

Editor's letter

Two 'Freedom' days have passed, and life is slowly returning to an approximation of normal. Sadly most record offices are still only open on an appointment only basis, and some not at all, but I know from talking to people, that what opportunities there are have been eagerly seized upon, and perhaps, having only a limited time slot has forced us to focus more clearly and not be distracted. On the other hand, little can replace the joys of just 'browsing', and no doubt some serendipitous discoveries have been missed. They'll be there for another time though. I think everyone has found 2021 harder to cope with emotionally than 2020, and perhaps research and reading have been valuable in taking us out of ourselves, and into other worlds and times where life was equally, if not harder to deal with. The vaccines have made an amazing difference, and we only have to look back to previous pandemics to realise how lucky we are. That's what a study of the past should teach us: to appreciate what we have.

Future Meetings of the Society

We are monitoring the COVID-19 situation and will decide closer to the time whether lectures will be on-site at Aylesford School, online via Zoom or a mixture of the two. Which option is selected will affect the talk provided, so please be prepared for changes at short notice – but the date and times are confirmed

19 October	7.30pm
16 November	7.30pm
15 January	2.30pm at Budbrooke Parish Hall
15 February	7.30pm
15 March	7.30pm: Members' Meeting
26 April	7.30pm AGM

We expect to provide lectures from the following pool, as circumstances permit:

Peter Coulls & Allan Jennings *Leamington Spa & Warwick Tramway*

Dr Paul Edmondson *John Hall, Master of Physicke – a Doctor in Early Modern Warwickshire*

Dr Andrew Watkins *North Warwickshire towns until c.1500*

Dr Elizabeth Golding *Nicholas Hillard: An Elizabethan Court Portraitist and his Warwickshire connections*

Dr Susan Kilby *Landscape History through the Stoneleigh Abbey papers*

2021 Outings

After having to cancel all outings in 2020, we were very pleased that outings could go ahead in 2021, albeit with some changes to the format. Keeping largely to outdoor venues, we have enjoyed a lively and informative walking tour around Warwick finding out about the Great Fire of 1694 led by two of our members, Steven Wallsgrove and Sue Rigby. In July we braved a very hot day to visit Napton on the Hill, where husband and wife John and Monica Evans showed us around the church and village with justifiable pride. In September we have an outing to the churches of Lea Marston and Over Whitacre, with WLHS

member Rita Poulson. We have followed the government rules in place at the time and encouraged our members to wear masks and socially distance, hopefully creating an environment that our members felt safe in. These outings seem to have been greeted with pleasure by our members, who have clearly appreciated the chance to meet socially again as much as the information they have gained at the outings. One member commented that one of the outings, which took place shortly after some covid restrictions were lifted, was "not only a physical tonic with the walking, but also a mental and spiritual one".

We offer our Outings Secretary, Rowan Fisher, grateful thanks for organizing the programme of outings for this year which, in addition to fascinating content, provided opportunities to meet.

25 September 2pm: Visit to the churches of Over Whitacre and Lea Marston, led by Rita Paulson, one of our members. The churches are a short car journey apart, and the cost is £6. Numbers are limited, so if you haven't already booked, contact Rowan Fisher on rowanfisher367@gmail.com

In terms of the outings for 2022, we will be 'playing safe' and organizing outings that will take place largely outside and will be following whatever government guidelines are in place by then. We feel very strongly that these outings should go ahead where possible, but in a way that people can feel safe when attending. Because of the uncertain nature of things, we will be planning these outings later than usual again and will hopefully have brief details and dates to share with you all in the New Year bulletin.

Other dates for your diary

Many local history societies are planning to return to face to face meetings, while others are continuing with Zoom, which are open to non-members, subject to Zoom limits. Those who have notified me are listed below, together with societies who have planned face to face meetings later in the year. Circumstances may change, so please check with each society.

- 8 September Alcester & District LHS, St Benedict's High School, Alcester, 7.30pm (subject to no changes to COVID restrictions): Ashley Wakelin on *Bigger than you ever imagined: 'Midland Red'*. For further information contact AlanDGodfrey@hotmail.com
- 14 September Lapworth Local History Group, Lapworth Village Hall, 7.45pm: Sylvia Gill on *Barry Jackson – Theatrical Pioneer*. This may be by Zoom, so non-members are asked to check on www.lapworthhistory.co.uk, where they can leave their email address for a link to be sent.
- 17 September Bidford History Society, by Zoom, 7.30pm: Prof Sarah Richardson on *The women who won the vote in Warwickshire*. Lectures are open to non-members at a cost of £4.50. Contact johnahead@aol.com for details.
- 17 September Kineton & District LHG, Village Hall, 7.30pm: Peter Coulls on *The Warwick and Leamington Tramway*. Please contact the chairman David Freke on 01295 670516 or frekedj@global.co.uk for further information if face to face meetings are not possible.
- 21 September Stretton on Dunsmore History Society, 7.30pm: Helen Frost on *The Women's Land Army*. Meeting held by Zoom, contact via stretton-on-dunsmore-history.org.uk for link to attend.
- 24 September Welford & Weston LHS, Deborah Hayter on *Lost Villages of Warwickshire*. Meeting currently by zoom: to inquire contact membership.wwlhs1969@gmail.com
- 25 September Leamington History Day: among other stalls and events, our talks secretary, Jim Ranahan, will be talking about WLHS and what we have written about Leamington, including publications, lectures and excursions, showing how we have engaged with aspects of Leamington's history & heritage.

- 27 September Leamington History Group, 7.30pm: Ben Richardson on *Leamington's Imperial Past*.
- 13 October Alcester & District LHS, St Benedict's High School, Alcester, 7.30pm (subject to no changes to COVID restrictions): Dr Robert Bearman on *Stratford-upon-Avon's 'Bawdy Court' in Shakespeare's time*. For further information contact AlanDGodfrey@hotmail.com
- 15 October Bidford History Society, by Zoom, 7.30pm: Dr Nick Humphris on *Chedworth Roman Villa*. Lectures are open to non-members at a cost of £4.50. Contact johnahead@aol.com for details.
- 15 October Kineton & District LHG, Village Hall, 7.30pm: Michael Luntley on *From this Ground: the stories of nineteenth century Warwickshire agricultural workers in poem and folksong*. Please contact the chairman David Freke on 01295 670516 or frekedj@global.co.uk for further information if face to face meetings are not possible.
- 19 October Stretton on Dunsmore History Society, 7.30pm: Paul Waddoups on *The Stretton and Princethorpe WWI Roll of Honour*. Meeting held by Zoom, contact via stretton-on-dunsmore-history.org.uk for link to attend.
- 25 October Leamington History Group, 7.30pm: Mick Jeffs on *Some tales about local architects after 1840*
- 26 October Lapworth Local History Group, Lapworth Village Hall, 7.45pm: AGM followed by Caroline Ewing on *Life in the Mad House, Warwick County Lunatic Asylum*. This may be by Zoom, so non-members are asked to check on www.lapworthhistory.co.uk, where they can leave their email address for a link to be sent.
- 10 November Alcester & District LHS, St Benedict's High School, Alcester, 7.30pm (subject to no changes to COVID restrictions): Rev. Julian Davey on *The fascinating history of the Seymour family*. For further information contact AlanDGodfrey@hotmail.com
- 16 November Stretton on Dunsmore History Society, 7.30pm: Alice Ross on *Stretton's Agricultural History*. Meeting held by Zoom, contact via stretton-on-dunsmore-history.org.uk for link to attend.
- 19 November Bidford History Society, by Zoom, 7.30pm: Sean Calley on *Titanic: Marvels, Myths and the Midlands*. Lectures are open to non-members at a cost of £4.50. Contact johnahead@aol.com for details.
- 19 November Kineton & District LHG, Village Hall, 7.30pm: Ellie Reid on *Dressing up the Past: the Warwickshire Pageant*. Please contact the chairman David Freke on 01295 670516 or frekedj@global.co.uk for further information if face to face meetings are not possible.
- 23 November Lapworth Local History Group, Lapworth Village Hall, 7.45pm: Dr Julian Davey on *Richard III and the Alcester Connection*. This may be by Zoom, so non-members are asked to check on www.lapworthhistory.co.uk, where they can leave their email address for a link to be sent.
- 26 November Welford & Weston LHS:, Brad Plimmer will show the DVD on *the History of Welford*. Meeting currently by zoom: to inquire contact membership.wwlhs1969@gmail.com
- 29 November Leamington History Group, 7.30pm: Sheila Woolf on *Queen Victoria and the People's Park*.
- 8 December Alcester & District LHS, St Benedict's High School, Alcester, 7.30pm (subject to no changes to COVID restrictions): David Moulson on *St Nicholas' Church Benefactions Board*. For further information contact AlanDGodfrey@hotmail.com

- 17 December Bidford History Society, by Zoom, 7.30pm: Dr David Abrutat on *Seven Wonders of the Peak district*. Lectures are open to non-members at a cost of £4.50. Contact johnahead@aol.com for details.
- 21 January Bidford History Society, by Zoom, 7.30pm: Dr David Abrutat on *An History of GCHQ*. Lectures are open to non-members at a cost of £4.50. Contact johnahead@aol.com for details.
- 25 January Lapworth Local History Group, Lapworth Village Hall, 7.45pm: Joe Harvey on *Mapping the Tunnels of Warwick*. This may be by Zoom, so non-members are asked to check on www.lapworthhistory.co.uk, where they can leave their email address for a link to be sent.

Societies' news

Not all of our member societies have a regular programme of speakers, focusing rather on research projects connected with their area. I would be pleased to learn of any such group's research projects. We all know that local history isn't just about talks.

Record Office re-opening

As many of you will already know Warwick Record Office has reopened to readers and volunteers. Entry is by appointment only, but documents no longer need to be pre-ordered. This is a very welcome development for everyone who has missed the opportunity to work with documents these past months. Fuller details can be found on their website: [Visiting the County Record Office – Heritage and culture \(warwickshire.gov.uk\)](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk)

Mapping Women's Suffrage

This project, to be found at www.mappingwomensuffrage.co.uk aims to identify and map the location, together with the lives and materials, of as many Votes for Women campaigners as possible in cities, towns and villages across England in 1911. Although still a work in progress, it is already producing a fascinating snapshot, and anyone wishing to help can contact via the website: [Visiting the County Record Office – Heritage and culture \(warwickshire.gov.uk\)](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk)

Recent publications

Orme, Nicholas, *Going to church in Medieval England* (Yale, 2021), £20, ISBN 978-0-300-25650-0. Nicholas Orme is one of the most knowledgeable and accessible historians writing about the Middle Ages, and this book is no exception. Drawing on surviving churches, documents and contemporary literature he paints a clear picture of both the institution and, at a local level, explores what ordinary men and women saw, heard and experienced when they went to church

Glyn Parry & Cathryn Enis, *Shakespeare before Shakespeare: Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, and the Elizabethan State* (OUP, 2020) £65, ISBN 978-0-19-886291-8. Despite its title, this book is not a mainstream contribution to Shakespeare biography but for local historians its main strength are an in-depth study of the competing interests of the Warwickshire gentry, at both local and national level, and also the misfortunes of those of lower status who were subject to the activities of paid informers. The former are represented here by the Dudley and Arden families, and the latter by the effect on people such as John Shakespeare, of the activities of James Langrake.

Next issue

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