

NEWSLETTER

Updating Hampshire's History

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VICTORIA
COUNTY
HISTORY



Hampshire

Sad Loss of Two **VCH** Volunteers

Michael Wall, C Phys F Inst Phy

Mike died after a short illness on 28 August. Mike and his wife Josie were among the original volunteers for the **VCH Hampshire** revision project in 2008. Until coronavirus lockdown started in



March they were both stalwarts of the Basingstoke Discovery Centre meetings. Previously, when they lived in Berkshire, they had learnt palaeography when working on Berkshire records with Joan Dils. This, and Mike's wide-ranging interest in all things technical and the natural world, made his contribution to the will reading sessions valuable and to the broader discussions always interesting. Our sympathy to his wife Josie. *Bob Applin*

Trevor Hart

In June we heard the sad news that Trevor Hart, one of our founding members, had passed away after a long spell in hospital.



Trevor lived in Upton Grey and after working in the city as a barrister, banker and company secretary with Barclays Bank and BZW he immersed himself in the history of the village. He led one of the first **VCH** summer walks around the parish sharing his knowledge of the church, of where the blacksmith lived, and of the converted school, two manor houses and numerous listed buildings. He gathered a wealth of documents, photographs and maps which are being digitised for a parish website. His research will be invaluable to **VCH** and our sympathy goes to Sheila and family. *Jennie Butler*

VCH Hampshire on ZOOM

When lockdown meant that the **VCH** group could no longer have their fortnightly meetings in Basingstoke Discovery Centre, we doubted many of us had ever heard of Zoom. Seven months later our meetings are all on Zoom.

ZOOM!

My wife ran 'socials' for the ladies who came to her exercise classes – so why couldn't the **VCH** do the same? There was nothing to lose, so we tried. Some took to it like a duck to water and have been there, week after week since we started. Gradually the 'social' became checking Sherfield on Loddon wills, trying to translate Dummer Court Rolls from Latin, and more of our number started joining us. From 30 September we've taken on the whole range of activities and more have joined. We read wills, edit the newsletter, discuss national conferences, plan future work and discuss completed work. The only barrier to our returning to the level of attendance pre-lockdown is people who don't have webcams or microphones. Some have bought these for next to nothing online and joined in. Numbers taking part are now in double figures ... *Andrew Howard*



Difficult In-Laws in Sherfield on Loddon

Our recent studies of wills from 1733 to 1800 indicate tricky relationships between some testators and their in-laws, especially sons-in-law. At a time when married women had few legal rights to any property and divorce was extremely rare, some fathers were concerned to provide secure funds for their daughters, particularly when their marriages seem to have been in difficulty.



• Daniel Chase in his will of 1733 bequeathed £6 per annum to his married daughter Hannah, 'while she continue to live sole and separate from her husband ... and no part [of Hannah's annuity] shall come to the use of ... Francis Ladyman her husband.' Perhaps grudgingly though, Daniel did leave Francis, 'the Sume of five shillings ... if he should happen to Survive me.' TNA PROB 11/656/327

• William Keep, schoolmaster of Sherfield on Loddon school, in 1800 similarly left five shillings for his son-in-law Charles Talmadge, while setting up, as securely as possible, a £12 annuity for his daughter, Mary, 'for her sole use.' It was clearly stated that, 'Charles Talmadge shall not have any power to Controul or Intermeddle,' with Mary's inheritance, nor could the money be used '... in Payments of his Debts.' TNA PROB 11/1350/214

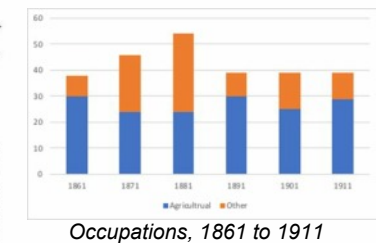
• Stephen Mott, in his will dated 1752, had a different issue with his son-in-law over a silver tankard he wanted his grandson to inherit. 'If my said Son-in-Law ... shall either refuse or neglect to deliver up the said Tankard to my Grandson ... then my said Son-in-Law shall be accountable ... for Household Goods and plate valued at thirty pounds,' which otherwise would have been granted to him as a bequest. TNA PROB 11/792/72

Lesley Mason



New Volunteer looks at Popham

We were approached in August by an A level student, Nancy Rickman, who asked if there was any work she could do for us. We sent her *Ancestry* images of census sheets for Popham to transcribe. She achieved this, skilfully negotiating the 19C handwriting for a parish unfamiliar to her. With a bit of mentoring on the pitfalls of census returns and how to analyse them she has written a very creditable account of the social status of the village from 1861-1911 as an entry for a history essay competition at her school, **Guildford High School**. Even though Nancy is back at school she has volunteered to transcribe a second parish for us. Clearly history is a subject she plans to pursue and we wish her luck in the competition and the future. *Jennie Butler*



OS map of Popham, 1911

Ex-slaves travelling through Basingstoke

A puzzling diary entry by the main landowner in Dummer, Stephen Terry, who recorded on 26 July 1855, '250 emancipated African negro slaves on their way to their purchaser in London were on the train yesterday' (Southampton-Micheldever-London). This was more than 20 years after slavery was abolished in the British Empire. In fact, they were former Spanish slaves from Havana on their way to West Africa by a tortuous route. *HRO 24M49/11*

Sue Lane

Anglo-Saxon Punishment

VCH Hampshire volunteer and archaeologist Mary Oliver was conducting rescue work at Oakridge prior to housing development in 1965. Evidence for an unsuspected Iron Age and Roman settlement was recorded, but this skull was found by the builders digging a drainage inspection pit. No further bones or other evidence could be found and the cranium was taken to the Willis Museum.



Now it has finally been studied by Garrard Cole of UCL, with interesting results, which have made their way into the national press, academic journals and the internet. The skull belonged to a young woman, aged 15 to

18, and dated to the 9C. There is evidence of brutal and probably fatal facial disfigurement and possible attempted scalping just before death. A century later law codes record this kind of mutilation as punishment for adultery, theft by slaves and other very serious crimes. The isolated burial of the solitary head reinforces her social exclusion and disgrace. *Mary Oliver*

Time for Family History

As well as **VCH** work during lockdown I have greatly enjoyed creating family trees from *Ancestry* for two friends. As well as the usual charts, I have created 30-40 page booklets with biographies of not just the main players but their children and grandchildren including images of census, baptism, burial, probate and emigration entries; military service records with pictures of relevant regiments and naval ships in action and photographs of extant houses, churches etc. Having done this for friends I am now doing the same for my own family – the research has been on-going for 28 years but has never really been shared with my siblings! *Jennie Butler*

How to Stumble across a Duck Pond

Lockdown exercise – daily walks – from Old Basing north towards Sherfield on Loddon. Mainly across fields, but there were two odd blocks of undergrowth. Why?

A quick look on Google Earth suggested both contained something. Then a deeper look at the Hampshire Historic Environment Record showed that one was a disused sewage works, and the other a duck decoy pond. But what was a duck decoy pond?



Basically a pond. Perhaps with tame ducks. Other ducks would fly in to join them. The newcomers would then be attracted into a tunnel or cage by food, or chased in by a dog, with the ducks then finding their way, one presumes, to the table.

There were a couple of hundred in Britain in the mid 1880s, mostly no longer used. The local one was on a 1759 map and could be as old as 1540. But don't rush to visit, there is nothing really to see, and heavily wooded and overgrown water features are not very safe ...

Andrew Howard

HRO 'Hands on History' Project

Since the beginning of the **VCH Hampshire** project our group has read and transcribed 16C and 17C wills and inventories for the various research parishes. These have previously been posted on the **VCH Explore** website but I was asked to provide them in a format suitable for Hampshire Record Office staff to add to their search catalogue while they worked from home during the office closure. As well as just uploading the text they have added modern spellings of unusual words for clarity. Farleigh Wallop and Cliddesden parishes have been completed and work is ongoing with Upton Grey enabling researchers worldwide to read the documents online - invaluable as the handwriting may be indecipherable to the casual reader and visiting Winchester impossible. This is a facility rarely offered in other counties.

Jennie Butler

See Hampshire Archives blog: *Hands On History: a VCH Project*. <https://hampshirearchivesandlocalstudies.wordpress.com/2020/06/28/hands-on-history/>

Dealing with the Surplus

A formidable challenge in researching and writing for **VCH** publications is keeping within the stringent word limits. It is invariably the case of how 'to get a quart into a pint pot'. This, however, gives rise to the question of – 'How to make the best use of all the material generated?' During the past few months I have been endeavouring to ensure that valuable research findings, which are surplus to **VCH** requirements, do not go to waste. With this in mind I have been drafting articles and seeking their publication in a variety of journals, such as the *Hampshire Field Club Newsletter*, *The Local Historian* and the *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*. Topics include campaigning for and against women's suffrage in early 20C Basingstoke and the development of Primitive Methodism in the town from its origins in the 1830s until 1923, when it paid off the debt on its new church, opened in 1903. If published, articles can then be referenced in the **VCH** publication, but perhaps more importantly, they serve to raise the profile of Basingstoke and its surrounding parishes, from a historical perspective. *Roger Ottewill*



Mapledurwell



Steventon



Medieval Basingstoke



Cliddesden, Hatch and Farleigh Wallop