



STAFFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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Two Anglo-Saxon items found by a metal detectorist near Whittington in 2020 are on display in Tamworth Castle Museum.

The first is a cast, copper alloy Early to Middle Anglo-Saxon die stamp for making pressblech foils, dating to the late 6th to 7th century.



The die stamp is sub-rectangular in form and cross-section. Both sides are flat, one of which is decorated with an interlace decoration without zoomorphic elements. The interlacing asymmetric and twisting pattern gives the design a writhing quality, but it lacks any zoomorphic elements such as a head or limbs. Concurrent with the development of Style II in the late 6th and early 7th centuries, another type of interlace - irregular and non-Roman in style, was developed, which could also include zoomorphic elements.

Each thread of the interwoven pattern carries a central panel of sub-circular and/or lozenge granules or beads which are framed by linear grooves, perhaps imitating filigree design of beaded wire. The lozenge, angular 'beads' perhaps represent a faux spiral-beaded wire

produced by beading at an oblique angle. The sinuous, interlacing pattern is surrounded by rectangular beaded border - again perhaps replicating a beaded wire pattern. Looking at the image, in the top right corner is a circular granule. No zoomorphic element, other than the sinuous, writhing animal-looking body, can be determined. The granule may represent an eye, but no angular head is decipherable.

The reverse side is flat and undecorated, bar six, short, incised grooves along the shortest edge on the right and four incised grooves located off centre along the widest side. The patina indicates that these marks were made in antiquity. The etched lines are unusual and no parallels can be drawn. If it is, in fact, a die stamp - perhaps these lines represent the number of times it has been used to punch a design onto gold and silver foil. It is not clear if this is decorative or marks out a numerical count. Also on the reverse, two circular indentations or (rivets?) sit parallel.

It was found relatively close to a gold sheet decorated with filigree and within c.7 miles (12 km) of the Staffordshire Hoard. It is possible that both items, along with other high-status pieces found within this area, form part of the wider story of the Staffordshire Hoard.

Early medieval (Anglo-Saxon) gold sheet with filigree and granules dating to the 7th century AD.

A rectangular gold sheet that is lightly battered and bent along the outer perimeter. The plate is decorated with a central rectangular border of filigree, framing sets of filigree S-shaped beaded wires that terminate with conical spirals. There are six conical spirals in total. The outer two pairs of conical spirals each finish with a single gold granule. One of the spirals with a gold granule has slightly loosened and the central part of one of the S-shaped beaded wires is missing.



To the left (as looking at the picture) there are three gold granules evenly spaced along the inner wall of the filigree border: two in each corner and one in the middle. This pattern is not repeated on the opposite side, or the granules are now missing. In-between the conical spirals are gold granular designs, the inner pattern, flanking the two central spirals, on both sides, is a design of four gold granules in a quatrefoil pattern with an additional granule on top. A further

four granular designs are present on the outer side of the S-shaped scrolls, comprising three gold granules all on the same level, in a sub-triangular shape.

The reverse is undecorated, bar an incised 'X' and is possibly an 'assembly' mark - similar marks are etched onto the reverse of the gold sheet for the hilt-collar from the Staffordshire Hoard assemblage.

Gold sheets with filigree scrollwork are typical decorative elements of 7th century Anglo-Saxon metalwork, ornamenting high-status pieces including weapon-hilts. This piece was found c. 7 miles (12 km) from the Staffordshire Hoard that consisted of gold, garnet and filigree weapon and helmet fittings and ecclesiastical symbols. Other objects found nearby carrying scroll filigree decoration include a possible tweezer cap from Elford. The conical spiral filigree wires are uncommon in Anglo-Saxon filigree with parallels from late Roman, Viking and Irish metalwork including the Tara brooch from Co. Meath. Perhaps then, this example found in the wider hinterland of the Staffordshire Hoard site may also form part of this story.

(Adapted from entries in the Portable Antiquities Database, finds.org.uk, discussion by Dr Lisa Brundle)

NEW BOOK

STAFFORDSHIRE RECORD SOCIETY

Collections for a History of Staffordshire 4th series, XXVII (2022) ISBN 978 0 901719 18 8

Local Histories: Essays in Honour of Nigel Tringham

edited by Ian Atherton, Matthew Blake, Andrew Sargent, Alannah Tomkins

The essays included are a tribute to Nigel, reflecting the breadth of his own work and his support of that of others. They include contributions from a variety of often overlapping worlds including doctoral students he has supervised, and colleagues and associates from the English Place-Name Society, Keele University, the Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society, Staffordshire Archive and Heritage Services, the Staffordshire Record Society, the Victoria County History, and the William Salt Library. They range in time from the early-medieval period to the twentieth century, and though the focus is on Staffordshire (with one contribution taking a broader Mercia-and-beyond approach) the essays, like the best of local history, are not geographically narrow but treat their subject as illustrative of wider themes and developments across England.

Introduction: Ian Atherton, Matthew Blake, Andrew Sargent, and Alannah Tomkins

Where was Clofesho? Paul Everson

The Swine Woods of Domesday Staffordshire, Andrew Sargent

Fiefs, Fonts, and Parish Churches: The Emergence of Staffordshire's Post-Conquest Religious Landscape, John Hunt

The Unlucky Family: Thomas, Earl of Stafford (d. 1392), Philip Morgan

Place-Names, People, and Landscape in Medieval Staffordshire, John Baker, Jayne Carroll, and Susan Kilby

The Archaeological Potential of Staffordshire Churches, Bob Meeson

Settlement and Change in the Upland Parish of Leek, Faith Cleverdon

‘Members of One Another’s Miseries’: The Culture and Politics of War Relief in Seventeenth-Century Staffordshire, David J. Appleby

‘There Never was a Viler Wretch in a Place of Dignity’: Thomas Wood as Dean and Bishop of Lichfield, and the Divisions of the Later Stuart Church, Ian Atherton

Rose Bagnall’s Books: Dissent, Reading, and Gender in Early-Eighteenth-Century Newcastle-under-Lyme, Ann Hughes

Colliers, Nailers, and Shoemakers: Richard Parrott’s Account of Cottages in the Parish of Audley and Hamlet of Talke, James P. Bowen

George Tollet (1725–79), a Neglected Staffordshire Historian, Randle Knight

Stafford Infirmary and the ‘Unreformed’ Nurse, 1765–1820, Alannah Tomkins

Family, Enterprise, Credit, and Community in the Early Nineteenth Century: The Willdeys of Lichfield, Peter Collinge

Ludchurch: A Staffordshire Wonder Revealed, David Horovitz

Clayton and Bell at Keele, Robin Studd

Here Lies the Hare, Matthew Blake

‘An Admirable Collection’: Stafford’s Wragge Museum, its Origins, and its Fate, Chris Copp

A Neglected Source for a Farming Community Snapshot: Land Tax Valuation Survey (1910), Paul Anderton

The Early Days of the Victoria County History in Staffordshire, John Becket

Price to non-members is £40 *plus* postage and packing: £5 for UK and £15 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 2 LZ. Email: matthew.blake@btinternet.com

Review

Collections for a History of Staffordshire, 4th series, volume XXVII; Local Histories: Essays in Honour of Nigel Tringham. Staffordshire Record Society, 2022. 432 pages, £40.

This volume marks something of a departure for the Stafford Record Society; previous volumes have focussed on one or two documents relevant to the history of the county such as volume XXI on Sir William Brereton’s letter book and volume XXV which presented the letter book of Henry, Lord Stafford (1501-63). This, however, is a special volume very appropriately marking the contribution to the Department of History at Keele University coupled with his work as Editor of the Victoria County History for Staffordshire (a role from which he has now retired) made by Dr Nigel Tringham, MBE. There have been other similar volumes in the Record Society’s past, such as those in 1970 and 1999 which honoured former stalwarts such as S.A.H. Burne and Michael Greenslade respectively, but this volume is unique in that Nigel has not stepped down from his role as editor of *Collections* with the Record Society.

The introductory chapter sets out the *raison d’être* of the volume, noting that two of Nigel’s former PhD students are contributors. The wide range of Nigel’s scholarship is enthusiastically endorsed, and there is a full bibliography of Nigel’s published material, which gives an indication of the wide scope and chronological range of his historical work.

Nigel Tringham of course needs no introduction to SA&HS members where he has undertaken a similar role in editing our *Transactions* for an almost identical number of years. Equally, some of the contributors are also well-known to Society members; our own president, Dr. John Hunt has provided an essay on the emergence of Staffordshire’s Post-Conquest religious landscape. On a sadder note, the

volume contains Bob Meeson's last published work. This is concerned with the archaeological potential of Stafford Churches. In this paper, he ably marshals both archaeology and history in pursuit of his suggestions, much in the way Society members would expect from his extensive knowledge of the subject. Other essays, 21 in total, which it is not proposed to review here, range far and wide, certainly in time, varying from a fascinating review of the location of the early English synodal meeting place at *Clofesho* through to David Horovitz's discussion of the history of Ludchurch and an essay by John Becket, something in the nature of a coda on the early history of the Victoria County History in Staffordshire, which places Nigel's predecessors as editors in context.

Many of the essays collected here reflect specific historical themes with which Nigel has been involved and produced material during the course of his career. A number of them culminate with a mention of Nigel's extensive published work and make a link between the theme of the essay and one or more examples of Nigel's researches. Such a link, like all the contents of this volume, is a fitting tribute to the very considerable contribution Nigel has made to the development of local history as an academic discipline, not just for studies relating to Staffordshire and its people, but regionally too. This volume can therefore be recommended as a more than suitable addition to the bookshelf of anyone interested not just in the history of Staffordshire or the midlands, but that of England as a whole.

Steve Lewitt, Honorary Secretary.

Wall Roman site and museum

The Museum at Wall Roman site, manned by the Friends of Letocetum (English Heritage volunteers) will be open, mainly on alternate weekends and Bank Holiday Mondays, from 11:00 to 4:00, until Sunday 22 October. There is a full list of opening times at <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/wall-roman-site/>

"Hidden gems of Wall", a guided tour around Wall village pointing out parts of Roman *Letocetum*, is on Saturday 20 May, 2:00- 4.15 pm. Cost £5 including refreshments. Prior booking is essential because numbers are limited: 01543 418464 or via <http://www.wallromansitefriendsofletocetum.co.uk/feedback.asp>

Open access

Volumes of the Transactions of this Society from I to XLVIII are now available on our website www.sahs.uk.net free of charge.

For access to the most recent 5 volumes you will need a password which can be obtained from Keith Billington

SA&HS Transactions – Back Numbers available FREE to enquirers

The Society has a back stock of past Volumes of its Transactions (the annual SA&HS journal). A decision has been made, as reported to the 2022 AGM held on 17th February, to make this physical back number archive available for free to anyone who would like copies; this 'offer' is to both the SA&HS Membership and beyond. However, precluded are the 5 most recent Volumes, so currently XLIX to LIII (LIV will be published in May 2023), copies of which can be obtained for a price, details available on application. So for FREE – all Volumes up to and including XLVIII, though some very early issues are unfortunately now out of print, these being I, VI-VIII and X. All that we ask is for the cost of postage, where applicable, to be covered. Indexes of the Transactions, which may assist, are to be found on the SA&HS website, and there's a small index at the back of Volume LI.

So, over to you – all enquiries please to Keith Billington: kjboutthere@yahoo.co.uk

Keith Billington

Why you should read Transactions Vol LIV

Mike Hodder

Reading through each successive annual *Transactions* volume to compile a summary, I always discover interesting details in articles which I might not otherwise have read.

Volume 54 of the Society's *Transactions* contains studies of documentary sources and reports on archaeological investigations, on topics and sites ranging in date from an early medieval "folk group" to a 19th century pottery works, and additionally an appreciation of the late Bob Meeson, a prominent archaeologist who was a long-standing member and supporter of this Society.

In "The Norman Forest of Kinver: An analysis of the Forest's extent and place-names recorded in the Great Perambulation of 1300", Kevin James begins by rightly reminding us that a medieval "forest" did not mean an area of continuous woodland but it was a legal term for land over which the king had sole right of hunting deer and boar, restricting the activities of other people who lived within it. Centred on the royal manor of Kinver, Kinver Forest extended from Staffordshire across the border into Worcestershire, covering a greater area than previously assumed. The perambulation lists points along the boundary and the author analyses the topography of the boundary and the elements of the place-names along it, including *clent* which appears in just two local place-names but is unknown elsewhere, suggesting it may have been a local name for a geographical feature. Speculatively, "gate" names associated with "park" names are suggested to indicate pre-Conquest livestock enclosures.

Nigel Tringham's article, "The last of the Audleys: James (d. 1386), Nicholas (d. 1391) and his wife Elizabeth (d. 1400)" includes a history of the wealthy north Staffordshire family, a commentary on the wills of three members of it, and a translation of the whole of the original (in French) text of each one. The family replaced their original castle in Audley itself, and undertook works at the parish church. They founded Hulton Abbey in Stoke-on-Trent and the three wills requested burial there, and specify their tombs and funeral arrangements. Their actual graves are identified amongst those

excavated at the Abbey. They also bequeathed chalices, patens, images, vestments and hangings to the monks.

“John Wilkinson (1728–1808) and the Bradley ironworks”, by Peter King, uses a range of original sources in a study of this hitherto relatively little-researched and rather under-appreciated ironmaster and his works in Bilston, Wolverhampton. Bradley is sometimes regarded as the oldest iron furnace fired by coke in the Black Country, replacing charcoal, but coke had been used sporadically earlier on, in the 17th-century by “Dud” Dudley and at Rushall furnace earlier in the 18th century. Wilkinson already owned iron furnaces in Wales and Shropshire when he established the Bradley furnace. Coal was first mined at Bradley in the mid 18th century by Thomas Hoo of Great Barr, who then let land for construction of furnaces. Wilkinson’s furnace was blown out in 1760 through shortage of ironstone, and subsequent litigation eventually resulted in a new lease, new furnaces were built and the old furnace was brought back into use in the 1790s. Wilkinson was also known as a gunfounder, producing cannon, shot and shells at Bradley and his other furnaces. He adopted others’ innovations, including stamping and puddling to make bar iron, and he built rolling mills.

The posthumous publication of the late Margaret O’Sullivan’s “Theodosia Hinckes (1792–1874): architecture, archaeology, and art” describes a Tettenhall lady who inherited family land and property. She commissioned Birmingham-based architect Thomas Rickman to build her a house in Tettenhall Wood. She was interested in antique stained glass which she installed in her house and in a new church in Wolverhampton which she paid for, in keeping with the activities of philanthropic women elsewhere who were endowing churches. She owned topographical art and architecture books and travelled, like her friend Emma Gentille Petit, sister of John Louis Petit, a topographical artist (who was the subject of an article by Margaret O’Sullivan in *Transactions* 51). In a project that may have begun in response to the winding-up of the Church Building Commission, Theodora painted watercolours of churches in the diocese of Lichfield. The paintings concentrated on the exterior and interior of the church buildings, depicting architectural elements accurately but not necessarily in detail. Furnishings inside the church and things outside it are selectively included in the paintings, and not always strictly accurately. Some of the paintings capture churches before late Victorian “restoration” and rebuilding, and they are important sources of information on churches that were subsequently lost or modified.

“Excavations at the former Vulcan pottery works, Clough Street, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire” by Helen Daniel yet again demonstrates the importance of archaeological investigation of relatively recent sites, in this case one that began in the 19th century and continued into the middle of the 20th, producing a wide variety of ceramic goods. Excavations revealed remains of a muffle kiln and bottle ovens with earlier ovens under them. David Barker’s report on the ceramic finds and ceramic production material identifies at least three manufacturers of specialist kiln furniture, which includes tilts, thimbles, spurs, saddles, and hand-basin props.

A short article by Steve Lewitt, “The *Pencersæte* revisited – re-opening the debate”, reassesses the likely extent of the territory of this group, who are known from a charter of AD 849 to have had a shared boundary with the *Tomsaete*, people of the Tame valley. The land of the *Pencersæte* has previously been interpreted as the Smestow and Penk valleys, possibly reflecting the *territoria* of Roman *Pennocrucium*, but Penk is not recorded as a river name in early sources, and a watershed between drainage basins may have been a zone of contact between separate groups. It is more likely that valley of the Smestow brook or river, which runs between Kinver and Wolverhampton, was the territory of the *Pencersæte*- this broadly overlaps with the later Seisdon hundred. There are some

Pen- names in the Smeston basin. *Pencer* may be derived from early Welsh and mean “a chief fort” or “a fort on headland”, possibly that on Kinver edge or the putative hillfort at Wolverhampton.



“R. A. Meeson: an appreciation”, by his former colleagues and collaborators, describes how Bob was originally a teacher, who first became involved with archaeology in this Society’s excavations at Wall, joined the Society and subsequently became a committee member, then began his own excavations

in Tamworth which became the focus of his subsequent research. He was Staffordshire's County Archaeological Officer and then a freelance historic buildings consultant. He was nationally renowned for his work, particularly on timber-framed buildings and churches. Knowledgeable and enthusiastic, he encouraged and supported many people in their archaeological careers.

In addition the volume contains updates on recent archaeological work in Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, Walsall and Wolverhampton, by Shane Kelleher, Jon Goodwin and Ellie Ramsey respectively.



The Staffordshire Archive Service are delighted to return with the online History Day this year. The packed programme will include news on the new Staffordshire History Centre where construction work is well underway. There will be updates on the Victoria County History project and the County's archaeology programmes together with research papers from post-graduate researchers at Keele University.

We also welcome our keynote speaker Dr Imogen Peck who will explore the impact of the British Civil Wars in Staffordshire. Further keynote speakers and additions to the programme will be announced in due course.

Saturday May 13 10.00 to 15.00

Book your ticket on the [Eventbrite page](#)

Church Tours

The Staffordshire Historic Churches Trust organise tours around Churches in our diocese and beyond for which there is a nominal fee.

We are in the process of planning 3 more tours for 2023. The first one will be on Saturday 24th June and will visit Shenstone Church and Old Tower, Wall, Chasetown St Anne and Shareshill.

The second one will be on Saturday 29th July visiting Church Eaton (Flower festival), Bradley and Moreton.

The third tour will be on September 24th - details yet to be arranged.

All tours include a tea.

Please show early interest by emailing Katie Brown at admastonfarm@outlook.com

Library & Legacy:

the story of Lichfield Cathedral Library

and the Seymour Collection

This exhibition in the Chapter House at Lichfield Cathedral tells the story of why the Cathedral's Library is unusual - possibly unique - amongst cathedral libraries.

The mediaeval library at Lichfield was almost totally lost during the English Civil War. In the 1670s, a new library was established with the gift of more than 400 books from the collection of William Seymour, Duke of Somerset. His wife, Frances Devereux, had family links with Drayton Bassett and spent extended periods of time there. Having inherited her husband's library on his death in 1660, she bequeathed the collection to Lichfield. She wrote in her will: *"for the respect which I and my family have received from the City of Lichfield, I give the books which were my late deceased husband's, to the Church of Lichfield to be*

put in the new library there.” Lichfield Cathedral’s Library thus contains a wide range of books which are associated with the library of a wealthy 17th century intellectual rather than with a cathedral.

This exhibition explores William Seymour’s library, illustrating the types of books which he (and his ancestors) chose to include in their libraries and how this reflected the culture of their time. Perhaps this will encourage us to consider what books we choose to have in our homes nowadays and, indeed whether books are still relevant in a digital age.



The exhibition also includes the only three books known to have survived at Lichfield from the mediaeval collection.

Saturday 22nd April to Sunday 3rd September 2023

Free admission

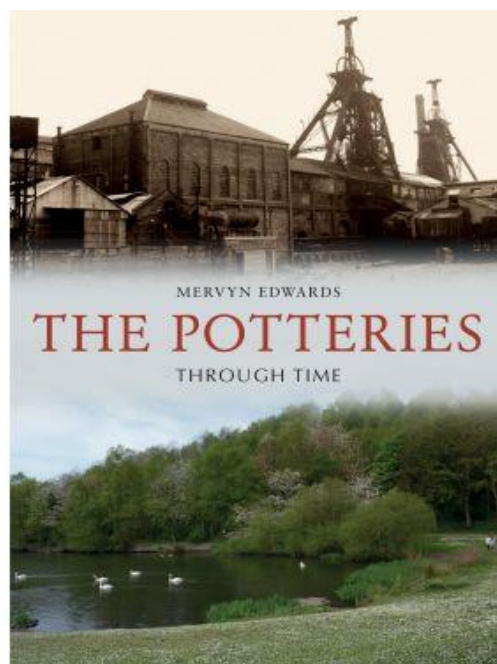
Open during normal Cathedral opening hours; see the Cathedral website for details <https://www.lichfield-cathedral.org/>

Book Review – The Potteries Through Time. Mervyn Edwards - Amberley Publishing, Autumn 2022, 96 pp softback, £15.99. ISBN 978 1 3981 0048 0. (also available as an e-book)

Following the book review by Richard Stone in the January Newsletter regarding North Staffordshire ceramic makers Adams (where my grandfather was a master engraver in the early mid-20th century) this is now another look at a new book about the recent history of that well defined, distinctive and unique area which is the Potteries. This time it's one of those photograph with caption productions, two images to a page with accompanying closely observed and informative descriptive commentaries. Another of those 'trip down memory lane' presentations in reality and as such it is, I have to say, one of many which have been produced to cover pretty much every locality in the country by now, or in this case the six towns which came to comprise the City of Stoke-on-Trent (NB the centenary of it being conferred as a City is coming up in 2025). You only have to peruse the book

shelves in the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery to see just how many local to S-o-T historical publications there are.

What makes **The Potteries Through Time** different is that the author Mervyn Edwards, who has written previously and severally on the local area, in this case he takes a 'then and now' approach with admirable use of historic photos, often necessarily monochrome, counter-placed alongside beneath with modern day images of the locations as they are now, for the most part managing to capture exactly the same spot and this provides an interesting and intriguing comparison. This is all of great interest to those, like me, who happen to have grown up in the area; this perhaps goes without saying. Many of the historic photographs are from the post-war years through to the 50s and 60s, some later, some in fact earlier.



I confess to a very clear recognition of many of the locations historically portrayed, particularly those to the north end of the six towns 'strand', i.e. Hanley, Burslem and Tunstall, with vivid recollection of the collieries and their associated mine top works, and their spoil heaps ('dirt tips' was the vernacular); also of course the profusion of pottery manufactories ('pot banks') with their prominent bottle kilns on the skyline. I have strong memories of Sneyd Green (featured), where my parents ran a lock-up corner shop (think 'Arkwright's'), and of significance is the nearby modern day Hanley Forest Park with its lake (again featured) which is where Hanley Deep Pit (shown) used to be, long gone .. Burslem and Tunstall as town centres are very much in modern day decline, drastically so, with Hanley not far behind.

So admittedly Mervyn Edwards' book is a nostalgia-fest for those who probably happen to originate from the area and are of a certain age ! Of value though also as a chronicle of changing times and in many respects the very dramatic change in landscape, social circumstances and way of life, not all of course for the good by any means; though the atmosphere is now a lot clearer and cleaner ! This pictorial book has been well put together with some 186 images in total and will be of great interest to those certainly with a local connection but also to the wider historian community with a view to considering the recent social past. I could go on at length, from a personal perspective, about everything that's in this publication, but I'd better not. Greatly enjoyed ! Recommended.

Keith Billington

Talk by Mike Hodder:

"West Bromwich before the Industrial Revolution" at Bromwich Hall (West Bromwich Manor House) on Wednesday 7 June at 10.30 am. Prior booking advisable <https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/joininmuseums>

Going Underground – The Potteries, by Anthony Poulton-Smith. Amberley press, 2023, 96 pages. £16.99.

Anthony Poulton-Smith is a name many Society members will recognise as the author of the *Place-names of Staffordshire* and *Lichfield Through Time* amongst other books on the County. Perhaps not surprisingly, he is a resident of Tamworth. He is a prolific author with, according to his website, at least 85 titles to his name based on historical subjects, especially place-names. He has written books on a similar theme to this current title, notably, from the perspective of Society members, *Going Underground – Birmingham*.

This volume looks at underground Staffordshire from three principal aspects, transport tunnels (canals and railways, although the A50 tunnel at Meir gets a brief chapter) collieries, and, thirdly tunnels associated with buildings. He devotes 15 of the 33 chapters to collieries throughout the North Staffordshire coalfield, ranging from the well-known at Silverdale through to minor pits such as Birchenwood, which closed as early as 1932. Much of the material deployed relating to collieries is derived in part from other publications devoted to this aspect of historical research.

His look at Harecastle tunnels, the canal version being portrayed on the cover offers a slightly more idiosyncratic take on the construction, development, and use of the tunnels with, of course, a side-line into whether there are any hauntings known, notably the almost-perfectly-named Kit Crewbucket, a late bargee who is reputed to appear in the main canal tunnel. He also notes streams which feed the Trent which have part-underground sections to their passage through the conurbation. The less-well-known tunnel connecting what used to be the Gentlemen's' conveniences at Stoke station with the North Stafford Hotel also merits a short but well-illustrated diverting chapter linked to his theme of transport tunnels.

Bathpool Park on the edge of the hill through which the several Harecastle tunnels have been bored is also discussed. Older members may recall that this is the area where the schoolgirl Lesley Whittle was held prisoner, and this terrible episode is recounted by the author – indeed it is the primary focus of that chapter.

There is very little that is new or ground-breaking in this work, which is aimed fairly and squarely at the curious layman rather than the academic. The use of illustrative photographs is particularly helpful and occasionally deployed to good effect, although sometimes the photographs (mostly taken by the author) do get removed from the piece of text they are meant to support (such as on p.43). Also, there are occasions where the caption does not accurately relate to the item photographed, when for example what the author on p.12 describes as a section of underground canal, the Trent and Mersey canal in a section near to the A500 in Stoke, is actually quite clearly not underground. The author cites only 3 items in his rather short bibliography, although I suspect several other works may have been used to assist with the creation of the material presented here. As is not unexpected in a work of this nature, there is no index, which can make looking for specific items difficult. For a brief work of less than 100 pages the price is quite steep, but if you are interested in tunnels and their changing uses through time in Staffordshire, you will enjoy aspects of this book.

Steve Lewitt, Honorary Secretary.

Charles Close Society Midland Group Meetings

The next meeting will be at Wall Village Hall on Tuesday 23rd May at 7.30pm. The topic for the evening to be confirmed. The venue is on Watling St, Wall, Lichfield WS14 0AW. For more information please email lez@watsonlv.net."

The SA&HS Programmes of Lectures

The spring season of SA&HS lectures finished at the end of April, and there is now the usual break during the summer months. Elsewhere in this Newsletter are details of the resumption with a new programme of talks through the autumn months, starting in September. Brian Bull, the Lecture Programme Secretary, has been busy organising speakers for the new period. Lots to look forward to. Some of the presentations will continue to occur virtually by means of Zoom, and not be at auditorium.

Looking further ahead, calendar year 2024 will comprise a 50/50 mix of 'live' in person and Zoom lectures, 7 of each in fact, again split into a spring and an autumn season. A total of 14 talks means that the usual annual number will have increased, the norm having been 12 per year for a long time now. Some of the 'live' in person talks, at the Guildhall in Lichfield, will be arranged for the lighter months of spring, which may be a benefit regarding evening travel to and from.

We continue to address any glitches with the level and quality of the microphone sound at the Guildhall. We acknowledge that it's not always been quite as it should be, though on the majority of occasions there is little problem. Also, where, when and how is constantly under review as to the longer term future with regard to mounting Society lectures. We will keep the Membership informed at all times.

Keith Billington

Live Lectures at The Guildhall

September to December 2023

22nd September Dr David Lepine

The Cult of St Chad in Lichfield Cathedral

St Chad is almost synonymous with Lichfield cathedral. Although he was bishop for less than three years, he remains at the heart of its identity and his cult flourished there for eight centuries, from his death in 672 until the destruction of his shrine in 1538. Despite almost all traces of the cult being swept away at the Reformation a surprising amount of evidence survives from which its medieval glory can be reconstructed. This lecture will explore all facets of the cult: its shrines, images, altars, liturgy and feast days, and the Lives of St Chad as well as its popularity. In the later Middle Ages the cult was given new vigour by the benefactions of three medieval bishops, most notably Walter Langton, and its status was raised from an essentially local, diocesan cult to one observed across the whole province of Canterbury.

Dr David Lepine is a historian of the late medieval church with a particular interest in secular cathedrals and their canons. He has written extensively on the lives and careers of medieval clergy. His publications include work on cathedrals and charity, John Gower and the Church, clerical status and display, and the commemoration of clergy.

20th October Dr Mark Knight

Transforming the Trent Valley Archaeology, incorporating the investigation at Catholme

Neolithic Site.

Dr Mark Knight is the Cultural Heritage Officer with The Transforming the Trent Valley Partnership.

A revitalised and treasured landscape of wildlife-rich waterways and wetlands is being made possible thanks to the 'Transforming the Trent Valley' scheme successfully securing a large grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund in December 2018 to deliver a multi-million pound scheme in the Trent Valley across 200km in Staffordshire and Derbyshire. Transforming the Trent Valley is a partnership project of 18 organisations working together to restore and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the Trent Valley, with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust at the helm.

3rd November Dr Imogen Peck

The Aftermath of the Civil War in Staffordshire

Dr Peck studied for a BA in History and Politics and an MSc in Political Theory at the University of Oxford. After a brief stint working in various charity and media roles she returned to academia to study an MPhil and then a PhD at the University of Bristol. On finishing her PhD in 2018 she was appointed as a Teaching Fellow at the University of Warwick. Dr Peck joined the University of Birmingham in autumn 2022. Dr Peck is a historian of memory and communities, with research expertise in local and family history, the social history of archives, and the mental afterlife of conflict. She is especially interested in the ways memory and the representation of the past shape individual and collective identities, with a particular emphasis on the experiences of non-elite men and women.

1st December Teresa Gilmore

Portable Antiquities Scheme - Staffordshire

Tonight's lecture will bring the Society up to date with the finds from Staffordshire.

Teresa has been working with finds since she finished her degree in 2002. Although on all university excavations, she tended to end up in the Finds Hut as opposed to out in the trenches with everyone else. Once the degree was finished, she started working for Cotswold Archaeology within their finds department. It was during this time, that she gathered all the knowledge about the different types of pottery. After that she started working within the PAS West Midlands. There was a short spell with the Cheshire & Merseyside PAS team followed by a short spell at Wardell Armstrong before returning to the West Midland PAS team. Teresa is currently the Finds Liaison Officer (East Staffordshire and North West Midlands) for the Portable Antiquities Scheme/ Birmingham Museums Trust.

These talks are held in the Guildhall Lichfield on Friday evenings at 8.00pm. Doors open and refreshments usually available from 7.30pm. Visitors are welcome; £3 at the door.

ZOOM LECTURES SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2023

6th October TBC

Invite out there - Awaiting a response

17th November Gillian White

Bess of Hardwick

Bess of Hardwick is one of the most fascinating women of the sixteenth century and her most famous building, Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire, survives as a fine example of Elizabethan creativity, magnificence and pride. This talk outlines Bess's remarkable life and then will briefly touch on the architecture and contents of Hardwick Hall, surely her lasting monument.

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 Department at Oxford University, as well as freelance lecturing and teaching. This lecture is the fourth outing for Gillian with us.



This newsletter is edited for the Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society by Richard Totty

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Views expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Society

Comments welcome

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