

Greetings from the Director of the Institute of Historical Research

The autumn round of county council funding cuts has not been kind to the VCH, and many of our flagship county research teams are now facing their most challenging times. Austerity, however, is sometimes the handmaiden to industry. As the Spring newsletter demonstrates there is no let up in the energy and creativity which VCH county staff, appeal committees, volunteers and enthusiasts up and down the country are bringing to existing and new projects. Here at VCH Central Office, the reorganised editorial team are working superbly well under Elizabeth Williamson's guidance. They are on schedule with the next handful of red books, the improved website is up and running, and we have a new summer school in local history planned for July. The IHR itself is in rude health as it celebrates its 90th birthday year with a series of events and fundraising initiatives (see below for more). Do join in if you can.

Miles Taylor – March 2011

IHR @ 90

In 2011 the Institute of Historical Research turns 90. We are the oldest such Institute in the world. Since 1921 we have been running a unique open access library, seminars and conferences, innovative research projects, and, through our fellowship and training programmes, supporting generations of younger scholars from around the globe.

To mark the Institute's birthday we are hosting a year-long celebration of other notable milestones of 1921. In that year the first PhDs in history were awarded in the UK; Marie Stopes opened her first birth control clinic; Asa Briggs, one of the UK's most distinguished historians, was born, as was the Duke of Edinburgh. Please see the IHR website for more details of these events: www.history.ac.uk.



The temporary buildings on Malet Street where the IHR was initially housed until it moved into the Senate House building in 1938

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Flying the VCH flag

Those in the business world are apparently seeing out the doldrums of the recession by focussing on building up their brands ready for an upturn in economic fortunes. At the VCH we continue steadfastly to research and write to high standards to maintain our reputation as the greatest publishing project in English local history. Somerset X has been published already this academic year and three more – Essex XI, Oxford XVI and Wiltshire XVIII – will appear this summer. These publications fulfil our obligations to our partners in the counties and to the University of London and satisfy a public, especially in the counties, eager to use new VCH volumes.

In the next few years a new series of paperbacks will be published. Phillimore have agreed to continue the EPE series and we already have received several proposals for new titles. You can learn more about the kind of paperback we would like to be proposed on our website (see p.4). Read more about Phillimore on p.5.

Alongside this, the VCH central team is developing the VCH brand with a new website (read more about it on p. 4), a revamped newsletter, new leaflets, a soon-to-be-improved mailing list and more inclusive VCH meetings. Also new are our online training materials, intended to help volunteers write VCH parish and urban histories, and this summer the IHR's first Local History Summer School (see p. 8) at which several of our most knowledgeable county contributors will be teaching.

Like those brand-conscious businesses we are trying to make sure that the VCH name and reputation become ever better known and more attractive to those able to support us with funds and volunteer effort. The exciting aspect about the VCH at the moment is that so many are becoming involved in the project, carrying on the good work of EPE. Volunteer historians are working in Cornwall, Cumbria, Derbyshire, Essex, Hampshire, Herefordshire, Leicestershire, Middlesex and

Nottinghamshire and we regularly welcome new volunteers.

As important as voluntary research is the huge effort that goes into fundraising by our county appeals and trusts, including the trust launched in Gloucestershire at the party to celebrate the publication of Gloucestershire XII. Despite loss of funding and, sadly, the consequent loss of permanent jobs for staff in four counties (Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Essex and Somerset) work continues there thanks to the support of the fundraising committees. Fortunately two counties have been spared in the current round of cuts: in Staffordshire funding has been renewed and in Wiltshire the existing agreement continues. For the up-to-date news about all counties please go to the county micro-sites on www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk.

Elizabeth Williamson
elizabeth.williamson@sas.ac.uk

County farewells

VCH colleagues and supporters are very sad to see that spending cuts of various kinds have meant redundancy for several long-serving colleagues, whose skill and experience have been invaluable. We send our very best wishes to Dr Simon Draper of VCH Gloucestershire who has found new employment with the University of the West of England, and to Dr Robert Peberdy who is to leave VCH Oxfordshire shortly.

Despite redundancy from permanent jobs Dr Chris Thornton and Dr Herbert Eiden have just started VCH Essex work on contract as consultant editors rather than permanent staff. Mary Siraut, who takes early retirement at the end of March, will continue VCH work in the Somerset County Record Office, at the

time being for love rather than money. Mary has led the way in making her county micro-site special; it is full of interesting material about her work, about VCH Somerset and about the history of county. We are very grateful to Chris, Mary and Herbert for their loyalty to the VCH and commitment to completing the volumes they have started.

Dr John Jurica, who joined VCH Gloucestershire in the 1970s, has just retired and those in VCH central office and his colleagues at the County Record Office, where he had worked for so many years, will miss him very much. His contributions were ingeniously researched and elegantly written – a model to us all. As architectural editor, I made many rewarding explorations of the county's buildings with John, who

always followed up our fieldwork with interesting new information stimulated by what we had seen. John had a magnificent send off at the launch of his Gloucestershire XII volume in the architecturally uplifting surroundings of Bromesberrow Place on 28 September 2010.

We also send good wishes to Dr Sue Parkinson who left the VCH at the end of February. Sue put a huge amount of effort into stimulating interest in the VCH in the East Riding of Yorkshire, making new friends and influencing local opinion. Her work will culminate in an exhibiton and accompanying talks at the Treasure House in Beverley in the autumn. To keep abreast of events there please see www.victoriacountyhistory/counties/yorkshireastriding.

Meet the administrator



Coral Pepper with Lady Banham at the Royal Cornwall Show

2002 to 2011 – where has the time gone? I was recruited by VCH Cornwall when the first bid for Heritage Lottery funding seemed just a 'twinkle in the eye'. We were chosen to pilot what were to become our two England's Past for Everyone projects. At first I was somewhat intimidated to be surrounded by the County; professors, doctors, historians, librarians, archivists, all of whom seemed to have their own vocabulary. However, when the EPE London team started arriving I realised we were all new and grabbed the challenge with gusto.

There was so much work to be done in a short time. Volunteers to be recruited and supervised, images to be sourced, schools projects to be planned and executed, training days to be organised, fundraising to

continue, time to be accounted for and project leaders, on occasions, to be comforted.

Words will not convey our excitement that day on a field at Marazion, opposite St Michael's Mount, when a cardboard box was opened and we held the first VCH publication in Cornwall for over 100 years. Since then we have had published another paperback and our second Red Book, and on the new website we are flagging up two more – it is to be hoped they will be achieved in less than 100 years.

All this, and on my watch, what more can an Administrator ask?

Coral Pepper – March 2011

Locality and Region Seminar – Summer 2011

Venue:
Ecclesiastical History Room

Time:
Tuesday, 5.15pm

3 May – John Beckett
(University of Nottingham)
This paper will be based on new research into the early years of the VCH

17 May – Carlos Lopez Galviz
(IHR, University of London)
A London micro-history

31 May – Alistair Hawkyard
(IHR, University of London)
Inigo Jones and the Parliament House

This seminar welcomes all those who are interested in the relationship between local and national history and who wish to share ideas, viewpoints and work in progress. It seeks to make an original contribution to local and regional history by drawing upon the long-established national resources of the VCH and co-operating with participants from universities, record offices, local history societies and heritage organisations, as well as with those engaged in independent research. If you would like to join our mailing list, please contact: elizabeth.williamson@sas.ac.uk.



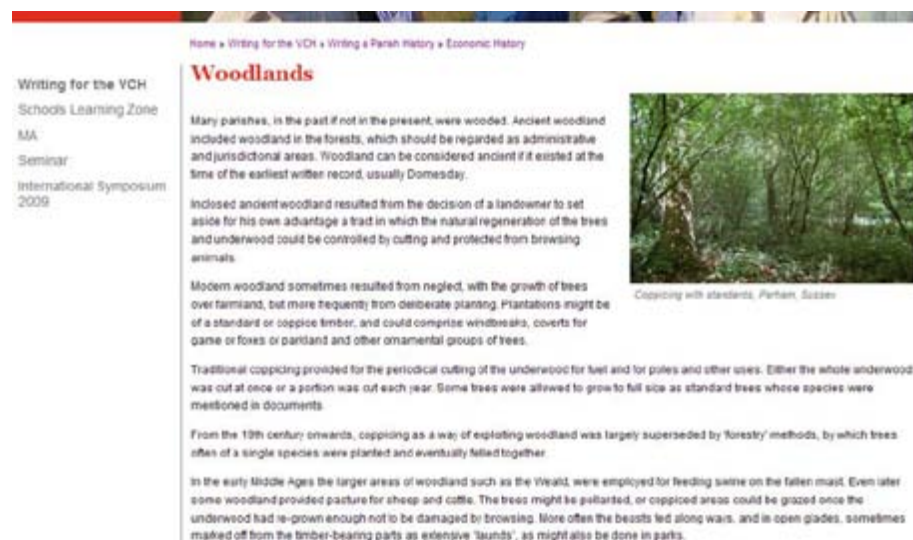
Learning and research resources online

On 21st February 2011, the rebuilt Victoria County History website went live and in doing so made available a wealth of learning and research resources. The new website supplanted the existing site, retaining the www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk url and drawing the content formerly presented across a number of VCH websites into a single, easily navigable structure.

The rebuilt site benefits from the latest Drupal modules which make it dynamic in the way its content is presented, such as through the use of pop-up 'light box' image galleries. It is also easy to maintain and update. This increased and advanced functionality has also allowed the expansion of VCH research resources which are available to all users of the site.

The largest of these research resources is the guide to writing for the VCH which can be accessed through the 'Learning' section of the national site, www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/local-history/writing-vch. This section of the website provides an online guide to all aspects of VCH research and the methods of disseminating that research. Training consultant Susan Hughes was commissioned to rework the guidance produced by Professor John Beckett into an easily navigable training manual which provides guidance on how to:

- research and write a parish history, with sections dedicated to Manors and Estates, Economic History and Social History
- research and write an Urban History, drawing on the latest VCH approaches to treating large towns and cities



A screenshot taken from the 'Writing a Parish History' section of the training manual. This entry comes from the Economic History section and provides background and selected reading on the treatment of woodlands in a parish entry

- contribute material to the VCH Explore web resource
- research and write an England's Past for Everyone paperback

The last of these sections provides comprehensive guidance on how to get a manuscript published as part of the EPE paperback series. Although the lottery-funded project has ended, the paperback series will continue and the VCH is actively seeking submissions from authors and organisations who have a manuscript or research project which they feel is suited to publication as part of the EPE series. Information on the process of submitting a proposal is included within the online guidance at www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/local-history/writing-vch/writing-epe-paperback.

In addition to the guidance on how to write for the VCH, the learning section of the website also houses the Schools Learning

Zone, a collection of resources for teaching local history at Key Stages 1–3, information about the MA in Historical Research offered by the Institute of Historical Research and details of the Victoria County History's Locality and Region Seminar which convenes fortnightly during academic term time.

The rebuilt VCH website has also made available to the general public, for the first time, the list of all parishes covered by the organisation (some 3,500) since the publication of the first volume in 1900. This index of parishes can be found at www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/parish-index and can be searched by parish name or filtered by county. If a search returns a parish which the VCH has covered, full details of which volume the parish was published in are listed, along with a link to where the text of the volume can be viewed, free of charge, at British History Online www.british-history.ac.uk.

Matthew Bristow
VCH Research Manager

Phillimore: local history publishers

By October 1897, William Phillimore, a Victorian lawyer, had founded the company that bears his name. Fuelled by a deep interest in antiquarianism, local history and genealogy, Phillimore began publishing works at a prodigious rate. To this day, Phillimore & Co. Ltd successfully continues to publish works in local and family history, genealogy and heraldry.

The past few years have seen a fruitful partnership with the Victoria County History and the England's Past for Everyone project – a project which has seen the production of a series of 16 full colour, impressively researched and well-produced books. Phillimore looks forward to continuing the series of EPE books, which are soon to be in production and promise to be just as successful and rewarding as the first.

Phillimore, although a small company, like to make their presence known at local history events throughout the year. We annually attend the *Who Do You Think You Are? Live* exhibition in London's Olympia. It is a chance for the public to meet the team, and for the team to

meet the customers, long-standing Phillimore authors and local and family historians.

Ties with the London Livery Companies, especially The Worshipful Company of Stationers of which two of the team are members, have opened the door to increasing the number of projects undertaken in the City of London. Phillimore look forward to continuing to build on their good relations with the Livery, and with Companies such as the Coopers, the Haberdashers and the Weavers who are all involved in upcoming projects.

Since 2008, Phillimore have published several notable series of books, including the *Civil Engineering Heritage* and *Motorway Achievement* series. Both sets of books have proved highly successful and demonstrate the diverse range of material covered within the client publishing programme. When it comes to 'client publishing', Phillimore are particularly excited about their forthcoming history of Arundel Castle. A full-colour, professionally photographed and

exquisitely designed 'coffee-table' book, it will set the benchmark for future publications. Phillimore are equally proud of their commercial publishing programme, which includes recent titles such as *Newcastle and Gateshead before 1700* edited by Diana Newton and A.J. Pollard and *The North Norfolk Coast* by Frank Meeres. These books, and many others, add to a catalogue of hundreds of titles covering cities, towns and villages across the United Kingdom, not to mention a large number of general titles such as *Researching the History of a Country House* by Richard Goodenough and *The Phillimore Atlas and Index of Parish Registers* by Cecil R. Humphery-Smith.

Phillimore & Co. Ltd plan to continue to grow as a company and enrich their list of titles. They will continue to publish books of the highest quality in the local history market and begin to explore the digital arena of e-books. They look forward to continuing their good relationships with authors, contributors and other organisations, as well as developing new and lasting affiliations which will guarantee the Phillimore tradition of exemplary local history publishing for many years to come.

The Phillimore catalogue is available at: www.phillimore.co.uk.



Members of the Phillimore team from left to right: Andrew Illes (Business Manager), Sarah Pavey (Production Editor), Sophie Nickelson (Editorial Assistant), Noel Osborne (Chairman). Not photographed here: Simon Fletcher (Commissioning Editor), Heather Robbins (Editorial Assistant), Alison Bowen (Contract Support Assistant)



Hampshire volunteers: enthusiasm, ferrets and ‘spectacular results’

The Hampshire project is a first in two ways: first to replace existing red books and first to try to use volunteers supported by professional historians to write red book articles. Work is ongoing for two red books: a parish volume based on Old Basing, Steventon and rural parishes to the east and south of Basingstoke and an urban history of Basingstoke.

The project is a voyage of discovery for the 30 volunteers who started work in January 2008 under their leader, Dr Jean Morrin (University of Winchester), who works 1–2 days per week on the project. Jean had never before worked for the VCH nor run a volunteer project so initial progress was slow. The original team came from villages around Basingstoke and from members of the Basingstoke Archaeological and Historical Society who had previous publishing experience. Volunteers research in Hampshire Record Office where Jean is available once a fortnight for consultation. Some joined after hearing of the project through word of mouth, local history societies, advertisements and the national VCH website. Many had already undertaken local history research and all would agree that specific local knowledge is invaluable to the VCH

volunteer, although not essential.

There are many reasons why volunteers joined the Hampshire project: to develop skills, to put their work in a wider context, to discover more about their house, parish, town, or as an incentive to publish research they had conducted over a long period of time. Many are especially interested in the economic and social history upon which core volunteer work is based. The census, trade directories, maps together with probate records and Parliamentary Papers online are studied. After tuition, the census is entered into Excel spreadsheets by the volunteers at home.

The wills group

A wills group meets at Chute House in Basingstoke every fortnight with new members joining and learning on the job. It is led by Jean Morrin and the members are now proficient at reading 16th-century probate documents as a group. Copies of wills and inventories dating from 1500–1850 are supplied by Hampshire Record Office; and transcriptions typed up by volunteers after the meeting. Some volunteers, having learnt the necessary skills, take copies of other wills home to

Volunteer focus: Jennie Butler

Jennie has published the Education section of Upton Grey online. Jennie discovered an interest in the history of education. It can be studied as a compact, stand alone subject with each school having a beginning and an end. She started on Upton Grey school by visiting HRO and TNA, reading managers' log books, Inspectors' reports, county correspondence, trade directories, newspapers etc. She is now working on Basingstoke schools (38+ of them) and has posted the history of the British School and the first Board School on the VCH Explore website.

transcribe. The interpretation of wills and inventories is a key element. Once they have been transcribed for a parish they are analysed for farming and other occupations and for evidence of the social structure of local society, religion, charities and care for the poor.

Group walks through the parish have been particularly rewarding and useful from a topographical viewpoint. They allow comparisons between different parishes, but also have a social element (such as combining a walk with a pub lunch) which has helped to band volunteers into a cohesive group.

Publishing parish histories

The VCH website is proving invaluable for interim publication. We were very pleased to see our first parish, Mapledurwell, published on the VCH website (www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/hampshire/work-in-progress) as a work in progress to coincide with our official launch in Basingstoke. The way Hampshire work is organised is

illustrated by the work on this parish. Volunteer research work focused on the Introduction, Economic History and Social History sections. The parish was selected because of the research previously undertaken on the estate papers of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, by Stan Waight, who took this further as a volunteer. Most of Mapledurwell was part of the Corpus Christi copyhold estate. Stan is now researching neighbouring Up Nately and, assisted by Edward Roberts, he has written the Buildings section.

Steventon will be the next parish to be published on the web. Individuals and groups are now working on Basingstoke, Dummer, Herriard, Old Basing, Steventon,

Volunteer focus: Barbara Large

Barbara, a fairly recent recruit, is studying Basingstoke Poor Law Union and its Workhouse, which was built in 1836 for one of the biggest Unions in the area, comprising 39 mainly rural parishes, with a total population in 1835 of about 15,500. Very few records remain about the Union or its Workhouse and the building was demolished in the mid-20th century and built over, which is why a history has never been attempted. However, there is an almost complete set of Minute Books in the Hampshire Record Office, which give a very good, detailed timeline of what happened. There is also some correspondence with the Poor Law Commission and subsequent authorities in the TNA at Kew, a few other miscellaneous documents and, of course, census information. Even though registers and accounts are missing, it is possible, from a detailed study of what remains, to piece together a viable history, and to extract some names of paupers, officers and guardians, together with interesting statistics relating to poverty in the area.

Tunworth, Up Nately, Upton Grey and Weston Patrick. Short items have recently been published on the VCH Explore site, including a comprehensive analysis of the 1851 Basingstoke census by Bob Applin and a lively account of the Massaginian riots of 1881–3 in Basingstoke by Bob Clarke (who has recently published a book on the riots).

Volunteers' views

Educational sources in Hampshire Record Office and The National Archives are a particular focus. It is fascinating and challenging work to which volunteers devote a great deal of time but from which they gain enjoyment and satisfaction. The parish clerk of Mapledurwell found the experience and knowledge gained absolutely wonderful. She wrote, 'initially we were fumbling along trying to find our way as we were the first village to be done but at the end the results were spectacular'. Another volunteer enjoys the insight into life during Victorian and Edwardian times gained from transcribing the census, as the same people can be followed through the decades, while new occupations appear and villages grow and decline. She added 'I hated history at school (achieved 13% annually until I could give it up), but social

and local history is fascinating. I get great delight in finding facts that have not been previously known to some of the many knowledgeable members on the team and am a bit of a ferret – won't let a line of enquiry go'. Another member says, 'we particularly appreciate the advantage of team work led by Jean Morrin and her ability to point out where Basingstoke details are normal or unusual and to explain the historical/social/economic context. We also value contacts through her with visiting experts and with those who are willing to help with queries that arise'.

In the words of Richard Tanner, 'we are learning, but only time will tell if we enthusiastic amateurs can produce books worthy of the Victoria County History project'. John Beckett set us a target of 2015 to produce the first new red book. We need more help with the medieval sections and are seeking funds to pay for that. We have been fortunate to meet at Chute House, the Basingstoke outpost of the University of Winchester, with its facilities for projection and computer access, but unfortunately this will close in July 2011 and we need to find a new base. If you are able to support the Hampshire project please do get in touch with Jean Morrin: jean.morrin@winchester.ac.uk

This piece was written by the VCH Hampshire volunteers



Volunteers working on transcriptions



Volunteers visiting Tunworth church



Events

Marc Fitch

The next Marc Fitch lecture will be on **12 July 2011** in the Chancellor's Hall of Senate House. The speaker will be Professor Jeremy Black whose subject will be **18th-century London: the pulse of a world city**. With this year's focus on London we hope to attract a large audience from those who are not our traditional Fitch lecture goers.

Essex to celebrate their diamond jubilee in October

For the VCH in Essex, 2011 will be an extraordinary year. We celebrate our diamond jubilee, publish Volume XI – and lose our county council grant, also after 60 years. Notwithstanding the latter accident, the VCH Essex Appeal Fund trust has now moved into control and will celebrate the diamond jubilee at the County Record Office in Chelmsford on Saturday, **8 October**. Understandably, the day's events will also feature the start of a major fundraising effort. The programme has yet to be settled but, when this is done, details will appear on the VCH website www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk. To end this brief note with news which may give hope to other VCHs in similar problems, nearly £6,000 of donations have been received since the news of the loss of the county council grant was released in early February.

IHR Local History Summer School

We are pleased to announce the inaugural summer school in research methods will take place from **Monday 11 – Wednesday 13 July 2011**. The subject of the summer school will be local history, and the programme will cover a wide range of different approaches to the history of localities in town and country. Sessions will include: What is local history?, Palaeography and Diplomatic, Interpreting Records, Computers for Local History, Family and Neighbourhood, Parish and Urban Histories, and many others. Staff from both the Centre for Metropolitan History and the VCH will

contribute significantly to the teaching of the summer school, along with colleagues from the VCH counties, experts from the University of London and speakers from selected external institutions and repositories. The full programme and further details will be published on an IHR dedicated events website through a link on the VCH site. The fee will be approximately £180 and the County History Trust has kindly offered to give small bursaries to support VCH volunteers who wish to attend.



For more information about the Local History Summer School, please contact the IHR's training officer, Simon Trafford, on 020 7862 8763 or simon.trafford@sas.ac.uk.

80th Anglo-American Conference 2011

This year, the Institute of Historical Research will be holding its flagship event, the Anglo-American Conference, on the subject of Health in History. The history of medicine and of human society in sickness and health is an ever widening window through which the present can view the past. The study of the ways in which societies over time and at war and in peace have defined and treated their 'sick', the changing content and status of medical expertise and ethics, and those episodic moments when the globe has been transformed by epidemic, panic and panacea is now an integral part of mainstream history.

The conference takes place **29 June – 1 July** and has a very full and interesting programme. The following sessions may be of particular interest to VCH researchers:

- 29 June – *Medical statistics and sources*
- 29 June – *Healthy Air*
- 30 June – *Continuity and change in late 19th and 20th-century British hospitals and asylums*

For more information about the conference please go to www.history.ac.uk/aac2011.

The Anatomy Lesson by Rembrandt (1632)



IHR on the move...

The IHR will be relocating from July 2011 for two years. As part of the Senate House refurbishment we will be moving from the North Block to the already refurbished South Block. VCH staff will be located in the mezzanine floor and it will be business as usual once we've unpacked all our red books!

Future editions

If you would like to contribute to future editions we would be happy to hear from you. We are also able to advertise your event from local talks to book launches and everything in between. Please contact the Publications Manager: jessica.davies@sas.ac.uk in the first instance.

Get in touch...

As part of the updating and improvement of our contacts database we need to confirm current contact details for all counties as well as the details, e.g. email, of anyone else who would like to be kept in touch with VCH News. We would be very grateful if you could let Carlos Galviz (carlos.galvis@sas.ac.uk) have these at your earliest convenience.