Unit and later at Worcestershire County Council. He was Conservation and Archaeology Officer at Coventry City for fourteen years and is currently Principal Conservation Officer at Birmingham City Council as well as Cathedral Archaeologist for Coventry Cathedral. The talk this evening will bring the Society up to date with Archaeological activities within Birmingham City.

18th March

Dr Gillian White

### Catherine of Aragon

Dr. Gillian White specialises in the history and visual arts of late medieval and sixteenth-century England. She began her career at the Warwickshire Museum and then worked for the National Trust as Curator / Collections Manager at Hardwick Hall, about which she then wrote her PhD at Warwick University. She now teaches art history part-time in the Continuing Education Department at Oxford University, as well as freelance lecturing and teaching. This lecture is the third outing for Gillian with the Society.

We all know about Catherine of Aragon: she was 'the first wife'. But what was she really like? Catherine was a remarkable and capable woman who steered a complicated course through Tudor England for more than thirty years. Well educated, courageous and politically shrewd, she was loved by the people and was in most ways an excellent royal consort. But she failed in one thing: to provide her husband with a son and heir. This talk tells Catherine's largely forgotten story, from childhood in the palaces of Spain, through her short-lived first marriage, her traumatic fight for survival as a young widow, her triumphant second marriage and the catastrophe of 'The King's Great Matter' that saw her set aside in favour of Anne Boleyn.

8th April

TBC - Invite out there - awaiting response

22nd April

Professor Chris Baker

St. Michaels, Lichfield – Clergy and Parish.

This talk will look at aspects of the history of St. Michael's church on Greenhill in Lichfield and the surrounding area, focussing on the life and times of the parish clergy from the late 18th century to the early 20th century. From 1782 to 1946 there were just seven long serving perpetual curates or rectors of the parish who witnessed changes in both the church and its locality. The talk will draw on material from churchwarden's records, parish registers, service books, tithe allocations and censuses to present a picture of a changing parish, its clergy and its people.

Chris Baker was born and brought up, in the Black Country, and as an undergraduate studied Engineering at St. Catharine's College, Cambridge, from where he gained his MA and PhD. After spending some time working for British Rail in Derby, he moved back into academia – firstly to the University of Nottingham, and then to the University of Birmingham, where he taught fluid mechanics to several generations of Civil Engineering students. His research interests are in the fields of wind engineering, environmental fluid mechanics and railway aerodynamics. He is a Fellow of the Institution of Civil Engineers, Institution of Highways and Transport, the Higher Education Academy and the Royal Meteorological Society. He is the holder of the International Association of Wind Engineering Senior Award – the Davenport Medal. He retired in December 2017 but continues to work on various aspects of railway aerodynamics, wind engineering and pollution and pathogen transport as Emeritus Professor of Environmental Fluid Mechanics at the University of Birmingham, as well as on aspects of Black Country and Lichfield history. He has been an Anglican clergyman since 1988 and has been attached to the parish of St. Michael-on-Greenhill in Lichfield since 1998.

6th May

TBC - Invite out there awaiting response

**ZOOM LECTURES FEBRUARY TO MAY 2022 starting at 8.00pm**

11th March

George Demidowicz

Soho Manufactory, Mint and Foundry

George Demidowicz began his research in historical geography at the University of Birmingham with a study of late medieval colonisation and settlement in the north east region of Poland. He transferred his interests to the local scene. He continued to research and write and became increasingly involved in conservation issues and the protection and interpretation of the historic environment. In 1990 George was appointed by Coventry City Council as the City Conservation Officer, going on to lead the Conservation and Urban Design Team and later the Conservation and Landscape Architecture Team. He retired in 2011 following the completion of Coventry's Millennium scheme, the Phoenix Initiative. George was elected as Honorary Research Fellow in the Department of History at Birmingham University in April 2011. George has been a member of the Birmingham City Council's Conservation and Heritage Panel for over 25 years and is a member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation. He has recently joined Coventry Cathedral's Fabric Advisory Committee and has contributed to a number of television and local radio programmes.

The Soho Manufactory (1761-1863) and Soho Mint (1788-1850s) were both situated in the historic parish of Handsworth, now in the city of Birmingham, and the Soho Foundry (1795-1895) lay in the historic township of Smethwick, now within Sandwell Metropolitan Borough. Together they played a key role in the Industrial Revolution, achieving many world 'firsts': the first working Watt steam engine, the first steam-engine powered mint and the first purpose-built steam engine manufactory (the Soho Foundry), to name but a few. The talk will look at the complex more than the personalities involved.

25th March                      Ashleigh Coffey

### A Guide for the Child and Youth

Ashleigh is a Master's Student in History at Keele University. She was given the opportunity to work in the Keele University Special Collections and Archives which gave rise to the Blog and its title. The lecture this evening hopefully expanding on the work Ashleigh carried out during the placement; more details will follow.

**NB The 'live' in person lectures at the Guildhall in Lichfield commencing on Friday 18th February 2022 (with the AGM for 2021 that evening) are subject to change depending on developments regarding the Covid-19 pandemic and possible introduction of restrictions and requirements imposed by the Government or the venue. The Membership will of course be kept informed of any alterations by means of email advice.**

---

In 2015 FoSSA (The Friends of Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archives) embarked on a project to digitize all 256 Staffordshire Tithe Maps held in the Staffordshire Record Office. This Society made a very generous financial donation to the project for the digitization of the tithe maps of the three Lichfield Parishes and the surrounding areas. It is always interesting (and rewarding to those of us who took an active part in this complex and at times rather difficult project) to see the uses to which these maps, now available to use free of charge on the internet, and the accompanying transcriptions of the tithe schedules which act as an index to each map, have been put by local historians and others. One such use has been the work of Chris Baker, a Lichfield historian on the prebends of Lichfield. The tithe maps and schedules of Lichfield record the parcels of land upon which tithe was payable to the prebendary canons of Lichfield Cathedral, in addition to the tithe payable to the incumbent of St Mary's church. The prebendary estates made the schedules very complicated as the boundaries of the prebends did not fit with any other boundaries and often buildings in Lichfield had been erected over prebend boundaries so that a tithe was payable on one part of the building to one prebend and on another part of the building to another. Professor Baker's Blog [A study of the ancient prebends of Lichfield Cathedral – Chris Baker's website \(profchrisbaker.com\)](http://profchrisbaker.com) discusses these boundaries and how they came in to being. For more information on the prebendary canons of the Cathedral see the M.Phil thesis of Carol Southworth [The Canons of Lichfield Cathedral in the Last Quarter of the Fifteenth Century \(bham.ac.uk\)](http://bham.ac.uk) - a good read in its own right and just perfect for a cosy winter evening!

*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*

**See our website: [www.sahs.uk.net](http://www.sahs.uk.net)**