



# STAFFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## NEWSLETTER January 2024

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### St Editha Church Eaton

We intend to visit this lovely church, together with St Lawrence Gnosall and St Mary and All Saints Bradley in March 2024 for a tour guided by Dr John Hunt. See inside (page 19) for details and an application form for tickets to this exclusive event.

## Excavations at Dovecliff

The September/October 2023 issue of British Archaeology contains a summary account of the investigations at Dovecliff Weir on the river Dove near Burton on Trent, which took place in 2020 during the Covid pandemic. Sarah Howard senior archaeologist for Midlands at the Environment Agency has written an account of the work on the weir illustrated with photographs and maps. A copy of the relevant issue of the journal is available to borrow at the Society's regular Friday evening meetings in Lichfield Guildhall.

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Keith Billington mans the SAHS stand at the Local History Fair held at the Chasewater Innovation Centre on 18 November 2023.

# Lecture Season 2023-2024 ~ SPRING 2024

**1st March 2024**

Matthew Jones

BY ZOOM

Roman Warwick

Matt Jones has been doing archaeology for nearly 20 years, starting paid archaeological work in the school holidays between terms. He studied at Cardiff University doing student excavations at Durrington Walls as well as the 'Islands in a Common Sea' project on the Isles of Scilly.

Matt has worked all over the country before starting with Archaeology Warwickshire in 2020.

This presentation is centring on Roman Warwick, which, up to this point there has been relatively scant evidence for. Archaeology Warwickshire have excavated two sites within Warwick and a third very close by which all have varying scales of Roman occupation.

**15th March 2024**

Speaker to be confirmed

LIVE AT GUILDHALL

West Midlands Buildings at Risk  
Synopsis to follow

**29th March 2024**

Christopher John

BY ZOOM

Castle Bromwich Airfield

Christopher John has a long interest in military history particularly WW1 in France and Flanders and local sites of interest. and has a particular local interest in the history of Castle Bromwich airfield.

The talk looks at the history of Castle Bromwich airfield from its first beginnings as a cradle of early British aviation, through WW1 when it was a major training centre for the RFC and RAF to its role in WW2 where it became a powerhouse of Allied aircraft production with the majority of all Spitfires being produced and test flown from there.

**12th April 2024**

Dr. Mathew Morris

LIVE AT GUILDHALL

The King Under the Leicester Car park

Mathew has worked for University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) since 2004, excavating a wide range of rural and urban archaeology across the Midlands, from the Prehistoric period through to the Industrial Revolution.

The search for the last known resting place of King Richard III is the subject of the talk tonight and will cover all aspects of the site project work followed by the scientific analysis and the DNA results.

**26th April 2024**

Elizabeth Thomson

BY ZOOM

Brick making in the Black  
Country/Brickyard Wenches of the Black Country

Elizabeth has worked for British Waterways and the Canal and River Trust for over two decades on the conservation of its historic estate. In 2018 she started a part-time PhD on the brick making industry of the Black Country at the University of Birmingham.

**10th May 2024**

Dr. Roger White

LIVE AT GUILDHALL

The Wem in Shropshire Hoard

Dr Roger White has presented lectures to the Society on several occasions, the most recent one however was in 2017 and was "A Clash of Arms: The Romans in the West Midlands".

This evening's lecture is centred on the Wem Hoard that was discovered in 2018 by metal detectorists with the site-find being excavated by Dr Roger White in 2019. The find is of key importance to Shropshire's history where there is limited evidence of people living within the County during the 5th century.

**24th May 2024**

Stuart Pierson

BY ZOOM

Coleshill Hall, Moats and Gardens: Wealth, Treason,  
War and Pleasure

Stuart is a Senior Project Officer at Wessex Archaeology, where he directs fieldwork projects. He studied archaeology at University Centre Peterborough and The University of Sheffield, with a focus on landscape and experimental archaeology.

Between 2018 and 2022, Wessex Archaeology have carried out extensive excavations within the original grounds of Coleshill Hall, between the M6 and the M42. Archaeologists discovered a nationally significant site which contained the best-preserved 15th & 16th century gardens ever found in the UK and remains of the Coleshill Hall, moats, and gatehouse.

**7th June 2024**

Dr. Katherine Farr

LIVE AT GUILDHALL

You Are What You Eat: How Isotopes Dish the Dirt on  
Historical Puzzles

Dr Kate Farr was until recently a Senior Lecturer in the School of Sciences, University of Wolverhampton having there taught for 32 years. Her interests are in the impacts of humans on their environment over the last 10 000 years since the last Ice Age.



Analysis can reveal so much more about our ancestors by analysing what we eat after any other remains have decayed away completely. Hence the title "You Are What You Eat". Archaeologists are now having to be much more careful about throwing anything away as science has shown that in future there may be a wealth of further information in there.

Lectures at the Guildhall start at 8.00pm with refreshments normally available from 7.30pm. All are welcome; £3 on the door.

Zoom lectures are for members only who will be notified of the Zoom link a few days beforehand.

## Other Events

### **Council for British Archaeology, West Midlands: News from the Past**

Saturday 2 March, Priory Rooms, Bull Street, Birmingham city centre, 10.00 to 4.30. This annual round-up of archaeological discoveries throughout the West Midlands includes talks on Sutton Park, Worcester Cathedral, Hartlebury Castle, and "Digging Deeper", a community archaeology project at Under Whitle in the Staffordshire Peak District. £25 (CBAWM members £20). Prior booking essential: <https://cbawestmidlands.org.uk/2024-news-from-the-past/>

### **Sandwell Priory and Sandwell Valley:**

Saturday 20 January, Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre (Sandwell Park Farm), 11.00: talk "Sandwell Priory and medieval West Bromwich". Small charge, advance booking essential: <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/whats-on/west-bromwich/sandwell-valley-visitor-centre-formerly-sandwell-park-farm/sandwell-valley-heritage-talk/2024-01-20/11:00/t-dvpdlgp>

Saturday 10 February, Sandwell Priory Heritage Walk, 11.00. Start at Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre (Sandwell Park Farm). Small charge, advance booking essential: <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/whats-on/west-bromwich/sandwell-valley-visitor-centre-formerly-sandwell-park-farm/sandwell-priory-heritage-walk/2024-02-10/11:00/t-krqgppq>

### **Sutton Park (Friends of Sutton Park Association):**

Saturday 16 March, Archaeology Walk, 11.00. Start at Sutton Park Visitor Centre. Advance booking not required; non-member donation £3. Details <https://fospa.org.uk/fospa-diary.html>

### **Wall Roman site (Friends of Letocetum):**

Tuesday 30 January, Wall Village Hall, 7.30: talk "A journey through Roman Portugal". Small charge. Details <https://www.wallromansitefriendsofletocetum.co.uk/index.asp?pageid=655913>

Tuesday 27 February, Wall Village Hall, 7.30: talk "Boudicca's last battle at Mancetter". Small charge. Details <https://www.wallromansitefriendsofletocetum.co.uk/index.asp?pageid=655913>

Saturday 27 April, Hidden Gems of Roman Wall tour. Start at car park, 2.00. Small charge, advance booking essential: Details <https://www.wallromansitefriendsofletocetum.co.uk/index.asp?pageid=655913>

Wall Roman site Museum re-opens on Saturday 24 March. Free admission, details: <https://www.wallromansitefriendsofletocetum.co.uk/index.asp?pageid=639203>

### **Charles Close Society**

The next meeting will be at Wall Village Hall on Tuesday 23rd of January 2024 at 7.30pm. Topic for the evening to be confirmed. You will find us on Watling St, Wall, Lichfield WS14 0AW.

For more information please contact Lez Watson at [lez@watsonlv.net](mailto:lez@watsonlv.net).

## **News from the Archives**

### **Stoke on Trent**

As of 27 November 2023 **our research service has now been temporarily suspended** and, whilst e-mail enquiries remain open at [stoke.archives@stoke.gov.uk](mailto:stoke.archives@stoke.gov.uk), **our ability to answer new queries will depend on the accessibility of any related material**. For more on the reasons why these changes to our service are necessary we'd recommend our recent "[Getting Our Docs in a Row](#)" blog post, which covers the changes taking place in our stores.

### **Stafford**

The newest volunteer group is now up and running supporting a postgraduate research project. Hannah Smith is a current PhD student at Keele University whose research is focusing on the legacies of slavery in Staffordshire, in particularly how slavery and abolition are remembered within the county. Hannah is leading the Staffordshire & Slavery volunteer group and studying documents from our collections.

Hannah launched the project earlier this Autumn by giving a talk where she gave the audience an overview of her research so far, reviewed a recent study trip to Boston and shared an interesting case study from Bath Record Office.

Madam

Jamia Jamaica

1757

Have now been fifteen Months in the Country, and have lately been in some doubt whether I should not have been obliged to have left your Interest here undisposed of, several Offers have been made but the Terms of payment were such as I did not think it your Interest to accept of. We have lately had an Offer from Mr John Bell of Kingston, he to choose one for your behalf, another, and to take the Negroes and the Land they are upon, at their Valuation, as I have never before had any offer for the Land, its the best that has been made as to Terms of payment, One fourth to be paid in Bills of Exchange at Signing, & in Bills of 1<sup>st</sup> Feb<sup>r</sup> 1758 and a Joint Bond of John Bell and George Paplay Esq<sup>r</sup> payable that Day Eighteen Months after signing the Writings and to bear an Interest of 6 p<sup>ct</sup>. It would have given me great Satisfaction had the whole payments been made on the Sale of the same - as it would have been more agreeable to you. Tho' the Purchases in this Country are more frequently made on Credit - When I look back upon the Transaction of your Estate in this Country and that you have for some Years past been brought in Debt, I thought it was your Interest to accept the best Offer that was made. The Valuation of the whole Negroes & 152 Acres they are upon was £3700. 15 - Jamaica currency Particulars of which you have by the Mann<sup>r</sup> of War<sup>r</sup>. I could not send you the Negroes as Desired as the Purchaser insisted upon all or none - There still remains your Tenements in Kingston and your Piece of Land called Paradise Penn<sup>n</sup> neither

Letter from the Sarah Smith collection.



The group are currently transcribing documents and discussing them with Hannah's guidance. As the project progresses we will be working towards making our catalogue more accessible; understanding how catalogue descriptions should be presented, what language should be used, what is important about a document, and what people would like to learn further in relation to slavery.

Name	Cost (£)
Amo <sup>d</sup> Brought Over	
Phoebe	
Rachael	
Rose	
Jenny	
Mary Ann	
Young Maugo	
Hannah	
Bep	
Phoebe	
Tibby	
Sarah	
Young Bep	
Parla	
Young Diana	
Letlce	
Franky	
Suba	
Young Queen, sickly	£ 40.
Baphne	
Maria	
Venus	£ 15.
Phillis	10.
2 Negroe Woman Girls	
Joan	
Monkey	
16 Girls Negroes	
Calia	
Sally a Mulatto	
Tibby	
Phillis	
Nancy	
Beneba	
Polly	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 190</b>

. Accounts from the Sarah Smith collection.

'In October I delivered a talk on 'Staffordshire and Slavery' for the North Staffordshire NHS Trust. My presentation touched on the practical links Staffordshire has to slavery, the relationship notable regional figures have



with slavery, such as Josiah Wedgwood, and the documents held in Staffordshire's Archive that relate to slavery.



Whilst there is a whole array of documents within Staffordshire's archive on slavery, I brought along copies of a letter and poem from African American abolitionist Phillis Wheatley, addressed to William Legg the 2<sup>nd</sup>, otherwise known as Lord Dartmouth. Wheatley was an enslaved person living in Boston, who advocated for the abolition of slavery and became the first published African American poet. Her letter and poem narrate the lead up to the American War of Independence and calls for the abolition of slavery from a black woman's perspective. Wheatley's letter and poem encouraged discussion about who she was as a person and, importantly, who normally narrates history. It was great to hear dialogue regarding the whitewashing of history and that the county's links with slavery need to be better researched and understood.

However, there was also surprise among NHS staff that a document like this is available for the public to see, whether in person or through being sent images of the document. This is indicative of issues across British archives, whereby it is mostly academics that engage and use the documents they hold. It is the responsibility of archives to engage with wider community groups to ensure collaboration when trying to understand their archival collections. It is particularly important that the archive considers how to engage with members of Global Ethnic Majority communities, when addressing topics such as slavery, to understand how lived experience should affect the categorization and use of such documents. Thus, this talk was an important indicator of who knows of the archive, as well as what steps should be taken to address this. My PhD thesis aims to help Staffordshire's archive better understand what they hold in relation to slavery and to disseminate this to the public.'

### **Hannah Smith – Keele University PhD researcher**

'As part of the Staffordshire History Centre project we are endeavouring to broaden and diversify collections and narratives and make our public programming more inclusive. We are striving to expand representation and inclusivity in both our service and our collections and reflecting on how we can better, and more sensitively, represent the diversity of the county's past and present. The need for this approach is evident in the comparatively small quantity of archives and objects we have which tell the histories of ethnic minority communities, the use of racist and imperialist terminology in the collections' catalogues.

We are taking a two-strand approach to this. Firstly, we are looking into the collections we currently hold, how we as a service interpret them, and how the public interact with them. Hannah Smith's PhD project has been a reassuring start to this endeavour, and we are heartened by how well it has been received by communities. Our displays in the Staffordshire History

Centre, and our community work, will broaden discussions around challenging items in our collections and share more diverse histories.

Secondly, we are centring communities at the heart of our work. The voices and opinions of communities are integral to bettering our service. We want communities to be actively engaged with the service and its collections and are working to develop stronger links and relationships with communities who have been previously underrepresented and excluded from the arts and culture sector. We hope to develop focus groups for future exhibitions and programming so we can collate and implement feedback. It is essential the service carries out more contemporary collecting projects to redress representational imbalance in our collections and this will be our focus over the coming year.'

### **Hannah Grange-Sales – Community History Development Officer**

Look out for more blog posts as the project develops over the next 6 months.

The Archive Service would like extend their thanks to Arts Council England and the Art Fund who have funded the purchase of equipment for this group to use through the West Midlands Museum Development Small Grant Scheme 2023 .

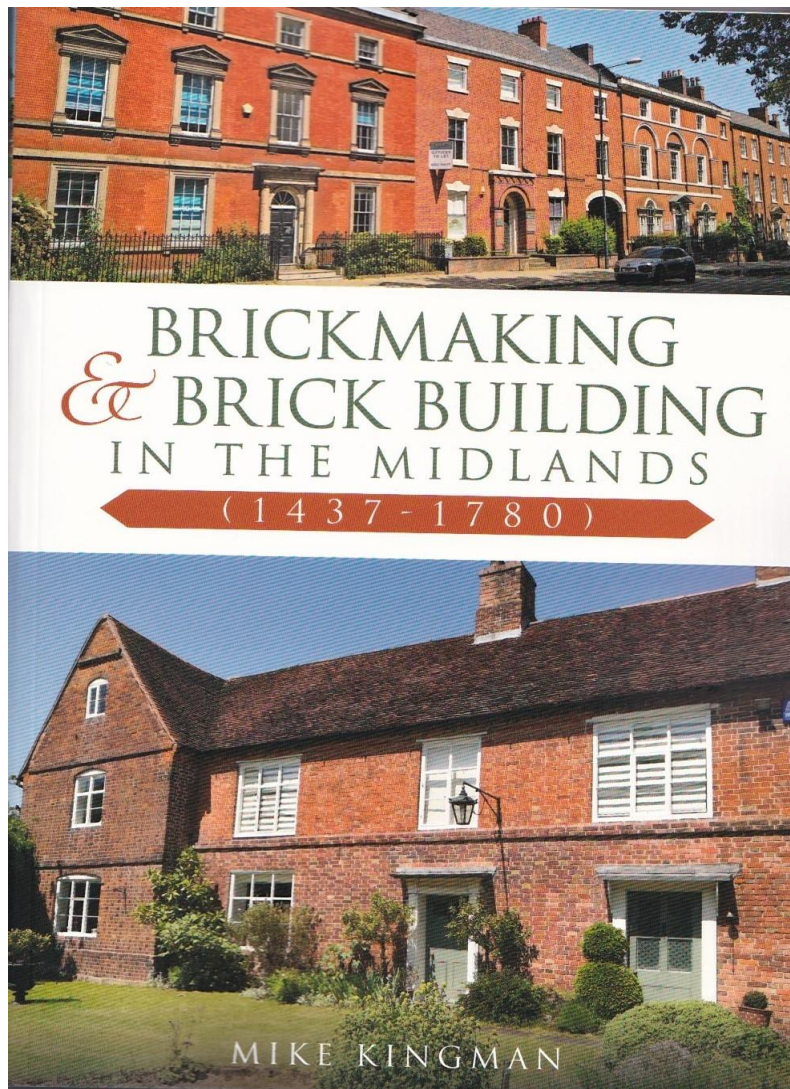
## **Book Review**

*Brickmaking and Brick Building in the Midlands (1437-1780)* by Mike Kingman. Brewin Books, Redditch Worcestershire, 2023. 312 pages. £14.95

Buildings made of brick are plentiful throughout the midlands. The humble and ubiquitous brick, in a variety of shades of red has both graced and disfigured the landscape throughout the midland counties in places where suitable quantities of workable building stone have been marked by their absence. Much of this building though is of Victorian-era provenance when it had become possible to mass-produce and cheaply transport bricks across the country using the rail network. Dr Mike Kingman, in this very interesting and highly informative book explains the early development of the buildings in brick in the midlands. The author's knowledge of the subject is clearly evident and based on much archival research, notably in Staffordshire with a focus not only on Newcastle-under-Lyme (the subject of an earlier paper by him) but also rural sites such as Yoxall, which may well be of interest to Society members.

In 13 chapters, plus an introduction and a very brief conclusion, he examines how brick was produced, transported and used as a building material. He notes the effect of what he considers to be "fashionable emulation" in the take-up of what was initially an expensive building material in the spread of building in brick across the midlands.





His understanding of the role of the gentry in 'popularising' brick is particularly marked and of much interest. Examples of appropriate buildings, including those now since lost, are carefully chosen and add to the strength and quality of his argument. Almost as a side issue, his understanding of, and erudite discussion about, the value of domestic building in timber is of much interest. His writing style is lucid and easy to follow, and he deploys his clearly extensive research-derived knowledge to considerable effect without any detriment to the flow of his argument. Indeed so effective is this technique that at times one wants to see the discussion extended further than perhaps the space available allowed. The chapter on the industrial uses of brick in a county such as Staffordshire with its history of iron-making and glass production outlines the development of these industries from a very different and highly informative angle.

Based, as it would seem to be, on the author's research for his Doctorate studies at Keele University, this book is undoubtedly a work of some considerable scholarship over an extended period on the author's part with over 1200 footnotes illustrating Dr Kingman's in-depth knowledge of a number of county and municipal archives. In particular, his use of Staffordshire material is very effective and very thorough. The extensive and extremely wide-ranging bibliography associated with the text has over 300 separate entries. It is therefore extremely disappointing that the absence of an index (perhaps as this would have cost money to undertake) means that this book cannot easily be used by similarly-

orientated historically-minded enthusiasts keen to follow through a theme or development of a building. It is this reviewer's estimate that altogether Dr Kingman refers to several hundred separate buildings scattered throughout the midlands, and in some cases well beyond, in his text, and tracing the development of such buildings or specific elements of their construction is therefore rendered extremely difficult.

A second, and equally important cavil is that the book only contains some 14 photographs, albeit all of high quality. Given the ideas and discussions suggested by Dr Kingman, more photographs, and perhaps line drawings and sketches, would without doubt enhance the quality of the arguments he puts forward to the overall benefit of the reader.

This book sits in the space between a completely academic textbook capable of being an authoritative source on the subject for some years and a general guide, suitable for the interested layperson of the field of study. As such, it does succeed in giving a general guide to the reasons why building in brick became both practical and fashionable in locations throughout the midlands but suffers from a lack of intellectual rigour in examining these ideas more thoroughly than perhaps the author has had space for. Anyone hoping to use it as a guide book for identifying key buildings to illustrate the development of brick buildings will also be disappointed, especially by the lack of photographs as noted above. Nevertheless, as a general guide, and at this price in particular, it is a useful addition to the bookshelf of those interested in the development of vernacular architecture and the way in which the landscape of the midlands and Staffordshire in particular was utterly transformed over the period under discussion.

**Dr Steve Lewitt, Hon Sec**

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Standon Farm c.a.1900. Formerly the Standon Boys' Farm Home, established by the the Waifs and Strays Society in 1885, Standon Bowers is steeped in history whilst overlooking the surrounding countryside. (From the Facebook page Staffordshire Past and Present which regularly posts photographs of Old Staffordshire, taken mainly from post cards.)



# Transforming the Trent Valley

**This project which started in 2018 with a Heritage Lottery Fund grant to a group of organisations fronted by the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust has now ended. Most of the work carried out during this time was environment related but there were several heritage projects. One of these resulted in the conversion of 11 pillboxes originally constructed in WWII to bat friendly roots. Another is described here by Dr Mark Knight Cultural Heritage Officer of the Trust.**

## Anchor Church

### Anchor Church has a long history...

Anchor Church is a series of rock-cut dwellings in a sandstone cliff next to a backwater of the River Trent near Ingleby, Derbyshire.

In the summer of 2020, Professor Ed Simons of the Royal Agricultural University was able to establish that the long held local belief that they were the site of a 9<sup>th</sup> century monastic cell was correct, and in fact represent the earliest intact domestic dwelling from the Anglo-Saxon period in the UK. The caves were likely constructed (or possibly enlarged) for the deposed Northumbrian King Eardwulf, who died around 803. A.D. We have been working with students from the University of Leicester's School of Archaeology and Ancient History to uncover the long history of Anchor Church. In 2021 the site was badly defaced by vandals using spray paint.

In July 2023 the Transforming the Trent Valley (TTTV) Partnership led a project to have the paint graffiti removed. Specialist conservators were brought in who carefully removed the graffiti without damage to the fabric of the sandstone caves themselves. The project was coordinated and overseen by Dr Mark Knight, Cultural Heritage Officer for TTTV.

This successful outcome is the culmination of almost two years of work finding the funding, a specialist team with the knowledge and equipment to perform the task, and liaising with planning officers, Universities, and archaeologists to ensure the right outcome was achieved. We are now working with Historic England, the landowner, local police and volunteers to monitor the site and report antisocial behaviour to try and prevent further occurrences of vandalism.

### The History of Anchor Church

The caves as they appear to us today have been much modified over the centuries. Although it is possible that caves had been cut into the sandstone cliff at an earlier date, the earliest evidence we now have points to an early 9th century origin. This fits with the local folklore, which tells us that the site was used by the exiled Eardwulf of Northumbria, or St Hardulph as we know him. There are some remaining features from this period still visible in the monument, the small interior arched doorways to the west of the building: the recesses for the door jambs, hinges and bolts, for example. The largest piece of Anglian architecture within the structure are the eastern chapel features and the pilaster cap on the easternmost internal arch. The larger internal apertures were probably created in the later 18th century when the site was used by the Burdett family as a rustic picnicking site. The western doorway would



have been enlarged to suit the gentlewomen's dresses from the period, and internal walls demolished to create larger internal spaces. The external windows were enlarged at this time to allow more light in. The brickwork along the window sills also dates to this time, along with the internal hearth and chimney.



Original photographer unknown. This image from the Knight family collection and thought to date to *circa* 1890-1900 and be one of a pair that were used in a stereoscope.

Early photographs show that the eastern entrance did not exist until the 20th century, and that a sandstone block kerb ran along the edge of the backwater, creating a landing stage to allow small boats and punts to moor alongside the church. By comparing the photographs we can see that the window apertures have been enlarged over the course of the 20th century, making them much larger. The original early medieval windows would have been even smaller still; just enough to allow in some light but small enough to keep out as much wind and weather as possible.

See [Transforming the Trent Valley](#) (press control and click) for a video and more pictures of the site. This text has been copied from this site.

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The Staffordshire Historic Churches Trust have allocated grants to nine churches in 2022/23. Admittedly none was over £3000 ... but every little helps. An interesting new initiative from the SHCT is to move away from giving one-off grants for approved jobs to funding more in the fashion of 'maintenance grants'. Five rural churches will now get twice-yearly visits, for three years, from a contractor who will do basic maintenance, but who also, importantly, researches into any issues that may need tackling. The current selected churches are Elkstones, Wychnor, Bobbington, Rushton Spencer and Ellenhall.

## Knowing Where You Stand: An Introduction to Local History

Delivered in partnership by Staffordshire Archives and Heritage and Keele University, this course offers the opportunity to discover the history of Staffordshire through academic-led learning and a wealth of original resources from archival collections.


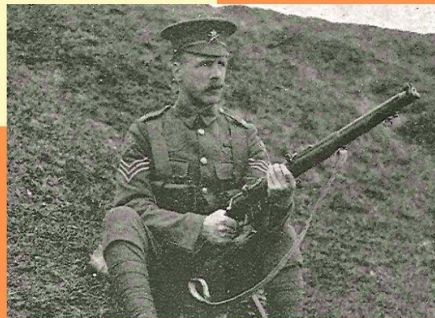


### The Long Revolution of Modernity 18th-20th Centuries

23rd January-26th March 2024  
Subsidised cost: £100 per term

Venue:  
Stafford Rugby Club, ST16 2TT

To book, please email  
[hannah.grangesales@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:hannah.grangesales@staffordshire.gov.uk)



*W. B. Blake*


## Fresh Air for The Potteries

### 150 years of William Blake

25 November 2023 – 5 May 2024  
The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery,  
Stoke-on-Trent

01782 232323  
[stokemuseums.org.uk](http://stokemuseums.org.uk) | Free Entry

**PM & AG**  
EXHIBITIONS

  
City of  
Stoke-on-Trent

**\*\*Lichfield City Centre Pedestrianisation AND Public Car Parks \*\***

## 1. Pedestrianisation

Those Members attending the Society's Friday evening lectures held at the Guildhall in Lichfield are likely to be aware of the changes to vehicular access to the City Centre which have taken place. Lichfield District Council has introduced a trial **pedestrianisation scheme** as part of an **experimental traffic regulation order** (ETRO), which trial is intended to be for a period of 18 months (start date March 2023). Restrictions now in place, which vary between Monday-Wednesday and then Thursday-Sunday, mean that with regard to Friday evenings it is no longer permissible to either drive through, or park in, most of the central streets, including the Market Square and Bore Street. We understand that an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) surveillance system is in place and is operational, at the junction of Lombard Street and lower Tamworth Street (one way system) and that since 16<sup>th</sup> November penalty fines have started to be issued for any vehicles driving through, whether then parking (say in Bore Street), or not. The LDC blurb mentions 'robust management' now being in force.

It has affected our operational considerations in that we, the Members of the Society Committee, can no longer park adjacent the Guildhall (in good time) in Bore Street to offload all the materials we essentially need to take inside for the conduct of the lecture evenings, then vehicles remaining there in situ for reloading at evening's end - it has become necessary to park instead on one of the public car parks at some distance, which is far from ideal, adverse even, requiring several trips to and fro on foot.

Council consultation with the public and stakeholders has been ongoing and we understand that a new specific consultation period is imminent (it may have been announced/launched by the time you read this) which we SA&HS intend to take part in and provide a response with our views and concerns; we are likely to suggest alternatives in some respects to the way forward.

It has to be said, it is not beyond question that the Society will seek and consider the use of a suitable alternative venue outside the centre of Lichfield. This would perhaps be a shame. Furthermore:

## **2. The City Centre Public Car Parks**

There was a 'News' item on the *Lichfield Live* website dated 4<sup>th</sup> November 2023 headed 'Report reveals proposals to change cost of using Lichfield District Council car parks'. An increase in charges across the board affecting all the City Centre car parks is 'proposed', for as soon as January 2024. **Moreover** it will no longer be free to park in the evenings, i.e. after 6.30 pm. On the short stays it will be £1.50, on the long stays it will be £1.00. Proposed anyway. So, another concern we have.

We know that not everyone drives in to the Guildhall lectures - there are those who are able to and choose to walk - there are those using public transport, principally the Cross City Rail Line. The majority of you though arrive by car. We hope you will continue doing so.

As a further development, there's also a suggestion been made (or so we understand) that the 'Debenhams' multi-storey car park on Birmingham Road, popular with many, may be destined for demolition.

We will keep you posted on developments. NB *Lichfield Live* is very regularly updated and is a valuable source of information. And the LDC website can be revealing - try searching 'City Centre pedestrianisation trial' when on it.



**Keith Billington**

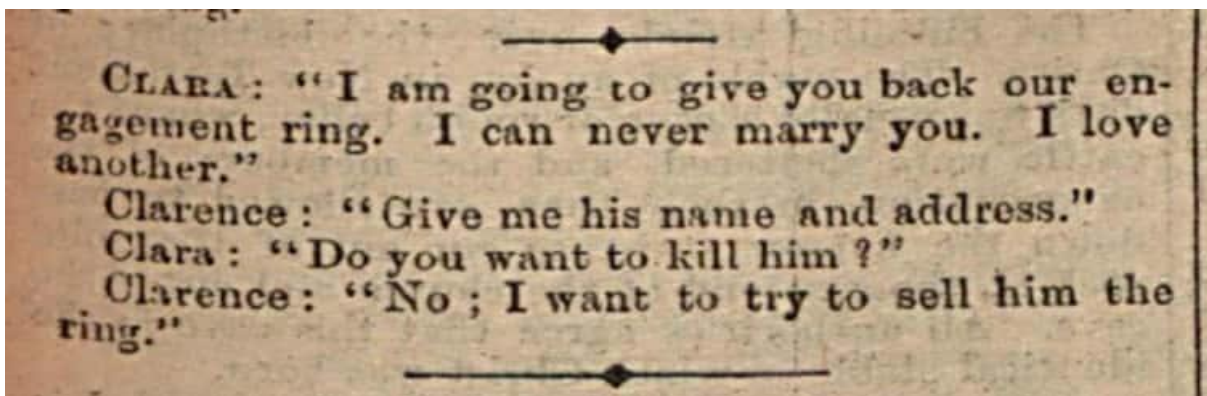
## Staffordshire Archives and Heritage Service

Over the last year, Staffordshire Archives and Heritage Services have established a new mutually supportive county network bringing together over 70 groups and custodians of collections, heritage sites or archives, who carry out research and family history and who wish to engage and promote these activities to the wider public. The team provide support and training around collections care, engagement and sustainability.



Image credit: Staffordshire Archives and Heritage Service via TNA West Midlands

The New History Centre in Stafford is progressing with plans to open in the Autumn of 2024.



## A giant task: Digitising the Lambeth Bible



Figures from the Tree of Jesse (detail of MS 3, f. 198r)

In Summer 2023, the Lambeth Bible left England for the first time to feature in the exhibition *Normands. Migrants, Conquérants, Innovateurs* in Rouen. Before leaving Lambeth the entire manuscript was digitised, and it is [now available on our digital repository](#) (control+click to follow link) for all to enjoy. To celebrate its online release, the staff of Lambeth Palace Library have been reflecting on what it's like to work with one of our most treasured manuscripts: capturing its glittering images and documenting its condition in fine detail, ensuring it is safely preserved for another 800 years. (see [A giant task: Digitising the Lambeth Bible – A Monument of Fame](#))

## Field Visit Wednesday 6 March 2024

### The Gnosall Group of Churches

Led by Dr John Hunt

The underlying theme of this 'study visit' will be the formation of two parishes and their respective churches – Bradley and Church Eaton (and also Gnosall) – from a territory that was focused initially on the collegiate church of Gnosall. Discussion will include looking at ideas on how parishes, and these in particular, came into existence, as well as the medieval fabric, furnishings and structural history of the churches and the features that link Bradley and Church Eaton with Gnosall; and also, at their manorial and settlement contexts. For some aspects of these themes, see: Hunt in *TSAHS*, LIII (2022), and Hunt in *Collections for a History of Staffordshire*, Fourth Series, 27 (2022).



St Mary and All Saints Bradley

We will assemble at 10.00 and during the morning will visit the churches of St Editha Church Eaton and St Mary & All Saints Bradley looking at features both inside and outside. After lunch we will visit St Lawrence Gnosall. All three churches are most interesting, Gnosall and Bradley are Grade I listed and Church Eaton is Grade II. Whilst not far from Stafford the three villages are very rural in character and the churches are large particularly St Lawrence.

We have arranged lunch at the Red Lion in Bradley - a cold buffet (without drinks) and this is included in the price. We are hoping to arrange tea/coffee on arrival either in Bradley or Church Eaton. Parking is available at each location. £18 per person.

A full itinerary and directions will be issued to participants closer to the date. There will be a maximum of 16 places available for this visit.

Please reserve me ..... place(s) on the Field Visit to Gnosall on 6 March 2024

Name.....

Address.....

Postcode..... e mail.....

I enclose a cheque for.....

(or alternatively contact Keith Billington for details on how to transfer the funds to SAHS.....)

Please send this form with your cheque if appropriate to Richard Totty, Rock Cottage Redhill Rugeley WS15 4LL

**Thursday January 25 at 7.30 to 8.30pm**



## Lunar Lecture

### Erasmus Darwin's Commonplace Book and the Enlightenment Organization of Knowledge

Speaker - Joanna C. Yates NWCDTP AHRC-Funded PhD Candidate, Keele University. Joanne Yates will consider the relationship between Erasmus Darwin's 'Commonplace Book' and his philosophical position as reflected in his published works. The entries Darwin recorded within this object can be divided relatively evenly into three general categories: Medical Practice, Natural History (including science and weather), and Engineering (designs and inventions). The first category contains entries that detail medical case histories, describe treatments founded in contemporary medicine, and posit the application of new science to effect more patient-centred cures. The second category, containing Darwin's observations on Natural History, includes experimental and theoretical science, and postulations on possible casual relationships exemplified in biological life-cycles and global weather systems. Finally, the entries grouped as Engineering offer a repository of numerous diagrams, descriptions, and examinations of practical and theoretical mechanical inventions. From this deconstructed perspective, the book can be regarded as a record of a historical moment and a testament to Enlightenment thought and practice on a huge scale. However, the material object as a whole can be considered a micro-archive through which Darwin engages in the production and authorisation of his philosophical oeuvre. This lecture will consider how the 'Commonplace Book' contributes to the interpretation of Darwin's overall philosophy, as reflected in his final and comprehensive work, *The Temple of Nature*. Lecture available live or on Zoom

Tickets; [www.erasmus-darwin-house@arttickets.org.uk](http://www.erasmus-darwin-house@arttickets.org.uk)

## Winter

This is a text by Geoffrey Whitney, who was born near Nantwich in 1548. His words were set to music by William Byrd as a madrigal for three voices. Byrd was closely associated with the Paget family, living at times in the Roman Catholic household of Lord Thomas Paget at Burton on Trent. In 1586 a singer, Henry Ediall, was questioned about his connection with the Pagets for whom he had apparently run a choral establishemet performing the works (dirges) of Byrd and others, which were suspected of being unlawful (i.e. Catholic). Byrd had a chamber at Burton and an inventory taken in 1580 (Pamela Walker's transcription appeared in *Transactions* volume L) shows that he had two virginals there and that there were other musical instruments in the Great Chamber, including a pipe organ and more virginals. The Archive Service have recently posted an image of the Christmas accounts of the Pagets for 1579 showing the amount of food and drink consumed in the feasting. [StaffsStokeHistory \(@ArchandHeritage\) / X \(twitter.com\)](https://staffs.stokehistory.org.uk/@ArchandHeritage)

In Winter cold when tree and bush was bare  
And frost had nipt the rootes of tender grasse,  
The Ants with joy did feed upon their fare,  
Which they had storde while Summer season was:  
To whom for food a Grashopper did cry  
And said she starved if they did help deny.

Whereat an Ant with long experience wise  
And frost and snow, had many Winters seene,  
Inquired what in Summer was her guise.  
Quoth shee, I sung and hopt in meadowes greene.  
Then quoth the Ant, content thee with thy chance,  
For to thy song now art thou like to dance.

(Several versions of the madrigal are available on YouTube)

This newsletter is edited for the Society by Richard Totty [richard.totty4@gmail.com](mailto:richard.totty4@gmail.com)

Comments suggestions and contributions are welcome

Opinions stated in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Society.

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### **Medieval music and dancing**

